



A LADAKHI IN COSTUME

LADAKH : THE MOONLAND

(Revised and Enlarged Edition)

F.M. Hassnain
Masato Oki
Tokan D. Sumi



LIGHT & LIFE PUBLISHERS
NEW DELHI ● JAMMU ● ROHTAK

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First Edition 1975
Second Revised Edition 1977

LESLIE L. SAVAGE LIBRARY
WESTERN STATE COLLEGE
GLEN SPLENDOR, COLORADO 81230

LIGHT & LIFE PUBLISHERS
2428, Tilak Street, Paharganj, New Delhi-110055
Residency Road, Jammu Tawi (J&K)
Delhi Road, Rohtak (Haryana)

Published by N. Gopinath for Light & Life Publishers and Printed
at Printco (India), A/8, Community Centre, Naraina D.D.A.,
New Delhi-110028,

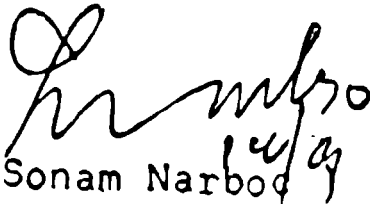
Srinagar, 15-9-1975

MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS
Power, Ladakh Affairs, Tourism

FOREWORD

Ladakh, the northern-most district of Jammu and Kashmir State and one of the loftiest regions inhabited by men, is today shedding the vestiges of medieval backwardness and is advancing steadily towards a new destiny. It is no longer the mysterious Shangrila of the yore, inaccessible and obscure-but a region where a massive endeavour for socio-economic transformation is taking place. The 434 km long road that links Leh with Srinagar has opened up vast possibilities of progress and is proving to be an effective lever for modernisation of Ladakhi Life. Ladakh has now been thrown open to tourists. Those interested in Buddhist culture will find a rich treasure of Buddhist art and monuments in this land of the lamas where gompas and chortens and prayer flags predominate. Thousands of tourists are expected to avail of the opportunity to visit Ladakh every year, giving a filip to the region's economy.

Ladakh : The Moonland, by Prof. Sumi, Prof. Oki and Prof. Hassnain is the first book of tourist interest, brought out by Light and Life Publishers, New Delhi, on Ladakh and contains very useful information, not only for tourists but for general public also. The authors have done well in bringing out this book and they deserve encouragement and appreciation.


(Sonam Narboo)

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INTRODUCTION

Ladakh has been thrown open to the tourist traffic and the number of tourist, trekkers, travellers and antiquarians to this moon-land on earth has been increasing steadily every year. Some like to see its rich culture, some visit this roof of the world for meditation but many more come to meet the cheerful and charming people of Ladakh.

We thought of writing a book for those who would like to visit this wonderful land. We have recorded our first impressions and have tried to touch all subjects. In this revised edition, we have added more information, which we hope will be found useful.

Our thanks are due to Mr. K. Kumar, Photo and Film Officer, Information Department, Srinagar, Kashmir and Mr. Y. Sora, Director of the Japanese Alpine Club, Oyama, Japan for photographs. We have to thank Mr. Ashraf, Mr. Bhalla, Mr. Nazir, Mr. Aslam of the Tourism Department; Mr. A. Ishiguro of the Nagoya University and Mr. A. Fida, Managing Director, Trans Himalayan Travels, Polo View, Srinagar, Kashmir for suggestions.

We must gratefully thank Shri Sonam Narboo, who, despite his innumerable responsibilities as Minister of Public Works, Power, Ladakh Affairs and Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir, took interest in our work and favoured us with his illuminating foreword.

We are grateful to the authors, whose works were consulted by us, including our young friend, Mr. Ngawang Tsering Shakspo, Research Officer, Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Leh, Ladakh, for his "Impressions of Ladakh". We also acknowledge the

help we got from the official publications of the State Tourism Department, Information Department and the Census Department.

New Delhi
May, 1977

F.M. Hassnain
Masato Oki
Tokan D. Sumi

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Prof. F. M. Hassnain, M. A. DL. B. D. Arch. is a research scholar, historian and author. He is a visiting Professor of a few Universities in Japan, where he teaches history and culture of India. Widely travelled, he is a member of many a national and international organisations pertaining to Archives, Archaeology and History.

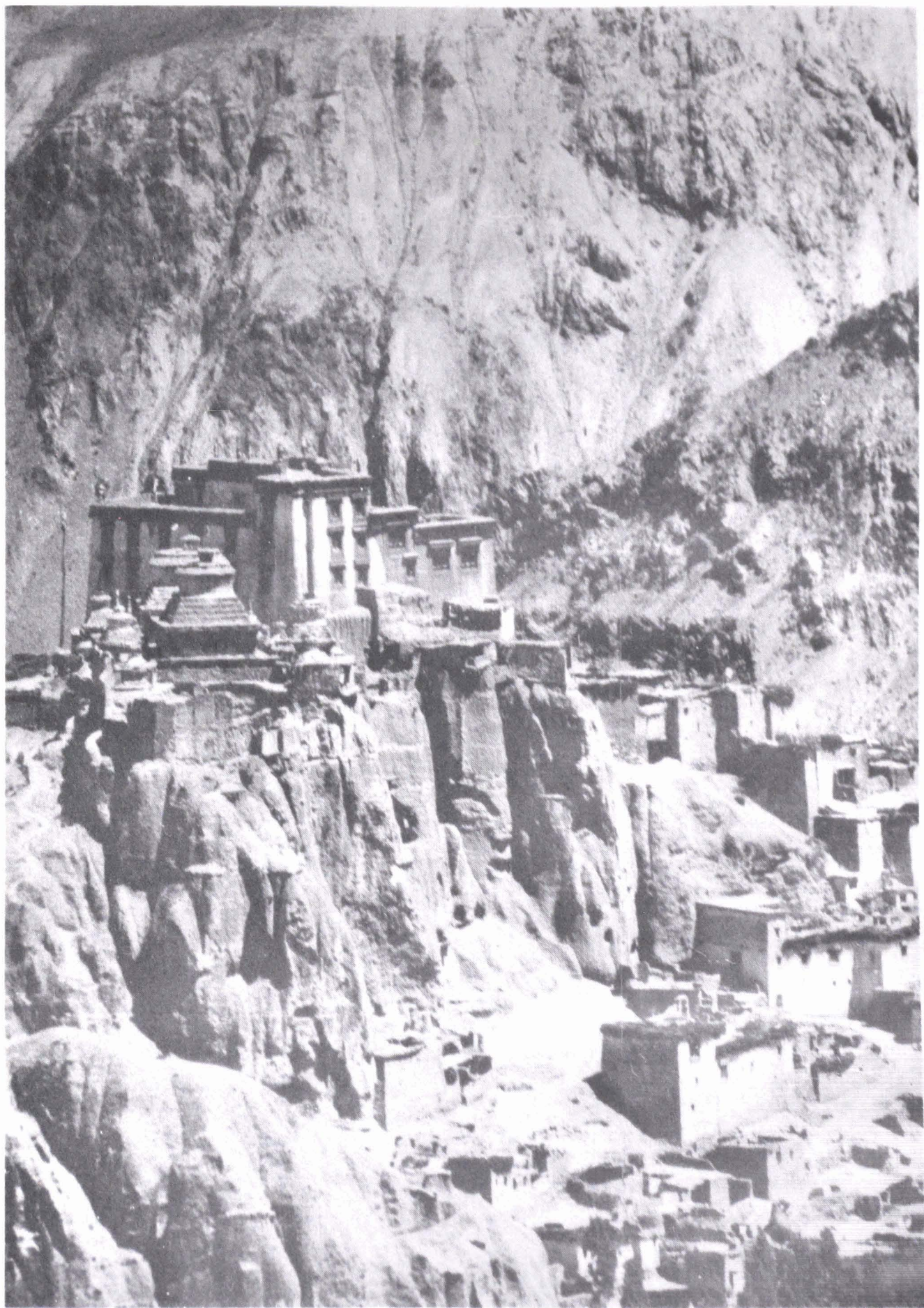
Prof. Masato Oki of the Meijo University, Nagoya, Japan is a scientist and Director of the Himalayan Alpine Association of Japan (HAAJ), a renowned organisation of skiers and mountaineers. He is the first Japanese to have visited Ladakh during the last two decades. Widely travelled, he is the organiser of Indo-Japan Nun Kun Expedition.

Prof. Dr. Tokan D. Sumi, M.A.D. Ind. of the Aichikyoiku University, Kariya, Japan is a world renowned linguist, historian and research scholar. Conversant with many languages, he has written numerous books and dissertations in Japanese, Chinese, English, Sanskrit, Pali, Turkish, Hindi etc. He is the first Japanese to have translated world famous Rajatarangini, from Sanskrit. Widely travelled, he is member of many a national and international societies pertaining to Buddhism, Anthropology, History and Linguistics. He is the President of Himalayan Buddhist Studies Centre, Nagoya, Japan.

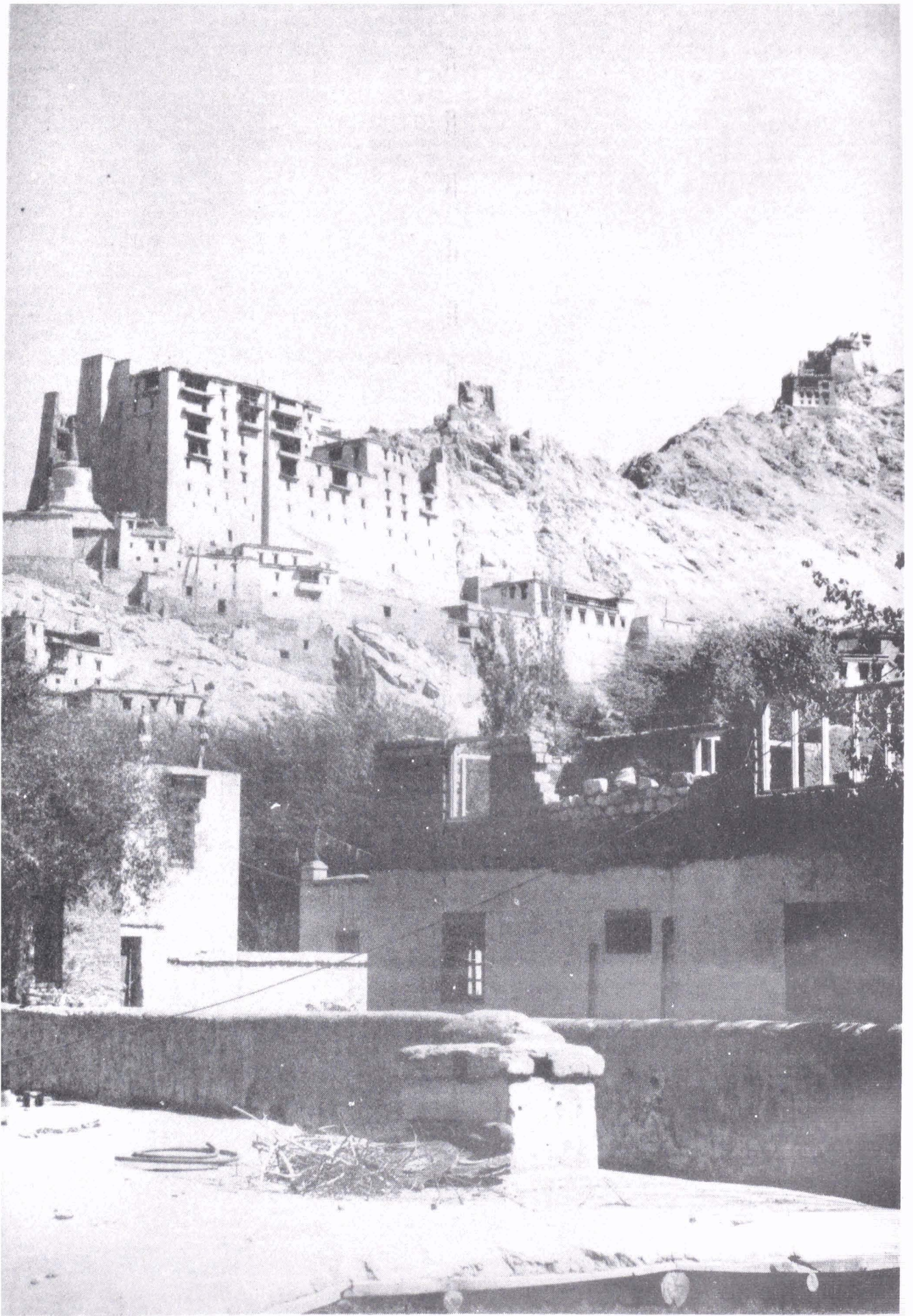
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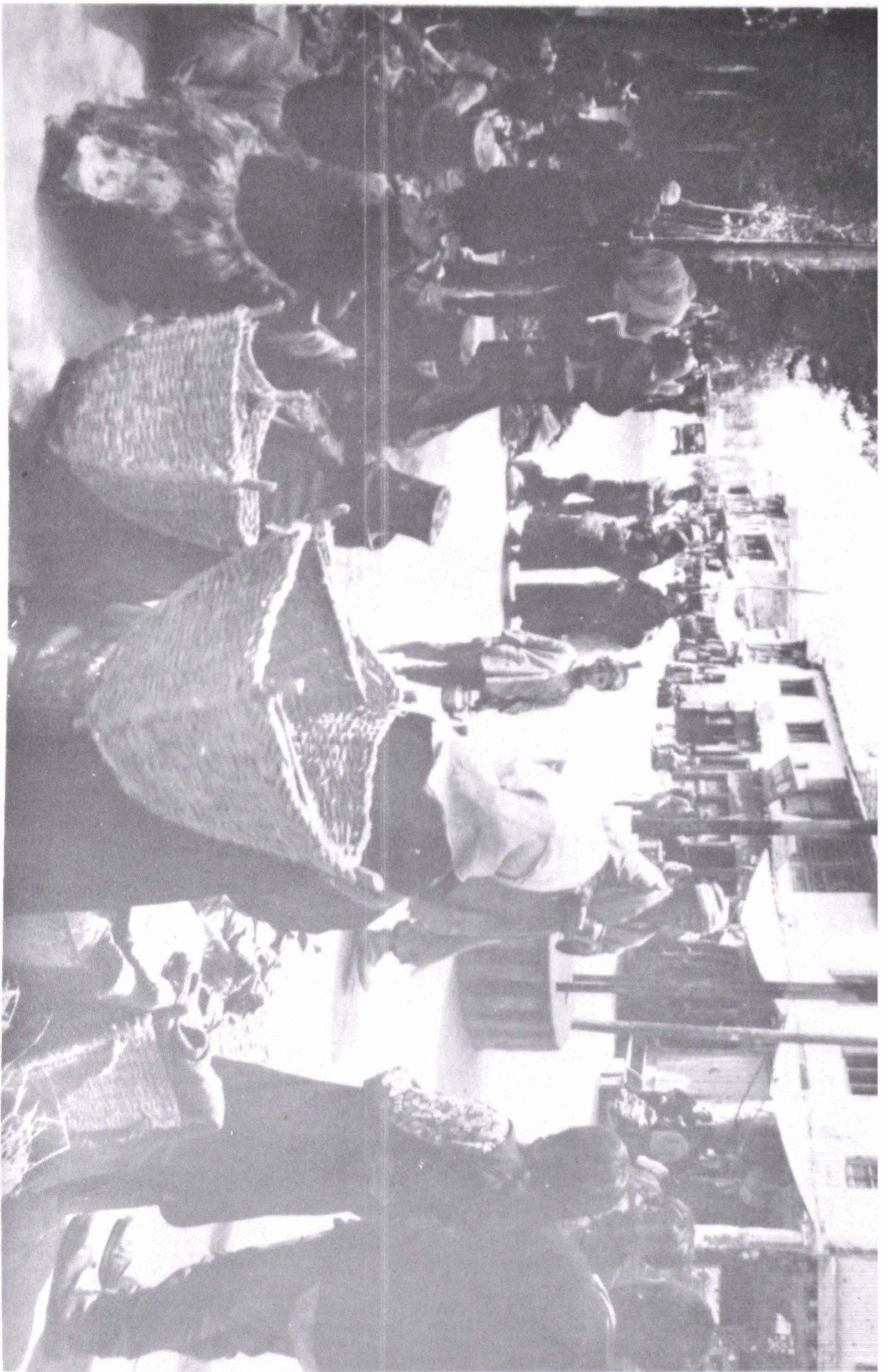


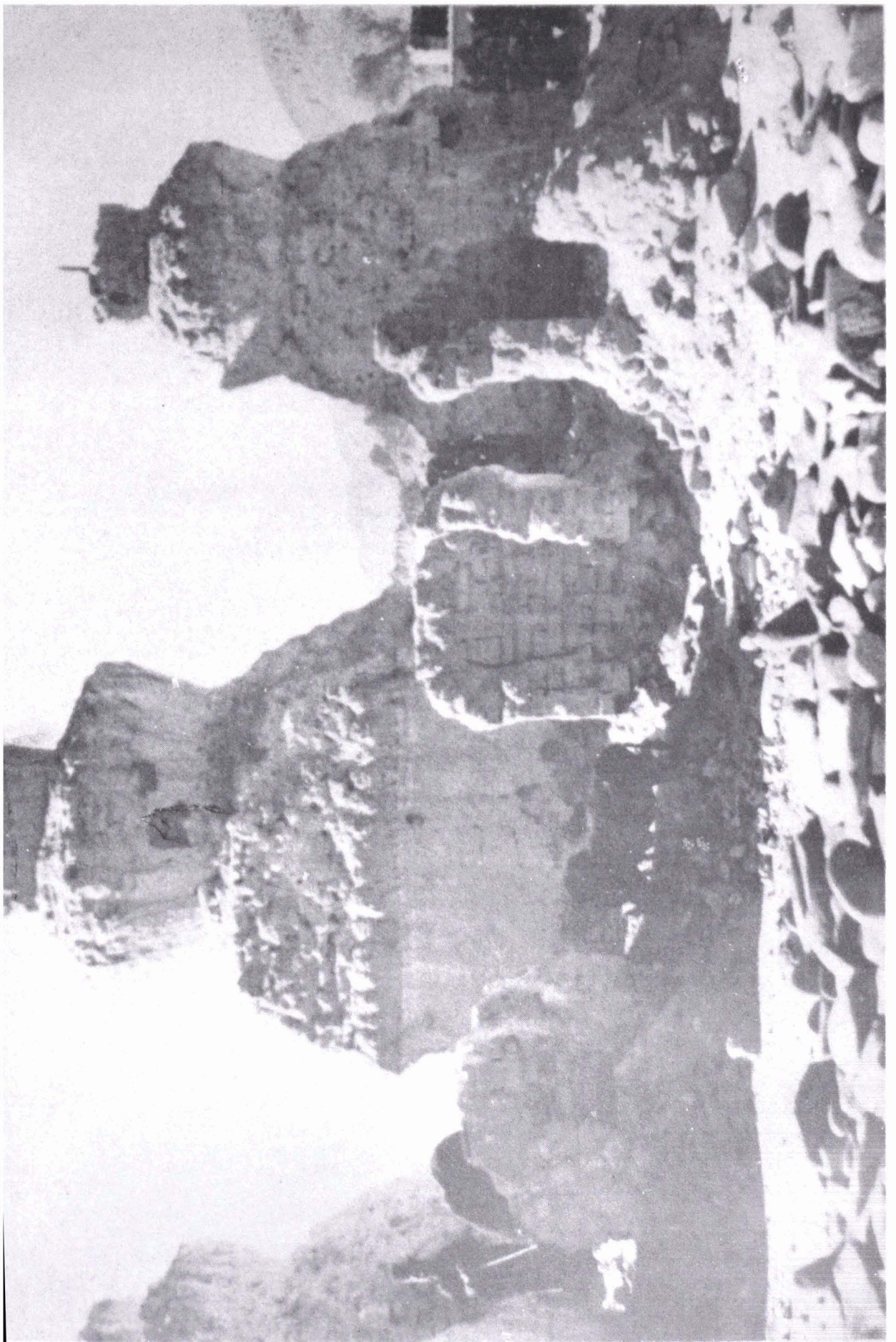


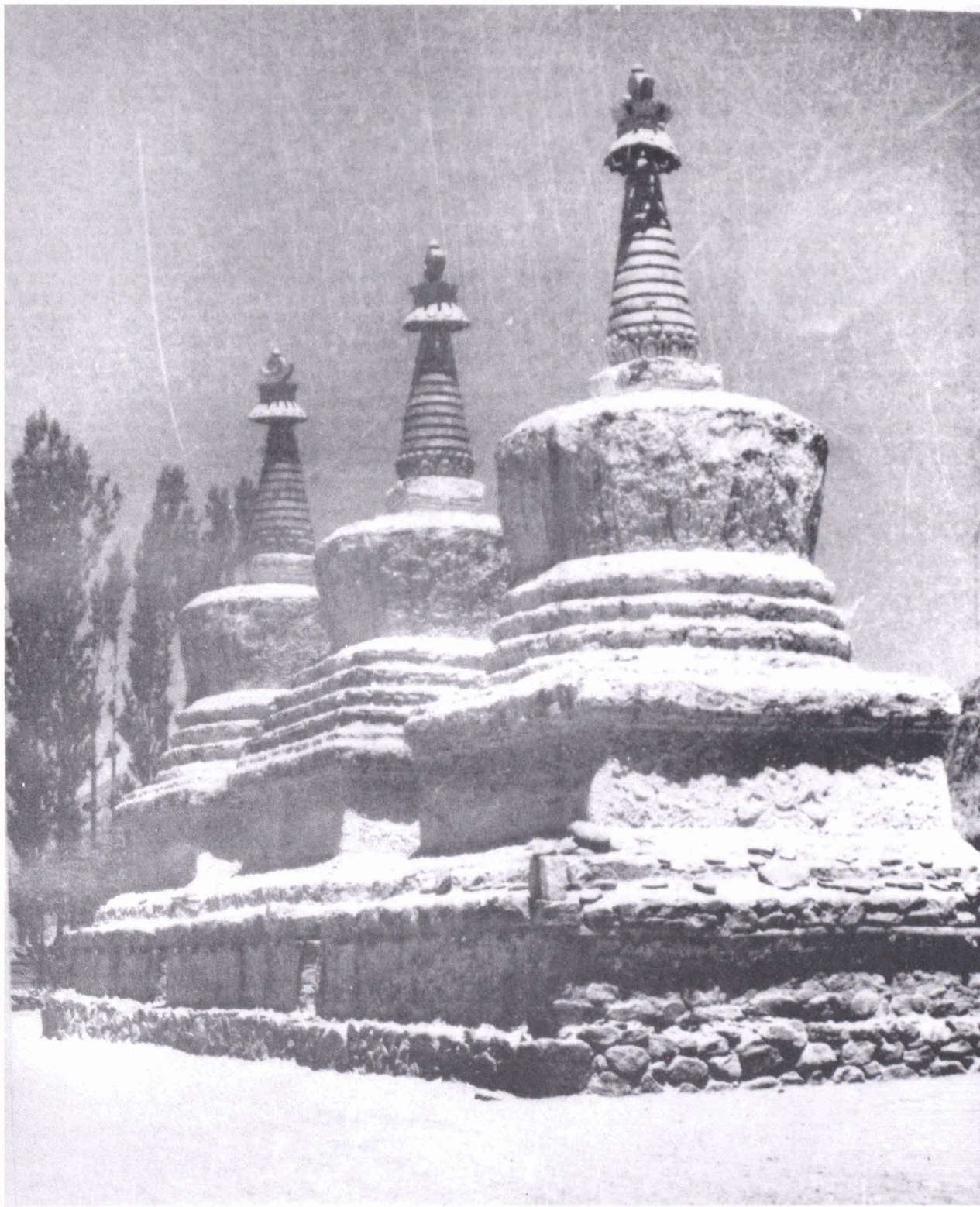


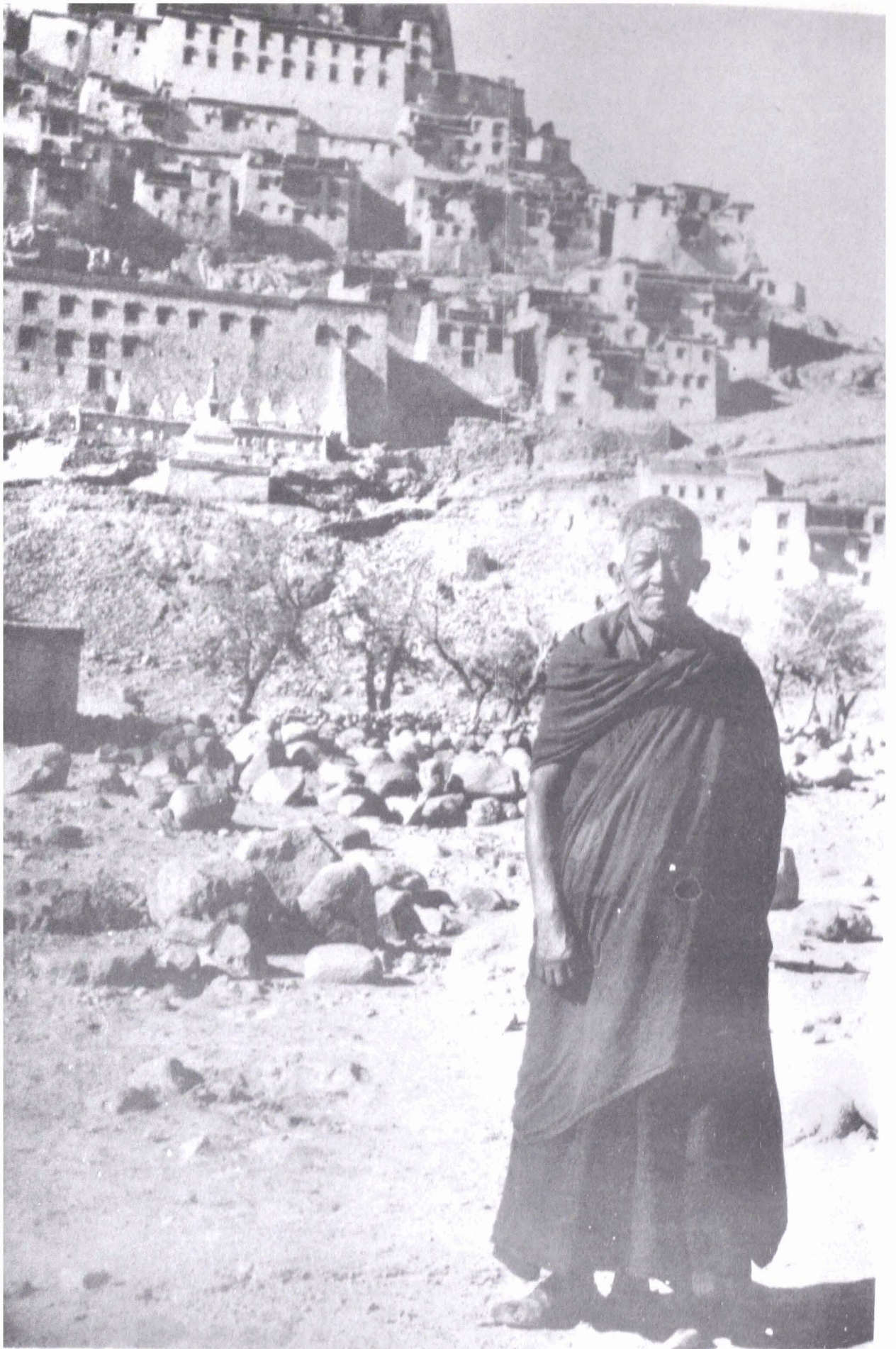




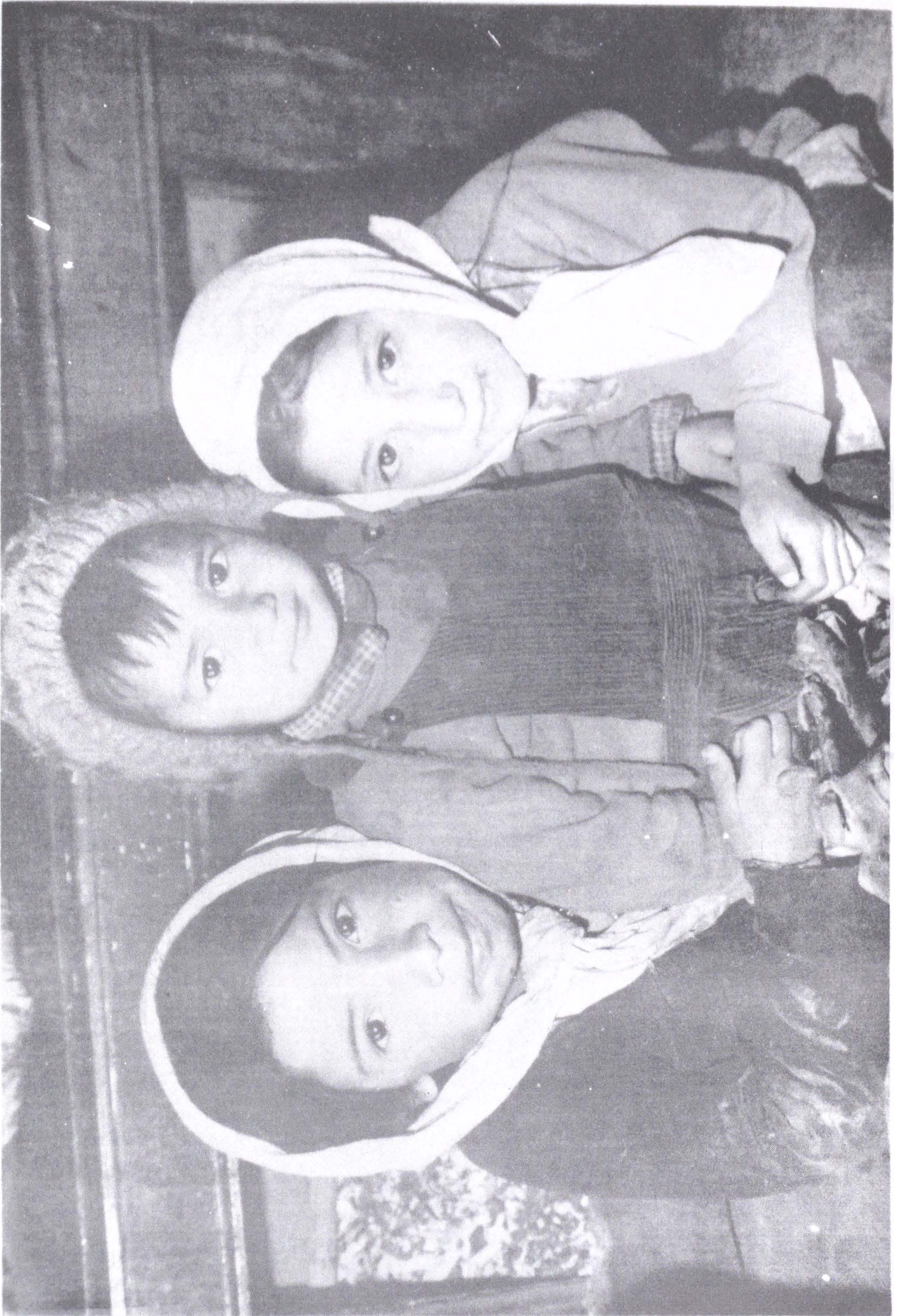














Travellers to Ladakh

“Aum ! Muni, Muni, Maha Muni, Sakya Muni, Swaha !”

Eversince Ladakh has been left open to the tourist traffic, it has become the sine qua non of the traveller. It has fascinated many a traveller and visitors from far-off lands. Some are fascinated by its unique geographical position, as the highest elevated land in the world. Some want to trekk on its barren mountains, which had been under the sea during ancient periods of the earth's history. Some of the experts want to study its geology, ethnology and anthropological antiquity. Some of them are of the opinion that this roof of the world was the earliest habitation during pre-historic times. Many come to study Buddhism here, a few to learn Tantric rituals and many more for meditation, away from the busy life. But numerous visitors, only come to Ladakh to receive the hospitality of the people.

Introduction

Judged by area, Ladakh is the largest district not only in

Jammu and Kashmir but also in the whole of India even though it has shrunk in size as a result of being split up by the Cease Fire Line and a part of its territory being under illegal Chinese occupation. In striking contrast with the huge area, to which the district extends, it is inhabited by a disproportionately small population, with a density of 2 per sq. mile, the lowest when compared with other districts in India.

Being cradled inside the lofty Himalayan mountain ranges, the major part of the territory falling within the district is inaccessible. In fact the topography, soil, climate, rainfall, language and social customs of the people are so different from other districts that it is difficult to identify it as a part of the state. The district is split up diagonally by the river Indus, which ranks 18th among the longest rivers of the world. It takes off from the Himalayas and appears in the south east of the district, flowing in a north-western direction. Other important rivers of the district include Shyok, Nubra etc. which deposit their tributes in the Indus before it enters Pakistan.¹

Brief Description

Lying between 32°.15 to 36° Latitude and 75°.15 to 80°.15 Longitude, Ladakh is bounded in the north and east by China and in the north-west by Gilgit and Skardu; Baramulla, Srinagar, Anantnag and Doda Districts lie in its west, while the Punjab and Himachal Pradesh touch its southern borders. The territory of Ladakh with an area of 97,872 square kilometres, representing 70% of the total area of Jammu and Kashmir State, is one of the most elevated regions of the earth. With a total population of one lakh and eleven thousand, Ladakh has one of the lowest population densities in the world. The joint effect of elevation and isolation amidst snowy mountains produces perhaps the most singular climate in the world. Burning heat by day is succeeded by piercing cold at night, and everything is parched by the extreme dryness of the air. The annual rainfall rarely exceeds 3 to 4 inches. As one drives along the ups and downs of arid, sun-beaten and wind-swept mountains for miles and miles, there is no sign of a human being, a bird or a tree. What meets one's eye are deserts of granite dust, bare crags and mountains of different hues and shades, which give a

¹ District Census Handbook, 1961,

feeling of being somewhere on the lunar surface.²

Area

Before 1947 the district consisted of three tehsils, Leh, Kargil and Skardu and extended to an area of 74,317 sq. miles. Following the 1947 tribal raids on the State as also, as a result of the Chinese aggression, the district lost an area of 9,563.2 sq. miles and was reduced to 37,753.8 sq. miles only.³

Ladakh is a mountainous country situated in the eastern part of the Kashmir Valley. "It is for the most part a desert of bare crags and granite dust, with vast arid tablelands of high elevation, a land where there are no forests or pastures". There is hardly any place in this region which is less than 8,000 feet high. The height of its mountain peaks ranges from 17,000 to 25,000 feet. A large part of the population of Ladakh lives at an elevation varying between 12,000 and 15,000 feet above sea-level, making the areas inhabited by them some of the loftiest inhabited districts in the world.⁴

The country contains "a great portion of what is the biggest massif of the mountains in the world the Karakorams". They form the northern boundary of Ladakh, with passes lying at elevations of 17,000 to 18,000 feet. To the south of the Karakorams lies the Ladakh range, the peaks of which tower only some 3,500 feet above the summit of Mont Blanc. South of this range and cut off from its main chain by the river Indus lies the Zaskar range. Thus, surveying the country from south to north, three mountain chains are seen and they contain two great valleys, the Indus and the Shyok, the true floor of Ladakh.⁵

In spite of its forbidding terrain, Ladakh has its own peculiar charm and attraction for the tourist. Pink granite contrasting with a deep-bluesky, brink sunshine and keen air and green river valleys, dotted like oases in a vast desert, present a destination worth visting. There is a great cultural variety among the peoples inhabiting different river valleys. A visit to this area is definitely a new experience. Gom-

² Ladakh Tourist Brochure, p. I.

³ District Census Handbook, 1961.

⁴ Keys To Kashmir, p. 136.

⁵ *Ibid.*

pertz writes in his book, "Magic Ladakh", that "at some comparatively recent period of the earth's history Ladakh was under the sea. Later on, when it emerged, it was covered with an icecap sweeping right down from the north Polar regions. That ice-cap has been melting more or less continuously ever since. At many places in this country the actual remains of the ice-cap can still be found according to the same authority the perpetually ice-covered slopes in the Karakoram are the "remains of the original ice-cap which once formed an almost unbroken sheet from the Pole down to at least as far as Kashmir, which is approximately at the latitude of southern Spain." The melting ice-serves the useful purpose of providing irrigation water in the country."

The Moonland

Ladakh is a moonland where earth and sky seem to meet and it looks like the roof of the world. It is a vast sandy desert full of gold granite dust and barren lofty mountains. The naked peaks seem to touch the blue and clear horizon. There are a few valleys here and there surrounded by high mountain ranges. You also meet a narrow and deep river on your way to Leh, the capital of Ladakh. During your journey, you also see lofty cliffs, spotted by gumpas for meditation. Heat there is but it is not hot, and cold there is but it is not cold. You perspire and freeze at the same time. The weather may be cruel but the people are kind. The journey may be tiresome but the land is hospitable. You will find in Ladakh the cold of Finland, the heat of Africa, the hospitality of Japan, the mysticism of Iran, the magic of Tibet, such is the earth called moonland Ladakh.

F-A-Hien and Ou-Kong

A hazy picture of ancient Ladakh emerges from the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Hien and Ou-Kong who travelled through Ladakh in the year 400 A.D. and spent more than a month in the country. They refer to the people "as the men of the snowy mountains." Fa-Hien wrote that "the country was mountainous, and so cold that no grain but corn, ever ripened." He found Buddhism flourishing as the only religion and saw in it nothing that was very different from the Buddhism of India except for the fact that the Ladakhi Buddhists used, as they continue

to do up the present day, the prayer-wheel. This is the familiar revolving cylinder which also appears as an emblem on the tombs of the ancient Scythian princes.⁶

Fa-Hien has named Ladakh as Kie-chha, which is still known as Kha-chan or the land of the snow.⁷ Hieun Tsiang has also mentioned Ladakh as San-po-ho or the country of the river Indus. The celebrated traveller, Marco Polo given some description of Lakakh.

Mirza Hyder Dughlat

Mirza Hyder Dughlat has provided a very interesting account of his adventures in Ladakh, in his famous:

Tarikh-i-Rashidi

“It is cold country, where nothing grows except barley. The summer season extends to forty days only and there is no vegetation or forests. The people use cattle-dung as fuel in their kitchens. Nomad tribes roam in the country, who live on raw meat and even their horses eat flesh. The people use goat skin as a dress. I have found gold mines at many places and people live in caves, who number thirty thousand. Due to high altitude, it is difficult to breath and one can not have full sleep. Out of 24 horses of good breed, 21 died of suffocation. The people of the region follow the teachings of Sakya Muni.”⁸

Jesuit Missionaries

Two Jesuit Missionaries, Azevedo and Clivera by name, visited Ladakh in 1631. Desideri and Freyre visited Leh in 1716 after having crossed the Zojila pass. Their travel accounts have been published in many languages. One of the books, which deals with their travel accounts is titled as “Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia” was authored by Wessels and was printed at Hauge in 1924. It has also been mentioned that Desideri remained in Ladakh for 6 months. His travel accounts have also been published by Klaproth in the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*.

⁶ Keys to Kashmir, Ofcit.

⁷ Ladakh, Cunningham, p. 3

⁸ Tarikh-I-Rajgan-I-Jammu, Hasmat-Ullah Khan, pp. 246-257.

Another missionary, Fra Franciso Orazio has also given a full description of Buddhism, for he stayed in a Buddhist gumpa for many years after having reached Lhasa in 1730.

George Bogle was deputed to Tibet by Warren Hastings in 1774 for collection of intelligence about the Land of the Lamas. In 1783, he deputed Turner to Tibet and his account is most curious and interesting. Moorcroft lived two years in Ladakh, from September 1820 to September 1822. In fact Moorcroft and Terbeck roamed in the Himalayas for 6 years between 1819-1825 and their travel records have been published.

Moorcroft was assisted during some of his tours by Syed Mohamad Shah Kashmiri, who was later on planted by him as his informer at Kabul. Moorcroft pretended that he was a merchant and credential certificates to that effect were managed by the Syed. Moorcroft has given an accurate account of Ladakh and his observations have been published under the title of "Travels."

Henderson reached Leh, the capital of the kingdom of Ladakh, in 1834 disguised as a merchant under the assumed name of Ismail Khan. He was kindly treated by the king of Ladakh, who asked for support of the then British Government in India against the Dogra invaders. Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu had deputed his famous military general, Zorawar Singh, alongwith a huge army for conquest of Ladakh. The poor and simple king of Ladakh, vainly thought that the British would save Ladakh from the arms of Gulab Singh, who reported the matter to his master, Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Punjab. The British assured the Maharaja that there was not the slightest idea of interfering with the Maharaja Ranjit Singh's plan of extending his conquests northwards. After this explanation, the British desired of Zorawar Singh to proceed with his military operations against the kingdom of Ladakh.⁹ Henderson was not allowed by the king of Ladakh to leave his kingdom but after his defeat, the king allowed him to proceed to Kashmir. All his accounts were lost during his return journey but he was not allowed by the then British Government in India to compile his memoirs for political reasons.

Henderson was followed by Vigne, whoes travel accounts have

⁹ Ladakh, Cunningham, pp. 10-11

been published under the title of "Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh and Iskardo."

Cunningham

Alexander Cunningham and Vans Agnew were deputed by the then British Government in India, to Ladakh in 1846 to define the boundaries of Maharaja Gulab Singh. Cunningham compiled his "Ladakh" during his stay in the region. He has given a full account of the geography, climate, flora, history religion and language of the people of Ladakh. His work is most authentic as far as geography of the region is concerned. He writes :

"The most striking feature in the physical aspect of Ladakh is the paralleism of its mountain-ranges." The different roads that lead to Leh are :

- a) the western road from Kabul and the Punjab through Kashmir,
- b) the south-western road from the central Punjab through Jammu, Kishtawar and Zanskar to Leh,
- c) the southern road from Lahore and Amritsar through Kulu and Lahul,
- d) the eastern road through Ruduk and Chusul,
- e) the northern road from Nubra to Leh,
- f) the north-western road from Baltistan.

Adolf and Robert Schlagintweit visited Leh in 1856 via Rotang pass. They were followed by another traveller, named Helman. Schlagintweit, who visited Leh in 1856. He obtained a manuscript, relating to the history of Ladakh, from the royal family which was later published in German.

Johnson was the first British to have conducted the geographical survey of Ladakh, Kashgar and Khotan. He served as the Governor of Ladakh from 1871 to 1883.

Nicolas Notovitch

Notovitch, a Russian traveller visited Ladakh in the year 1890 and stayed for a few months at the famous monastery of Hemis. As he had broken one of his legs, he had to stay in the gumpa and was

looked after by the lamas. The Morovian Mission doctor, Marx bandaged him from time to time. He discovered a manuscript, dealing with the unknown life of Jesus Christ, from the library of the monastery. He obtained its translation from the Head lama and after his return journey, got it published at Paris as the "Life of St. Issa." This work was later published from New York under the title of the "Unknown Life of Jesus." It relates the story of Jesus Christ having visited Sind, Rajgir, Banares, Nepal, Kashmir and Persia.¹⁰ He is the first person to have measured the longitude of Khotan in Central Asia. He visited Leh in 1866.

Shaw

Shaw passed through Leh in 1867 on his political mission to Yarkand, Hayward surveyed the routes leading to Leh during 1868-69 and published his famous map of the routes in Ladakh. Carry further surveyed the routes on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society, London during 1885-1887. Forsyth, Golden Trotter and Henderson visited Leh in 1873 on their way to the Pamirs. They were on political mission and the British posted English Officers at Leh to watch over their interests in Kashmir and Turkistan.

Mrs. and Mr. Ujifarvy went to Ladakh via Karakoram during 1880-81. Ransdel went to Leh in 1888-90 via Khotan. Bower published his travel accounts of Ladakh in 1893. He had travelled in Ladakh in 1891. In 1896. Welbie and Malcolm surveyed Ladakh. Deasy who visited Ladakh in 1900 explored Tibet, Pamirs and Central Asia for three years and published result of his explorations in 1901 under the title of "In Tibet and Chiese Turkistan being the Record of Three Years Explorations."

Hedin

Hedin may be considered the most famous among travellers and explorers of the Himalayan region. He explored the whole region twice; during 1899-1902 and 1906. He visited Leh twice. His famous travel accounts have been published under the title of: "Trans-Himalayas." He has given very inreresting details about his adventures.

¹⁰ The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ, Nicolas Notovitch, 1894.

In 1907 Tsuyoshi Hino, a Japanese soldier visited Kashgar, Yarkand and Karakoram Pass. He is the first Japanese to have visited Ladakh. In 1913-14 De Fillipi Expedition visited Ladakh. In 1920 James Baily Fraser, Published his travel account of Ladakh under the title : Journal of a tour through part of the snowy ranges of the Himalayan mountains and to the sources of the rivers Jamna and Ganges. In 1927-28, Trinkler and De Terra visited Leh.

Lure of Ladakh has charmed many a famous travellers of the world. In 1947 Ladakh was closed to the visitors due to obvious reasons. It was thrown open to all visitors in 1974 after a long ban of 27 years. The first foreigners to visit Ladakh on the opening day were Masahiro Yamada and Masato Oki, two mountaineers from Japan. Since June 1974, thousands of visitors from the country and abroad have visited Ladakh. This has given a fillip to Ladakh's economy. This land enjoys a unique distinction in having preserved Buddhism and its rich culture. Buddhists from all over the world and other tourists will seize the first opportunity to have a pilgrimage of this holy land.

Prior to the opening of the Leh road to tourists, Syed Mir Qasim, the then Chief Minister of the State had declared at Ladakh as under:

“Ladakh enjoys a unique distinction in the country not only because of its strategic but essentially because of its rich cultural heritage. There is no other place in the country, where Buddhism still exists in the same undistorted form as it does in Ladakh, as original as it could have been in the third quarter of the twentieth century. Gumpa, of which there are many in Ladakh, is a unique institution and I am sure thousands of our countrymen would seize the first opportunity to visit this area if it is thrown open to tourists.”¹¹

We waited for this opportunity and when Ladakh was brought on the tourist map of India, we took the first opportunity. Our first visit to Ladakh gave us this impression that we were on some lunar surface. As we drove on our way to Leh from Kargil, we felt that it was a bewitched land which was sun-beaten and wind-swept. As we

¹¹ Syed Mir Qasim in Ladakh, S. Kaul, p. 6.

drove miles and miles, we saw golden granite dust and the lonely peaks and it appeared that we had no connection with the world except the beautiful blacktopped road. We saw mountains of different hues and shades, when there was no sign of a human being or a bird. We came across a green patch or a village only at places where there was some little water but the overall scenery of desert like arid lands was overpowering. We simply felt amazed.

Our journey to Leh was monotonous and tedious but it was a wonderful experience. We felt that we had been thrown on some township of the moon.

History

“When the lazy people had heaped up stores,
The greedy ones did violence to the tillers of land,
And seized, ungiven, the fields and the rice,
Then he, who gave protection against these.”

The chronicles of Ladakh are known as *La-dvags*, which deal with the history and culture of the region. It goes to the credit of Hermann Schlagintweit to discover the chronicles, who got prepared a copy of the original documents. Its German translation was published in *Abhandlungen der kgl. bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, in 1866. The British Museum, London also obtained a few copies of the history of Ladakh. Marx of the Morovian Mission at Leh also obtained two copies of *La-dvags-rgyal-rabs* in 1890. Francke of the Morovian Mission, Leh, after having consulted various manuscripts, compiled his “*Antiquities of Indian Tibet*” and “*History of Western Tibet*” which were published in 1926 and 1927.

Early History

The district was known in the past by different names which bear no semblance with each other. It was called Mar-yul or lowland by some Kha-Chum-Pa or Snow land by others. Among the earliest travellers, Fa Hien referred to it as Kia-Chha and Hiuen-Tsang as Ma-lo-Pho. There are many others who prefer to call it as the land of gumpas and lamas. During the modern times, however, it is identifiable by the name Ladakh only. It has not however, been possible to trace the reasons accounting for the district having been assigned the name Ladakh.

Except for some stray commentaries and hazy accounts the past history of the district is shrouded in mystery. In any case it is believed that the district was first inhabited by a tribe of nomads who tended their herds in the small valleys of Ladakh. The carvings on the rocks, which have been preserved to this day indicate that they chased the Kiang or the Wild sheed.

The present day Ladakhies claim that they are the descendants of a blended race of Mons of north India, the Dards of Baltistan and the Mongols of Central Asia. It is said that the Mons were the first immigrants and were followed by the Dards who founded different settlements in the Indus valley. The Mongols are supposed to have migrated to the district early in 10 Century A.D.

During pre-Islamic rule of Kashmir, Ladakh was more or less an independent territory and was ruled by local Rajas. After the installation of Rin-Chen, a fugitive prince of Ladakh as the ruler of Kashmir, there were many conflicts between the Rajas and the Sultans and the district was several times annexed with the State but relapsed into independence on each occasion. In actual effect, however, it became an integral part of the State in 1842 when the Kashmir army headed by Wazir Ratna advanced into Leh and defeated the Tibetians.¹

Antiquity

Ladakh historical records go back to 400 B.C. when Sargyal established the kingdom of Ladakh and Tibet. Niathichen was the

¹ District Census Handbook, 1961.

next ruler, who established the rule of Thi dynasty. Nothing is known of the Che-lik kings. Similar is the case with Utho-Ylde kings. The Gyalpo established his rule in 333 A.D. One of the famous kings of this dynasty was Gyalpo 'Showang-Chen-Izghimpo' who came to power in 650 A.D. He was a great patron of learning. He also established relations with foreign countries.

History of proper Ladakh has been recorded in *Ladwagas-Rigyal-Rabis* and its translation into English was prepared by A.H. Francke in 1926. It starts from the reign of Skyed-IIde-Negma-Gon, who came to power and is considered the founder of Lah-chen dynasty, which ruled over Ladakh upto the end of the 15th century. During the reign of Lah-chen Naroop-Gon, the famous Buddhist scriptures of Ladakh, known as *Kangur* were compiled.

His son, Gyalpo Rinchin became the ruler of Kashmir and accepted Islam. He assumed the name of Sultan Sadar-ud-Din and came to the throne in 1324 and passed away in 1327. He is the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir.²

Ladakhi Ruling Dynasty

The ruling dynasty of the Ladakhi kings was founded by Nima-gon, who came to power in 975 and died in 990 A.D. He conquered many small chiefships and extended his kingdom far and wide. He defeated the invading hordes from Central Asia and established his capital at Shay near Leh. Before his death, he divided his kingdom amongst his three sons. His eldest son, Spal-gyi-gon became the ruler of Ladakh proper and exercised suzerainty over his two brothers. He built many forts in the kingdom and organised his army on sound lines. He deputed Losava Rinchen Zangpo to Kashmir for collection of religious books. Losava returned to Ladakh along with a number of Kashmiri artists and workers, who built and decorated the monasteries of Alchi, Tholung, Chigtan and Basgo.

Nag-lug came to power in 1150 A.D. He got built many palaces in the kingdom. Tashi-gon, who started his rule in 1230 A.D. was a great patron of Buddhism. During his reign, many scriptures were written in letters of gold and silver. The next king, Chuspal

² Rajatarangini, Jonaraja, Stt. 174-220

was a great administrator, who organised his administration on sound lines. Norub-gon, who ascended the throne in 1290 A.D. promoted religious activities in his kingdom.

Ladakhi Dynasty

The royal dynasty of the Ladakhi kings was founded by Skyid-Lde-dyima-gon in the year 842 A.D. His son extended the kingdom from Ruduk to Baltistan. Before his death, he distributed his vast possessions among his three sons and Palgyi-gon became the king of Ladakh proper. The king deputed Losava to Kashmir for collection of the Buddhist scriptures. He imported many Kashmiri artists and workers for building of monasteries in the region. The gumpas of Alchi, Tholung, Chigtan and Basgo contain many works of art by the Kashmiri craftsmen.

Nima-gon ruled over Ladakh between 975 and 990 A.D. He built a new capital at Shey and extended his kingdom far and wide by defeating the invading hordes from Central Asia.

Sesrab came to power in 1340 and passed away in 1400 A. D. The next ruler, Thi-sug-lde got built many religious edifices, like *chortens* and *mani* walls. During his reign a large number of Nestorian Christians migrated to Ladakh as refugees from Central Asia.

Tik-bhom-lpe, the next ruler, built the capital city of Leh, which he got decorated with palaces and gumpas. He made arrangements for the settling of the lamas in the monasteries at Leh.

Namgyal Dynasty

Lahchen Bha-gon founded the Namgyal ruling dynasty of Ladakh in 1475 A.D. He founded the towns of Narla and Timusgam. He also repulsed an attack from the Sultanate of Kashmir.

Invasion on Ladakh : 1531

Ladakh was invaded by Mirza Hyder Dughlat in 1531. He has given an account of the campaigns in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* as under:

“When I reached Nubra, I invited people to accept Islam and a great number of people submitted. But the Chief of Nubra and

his nobles did not agree to submit and strengthened their position in forts. I laid a siege and the enemy was routed. They fled in various directions and were slain or captured. Afterwards no one dared to oppose me. From that place, my army marched towards Leh. Two rulers waited on me and submitted. I held consultations with my advisors and decided to attack the valley of Kashmir.”

“In 1532, I crossed the Zojila pass advanced towards Kashmir. The Kashmiri army tried to stop but in vain. I gave them a chase and my army alighted safely in Kashmir. The people left their houses and property and fled towards the hills. Some of the nobles submitted including Malik Ali of Chowdura. The ruler of Kashmir, Mohamad Shah submitted and as such we set out to return from the same way, by which we had come. We set out for Ladakh.”

“We settled in Shay for some time in order to recover from fatigue. After some time, my retainers reached and being reinforced, we marched against Baltistan. Then we marched towards Zansker. As the road to Badakshan was the only one that offered safely, we decided to cross Tibet and reach that place”.

“Only 50 soldiers remained with me out of 700 and the rest having kept for Yarkand. We were without proper clothing and food. We had a few horses and our condition became miserable. We decided to leave the place because it was so cold and deserted. I started with 23 followers and we lived on wild game in way. After crossing the Pamirs, I reached Badakshan, when spring came, I went to Kabul”.

“At Lahore, some of the nobles from Kashmir, requested me to come to their rescue and attack Kashmir. I led an attack and defeated the enemy. The battle was very desperate. I conquered Kashmir on the second of August 1541.”

The above account would show that Mirza Hyder Dughlat gained nothing in Ladakh and instead became the ruler of Kashmir. It also reveals that he could not conquer Tibet due to severe winter and other such difficulties. The same mistake was repeated by Zorawar, when he attacked Tibet during winter of 1841 and was perished.

Namgyal Dynasty

The family of the Namgyals came to power in the 16th century. Sovang Namgyal subdued the whole of Ladakh and established his capital at Leh in 1533. He is known as a great conquerer and an able administrator. He built a royal palace at Tsemo, which has perished now. He also built a grand temple and got it decorated with many Buddhist images. Some of the rooms of this temple still exist with such relics. Sovang Namgyal was a brave soldier and subdued other areas of Ladakh during his youth. He succeeded in extending his kingdom even upto the outskirts of Lhasa. He conquered Shigar, Kharko and other regions of Baltistan. He was so generous that he never dethroned the subdued rulers, but allowed them to rule under his domain and authority.

Sovang Namgyal is also famous for his works of public utility. He got built new roads in Baltistan and Ladakh. He also got built new bridges over many rivers and streams. He passed away in 1555 and was succeeded by his brother Jamyang Namgyal. During his reign Raja Ali Sher of Skardu invaded Ladakh and subdued it. As he could not remain in Ladakh, he entered into matrimonial alliance with the king. Jamyang Namgyal gave his daughter in marriage to Alsi Sher, who in return gave his daughter in marriage to the king of Ladakh. This princess gave birth to two sons namely, Singe Namgyal and Norbu Namgyal. The later became the king of Ladakh after his father's death. The queen mother, Argiyal Khatoon is buried at Hunder, a village on the left bank of Shyok river in Nubra.

Singe Namgyal

Singe Namgyal became the king of Ladakh in 1610. He was a brave soldier and able administrator. During his early reign, Ladakh was invaded by the Rajas of Baltistan but he defeated them. He also subdued Purang, Zanskar, Spiti, and other areas on the east of Ladakh. He even invaded Tibet but could not attain much success. Singe Namgyal, now wanted to annex Skardu but its ruler obtained the help of the Mughals. The Mughal army from Kashmir having arrived at Kharpokhar, Singe Namgyal agreed to pay homage to the Mughals.

Singe Namgyal was a great builder, who established many monasteries in his Kingdom. He got built the famous gumpas of

Hemis, Chimre, Hanle, and Tmosgang. He got erected many *mani* walls in his dominion. He was a great patron of Buddhism.

Singe Namgyal was succeeded by his son Deldan Namgyal in 1645. He was benevolent, kind and effecient and as such was very popular with his subjects. He got built a magnificent monastery at Shay, near Ladakh. He got it decorated with numerous images. He got built a lone mani wall near Leh, which is known as Rengmo. Most of the edifices erected by this king still exist in Ladakh. The palace at Shay is a tourist attraction.

During his reign, the ruler of Skardu invaded Ladakh and the Ladakhi army was routed at Buddhkharbu. During this period, the Mughals also invaded Ladakh but Deldan Namgyal avoided disaster by submission. He agreed to owe alliance to Delhi. He also agreed to get recited *Khutba* in the name of the Mughal Emperor in the mosque at Leh. This famous mosque got built by this famous ruler of Ladakh and exists in the Leh bazar which is a tourist attraction.

Deldan Namgyal had many sons. He was succeeded by Delek Namgyal in 1666 and adopted the appellation of Aqbt Mohmad Khan. During his reign, Tibet invaded Ladakh in which the Ladakhis were defeated. Deldan retreated to Baszgo fort which was besieged by the Tibetans. He implored help from the Mughal Governor of Kashmir and succeeded in driving out the invaders. He adopted the Muslim name of Aqbat Mohmad Khan and was granted a jagir in Kashmir. He established trade relations with Kasmir and Tibet.

Nyima Namgal

Deldan Namgyal was succeeded by his son, Nyima in 1695. He continued to pay homage to the Mughals. He established peace and order in his kingdom. He was a patron of art and letters. He established a paper mill in Ladakh and also introduced hand printing. He got edited famous Buddhist scriptures and other sacred texts. He got built a big palace at Nubra, which exists even now. During his reign, Desideri, the famous Italian priest reached Leh, in June, 1715. Nyima Namgyal died in 1750.

Ladakh continued to be ruled over by weak kings of the Namgyal dynasty after his death. Tundop Namgyal came to power in 1820,

He was a weak ruler who had no capacity to face incursions from Kulu and Kishtawar. Foreign invasions resulted in weakening his administration. He was succeeded by his son, Sovang, who spent his time in merry-making and affairs of the state fell to disorder.

Invasion of Ladakh : 1833

Wazir Zorawar Singh, the commander of the Dorga army invaded Ladakh in 1833. At the head of about 5000 soldiers, he crossed the Botkal pass between Kishtawar and Kargil. The Ladakhis faced the invading army at Suru but were defeated. He was kind to people and this was rewarded by submission by the people. He built a fort there and marched further. At Pushkum, he had to face a very strong opposition in which many perished and many were made prisoners.

In the mean while the king of Ladakh, Gyalpo Akhbat Mohmad Khan, ordered general mobilisation and a huge army of about 22000 soldiers was collected under the command of Dorji Namgyal, and other chiefs. This Ladakhi army reached Mulbek to face the invaders. In the subsequent skirmish, which resulted in the arrest of many Dogra soldiers, Zorawar ordered his army to retreat to Suru, where he remained for four months.

After some time, the Ladakhi army under the command of Kalon Banka, marched towards Langkarchu and attacked the Dogras. But they were defeated and fled. Many perished and many became prisoners. The king of Ladakh became alarmed at this defeat and sued for peace. He advanced to Bazgo to receive the Wazir. Both the king and Zorawar then went to Leh to decide the terms of peace. It was finally decided that the King would pay Rs. 50,000 as was indemnity, and an yearly tribute of Rs. 20000. Zorawar returned to Lamayuru and then subdued Zanskar.

Freedom Struggle

In the meanwhile, an insurrection had occurred at Leh and the Ladakhis raised the banner of independence. They decided to collect a new army and fight the Dogras. Zorawar again marched towards Leh from another route and reached Chachot near Leh. The Gyalpo submitted and both reached Leh. A new fort was built at Leh and garrisoned with Dorga soldiers. The king of Ladakh was dethroned

and the village of Stok was given to him for his maintenance. Thus came to an end the kingdom of Ladakh. Ladakh became a part of Jammu and Kashmir State, which had come into existence by the Treaty of Amritsar, 1846 between the then British Government of India and Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu.

Zorawar invaded Baltistan and conquered it, elated with his successful campaigns, he thought of invading Tibet. Having collected a large army, he marched towards Ruduk. Having defeated the Tibetan outposts, he proceeded further towards Kard-amkhar. In a fierce battle in which the Tibetan army and the Dogra army fought each other occurred for three days Zorawar was outnumbered by the Tibetan army and he died fighting in the battle field. The Dogra army perished in this campaign.

Ladakhi Version

Mehta Basti Ram, the Dogra Governor of Ladakh wrote reminiscences of the Dogra War for Cunningham, who published these events in his "Ladakh." His account of the war differs from that of the Ladakhi chronicles. As such, the account given in the *Ladvags-rgyal-rubs* is reproduced here :

"Ladakh was invaded by the soldiers of Gulab Singh, who arrived in many numbers under the command of Zorawar Singh, Miyan Singh Basti Ram and Mirza Rasool Beg. The King of Ladakh deputed his army to face the invader under the command of Dorje Namgyal. Neither side gained victory. Zorawar deputed his emissary to Dorje with the message that if the King agrees to pay a tribute of Rs. 1000 to the Maharaja of Jammu, his mission would be complete. The King of Ladakh felt ready to agree but the queen Zi-zi disagreed and forced the king to fight the invader. A great battle ensued in Suru, in which both sides suffered losses. But next day the Ladakhi many commanders were hit by bullets and soldiers escaped for safety. Zorawar proceeded to Mulbek and then to Pushkyum. All the treasures were looted and despatched to Kishtwar by the Dogras. But Bankhapa persuaded them and the Dogra soldiers were cut to pieces at Bhatura. Zorawar proceeded towards Bazgo, where the King of Ladakh met him and sought peace. He agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 5000 to the Maharaja. Zorawar went back satisfied."

“In the meanwhile, the Ladakhis again raised the banner of revolt, under the leadership of Bankhapa. When the news reached Zorawar, he again returned to Leh and turned out the king from the castle of Leh. Village Stok was provided for the maintenance of the royal family. The crown prince fled to Spiti. After having deposed the king, Zorawar returned to Jammu.

Zorawar again came to Leh to demand arrears of the five years. He abused the king and fined him and his ministers. Zorawar demanded Rs. 50000. from the old king, Rs. 30000. from his minister and Rs. 15000 from all the other officers. Having agreed to pay the fine, the king of Ladakh was again re-instated on the throne. But he died due to illness and his son, Hijmed Singe Namgyal was appointed the next king. He agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 18000 to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.

Zorawar now decided to invade Yarkand and Tibet. After having made full preparations, he led his armies towards Tibet. When winter had set in and snow had fallen, Zorawar was surrounded by the Tibetans. He and his army was cut to pieces and the Tibetans gained a victory. The Maharaja deputed a huge army to beat the Tibetans, who suffer a crushing defeat. Peace was concluded between the parties and old boundaries re-established.”

Dogra Rule

Ladakh passed into the hands of the Dogras in 1840 and continued under the rule of Gulab Singh, Ranbir Singh, Pratap Singh and Hari Singh upto 1846. The Maharajas mentioned above, placed the region under the administrative control of the governors, who were known as Wazir-i-Wazarat. Their names are given below:

Magna Thanedar	1841-1847
Mehta Basti Ram	1847-1861
Mehta Mangal	1861-1866
Wazir Shib Saran	1866.
Syed Akhbar Ali	1866-1870
Ganga Singh	1870-1871
Johnson	1871-1883
Radha Krishen.	1883-1888

Sardar Mohamad Akhbar khan.
Chowdhery Khushi Mohamad.

These officers of the State Government, conducted land settlement and also carried out many works of public utility. They tried their best to develop agriculture and industry. Some canals were dug for irrigation purposes. Administration of the areas was brought on sound lines but despite their efforts, Ladakh remained a backward region of the country. It was only after 1947 that serious efforts were made for planned development of Ladakh. Today Ladakh can claim to be more advanced and less backward area in the Jammu and Kashmir State.

The Deputy Commissioner is the head of administration in Ladakh at present and he controls all administrative activities in the District.

Ladakh is a part of Jammu and Kashmir and as such it is a part of India. In 1958 China encroached on certain areas of Ladakh and constructed roads in the Aksaichen sector, which is a part of Ladakh. They even entered into Changchenmo valley in 1959, which resulted into a battle between the armies of the two countries. China attacked this sector in 1962, which developed into a major war. It appears that they had to close the war due to adverse world opinion.

The above narrative explains historical importance of Ladakh not in strategical terms only but in respect of its rich culture also. There was a time when it served as an entrepot on the Asian trade roads. Today it is on its way to modernization.

General Administration

The district is administered by a Collector who is assisted by an Additional Collector, Tehsildars, Naib Tehildars, Superintendent of Police and Deputy Superintendent of Police etc. The Collector designated also as Deputy Commissioner functions in addition as District Magistrate and is the head of civil administration.

As the incidence of crime has always been negligible in the district and the population inhabiting it is also of a limited size, the district is administered by two police stations only one with its head-quarter in Leh town and the other in Kargil village. In addition there are

number of police posts which together with the personnel working in the police stations are manned by 122 officers and men consisting of Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, Head-Constables and Constables etc.¹

1. District Census Handbook, 1961.

Ladakh

“All the necessaries for food,
The making of curds from milk,
Pots from clay and weaving with looms,
And many mechanical arts.”

The etymology of Ladakh is shrouded in mystery and is known by many names. It was called Maryul of the low land. It was also known as Khachanpa meaning the land of snow. It is also known as Ladwag. It is situated in the north of India and lies in the Indus valley basin between 32° to 36° latitude and 75°.15 to 80°.15 longitude. It is composed of various regions known as Kargil, Zaskar, Rupshu, Nubra, Aksai-chen, Leh etc.

Ladakh is “for the most part a desert of bare crats and granite dust, with vast arid tablelands of high elevation, a land where there are no forests or pastures.” Ladakh has often been termed as the roof of the world, where people live at an elevation of 12000 to 16000 feet above the sea level. These areas are the loftiest inhabited areas of the world.

According to geologists, Ladakh was under the sea, millions of years ago. Slowly and slowly it emerged out of the sea. This view is the same, which has been expressed by the ancient Ladakhi texts. Fossil shells found in Ladakh will be an interesting study for the geologists.

Physical Aspects

In view of the diverse character of its topography, varying altitudes and climatic disparities of its different parts, the State has been divided into four natural regions. The district of Ladakh falls in what is known as the Indus Valley region which is inter-woven with a complex net work of nude Himalayan ranges.

The district extends between 32°-15 to 36° latitude and 75°-15 to 80°-15 longitude. For the most part it is desert of bare crats and granite dust with vast aric table-lands of high elevations with no traces of vegetation in the upper slopes.

Some of the geologists are of the view that during pre-historic times Ladakh was under the sea. Later when it emerged, it was covered with an ice-cap which has kept on melting since then. They also contend that the perpetually ice-covered slopes of Karakoram are the remnants of the original ice-cap.

Barring a few valleys here and there, the district is strewn with series of mountain ranges which extend from south-east to north-west. Important among these are the Himalayan range, the Ladakh range, the Mustagh range and the Quen Lun range. The mountains being exceptionally high and snow covered, the rocks are mostly sedimentary and soft and the drainage is elaborate. The lakes which seem to have been formed by the damming of river valleys and by glaciers etc. include among others Amtogar, Sarigh, Jilganang, Spanggur and the Pangong. The last named is the largest and measures 40 miles in length, 4 miles in width and about 150 ft. in depth.¹

According to its system of rivers, Ladakh can be divided into a number of valleys, the principal valley being that of the Indus which runs through the entire length of the region from south-east to north-west, the other valleys being those of Drass, Suru, Zanskar and

¹ District Census Handbook, 1961.

Nubra. Indus is known as Singe-cho or the Lion river in Ladakh.

Natural Divisions

Ladakh may be divided into the following divisions:

(a) Central Ladakh, it consists of villages along the river Indus, or at the mouths of the rivers and streams falling into it. It comprises the following areas:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Giah | 2. Hemis |
| 3. Chimre | 4. Thikse |
| 5. Chachot | 6. Leh |
| 7. Bazgo | 8. Saspul |
| 9. Timisgam | 10. Lamayuru |
| 11. Karbuchan. | |

The areas are given in order of altitude. The Lamayuru and Karbuchan areas are comparatively warm and fertile. Fruit trees are grown in most of the villages comprised in these areas. Some of the villages produce two crops in a year.

(b) Rong: Above Central Ladakh, the river Indus, becomes a narrow and the villages which occur in the side valleys are comprised in the areas of Rong. The villages are colder than those of Central Ladakh, average altitude being above 13,000 feet.

(c) Rupsho: It is a wide tract at the south-east end of Ladakh, lying between the water-shed range and the Indus. The Leh-Kullu road passes through this area. The height of these valleys varies from 14,000 to 15,000 feet. The climate is extremely cold and dry. The snow limit is above 20000 feet, which is due to the dryness of the air. The amount of snow fall is very small and cultivation is very scanty in this tract. The inhabitants called Champas, lead a nomadic life. Their livelihood depends on the proceeds of shawl wool, and wages for carrying merchandise to Ladakh, Spiti and Lahul. The area is very scarcely inhabited. There are large pastures for grazing goats and sheep and the chief item of the revenue is the grazing fees.

(d) Tanktse: This area consists of the high plateaus above Rong and with the exception of Durgub and Tanktse, all the villages are very high and dry, most of them having an altitude of over 14,000

feet above the sea level. Tanktse-Lhasa route runs through this tract.

(e) Nubra: The Nubra Valley is separated from Central Ladakh by the Khardongla, which is 17,500 feet high. The villages are situated along the banks of the Shayok and Nubra rivers. The lower villages of this valley are as warm as the lower portion of the Central Ladakh, while the upper villages also enjoy a moderate climate, as compared with the higher villages of Central Ladakh. Grazing and wood supply is also abundant.

(f) Zanskar: It lies towards the south-west of Leh, in the water-shed range. Before the conquest of Ladakh, it formed part of the Ladakh, kingdom, being governed by a Raja, who was dependent on Gyalpo at Leh. Zanskar is closely united to the west of Ladakh, both by physical characteristics and by close relationship in race, religion and speech. The villages in the Zanskar valley are situated along the banks of the Zanskar river and its tributaries. The two main branches meet below the central village, Padam, and flow in a northern direction to join the river Indus near Nemo.

Ladakh is divided into 3 administrative divisions named as tehsils of Kargil, Zanskar and Leh. Kargil is situated on the road to Leh from Srinagar. Zanskar, is covered by the great Himalaya mountain ranges with the Nun Kun peaks. Leh is the headquarter of Ladakh region, and is divided into 3 administrative divisions of Nubra, Nyoma and proper Leh. There occurs much snow fall in Zanskar and the climate is very cruel. It remains cut off from Ladakh for nearly seven months. Nubra, on the other hand is pleasant and beautiful. It has a soft climate and there is abundance of vegetation.

The most striking feature in the physical aspect of Ladakh is the parallelism of its mountain ranges, which run across it from south-east to north-west. The general direction of mountain chains determines the courses of the rivers as well as the boundaries of the natural divisions of the area. The ranges from West to East are the main Himalayan range, the Zanskar range, the Ladakh range, the Muztagh range and the Kuen Lun range.²

Following is the classification of the assessed area as estimated in

² Ladakh Tourist Brochure.

1960-61.

<i>Kinds of land</i>	<i>Area in</i>		<i>Percentage of total area</i>
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Sq. miles</i>	
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1. Forests	158	0.2	0.1
2. Land put to non-agricultural uses.	4,459	7.0	3.2
3. Barren and uncultivable land	64,345	100.5	46.8
4. Permanent pastures and other grazing lands.	2,067	3.2	1.5
5. Land under miscellaneous crops.	2,730	4.3	2.0
6. Culturable waste	22,437	35.1	16.3
7. Fallow land other than current fallows.	353	0.6	0.2
8. Current fallows	1,880	2.9	1.4
9. Net area sown.	39,165	61.2	28.5

The above data shows that although the assessed area does not exceed 0.57% of the total area falling within the district, the size of net area sown is still smaller and limited to 61.2 sq. miles. Even if such other areas as land put to non-agricultural uses, permanent pastures and other grazing lands and under miscellaneous crops are taken into account the total area available for different purposes would not exceed 75.7 or 76 sq. miles.³

Villages and Towns

The district includes 237 inhabited, lun-inhabited, villages and the solitary town of Leh. Kargil was a town in 1911 but was later transferred to the rural list on which it has been retained so far.

The town of Leh was inhabited in 1941 by 3,372 persons as against 3,720 in 1961. This shown that the decennial growth rate in the urban sector has been 5.2% only.

³ District Census Handbook, Ladakh, 1961.

It may be stated here that during the 20 years preceding the Census of 1961 the district has passed through very trying conditions brought about by the tribal raids from across the Cease-fire Line and the Chinese aggression. The normal life of the people has on each of these occasions been upset and the already frail economy of the district has received a severe set-back. The town of Leh which used to function in the past as an important commercial centre has completely lost its importance following the closure of the trade routes with Yarkand and other areas in Central Asia and with Tibet. The immigrants from Kashmir, Punjab and other areas who had set up commercial establishments in Leh town, have in consequence wound up their concerns and returned to their native places.

On the other hand, the district is now politically very important as it holds a strategic position on the international border with China, Russia and Pakistan.

Trade Centre

For centuries Ladakh has been an important centre of trade between India and the countries of Central Asia. Leh, its capital, being the terminus for the caravans from both the regions. The principal commodity of trade is wool, which furnishes raw material for the world renowned shawl manufacture of Kashmir. Other exports are salt and dry fruits and imports tea, tobacco, grains, sugar and matches.⁴

Road to Leh

There are three routes leading to Leh. One is via Kulu, the other via Suru-Kargil and the third from Srinagar. The first two routes are different and for trekkers only and the third route is easy and motorable.

From Srinagar to Leh, there is a very good motorable road. It is one of the highest roads of the world. Important stations on this road are; Srinagar-Gandarbal-Kangan-Gund-Sonamarg-Kargil-Zojila-Matin-Drass-Kargil-Lamayuto-Khalse-Bazgo-Leh. The distance of Drass-434 Kilometres can be covered in two days. This road remains

⁴ Keys to Kashmir.

closed between October and May due to snow blockade at Zojila. Passengers to Leh have to cross the Zojila pass, which is at the elevation of 11,578 feet above the sea level. Two other highest joints in the road are the Namkila 13,000 feet high and Foula 13,400 feet high. Both the place look majestic. The zig-zag road at Lumayura is a remarkable feat of engineering.

If anyone is interested in the thrills of adventure, he may go to Leh via Kulu or Suru on foot. If he is interested to have the normal course he must go via Zojila. The route from Srinagar to Leh is spotted with the following stops. Srinagar to Ganderbal and then to Kangan, where we find the power station. From Kangan to Sonamarg, which is a tourist spot. It is better to stop at Sonamarg for acclimatization. From Sonamarg to Zojila pass and then Matin and Drass, which are the coldest places in the world. In Drass one finds an ancient Aryan tribe known as Brokapas. From Drass we go to Kargil, the second important town in Ladakh after Leh. Kargil subdivision is composed of the tehsils of Kargil and Zaskar. The town of Kargil is an important half-way between Leh and Srinagar. It is an important trading centre.

Kargil is populated by Mongoloid Baltis, who profess Shia Islam. About forty miles to the north east of Kargil, Dukpas live in the villages of Durchiks and Gakon, who are Buddhists by faith but ethnologically belong to ancient Aryan tribe.⁵ They have Aryan features and are beautiful. The next stop is at Shargol, where you find willow nurseries and tiny streams. At Mulbek, is an ancient carved statue of Buddha in the living rock. Then comes Budkharou, where there is abundant water and fields. Lamayuru has a very ancient gumpa, with many statues and prayer halls. Khalse is a village which grows vegetables, fruits etc. Bazgo is the gate way to Ladakh. Then we reach Leh, the capital town. Leh has been connected with Manali in Himachal Pradesh with a jeepable road.

Two decades ago, it would take many weeks for a traveller to reach Leh from Srinagar but now it takes two days to reach Leh.

⁵ Recent studies conducted by Prof. Hassnain reveals that like one Kafir of Nasirtan, the Dukpas of Ladakh are the remnants of the Greek soldiers of Alexander the Great.

Roads

The principal roads that open the region to the outside world are the Kargil-Srinagar, Kargil-Leh and Kargil-Skardu road. They are all practicable for pack animals, but the snow in winter closes the Zojila pass to animals for a few months. The road leading from Kargil to Skardu is closed now.

There are other routes to the region which are of less importance. The route from Kargil to Kishtwar runs through Suru over the Bhotkel 14,370 feet high, it is not practicable for pack animals, though a riding pony may be led. This route remains closed for a few months during winter.

The route from Kishtwar to Leh through Zanskar runs over the Umasi to Pass through Pardar to Ating in Zanskar and two more passes are crossed before reaching Ladakh. This route is open to baggage animals for four or five months in a year. Another route leads from Padam in Zanskar to Kulu, and is fit for pack animals.

The following table will show the stages on the Srinagar-Leh road:

Srinagar	—the capital city of Kashmir
Nowshera	
Gandarbal	—a tourist spot
Parang	
Kangan	
Gund	
Sonamarg	—a tourist spot famous for snow glacier
Baltal	—a hilly route leads to Pahalgam from it
Zojila	—11,578 feet above the sea level
Minamarg	
Matin	
Drass	—coldest place in Asia
Kharbu	
Kargil	—a famous town on the road and night stop
Shargol	
Mulbekh	—famous Buddha statue in the rock
Namikla	—13,000 feet above the sea level

Budhakhharbu	
Futula	—13,400 feet above the sea level
Lamayuru	
Khalse	—a tourist spot
Nurla	
Suspol	—a tourist spot
Bazgo	—gate way to Ladakh
Nemo	
Leh	—the capital town of Ladakh

Road length from Srinagar to Leh comes to 434 kilo-metres.

The route and distances from Srinagar to Leh are:

<i>Place</i>	<i>Distance from Srinagar in Kilometres</i>
Sonamarg	84
Sarbal	92
Gumari (Zeji-la top 11,578 ft.)	110
Minimarg	119
Matayan	127
Drass	147
Thansgam	170
Kharbu	180
Channigund	194
Kargil	204
Mulbekh	244
Namika La (12,220 ft)	259
Budhakhharbu	274
Henis Kut	283
Fatu-La (13,479 ft.)	295
Lamayuru	310
Khalse	337
Saspol	372
Nime	398
Leh	434

Approach

Ladakh is connected with the Kashmir valley by a black-topped road, which remain open from June to November. The road, pass-

ing through the picturesque villages of Ganderbal, Kangan and Gund on the banks of the river Sindh, leaves the valley at the lush green Meadow of Gold (Sonamarg). The first pass to be crossed to reach the forbidden land of Ladakh is Zoji-la (11,578 ft. above sea level). On the other side of the pass give a surprising contrast. The Kashmir side of the pass consists of green-clothed, forest-clad hillsides while the Ladakh side is bare and stony. Even the feel of the air is different. The soft and mild air of the Valley is replaced by a brisk keen air, a clear light-blue sky with a bright sun. The first habitation across the Zoji-La is the village of Matayan. The inhabitants of the village are a mixture of Kashmiris Dars and Baltis and speak four languages (Balti, Dardi Kashmiri and Urdu).

Between Matayan and Drass are the villages of Pandrass and Murad Bagh.

Drass

In a broad opening of the valley about 2 miles wide and 3 miles long consisting of alluvial plateaus of different levels, watered by the river Drass issuing from Zoji-la, stands the village of Drass, the second coldest place in the world. On the north, the terraced plateaus of Drass are bounded by irregular-shaped spurs jutting up in rocky peaks, throughly bare of vegetation showing a barren brown expanse of stone and rocks. On the south tower great precipices of limestone rock.

From Drass to Kargil, the road still follows the valley of the same river. It continues over stony ground, along the feet of great rocky mountains. Few villages are passed and even those one goes near are not always visible from the road, for some are situated hundreds of feet above, on plateaus which are the remains of denuded alluvial fans.

Below Thasgam starts a grante country, the mountains rising on both sides to serrated ridges of 17,000 to 18,000 ft. the whole vertical height down to the river being of bare, irregular, broken cliffs and their debris. From this place to Kargil are the villages of Sham Shah, Kharbu, Choli Shampo and Channigund. A sharp bend in the road near the place where the Suru joins the Drass river, brings the town of Kargil in sight.

Kargil

Kargil, the second largest town of Ladakh, with a population of 2,800, situated on the left bank of river Suru which receives the Drass river as tributary at Kharul about six kilometres down Kargil and then flows into the Indus at Marul. The Suru Valley with Kargil as the headquarter is peopled by Muslims, a majority of whom belong to the Shia sect. The villages in this area are about 9000 ft. above sea level and snowfall in winter is not heavy. The sun has a greater force and warmth. One finds here an abundance of fruit trees, mainly mulberry and apricot. Willows and poplars grow along the water courses led over the terraced fields.

Kargil is your stop for the night. It was once an important trade centre but it has now lost most of its importance. However, it is the second biggest town in the district of Ladakh. It consists of a few mohallas, known as Lankor, Gong and Chanchak. At Baroo, about 2 km. from Kargil, there is the famous Khankah, where thousands of devotees pay their homage. Baroo is fast developing as a tourist spot with a number of modern hotels.

From Kargil, a tourist can go to Zaskar to see the famous peaks known as Koh-i-Nun and Koh-i-Kun. From Kargil, the road leads you to Batalik, wherefrom one can go to the Kafir villages of Garkon, Durchiks, Dah and Hanu. These people, who are known as the Dukpa are the last remnants of the Greek soldiers, who came with Alexander, centuries ago.

After crossing Suru the road goes along a flat sandy plateau and then again descends into a narrow valley. Following the course of the stream it passes through Mulbekh, the first village having a Monastery of some significance. There is a large statue of Maitrija-future Buddha-carved out of rock on the roadside. The monastery is perched on a high rock and look commanding. From here the road turns into landscape of dunes and climbs to the top of 12,200 ft. high pass of Namika La and thence descends to the villages of Budhkhharbu. There is a 2-room Rest House of the Public Works Department here. The road after following a stream for some distance wind up towards the highest point on the Srinagar-Leh road, namely Fatu La, 13,479 ft. above sea level.

Mulbekh has a significant monastery perched on high rock,

overlooking the village. It is a nice excursion to climb to the monastery and see its relics.

Lamayuru

Immediately after crossing the highest point on the Srinagar-Leh road (Fatu-La) one descends into the valley of Indus along a winding road. After turning a bend in the road, all of a sudden a very strange-looking village with a Monastery on top comes into sight. This is Lamayuru, the oldest Monastery in Ladakh. The village has the appearance of being something out of James Hilton's novel "The Lost Horizon of Shangrila." There are strange cave dwellings carved out of the mountain side and it is worthwhile to stop for an hour or so to have a quick look around.

About half an hour's drive from the windy and chilly Fatu-La brings one to the mysterious Lamayuru, the oldest Monastery. On turning a curve in the road, Lamayuru suddenly pops up like an old Tibetan village with monastery. Lamayuru is somewhat tiresome due to the number of turns in the road, almost twenty turns in hardly sixteen kilometres. The road crosses the Indus, near Khalse. Ruins of Zorawar Fort are adjacent to the bridge on the Indus. There is a Public Works Department Rest House (one bedroom) at Khalse. Apricots of Khalse are reputed to be very juicy. Walnut is also available at Khalse. From Khalse on-wards, the road almost continuously follows the Indus and is more or less level. Two big villages of Saspel and Nime are passed before reaching Leh. Near Nime a little ascent is involved. Here the Zaskar river joins the Indus. As the road nears Leh, one passes along a number of terraced plains of considerable length. The landscape consisting of barren granite contrasting with deep blue sky is typical of Ladakh. On the right, some high snowy peaks can be seen. Far off in the distance, a chain of mountains with white snow peaks can be seen on a clear day.

Alchi and Likir Monasteries

These two gumpas are situated in the vicinity of Saspel on the Srinagar-Leh road. Likir is towards the north, a few kilometres from the main road, while Alchi is across the Indus about five kilometres. Both the gumpas are approachable by road and house some interesting items. There are a number of massive clay statues of different forms of Buddha, very colourful and beautiful. The important posses-

sion of the gumpas are the colourful wall paintings which are a thousand year old. It is really rewarding to visit these gumpas.

Leh

Situated at the apex of a triangular plateau formed by the Indus at an altitude of 11, 500 ft. above sea level is Leh, the chief town of Ladakh. A compact small town of 8500 people, the most conspicuous object here is the palace of the former rulers, an edifice boldly built up to the height of eight or ten storeys from the shoulder of a spur. Higher up on the same rocky ridge are the monastery and the towers of an old fortification. Below in front of the palace houses over the slope. On the flat beneath is the newer part of the town. Entering from the direction of Kashmir one passes along a big Stupa and after turning a curve there is a long, wide and straight bazar, the houses regularly built and uniformly whitewashed. At the farther end of this bazar is the old part of the town-houses separated by narrow winding passages. Outside the city are several gardens and plantations of willow and poplar. On the east, the mountains are near and there is no cultivation but to the west, the whole width of the valley is of a cultivated land, descending in terraces, with small hamlets scattered over it.

Mountaineering and Trekking in Ladakh

Ladakh is a mountainous country and great position of it lies in the biggest massif of mountains in the world. There are various mountain ranges, which are known by different names. There is the Karakoram range, the Ladakh range, Mustage range and Kuenlun mountains. Between these ranges there exist valleys which are suitable for camps. The slopes are fit for trekking and the ridges and summits are fit for climbing. There are many un-named peaks in Ladakh, which would tempt many a mountaineer in future. There are many a passes in Ladakh which are known as La. Besides this, there are many glaciers, which are an adventure in itself. In the past only Europeans would go to Ladakh for adventure or sport. But now, mountaineers from other countries are eager to take the first opportunity to visit Ladakh, In fact there are many adventures in store for them.

Various chains of mountains in Ladakh are in fact continuance of the great Himalayas. The following ranges cover the whole of

Ladakh in the system of parallel chains:

Kuenlun mountains
Karakuram mountains

In between the above ranges, there are other parallel ranges, known as the Ladakh range, great Himalaya range, Kailas range, and the Aghil range. All these ranges have been assigned with different names by different authors. However, it is a fact that both the Kuenlun and the Karakuram, cover the major portion of Ladakh. The whole mass of these mountains is of great interest for the mountaineers. These are cut into by deep valleys and by numerous ravines. Then there are ridges, the spurs and the summits and the last are aim in life for mountaineers. They want to conquer these summits or peaks. And there is enough for a mountaineer to conquer.

The mean elevation of these mountains would show that it is more than 20,000 feet above the sea level and the mean height of the mainland Ladakh is above 12,612 feet. The following table would explain the position:

Area	Mean height
Drass	11,063
Leh	11,500
Nubra	12,763
Zaskar	13,154
Rupshu	15,634

The above would reveal that Ladakh is the loftiest habitated area in the world and no part of it below 8,000 feet. Now, we will give a table of its ridges, summits, or peaks.

Range	Height
Karakuram	26,000
Kuenlun	23,000
Zaskar	23,410
Tshomoriri	21,000

Some of the important ridges and peaks are mentioned below for information to the mountaineers, who, it is hoped, will scale them in the near future,

The measurements may differ in some cases, because different authors have given different measurements.

Nubra peak	25,180	—also known as Sisar Kangri
Shayok ridge	25,000	
Nubra peak	24,600	—also known as Sisar Kangri
Kun peak	23,410	—Both the peaks are known as Nunkun peaks also.
Nun peak	23,219	
Unknown peak	23,000	
Tshomoriri peak	21,000	
Gya peak	21,000	
Tok peak	21,000	
Unknown peak	21,000	
Rongo peak	20,786	
Hanle peak	20,650	
Zanskar ridge	20,000	
Lanak peak	20,000	
Unknown peak	20,000	
Mustag range	20,000	
Dayamur peak	20,000	
Unknown peak	19,000	
Baltal peak	19,650	

Climbing

Ladakh provides extensive opportunities for high and difficult trekking and challenging climbing. There are innumerable peaks of heights ranging between 5,000 to 7,000 metres, most of them unnamed and un-climbed. Suru and Zanskar valleys present excellent areas of trekking in the shadow of high peaks of Nun Kun. The Zanskar Valley can be approached from Kargil in about a week's trekking. The 14,000 ft. high pass of Pen Zi La has to be crossed to reach the Valley. There is a jeepable road following the river Suru upto Rangdom Gumpa, about 130 kilometres from Kargil.

Nun and Kun, the two famous peaks (7,135 and 7,087 metres respectively) can be seen from a place called Parkachik in the Suru

Valley (about 60 Kilometres from Kargil). From this point onwards these two peaks dominate the entire view. The main glaciers of these mountains are approachable from a number of points in the Suru Valley. In fact, for the northern side the base camp can be set up just near the road, there by making Nun approachable in 11 hours (jeep drive) from the Srinagar airport. Trekkers to Ladakh can approach Trans Himalayan Travels and Tours, Polo View, Srinagar, Kashmir, who are experts in the field and can make all arrangements for sight-seeing and trekking in the region.

Some of the famous treks in the region are:

Leh—Kargil via Suru valley.

Kargil—Suru—Zaskar—Kishtwar—Manali.

Leh—Zaskar—Kishtwar—Manali.

Kargil—Suru—Warwas—Kishtwar—Pahalgam—Srinagar.

Srinagar—Anantnag—Nobug—Sukhnes—Pijhoi—Shrinmat—

Suru—Sanko—Kargil.

There are other short treks, possible around Leh. The details of all these treks can be obtained from the Director, Trans Himalayan Travel and Tours, Polo View, Srinagar, Kashmir, India.

Transport

There is a daily bus service from Srinagar to Leh. The Bus leaves Srinagar at 8 in the morning and reaches Leh next evening after a night's stopover in Kargil. One can drive in one's jeep or wagon to Leh in one day also but the journey becomes tiresome as a number of high passes have to be crossed on the way. The bus which halts for the night at Kargil leaves very early the next morning for Leh. The same timings hold good for the return journey. There are no restrictions on taking one's own vehicle provided it can undertake the journey.

Jeeps and cars are also available at Srinagar, which undertake journeys to Leh and back.

Communication

There is hardly any district in the State in which the development of communication has received as much attention as in

Ladakh. Before 1947 the district was accessible by a birdle path only and the journey from Srinagar to Leh could not be completed in less than two week's time. Although even now there are no surfaced or metalled/shingled road in the district, an elobarate programme of constructing jeepable road was launched immediately after Independence and by 1960-61 the district was provided with a number of jeepable roads measuring 314 miles in length. Important among these are Leh—Kargil road and Baltal—Kargil road which connect Leh and Kargil with Srinagar. Of these, the former has a length of 150 miles and the latter is 70 miles long.

Post Offices

The number of Post Offices has appreciably increased after 1941. It may be remarked here that till 1950, the Post and Telegraph Service were owned and administered by the State Government who could not afford to maintain more than a few offices. This will be evident from the fact that there were in all 5 post offices in the district before 1950. By 1955-56 another 6 offices were established following the transfer of Communication to the Centre. During the next 5 years, 15 more offices were set up bringing the aggregate number to 26. This shows that the average number of Post Offices per 1,000 poulation which stood at 0.06 in 1950-51 is now about five times larger and stands at 0.29.

The town of Leh has also been connected with Srinagar by telephone. This has proved of great relief not only to Government but also to the people.⁶

Accommodation

At present the following accommodation is available at different places:

Drass

The Public Works Department Rest House has three double rooms with attached bath rooms but no running water is available in the rooms. Advance booking can be made through the Executive Engineer (R&B) Kargil.

⁶ District Census Handbook, Ladakh, 1961.

Kargil

The Dak Bungalow here has seven double rooms with attached bathrooms and running water. Advance booking can be made through the Tourist Officer, Kargil, (Ladakh).

There are several hotels and restaurants in Kargil and notable among these are:

Hotel de Zojila, Baroo
Feroz Guest House
Hotel Nun Kun
Standard Hotel
Hotel Kargil International

Budhkarbu

Public Works Department Rest house has two double rooms but no running water. Advance booking can be made through the Executive Engineer, (Road & Buildings), Kargil (Ladakh).

Khalse

Public Works Department Rest House has one double room but no running water. Advance booking can be made through the Assistant Engineer (Roads and Buildings), Khalse (Ladakh).

Leh

At Leh, accommodation is available in the Dak Bungalow and the Leh Motel. The Dak Bungalow has ten bed rooms with attached bath and running water. The Motel has nearly 20 bed rooms, fully furnished but without attached bath or toilet. Both the Dak Bungalow and the Motel have been provided with catering arrangements but no bedding is provided. As such, it is necessary to carry one's own bedding or a sleeping bag with self.

At Leh, a good number of hotels, rest houses and paying guest houses have come up, which provided efficient service. Majority of the tourists prefer to live in private guest houses, for they receive much hospitality from the people, who are very kind and gentle.

Some of the hotels at Leh are:

Hotel Dreamland
Hotel Ibex
Everest Hotel
Hotel Yak-tail
Glacier View Hotel
Leh Guest House
Burman Hotel
Greenway Hotel and Restaurant

Climate

The climate of Ladakh and Zaskar is extremely dry and cold. In winter, the rivers freeze and form natural roads, which are superior to the artificial ones. Thus in winter, the Nubra and the Zaskar rivers open up communications between Nubra and Chorabay and Ladakh and Zaskar respectively. In many villages, there are temporary hamlets which are only used in summer, while in winter, the villages decamp to the lower altitudes at the mouths of the streams. Cold is intense in Rupsho, the higher plateaus above Tanktse, in Rong and Zaskar, while Central Ladakh and Nubra possess a comparatively mild climate. But even in Ladakh cold is severe and the temperature often goes down below zero. But owing to dryness of the climate, the atmosphere is generally clear.

Climate and Rainfall

The district experiences almost arctic cold during winter when the temperature may be as low as 23°C (about 10°F). The climate is generally dry and cold but some of the valleys such as the Indus, Shyok etc. are very warm in summer.

The district falls in what is known as the Yellow Belt where the average rainfall per year does not exceed 15". Enclosed by lofty mountain ranges, the monsoons never reach the district and get exhausted among the low hills in the valleys.

The tehsilwise data shows that the average rainfall in Kargil is 639.361 mms (25.172"). In the case of Leh, however, the corresponding average does not exceed 139.499 mms. (5.492"). It is due to this scanty rainfall that the size of land under cultivation is extremely

small and only such areas which are catered by natural water courses or snow-fed fhuls can be used for purposes of cultivation.

Rain and Snow-Fall

The mid Himalayan range obstructs monsoon currents which deplete their exhausted stores in the neighbourhood of Zojila and Drass. Hence the climate of Ladakh and Zaskar is extremely dry and rain-fall very insignificant. Similarly, snow-fall in the Ladakh valleys is scanty inspite of their high altitude. Zaskar being nearer the mid Himalayan range, receives more snow-fall than Ladakh but the climate is, on the whole, very dry and cold, as compared with that of Kashmir. The spring summer, and autumn together last little more than five months, after which the snow-fall closes all the approaches to Zaskar and the people are shut in for about six months. The snow does not clear up in the spring, in time for sowing and the Zamindars spread the earth in their fields which absorbs warmth from the sun and melts the snow.

Temperature

There are great extremes of heat and cold, mixed with dryness in Ladakh. Annual mean temperature of the area is given for benefit of the tourists:

Nubra	39°
Leh	37°
Zaskar	39°

Generally, the temperature at Leh during summer may be 70° F. during day and it may be 20° F. during winter, Mean daily minimum temperature is calculated as under:

January	—15°
February	—13°
March	— 7°
April	— 2°
May	— 3°
June	— 7°
July	—11°
August	—10°

September	— 6°
October	— 1°
November	— 7°
December	—12°

Vital Statistics

Cholera has been raging in the district almost throughout the decade and has had its heaviest tolls in the year 1953, 1954 and 1958. As a result there have been 1,368 deaths from all causes in 1954 but the number of births though comparatively smaller was still fairly high and stood at 1,136. In 1953 and 1958, however, the total number of deaths stood at 1,114 and 1,002 respectively, but the number of births during these years was limited to 771 and 564 only. This again indicates that the registration of births has been defective and has not received the attention which it deserves.

Malaria has also been responsible for a large number of deaths in the district during the decade. According to the information supplied by the Police Department there were 1,361 deaths due to malaria as against 3,426 and 817 attributed to cholera and typhoid respectively.

Minerals

Ladakh and Kargil areas are very rich in mineral wealth. These include copper, chromite, sulphur, limestone, borax, soda and gold dust. During old times, gold was found from the sand of the river Shyok. Salt is also found at Rupshu. Hot springs of Rupshu are famous and people take bath in them for cure.

Momiaï

Another substance, of which we should make mention is momiaï, which is very much prized as a medicine for sex energy. It is natural substance of dark colour paste-like thing found on the high rocks and is formed from the black substance which ooze out of the stone due to extreme heat during day. It burns like petrol and gives a black smoke. Preliminary test of this natural medicine by our friend, Prof. Alayov at Moscow, revealed that this substance had all the ingredients needed in a medicine for vitality and vigour.

Cow, Goat and Sheep

Livestock consists of cows known as zo, yak, goat and sheep. Ladakh is famous, through out the world, for fine type of wool known as pashmina. The cattle are used for ploughing and eating purposes. The People are fond of meat, which is also dried up in the sun for winter months. Ladakh is famous for Markhor, Ibex, Marmot, Bear and Antelopes.

Game Laws and Shooting

Ladakh being a sensitive area in terms of defence, shooting of animals is totally prohibited these days. Previously, the Game Laws were as under:

(1) All sportsmen shooting in Ladakh were required to have in their possession permits from the State Games Preservation Department. For this purpose, the season was divided into two parts: 15th April to 14th July and 15th July to 15th October.

(2) Shooting, killing and catching of yak is totally prohibited. The killing of goat is also banned.

(3) Sportsmen are not allowed to shoot more than 2 heads of ovis poli in the Pamis.

(4) Ovis Ammon can be shot in the tributaries of the Indus, the Hanle river basin, the Puga river area, the basin of Tsomoriri lakes, Tiri Foo, Chusul, Changcenmo region, and Leh-Kulu road.

(5) Sharpu can be shot in the Igu basin, Phiang area, Nimo Bazgo, Hemis, Ilci, and Damkar to Hanu.

Fuel

In other parts of the State, where electricity is not available, wood-fuel is used for cooking rice, vegetables, mutton and other dishes. This is not possible in Ladakh due to scarcity of wood which can be had at prohibitive prices only. In the circumstances, stoves fed with kerosine oil are used not only for cooking purposes but also for warming up rooms during winter. A special type of iron stove is installed in the room and fed with kerosine oil.

Lighting

There is dearth of electricity in Ladakh. Small power houses have been provided by the Government at Kargil and Leh. Mostly, houses in the village have no electric power. As such people use kerosine or oil lamps. In every gumpa, a number of lamps filled up with oil or butter burn day and night. At some special and auspicious occasions, even holy water burns in these lamps, which surround a diety. This is strange phenomenon witnessed by some of the visitors. May be these are magic lamps.

Water Supply

Water supply is deficient in the district because of the poor rainfall it receives. There is no arrangement for the provision of protected water supply and the people have to depend mostly on the water obtained from rivers, streams and ponds.

Medcial

The Census Report for 1941 shows that the district had then been provided with 2 dispensaries only, with headquarters at Leh and Kargil. Majority of the inhabitants had, therefore, to depend on indigenous treatment which, however did not conform to any recognised system such as allopathic, unani, ayurvedic or homeopathic treatment.

There are now 16 medical institutions, in the district of which except one all others are functioning in the rural areas. Considering, however, the mountainous character of the district, the low density of its population and the long distances at which the villages are situated, there can be no doubt that the medical relief made available to the people is still inadequate.

The 16 institutions referred to above include 1 district hospital, 6 allopathic, 6 ayurvedic and 3 unani dispensaries. Of these, the district hospital alone which has been set up in Leh town is equipped with 20 beds for the treatment of inpatients.

As the rural and urban areas of the district are inhabited by 84,931 and 3,720 persons respectively, the average number of persons served by a rural and urban institution comes to at 5,662 and 3,720

respectively. It is also clear that the average number of beds per 10,000 population is in the neighbourhood of 2.3 only and negligible per square mile of area.

Reptiles and Fish

There are no reptiles in Ladakh. There is abundant fish available in all the streams and rivers. These fish live in waters even 15000 feet above the sea level. Ladakhis do not catch fish, which are known as Nya in Ladakh.

IV

People

“The ether is the receptacle of the air,
That, the receptacle of the mass of waters,
That, the receptacle of the great earth,
That, the receptacle of living beings.

Ancient manuscripts found in Ladakh deal with the creation of the world and human being. While giving the table of nations, the authors refer to human beings having descended from a monkey, Sutin, which takes us nearer to Darwin's theory of human evolution. It is not possible to identify all the tribes, clans and communities mentioned in these Ladakhi works. These speak of the gods, the nobles, the dwarfs and the barbarians. According to these texts, the earliest humans had light bodies, they were free from illness, they did not look for food, they had supernatural perception and they possessed miraculous powers. After having licked the nectar, the lightness of their bodies disappeared, their complexions changed and they could no more fly to the heavens.

Introduction

The people of Ladakh are a mixture of Mongolian and the Aryan races. The Aryans who originally settled in the country were the early Buddhist people from Kashmir and the Dards of Gilgit. The Mongolian stock is traced to Tibet, from which country shepherds and nomads came to the plains of Ladakh to graze their flocks. The Mars, who started setting from the year 200 B.C. contributed largely to the development of the country's ancient irrigation system. They built waterways and also erected many fine pieces of sculpture. They were the first people to introduce the art of music in the country and evolved a musical instrument which closely resembles the Indian *Sitar*. They were followed by the Dards who subdued them and also conquered the earlier Tibetan settlers. To the Dards belonged the wonderful art of rockcarving. They drew figures of the various animals inhabiting the country, but many of these beautiful works of art have been lost. Last to settle in the country were the Mongols. The fusion of these races has produced the modern Ladakhi. The Dards introduced the game of polo which even today is a very popular sport. Those settlers who were originally Mars, adopted music as a profession.¹

The People

As has been indicated in a previous paragraph, the present day population of Ladakh is the result of blending together of the Dards, the Mons and the Mongolians.

The 1961 Census data shows that the district is inhabited by the Buddhists, the Muslims, the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Christians. The Buddhists are mostly the descendants of the Mongolians and bear a close affinity with the features of the Tibetans. They are reputed for religious tolerance, honesty and hardwork. There are even now some families, members of which follow different religions and yet live in peace. Where the husband and the wife profess different faiths, the male child is regarded as a member of the community to which the father belongs and the female is admitted to the religion of her mother.

Theft and murder have been more or less unknown in the district

¹ Keys to Kashmir, p. 138.

in the past. Ladakhis are fond of music and dances and organise concerts frequently. They generally wear woollen jackets with multi-coloured peti-coats reaching up to the calf of the leg. The head-dress is usually a sheep-skin cap with a large flap to protect the neck and ears. The shoes are of felt and have soles made of sheep skin.

Buddhism does not recognise any caste or racial distinction, but some differentiation is made on the basis of social and occupational considerations. In any case, the Buddhists may be classified among three principal categories namely, Rigzang, Mangriks and Rignun, Rigzang is the upper class and includes, Gyalpo, Kushak, Klon and Lonpo. Mangriks who constitute the middle class consist of Lamas, Unpos, Nangsu, Larjo and Thakshos.

The lowest class which is known as Rignun, includes Beda, Mou, Garra, Shinkhan and Lamkhun etc.

The Muslim Population includes Tarakcohhs, Mughmi, Brukpa, Mangriks and Kamin. Most of the Muslims of Ladakh are; however, known by their geographical and occupational names. such as, Ahmadpa, Akhunpa etc.

In their morals the people of Ladakh have remained untouched by the sophisticated and vice prevalent in other lands. Murder is unknown in Ladakh and infanticide unheard of. There is no room for jealousy in Ladakh society and the 'property sense' does not appear to exist in any shape or form.

Character

The Ladakhis are truthful, good natured, cheerful friendly, industrious and honest. They are seldom angry and soon ready to become friends. In conversation they do not mix flattery and are very polite. They are happy go-lucky persons, fond of food and drinks. Being hospitable by nature, they do every thing to make their guests comfortable.

The Ladakhis are very superstitious. Hence when you offer a gift of bowl or vassel to them, it is necessary to put some thing in it, because an empty vassel is considered as unlucky.

A prominent feature in the Ladakhi etiquette is the presentation

of scarfs, known as khatak. Whenever, you pay a visit to some one, always present a silken scarf to him. The gracious bow or the costly present counts nothing, if not accompanied with a khatak or the scarf.

Population and Density

The district has the largest area among the districts of all the States in India. In so far, however as its population is concerned it ranks last even when compared with other districts of the State.

Age Structure

Elderly persons constitute more than 10% to 11% of the total population of each sex whether inhabiting the rural or urban areas. This shows that the longevity of life is uniform in all parts of the district. Further, a comparison of the proportions of elderly persons of Ladakh district, inhabiting its rural and urban areas, with similar proportions of most other districts will show that the span of life in Ladakh is longer than elsewhere in the State. This is not unexpected in view of the fact that the people of Ladakh are used to hard work under very difficult and trying conditions inherent in the topography and the climate of the district. They are well built and have developed sufficient resistance to work even when the temperature is as low as -23.3° (-9.94° F).

Sex Ratio

Ladakh district is distinguishable from all the districts of the State, on account of very high proportion of its female population. The district as a whole has a sex-ratio of 971 per 1,000 males, the highest among all the districts as also when compared with the entire State. Even the rural and urban proportions which stand at 970 and 1,012 are the highest in comparison with the corresponding proportions of other districts.

In the urban areas, however, the proportion of female population has shot up abruptly to 1,012 per 1,000 males. This is due to the opening of a middle and basic school for girls and setting up of a hospital which is manned by members of both sexes,

Ladakhi Ladies

The ladies in Ladakh need not agitate for equality with the men. In the past, a woman could seek any number of husbands like a man who could have many wives. Both had equal rights in respect of divorce. But now, it is a thing of the past. However, a Ladakhi lady still retains her royal position. She command respect and honour and retain a more powerful position in Ladakh. They enjoy great freedom than their counter-part in the country. The ladies work in the field. Family system in Ladakh is based on maternal system, where a wife is an authority. Ladakhi ladies are beautiful and smiles adorn their rosy cheeks. They are gentle, kind, simple and innocent. Open hearted by nature they welcome and are helpful.

Men are also kind, generous and helpful. They greet all with a smile. People on the whole are gentle and friendly and there is no incidence of crime in Ladakh. These people are more near to Gods than the so called civilized nations. Fine qualities of character are a hall mark of the Ladakhis. There is no communal trouble between the Ladakhis and they do not believe in caste, creed or colour distinctions. Modern civilization has, in fact started to shake their age-old innocent qualities.

Polyandry prevailed in Ladakh in the past, but it is practically dead now. The eldest son married and the wife was shared by all the younger brothers also. This had resulted in thinning the population. May be that this practice was followed by Ladakhis in view of their poverty, the younger brothers would become Lamas and live as mendicants in a monastery.

Migration

The topography of Ladakh is even more difficult than that of Doda district due to its being enclosed by series of Himalayan, Mustage and Knenlun ranges, which operate as a bar against large scale in and out migrations. It is for this reason that about 97% population returned at the Census of 1961 claim their birth place in the district itself.¹ The proportion of persons hailing from other parts of the State is, as low as 09% only, which is less than half the corresponding proportion of those born in countries outside India. There is no doubt

¹ District Census Handbook, Ladakh. 1961.

that district is now accessible by a vehicular road but the journey from Srinagar to Leh is so odious and the facilities available in the intermediate stations, so scanty that very few people opt to migrate to the district. Further there are practically no avenues of employment available to the migrants which has caused an aversion even among those who used to migrate to the district in the past for commercial purposes.

The number of persons born in other States in India is smallest when compared with other categories and does not exceed 124 or 0.1% of the district population. These consist mainly of Central Government employees posted in Ladakh.

Of the 1,676 persons born in countries outside India as many as 1,654 belong to Tibet. The remaining 22 persons hail from Nepal (8), Pakistan (7), Afghanistan (5) and other countries (2).

Immigrants from other States in India include 109 workers and 15 non-workers. Of these 100 workers and 12 non-workers 75 are engaged in other services, 22 in trade and commerce, 5 in cultivation, 4 in household industry and 3 in mining, quarrying, livestock and construction.

Religion

The district is inhabited among others by Buddhists and Muslims whose aggregate population stands at 87,983 or 99% of the total population of the district. Buddhists are in a majority and comprise 54% of the district population as against only 45% claimed by Muslims.

Other communities inhabiting the district consist of Hindus (575), Sikhs (83) and Christians (10). Hindus represent less than 1% of the population, whereas the proportions of Sikhs and Christians are negligible.

Growth of Population

It is, however, a fact that the growth rate in Ladakh has been low all along in the past partly due to the prevalence of polyandry and partly on account of climatic and economic conditions which have been operating against the development of populations. With the exception of a small percentage of its population, the tehsil Leh, as a

whole, is inhabited by Buddhists who besides practising polyandry join monasteries in large numbers to live a life of celibacy as monks and nuns.

Polyandry

As in Tibet, polyandry has been practised in Ladakh from the remotest times. The institution is confined to the brothers in a family, the eldest marrying a wife whose other husbands are also his brothers. The usual number of such husbands is two, but three or four are also married to the same wife. Where there are many brothers in a family, the younger brothers are precluded from sharing the common partnership. Should they continue unmarried, they enter the monasteries to live as lamas. The family estate is inherited by the eldest brother, whose duty is to look after his mother and unmarried sisters. He also has to support the next two younger brothers, who are married to the same wife. In the absence of a male heir, the family wealth is inherited by a daughter, who can marry the person of her own choice and also divorce him at will. Such a daughter for preference marries a younger son in another family, who is barred from marriage to his elder brother's wife. This husband is known as her *Magpa* and his position is not a very pleasant one. He owns nothing, always does what he is told and he can be divorced summarily. After the divorce of one *Magpa*, the wife exercising this right may take another husband, whose eventual fate can also be the same.

Health

The disparity between the growth rates of Ladakh and most other districts of the State is due to several reasons. Among these mention may be made of the practice of polyandry which has in no small measure operated as a curb against sizable growth of population. The severe cold for the major part of the year and the difficult topography of the district which makes it more or less inaccessible also cooperate to check the increase in the population.

As a class, the Ladakhis who are used to hard work under very difficult conditions are sturdy and strong. The statistics of causes of deaths which are available from 1951 to 1959 only show that cholera and malaria are the principal causes, to which most of the deaths are attributed. T. B. and typhoid are gradually being eradicated and pneumonia is conspicuous by its absence.

Dress

We found that the traditional dress of the Ladakhis was colourful and interesting. It may look peculiar to those, who look to the west for fashion. It appears that severe climate of Ladakh has affected the dress-making. The most conspicuous garment is the guncha or the gown, which is made of either woollen cloth or velvet. The leggings may be of cotton or silk. Quilted caps are so charming and the boots are of felt or leather. Colour choice ranges between red and yellow but black is a must. Even foot wear is also double coloured and the lamas wear red boots. Head-wear of the Ladakhi women is very interesting. From the forehead towards the back, ladies wear long sheet of cloth, studded with numerous pieces of turquoises, which hangs down like a tail. Long silken scarfs are also used by ladies and these are kept hanging at the back, duly fastened with caps.

Western fashion has invaded Ladakh as other parts of the country. Ladies seem to be fond and proud of their traditional dress, while the youth like western dress.

The dress of the Ladakhi consists of the woollen cloak which is thick and warm. Quilted skull-caps, or a cap of sheep-skin made with a large flap to cover the neck and ears, are warm. Boots of felt, with the soles of sheep skin, are used. The Ladakhi woman's dress is a black woollen jacket over a coloured woollen petticoat. A sheep-skin covers the top of the body hanging over both front and back. A large brass or iron needle holds the vestment in place, in front.

Language

The predominant language of the district is Ladakhi which is spoken by 56% of its population. The next important language is Balti which claim 37% speakers. Among the remaining mother-tongues, Budhi and Tibetan claim 2% each and Brokpa and Kashmiri 1% speakers each.

In addition 11 other mother-tongue listed below are also spoken but the aggregate proportion of the speakers of all these languages is limited to 1% of the district population.

1. Dardi
2. Darwi

3. Dogri
4. English
5. Hindi
- 6- Kalwi
7. Malayalam
8. Nepali
9. Punjabi
10. Urdu
11. Yarkandi

There are 5,498 persons or 6.2% of the population inhabiting the district who speak an additional language besides their mother-tongue. Among these the highest proportion of 43% is claimed by those who have returned Ladakhi as their mother-tongue. Balties rank next with the corresponding proportion of 35%.

Ceremonies

Important ceremonies pertain to the birth of a child, when a *past* is served after a week. Another *feat* is served on marriage ceremony. It is a day of much entertainment and festivities. Funeral feast is given at the time of death. Monks are called to say prayers for a few days and then the body is cremated. There are two kinds of marriages in Ladakh. In the first case, the bride goes and lives in the house of the bridegroom and in the second case, the groom goes and lives in the house of the bride. Marriages are arranged by parents or by the concerned themselves. It is a day of much singing, dancing and drinking. Delicious food is served at marriage feasts and *chang* is a must on these occasions.

Literacy

Ladakh is one of the educationally backward districts of the State and ranks 6th among them on the basis of literacy. The Census data shows that only 8.3% of its inhabitants are literate. The only other districts in which the corresponding proportions are smaller consist of Anantnang, Baramulla and Poonch.

Curiously enough the rural literacy is higher when compared with many other districts and stands at 7.7% and 9.9% people are literate, the percentages of other districts are smaller than that of Ladakh.

In urban areas 221% people are literate. This is about 3 times the proportion of rural literacy but smaller than the corresponding averages of urban areas of all other districts except Anantnang and Baramulla.

The larger incidence of literacy in the urban areas which are inhabited by only 4. 2% of the district population cannot be regarded as an index to the growth of Literacy in the district. This is because most of the urban literates are immigrants serving in various Government Offices, and institutions functioning in Leh town.

In so far as the rural areas are concerned, the literate population includes Buddhists who though able to read religious scriptures possess limited capacity of writing simple letter even in Bodhi language. Such persons can hardly be regarded as literate.

Except for 9% workers engaged in household industries, mining, quarrying, manufacturing other than household industry and transport, storage, etc. and all other literates, without educational qualifications work in other services or cultivation. The former consist mostly of public servant teachers, and employees of religious institutions.

Workers with primary or junior basic qualifications are also concentrated in other services and cultivation except for 5% among them who are engaged in trade and commerce.

Almanac

Ladakhi months are based on lunar system but years are counted in a series of 12 or 60. The twelve years decade is known as under:

Rat,	Ox,	Tiger,	Rabit,	Reptile,	Snake,
Horse,	Lamp,	Monkey,	Sparrow,	Dog,	Pig.

The months have no name in Ladakh but are numbered from one to twelve. But, the days in a week have been named as under:

Zada—wa.	Monday
Meg—mar.	Tuesday
Lhagm—pa.	Wednesday
Phur—wa.	Thursday

Ya—sangas.	Friday
Asphan—pa.	Saturday
Zan—ma.	Sunday

Education

It appears that the progress of conversion of primary into Basic Activity Schools has been quite satisfactory. There are, 137 institutions consisting of 75 Primary and 62 Basic Activity Schools. This proportion does not, however, hold good in the case of girls' schools of which only 4 out of 12 provide basic education.

There is no college in the district either for boys or girls. The only institution of higher grades consist of 1 technical institution and 4 high schools, which are ear-marked for the education of boys only. Obviously, the girls students are expected to discontinue their studies after completing the middle school course unless any of them can afford to migrate to other districts of the State for higher education. Even the number of Middle/Central Schools meant for girls in limited to 2 only in the entire district. One of these has been set up in the urban sector and the other caters the female students of the entire rural area of the district.

Polo

Polo is played on special occasions when a number of players, mounted on horse back and armed with hockey like sticks draw the ball in the court of the opposite team. The game consists of winning a large number of goals than the other party.

Crops

Although the bulk of the net area sown enjoys irrigational facilities, rice is not grown in any part of the district. Grim is the principal crop and occupies an area of 16,606 acres. Other non-food crops and fodder crops ran next followed by wheat, which together claim 14,691 acres, more or less in an equal proportion. Pulses and millets etc. are grown in an area of 6,427 acres, while barley occupies an area of 2,498 acres only.

The inhabitants of Ladakh live mostly by agriculture cultivating tiny holdings of land. They lead modest, austere and peaceful lives.

Their food consists of thick barley cakes moistened with water and accompanied by a brothe of dried or fresh turnips. On festive occasions, such as marriage, meat which is normally beyond the means of an average person, is added to the menu. Tea is a common and widely used beverage and its method of preparation is entirely indigenous. The tea leaves are mixed with soda bicarb and seasoned with salt. The brewed tea is then churned with butter till the whole becomes a thick liquid. Liquors made of fermented barley and wheat are in common use. They have a sour odour.

Food Products

Agriculture is very scanty in Ladakh, due to cold climate, sandy land and the absence of rains. There are small patches of land available near streams, the river banks and watershed areas between the ridges of the mountains. Wheat and barley and grim is grown every where. Vegetables like cabbage, radish and potatoes are also grown. Most of the Ladakhis are farmers and only one crop grows during an year. Grim is a staple food of the people, which is known as Zan. Grimflour is roasted and used while taking tea or drinking chang. The rich eat rice and cakes. Apple, Plum, and Appricot are grown in many parts of Ladakh. Nubra is famous for Appricot. The following varieties of vegetables are grown in Ladakh and Kargil: cabbage, califlower, knolkhol, radish, turnip, potatoe and tomato.

In Ladakh days are hot and nights cold. These extremes in temperature have adversely affected agriculture. Only 16 per cent of land is cultivated and these tracts of land are available at the hight of 10,000 to 14,000 feet above the sea level.

Food and Drinks

Chang is the most favourite drink with the Ladakhis. It is a home made beer. There is no prohibition in Leh and chang is sold openly in the streets. Food consists of rice, which is imported, nodles, wheat cakes, vegetables and meat. Butter and oil is used for roasting. Tea is very common and is taken several times during day. Mokmong, Gyatuk, Zan and Thukpa are favourite dishes. Mokmog or the minced meat balls are very delicious. People are fond of Zan, which is a flour of grim or barley. Its balls are boiled in hot water before eating. This flour is also put as a powder in tea or chang. Salt tea is preferred in Ladakh. Butter and salt tea are shaken in a

wooden barrel before use.

In the Leh town, there are numerous restaurants, tea shops and hotels but these are not of high standard. Any how, these establishments are always full with customers. Mugmug shops are very popular with the tourists, because meat balls sold there are fresh from the boiling pan.

Agrarian Reforms

Immediately after the assumption of office in 1948, the popular Government introduced a number of bold measures to tackle the complex problem of building rural economy. Besides the fact that thousands of rural inhabitants were landless and made their living by working as agricultural labourers on big landed estates, there were many others, whose land holdings were uneconomic and who had to supplement their financial resources by raising loans from money lenders, grain dealers and other similar intermediaries. There were still others, who mortgaged their belongings and particularly the produce of their fields in advance to defray expenditure on social customs, like marriages, births, deaths etc.

The State Government resumed all the *Jagirs* and *muafis* with effect from 13th April, 1948 and compensated the muafidars and jagirdars by grant of life-time maintenance allowances in their favour. A legislation entitled 'Big Landed Estates Abolition Act of 1950' was also enacted limiting the size of agricultural holdings held in proprietary rights to 182 kanals only. Lands which thus became available were allotted to agricultural labourers and to those whose holdings were uneconomic.

Debt Conciliation Board were also set up in each district to settle down the debts which had assumed dreadful proportions. The Board generally wrote off the interests and adjusted the payments already made against the original loan.

Economy

For many centuries Leh had occupied an important position on the treaty route, which linked Indian trade with the countries of Central Asia. It was a place where caravans exchanged merchandise. At that time, Leh would have been a commercial centre. It is not so

at present and the Ladakhis have to depend on agriculture and their economy revolves around agriculture now.

Only Indian currency is legal tender in Ladakh. As such visitors are advised to exchange foreign currency in the local banks at Srinagar and then go to Ladakh. They are also advised not to sell their belongings in the region. Ladakhis are honest and as such, there is no point in bargaining with shop-keepers. Prices are higher than that prevailing at Srinagar and this is due to the high cost of transportation.

Industries

There are 2,445 factories and workshops in the district. Of these, only 85 exist in the town of Leh and all others are scattered in the rural areas.

A closer examination of the nature of industries shows that as many as 2 436 factories and workshops are engaged in the production of rice, atta, flour, etc. by milling, dehusking and processing of crops and food-grains. The remaining nine, include five engaged in the production of sundry hardwares such as, G.I. pipe, wire net, bolt, screw, etc. The other four consist of a workshop, engaged in cotton weaving on handlooms, a tailoring shop, furniture and fixture manufacturing concern and a jewellery workshop.

The rural factories and workshops include 2,358 water-mills where grim, barley etc. are dehusked. The other two produce, sundry hardwares etc.

Local products

Wool tweed, woollen blankets, brass-ware, shoes, footwear, making of local ornaments like chains, rings etc., are old time industries of Ladakh. Pashmina shawls are also prepared now. All these products can be had from the local market at Leh, Kargil or from the Wool and Pashmina Centre at Leh, at very cheap rates. Souvenirs like painting in oil etc. can also be purchased. Visitors are cautioned not to purchase any curios, sculpture or old paintings from Ladakh, because export of these antiquities is banned under law.

Woollen rugs, and small carpets can be purchased at reasonable

rates from local shops.

Wages Statistics

The old practice of paying wages in kind seems to have been discontinued from all parts of the district. Every labourer, skilled or un-skilled, is paid in cash only.

Dogs

There are two kinds of dogs in Ladakh, which have attained fame. One is a bigger and the other a small. People are very fond of small dogs with mass of hair, which is long and even covers face and eyes. These dogs have brown colour and are very much prized by the visitors.

Houses

Most of the houses are made of large unburnt clay. Important houses are made of rough stones on hilly cliffs. The roof is made of popular tree branches. Most conspicuous feature of habitation is that there has been a tendency to build houses on cliffs or rocks on a high altitude. We, like other visitors, felt amazed to see such houses on cliffs touching the sky. Our stay in such a house was a strange experience. It looked as if we were nearer the gods and nature and it elated our spirits. A strange feeling of ego sounded in our hearts. At the same time, we felt lonely from human beings but more in the company of the gods. It is pleasure to see the kitchen of the house, which is beautifully arranged in the centre of the main room. The fire pot has a chimney, through which smoke goes out. Utencils, pans, pots and cup are arranged on racks and this exhibits the artistic tastes of the Ladakhi ladies.

Leh

“The King built one row of 108 Chortens at Sle.”

The capital town of Leh was founded in the 14th century by Khri-gtsug-lde. It was pronounced as Sle or Gle in the beginning but its spelling was changed to Leh by the Morovian missionaries, who preferred the German orthography. One hundred and eight is a sacred number of the Buddhists of Ladakh. Since the date of its foundation, it was considered auspicious that the heir apparent of the royal kingdom should be born at Leh. The kings of Ladakh built many palaces, monasteries and religious edifices here, from time to time. One of the prominent buildings of Leh is the Leh Khar or palace, which is nine storey high and commands a fine view of the valley. Its walls are decorated with fresco paintings. The other places of interest in the town are, the Leh mosque, built during the Mughal period, the Tsemo gumpa, the Christian cemetery and the Leh bazar.¹

¹ Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Francke. p. 99.

Introduction

Leh is the name of the only town in the district which is also its headquarter. The Tehsildar Leh who was asked to intimate the historical background of how and when the town came to be known by its present name has stated that the relevant record, (*misli-haqqiyat*) does not throw any light on the subject.²

Leh, the capital town of Ladakh has its own antiquity. It had been the stopping-place for all traders from India, Kashmir and Afghanistan to Yarkand and Khotan. From having been conquered and occupied again and again by various nations professing different religions, it contains a great variety of races, with differing customs and creeds. But, despite this varieties, there is complete religious toleration among the people. In fact, Leh can claim the honour of being the most cosmopolitan town in the State.

Boundaries and Area

The tehsil is bounded in the north and east by China and in the south and south-west by Punjab and Himachal Pradesh respectively. Tehsil Kargil lies to its west and Gilgit district and Frontier Areas to its north-west.

According to the Census Report of 1941, the tehsil of Leh extended to an area of 29,848 sq. miles only. The Surveyor General of India has, however, pointed out that the previous survey had been defective and that the jurisdiction of the tehsil actually extended to 31,929 sq. miles excluding village Mansor and other areas which are under Chinese occupation. This figure has been arrived at on the basis of planimetering and is subject to incorporation, adjustment and correction.

Population and Density

The tehsil of Leh is the largest in the State in so far as the size of the area to which it extends is concerned. Even its rural area is the biggest when compared with other tehsils. The urban sector, however, ranks 11th among similar areas of other tehsils of the State.

² District Census Handbook, Ladakh, 1961,

The tehsil has a total population of 43,587 only. On this basis it holds 30th position in the State. The rural area has the smallest population among all other tehsil except Karnah. The urban population is, however, comparatively large.

Sex Ratio

Leh tehsil is predominantly inhabited by the Buddhists who constitute about 89% of its population. A distinguishing social feature of this community is the practising of polyandry which though prohibited under law has not completely died out. Before 1951, the sex ratio in the district as a whole was very high particularly into its rural areas. As a result of the enactment of the Legislation, the proportions of the two sexes have been normalised in the Kargil tehsil, but in Leh the female population even now exceeds that of the males.

Houses and Households

In so far as the town of Leh, the only urban area of tehsil, is concerned, there is no dwelling in which the predominant material used in the construction of walls is not stone.

Roofs are generally built of grass, leaves, thatch, reeds, wood etc. In the rural areas of the tehsil, the proportion of dwellings with roofs of grass, leaves or wood etc., is 70% as against about 82% of the urban areas.

It may be remarked here that the climate of the district is very dry and snowfalls are so light that the roofs of the buildings are cleared of snow by sweeping it off with brooms. The rainfall is equally small, with the result that the major part of the district is barren, uncultivable and uninhabited. The roofs of the dwellings are, therefore, flat and not in slope, as is the practice in areas which do not experience snowfalls, such as Jammu.

Wood is very scarce and therefore, extremely expensive. Only two wood planks are spread over the walls and the intervening gaps between them are covered with tender twigs of poplar trees. The holes and crevices, if any, are then filled up with mud or stone metal. The whole surface is finally plastered with 4-5" thick mud coating. The only distinguishing feature of the roof material of the rural dwellings of Leh tehsil is that besides grass, leaves, reeds and mud, stone

metal etc., single is also used in a small percentage of dwellings.

Literacy

The tehsil holds 10th position among other tehsils of the State on the basis of literacy. The rural literacy is higher not only than that of Kargil tehsil but also when compared with all other tehsils of Kashmir Province. Judged by this proportion, the tehsil rank 6th in the State.

Medical

The tehsil has been provided with 9 medical institutions consisting of one hospital, 3 allopathic, 4 ayurvedic and one unani dispensaries only. The hospital has been set up in Leh town and the allopathic dispensaries in Nubra, Chesul and Khalse. The solitary unani dispensary has been provided for the benefit of Tibetan refugees. Of the 4 ayurvedic dispensaries, one is functioning in Nubra and the other 3 in Temisgam, Sakti and Surukarchi villages.

The only medical institution where, besides out-patients, facilities for the treatment of in-patients are also available, is the hospital at Leh it has carried out 9 major and 1,646 minor operations during the year 1960-61. In addition, 163 in-patients are also said to have been admitted in the hospital during the same period.

Communication

Before 1947, neither the tehsil headquarter nor any village in its rural sector could be reached by any route other than a bridle path. During the post-Independence period, however, some of the bridle paths have been completely converted into jeepable roads, while others have either partly or wholly been made fit for being used by jeeps.

For local transport in and around Leh, there are some jeep-taxis available which have fixed charges for full-day as well as half-day engagement. In addition, some rural bus services also operate but the buses are not very comfortable.

Leh Khar

The Khar or the palace at Leh was built by the most famous king of Ladakh, Singe Namgyal. This palace is an engineering feat of the Ladakhis and its architecture is amazing. The gate of the palace is towards the east and a wooden lion is placed on the gate. During the rule of the Ladakhi kings, the lion was attached with a rope and it would come in and go out of the cage and there was some mechanism by which it would roar also. Now, it is in a broken condition. The palace is nine storeys high built on a very steep cliff. The stairs lead us to a big courtyard known as Theckchen, which served as a stage for court dancers. It also served as a meeting place for trade discussions. The darbar hall of the palace was destroyed by the dogras, after subjugation of Ladakh. The walls of the palace were decorated profusely with paintings, depicting, history, religion and culture of the Ladakhis. Unfortunately, all these paintings have been destroyed or mutilated. On the right side of the palace is the Duddul chorten, built to keep the evils away. The palace, which was bombed by Zorawar, needs immediate repairs, for it is one of the only kinds of palaces, in whole of India and is a major tourist attraction. The State Government is taking active steps to acquire it from the Queen Parvati Devi of Ladakh and it is hoped that it will be declared as a monument of national importance.

Chuglamsar

Near Leh, on the banks of the river Indus, this place is a tourist spot. There are many nurseries around with willow and poplar plantation. The bridges on the Indus are worth seeing. During summer, people stay on the banks of the river in tents.

Sankar Gumpa

About 3 kilometres from the town of Leh is this Gumpa headed by Rev. Kushik Bakula. The Gumpa is electrified and has a telephone line also. There are innumerable small statues of pure gold and a number of interesting paintings. The Gumpa can be visited in the evenings also as it is well-lighted,

Church

The Morovian Mission was established at Leh in 1864, when the missionaries were permitted to travel in Ladakh without getting a new passport every year. They were allowed to build a church there by the Maharaja with great reluctance. In the beginning, they opened a small school also to teach English. In 1885, the Mission Hospital at Leh was established with Dr. Marx as its first medical missionary. Subsequently, the New Testament was translated into Tibetan with the help of Rev. Gergan, whose son became the first Christian at Leh. After that many Ladakhis were baptised and we have a small community of the Christians in Ladakh. The Christian Church and the Christians Cemetery at Leh attracts many foreign visitors.

Leh Mosque

This mosque was built by the Ladakhi king, when he became a vassel of the Mughals. It is situated in the Leh market beneath the Leh Khar. It was built by the Ladakhi king, Singe Namgyal in year 1594.³

Islam was introduced in Leh by the traders of Yarkand and Kashmir. Islam was introduced in Zanskar by a Kashmiri trader, named Razaq Joo, who settled there in the 16th century. It was due to the efforts of Syed Mohamad Noor Bakash that Islam became popular in Kargil and other parts of Baltistan.⁴

There is a Imambara and a mosque, other than mentioned above, in Leh.

Spituk Monastery

A few kilometres short of Leh, on the Srinagar-Leh road, on top of a small hill overlooking the Indus, is the Spituk Monastery. There is a new gumpa within the monastery as also the old gumpa has been well-renovated. Some very interesting Thankas are the pride possessions of the monastery. This gumpa too is electrified. Higher up on the hill is a chamber housing enormous statues of the

³ Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Francke, pp. 112.

⁴ Tarikh-i-Rajgan-i-Jammu, Hashmat Ullah Khan, pp. 663-673,

Goddess Kali. Its faces are exhibited only once in a year on the occasion of the annual festival, which occurs in January. This chamber also contains a very old collection of face masks. It is interesting to visit the gumpa on the day of the *Puja*.

Shay Palace and Monastery

About 15 kilometres from Leh, on the way to Hemis, is the Summer Palace, situated on top of a hill and houses the largest victory stupa with a golden top. The monastery has a two-storey high statue of Buddha in a sitting position. The statue made of copper and gilded with gold is worth seeing. The monastery remains closed and it is advisable to make prior arrangements with the Lama to see it.

There are some other monasteries also at different places. Leh has a beautiful monastery on top of the hill overlooking the town.

Thiksey Monastery

On the way to Hemis is the famous monastery of Thiksey, situated on a hill-top. It has a beautiful location and one can enjoy an enchanting view of the green Indus valley from its rooftop. The monastery has a number of chambers full of statues, stupas and *thankas* of all kinds. There are sixty lamas in the monastery and it is supposed to have a nunnery also. Wall paintings are very interesting.

One of the *thankas* shows the Yamraj or the god of death, holding six worlds in his massive hands. Another wall painting shows the four gods, known as Gilshins, which are meant to keep away evil spirits. One painting depicted the following words:

La or the world of the gods
 Lamin or the world of the small gods
 Me or the world of the humans
 Tudo or the world of the animals
 Nelva or the hell
 Ida or the next hell

According to the Ladakhi mythology, a snake represents jealousy, a bird is the symbol of lust and a pig signifies ignorance. All the

three symbols are shown in an interesting art relic of this monastery.

Hemis Gumpa

This is the highest monastery in Ladakh, situated at a distance of 40 kilometres from Leh along the Leh-Manali road. The road to Hemis leaves the main road at Karu (about 35 kilometres from Leh) and crosses the Indus. The monastery is not visible from the road as it is located in a side valley. There are a number of gold statues and stupas decorated with precious stones in the Monastery. Among the innumerable *Thankas* (paintings on cloth), there is one supposed to be the biggest in existence. This *Thanka* is shown to public once in every eleven years and the next exhibition is scheduled for 1980. A very colourful annual festival known as the 'Mela of Hemis Gumpa' is held in the month of June and people from far and near in Ladakh attend the festival in colourful costumes. The famous mask dance of Ladakh is a feature of this festival.

Buddhist Culture

**“Glory to the chief Buddhas ! Reliever of all suffering,
Master of all virtues ! Equal to the Heavens ! Adoration !
Glory to the chief Buddhas ! Conqueror of the invincible,
Possessor of the fame of all purity ! Adoration !”**

There were diffused ten millions and one hundred distinct suns and moons. There are one thousand millions of lotus gardens, spread in the four continents. All these are surrounded by the circular ramparts and all these appear as enumerators of the holy name of Sakya Muni, Buddha. The rulers of the world are divided into two categories : Buddha rulers and the creature rulers. The Buddha rulers are compassionate and do utmost good to the humanity. The king over the three thousand worlds of suffering is Sakya Muni Buddha.

Buddhism, in a slightly varied form, constitutes the religion of Ladakh. The people profess a faith that teaches “compassion, courtesy and kindliness, truthfulness, loyalty, politeness in word, cheerfulness and good humor”. The form of Buddhism prevalent in Ladakh is known as Lamaism, and religious sentiment is an all-pervading factor in the life of the people. Buddhism found a foothold in

Ladakh and was accepted universally during the reign of Asoka. The Indian Emperor sent emissaries and monks to spread the teachings of Buddha and thus, in the middle of the seventh century, Buddhism even found its way into Tibet through the country of Ladakh.

Buddhist Culture

Buddhism of Ladakh is known as Lamaism. Ladakhi Buddhist are divided into two main sects : Yellow and Red, but broadly they belong to Dukpa, Gyaldon, Snigmpa, Dekong Saskin, and Ludok schools of thought. Lamas belonging to Dukpa, Dekong, Saskin and Snigmpa schools wear red caps while the other wear yellow caps.

Lama

Lamas or the monks are an important element in the Ladakh society. Their main profession is priesthood but they work as teachers, physicians, and astrologers. In every family, there are some members attached with respective monasteries. The nuns are known as Chomos. The Lamas and Chomos work in the fields belonging to a gumpa. You meet so many Lamas in Ladakh, which makes you feel that it is a land of the Lamas. The lamas have particularly dominated the social order. The Head Lama is known as Kaushak. Next to him in rank is known as Loban. Religious ceremonies are conducted by Wizat and Chemus. Chouts are entrusted with other works such as lighting, stores etc.

Males and females can be admitted into a monastery as Lamas or Chomos. Ladies have to shave their hair. They live in solitary cells and meditate. There are about 1500 Lamas and nearly 100 Chomos in Ladakh.

Functions

The lamas have to attend to manifold functions. Gompertz has beautifully described these, in his "Magic Ladakh," as under:

"He learns to read and write. He learns to patter charms and to intone the Buddhist scriptures—the Tangyur and the Kangyur—one of 108 large volumes and the other of 63 volumes."

“He learns the ritual of the services. He learns also to play the religious instruments—the big warming panshaped drums, the little clarionets, the great telescopic brass and copper trumpets, six to eight feet long. He learns also to spin the “dorjes”, the thunder bolt symbols of lamaism—which are the main mark of the Lama; learns also to play the little double-sided drums which are turned in the hand and so beaten by a small weight on a string as they twist backwards and forwards—little double drums, which the best are made from the brainpans of two human skulls, and like the “dorjes” are mighty weapons against demons.”

“He is taught also how to make the ceremonial offerings of Chang and barley, to build the pyramids of butter and parched grain which are piled up on festival days, learns too the charms against evil spirits which will form so much of his work later on when he goes out among the laity.”

“And you meet him sometimes in company with an old lama going out to celebrate a marriage or a funeral—beating the little brass shrined images or the tomes of the scriptures, acting in fact as acolyte, and so learning the practical side or the business.”

“Then, for such a show aptitude, their arts and crafts to be learned—the printing of the scriptures by the use of wooden and metal blocks, the fashioning of images in metal or wood or plaster the painting of the wall frescoes, without which no monastery would be complete.”

“Again, there are horoscopes to be learned, the manner of selecting auspicious day for weddings, the selection of names for children, the choice of methods of disposing of the dead—an important business upon which may depend the here-after of the departed spirit.”

Life of a Lama

All the Lamas do not necessarily live in monasteries. Some of them live in the villages and take part in the tilling of fields and other work connected with the daily life of the monastery. Nearly every family in Ladakh has at least one representative in the monastery. When a boy is eight years old, he is sent to the monastery for education and training as a monk. He passes through the stages

pupil and probationer and ultimately becomes a monk. As monk he observes some 253 vows, including that of celibacy, and also conform to a rigorous discipline. In every home in Ladakh one sees a boy wearing a Lama's cap or a little girl with the cap of a chomo nun.

A lama's head is shaved completely. Some lamas wear red caps, others yellow ones. Those wearing red caps belong to the old, unreformed sect, while those with yellow caps are members of the *Gelugp* the reformed lamaist church. The head lama in Ladakh is known as the *Shushok*. He is born, not made, and one of the basic tenets of lamaism says that a *Shushok* after his death is reborn only as a "*Shushok*" because he has attained *nirwana* and enjoys freedom from the cycle of life. In the words of Gompertz:

"His spirit is that of Buddha, of a personified attribute of Buddha, or of some famous bodhisat."

"When, therefore, a *Shushok* dies those about him listen earnestly in the hope that he may give them some clue as to where his spirit will re-incarnate, which he may or may not do."

"Thereafter they wait for a time, which must not be less than a matter of ten months but which may be considerably longer and may run to several years and then they set out to seek for the babe or child whose human form conceals the immortal spirit of the living Buddha. They may have some clue to guide them as to the locality, some clue caught from the dying words in his last incarnation-or they may be dependent solely upon the auguries of their sacred books."

"Eventually they will gather together several children whose birth has occurred later than the minimum period necessary since the *Shushok* has changed his body-interesting, this since it implies a belief that the soul enters the embryo body from the moment of conception."

"The children are then shown possessions of the late *Shushok* his robes, his insignia, his dorje and drums, and so on-and when one or other of the children evinces recognition of some or all these, possibility is converted into actuality."

Incarnation of Lamas

Succession of incarnate lamas is a complicated affair. It is done on the basis of the transmigration of soul for this purpose, a search is conducted of the newly born babies after a weeks time from the death of a lama. Personal belongings of the deceased lama are placed before the baby along with other similar articles. If the baby touches the belongings of the deceased lama, he is considered to possess the departed soul. This test having succeeded, the baby boy is declared as the next lama. Much rejoicing is done on this auspicious occasion. After a year or so, the boy is brought up and educated under the guidance of the priests. Such a selection of the next Lama is based on various tests as well as religious sanction, which used to be obtained from Tibet. For this purpose astrological works are consulted and occult science of numbers is used by the priests.

According to the Buddhists, when a man dies, his spirit may be born again in another body. Such an incarnation is perpetuated involuntarily through the forces of Karma. The position of an incarnate Lama or Rinpoche being very high and esteemed, he is sure to come again to lead and show the path to Buddhahood. Such is the role of lamas in the task of removing obstacles in the way to *nirwana*

Festivals

Among the important festivals, mention may be made of Losar or new years day. It is observed for three days and its programme includes candle light procession, horse races and much drinking and feasting. Fair and festivals are held annually at each monastery and some of the famous fairs are held at Lamayuru, Sakti, Likir, Thiksy, Spituk, Matho, and Hemis. Fairs and festival are observed in the first month of the lunar year at Matho, in fifth month at Hemis and in the ninth month at Chimre, in the eleventh month at Spituk and in the twelfth month at Thiksy and Sakti. The fair at Hemis is very famous and it includes mask dances and much eating and drinking. In the gumpa compound various groups stage their dances, plays and music. This fair is attended to by a large number of people, including visitors. The fair held at Shay is also famous. A priest, who has meditated a month earlier, answers question and he can expose your inner wishes.

Dance of Purification

One of the notable features associated with the monasteries is the famous mystery play performed with the advent of spring. Such plays are often specially arranged for distinguished visitors at the Hemis Gumpa, the largest monastery in Ladakh inhabited by monks belonging to the red-capped order. The play is staged at the time of the annual fair. The environs of the monastery wear a festive appearance at this time and to the monastery throng people from all corners of Ladakh. There is no fixed date for the annual fair, the time being dependent upon a particular occurrence of the full moon of the Tibetan Calendar, which may take place at the end of a series of cycles, sometimes totalling 60 years. The factors in the mystery plays are all lamas and the musicians of the orchestra are also lamas, who blow trumpets which are nearly 15 feet long strike huge cymbals and drums and also play clarionets. The play is staged in the courtyard of the monastery.

The first act, or rather its first dance known as the "Dance of purification", commences after the *Shushok* has seated himself on his throne. The dancers wear black hats and each carries a twig from the holy "Shukpa" tree. As they dance the lamas sweep the ground with these and sprinkle holy water from vessels which they carry. Their number is then reinforced by contingent of dancers resembling half-human and demoniacal figures. The dance progresses clock-wise round the courtyard. It is performed with a very slow motion. When it ends, the dancers depart in pairs. There then enters a figure who is the Lord Buddha. He is accompanied by nine others who symbolise his earthly lives. They are dressed gorgeously and their actions are of a ceremonial character. After circling the courtyard, they take their seats under the gallery to the right of the orchestra with the Buddha in the centre. The smaller masked figures, dressed in silk robes, come out and pay their homage. They represent celestial spirits.

This interlude is followed by another dance. Strange looking figures depicting demons of all ages swarm out upon the stage and commence dancing in a slow stately measure. They retire and are replaced by another group wearing masks decked with three-cornered flags. Each of the dancers carries a drum and they face one another in two lines, advancing and retreating to the beaten accompaniment of their drums. The beats become very rapid and then are slowed

down. The clumination is a sudden shriek from all the demon actors and their flight from the centre of the state. Then entire spirits clad in rags. Then demons seek to frighten them. They dance in a confusion of movements dashing in various directions. They also leap forwards and backwards. More figures now appear on the stage. They are the stag-headed god of hell and his attendants. They wear dog-toothed masks symbolising the fate which awaits those who lead unworthy lives. They dance slowly in a circle.

At this point two figures clad in red robes make their appearance of the roof of the monastery and play notes upon their conch shells. It is a signal for the audience to leave the amphitheatre for their mid-day meal.

At its conclusion the red-clad conch-blowers appear again on the roof and blow blasts summoning the audience back to their places in the courtyard. The dances then begin again. From year to year the character and order of the dances vary. In one of the dances, men wearing the old Mongol warriors dress and brandishing swords appear. Next come two Lamas carrying the foot-long figure of a man under a scarf. This is lifted to reveal to the audience and effigy of Langdhama who was the king of Tibet in the early Buddhist days and was strongly anti-Buddhist. The actors in black hats enter again and dance around the effigy of the dead king. They make offerings of chang and barley meal to him. The further course of this mystic dance is thus described by Gompertz:

“As they withdraw, the demons sweep down and the ghouls enter also—white, pallied figures, with skull-shaped masks, and long figures and toes to their white garments to give them a skeleton appearance; tight-fitting white garments, picked out in red to represent the bones.”

“They dance fantastically round the corpse, dashing up to it and threatening it with their ghost daggers, dashing away with wild shrieks, sweeping in again, and once more dashing out. Sometimes they are chased away by some saintly figure who performs charms and incantations, but presently they are back again, waving their daggers.”

“Then comes the great stag-headed, blue-faced skull-crowned god of hell with his sword, and stands over the corpse. He waves his

sword about it as though to carve it in pieces, yet somehow missing it each time, and perhaps he, in turn, is repelled for a space by the intervention of some benevolent figure.”

“But the end is certain. At last he will suddenly swoop down on the corpse and bury his sword in it, the ghouls will clamour round and carve it into little pieces, which they stuff into their cavernous. skeleton jaws. And here, for some strange reason, a lama stands beside the corpse. Whether the idea is to show that the lama is powerless to save the evil-doe who has neglected him during his earthly life, I cannot say, but that is the impression it gives.”

“Thereafter, from the tragic the scene turns to the grotesque. Enters an old teacher—a fat buffoon of a mask—who can barely walk, attended by a riotous train of impish school-boys in pink masks. He installs himself on a seat, and proceeds to teach his flock, who mock him the whole time, and his ill-directed blows with the rod he holds fail always to reach the delinquents. I was told this figure represented the false teachers who, from time to time, have arisen in the history of Buddhism. The horseplay goes on for a long time, and draws shrieks of laughter from the crowds, most of all when one daring youth possesses himself of the rod and castigates his pantaloons of a master.”

In the afternoon the ceremony of animals takes place. Yaks, ponies and dogs are brought into the courtyard. They are first censed and then sprinkled with holy water. After this they are painted red. They are then led three times through the monastery building. These animals are believed to carry away with them the sins committed by people during the year which has passed. The ceremony brings the show to an end, and in the evening the whole gathering indulges in festivities of all sorts. This is the end of the mystery play which will not be staged again for another year.

The Matho Fair

The fair at Matho is a unique one. Two priests have to undergo strict mediation for two or three months. A time comes, when their inner eye expose to them everything. The whole process in some what supernatural. A spirit takes control of the priest and he acquires supernatural powers. His eyes are bandaged with black cloth but he

can see everything. He runs here and there among the people, he runs and jumps over walls and roof but his step never faller. He walks forward and backward on walls and roof, blind-folded, but he never falls when the festival is over, he become normal and the cloth over his eyes is removed. It can safely be said that the priests in Ladakh possess tantric powers. There are a few Lamas, who can restore a patient to health by seeing the photo. Witch-craft is also practised in Ladakh and some holy men can perform wonders. Prof. Hassnain, our co-author has had personal experience of meeting some such wonderful men and women in Ladakh.

Music

The Ladakhis are fond of music, dancing and play. Religious ceremonies also consist of music, dramas and masked dances, which are a kind of mystic experiences. The Bedas or the mons are professional signers and most of them are converts to Islam. Musical instruments include flutes, clarionets, cymbals, drums and other string instruments. Combined or folk dancing is performed on festive occasions.

Buddhist Gumpas

Buddhist monasteries in Ladakh are known as gumpas. In every major town or village, one can see a number of gumpas, which house rich cultural heritage. Every gumpa is in charge of a senior, under whom the juniors work. Kousak Staksong Raspa is the head of Hemis, Ghimre, Hanle and some other small gumpas.

Spitok, Sankar, Sabu, Stok and some other gumpas are under the control of Kausak Bakula, while Likir, Karhsa and some other gumpas are under Kausak Nares Stolko. The gumpas of Phiang Lamayuru, Buddhkharbu and other small monasteries are under Kausak Stokas Uldon.

The gumpas include one large hall where prayers are conducted. Important among the images exhibited in the halls are those of Lord Buddha and coming Buddha to be known as Lord Maitreya. Both are coated with gold and silver, besides being studded with gems.

In addition, every Gumpa owns a library stocked with books on religion, medicine, philosophy, etc. The books are wrapped in silken

cloth and kept in wooden boxes.

Some gumpas are provided with a musical band which is played during mystical dances performed by Lamas in connection with the celebration of religious festivals. Stone walls which some times measure more than 100 yards in length and several yards in height are found at the entrance and exit of every Gumpa and are known as *Mani Walls*. The upper surface of these walls is invariably covered by flat slabs of stone carved with sacred Mantras or the image of Lord Buddha. Similar walls are also seen at the entrance and exit of every village which is exclusively inhabited by Buddhists.

Monasteries

Among the main attractions in Ladakh are the Buddhist monasteries or gumpas. Almost every village has a monastery, big or small. The monasteries are the most conspicuous buildings in Ladakh and these are invariably situated higher up on mountain spurs or on an isolated rock or under the shelter of a lofty cliff away from the villages. In a monastery there are two head lamas—one the leader in spiritual matters and the other managing the temporal affairs. There are twelve main monasteries in Ladakh. Some of the important monasteries, which can be easily visited by the tourists are:

Likir Gumpa

It is a Buddhist monastery in the Likir village, between Bazgo and Nurla. It was built in the 11th century by the King of Ladakh, Lahchen Gyalpo, who collected a few hundred lamas and got them settled in this monastery. This monastery houses many images and statues and paintings.

Sankar Gumpa

Situated only half a kilometre from the Leh market, this gumpa houses a number of images of the Tibetan reformer, Tson-kha-pa. This monastery belongs to the Yellow sect and is an ancient one. It houses a gorgeous representation of a Buddhist deity with a thousand eyes, a thousand arms and a thousand legs. There is a huge image of Avolokiteshwara in this monastery.

Tsemo Gumpa

This gumpa is situated behind the Leh Khar and houses a huge image of Chamba. It is a master piece in art.

Leh Khar

This is an ancient palace of the Ladakhi kings. Started in earlier periods, it attained prominence during Namgyal period. This eight storey building with large number of rooms is a tourist attraction. There are a few rooms meant for prayers. The halls are decorated with wall paintings. Two gumpas are attached to the palace and served as royal gumpas in the past. This palace over looks the Leh town.

Shay Gumpa

This gumpa is about 15 kilometres from Leh and a tourist attraction. Many people come to this place to see the colossal statue of Buddha, which was installed by the famous king of Ladakh, Deldan Namgyal, in about 1655. It is about 40 feet high above the base and occupies two storeys of the building. It is made of brass, studded with precious stones and gold plated. A sacred lamp burns here through out the year in which butter is used.

Lamayuru Gumpa

Lamayuru gumpa is situated between Buddhkarbu and Khalse on the Leh-Srinagar road. It is composed of a number of structures and edifices built on steepy rock mountain. Its outer and inner architecture is sublime. Inside walls have been decorated with paintings. Among other images, it also has a colossal statue of Avolokiteshvara with eleven heads and one thousand hands. This monastery also houses some of the rarest manuscripts on religion, law and ethics.

Hemis Gumpa

Hemis gumpa is situated in Hemis, nearly 22 miles above Leh. This monastery is very rich in art and sculpture, and houses very rare and ancient Buddhist relics. Hemis gumpa is one of the oldest religious edifices in Ladakh and is very famous for its rich cultural heritage. Most of the statues and images are gold plated and studded with pre-

stones. Some of the prayer halls houses very ancient rare paintings and manuscripts. Every year, a fair is held at Hemis in June and on this occasion, many people visit this monastery and witness masked dance and plays.

Flang Gumpa

This gumpa is situated on the left side of the road from Srinagar to Leh, 20 kilometres short of Leh, is the monastery of the Red Sect of Buddhists. The Head Lama of the monastery, Kushak Togdan is the Vice-Chairman of Ladakh Development Committee. The monastery has some beautiful statues and thankas.

Nubra Valley

Nubra is one of the most beautiful valley in Ladakh. It can be approached by two routes from Leh. The Khardongla route is given below :

Leh to Sambog.	18 km.
Shambog to Khardongla.	16 km. (hight-17,000 feet.)
Khardongla to Khartsar.	15 km.
Khartsar to Tigar.	23 km.
Tigar to Panamik.	19 km.
Panamik to Umung.	23km.
The Diger route is detailed below.	
Leh to Sabu.	24 km. (hight-15,000 feet.)
Sabu to Digar.	34 km. (hight-15,000 feet.)
Diger to Khartsar.	40 km.
Khartsar to Tigar.	23 km.
Tigar to Panamik.	19 km.

Nubra

Two routes that lead us to Nubra, consist of the valley of the Nubra river, and the Shyok river. Lofty mountains bound the valley. There are several green pastures there. The whole atmosphere is cheerful because of a number of smiling villages and monasteries are in the area.

At Panamik, we have a hot water spring. At Charasa there exist the houses of old rulers of Nubra. These are built on an

isolated rock which is polished and smoothed by constant rubbings. There are number of every high mountain peaks overlooking the valley of Nubra. Some of the peaks have been surveyed but the others are still unknown. The height of these summits range between 18,000 to 26,000 feet or above. Two peaks are prominent which measure from 24,600 to 25,180 feet in height. These peaks are also known as Sisar Kangri.

Other Places of Interest

Gumpas at Tiksay, Suspol, Spitok and Rizong are famous for their rich cultural heritage. In fact in every village or town, a major attraction for a visitor is a gumpa or a chorten or a *Mani* wall. These religious edifices are of much archaeological, historical and cultural importance. Every gumpa is decorated with cloth paintings, flags and banners.

There is a Moravian Mission Church at Leh and Khalse. There is a Christian cemetery at Leh. Some of the tomb slabs are worth noticing especially the graves of adventurous travellers, who passed away in Ladakh.

At Mulbek, on the Kargil-Leh road, there is a small gumpa with a huge rock carved into a colossal stature. It is nearly 18 feet high, set against beautiful background. Near Shay, one can find such rock engravings and inscriptions.

Outside every gumpa, there is a prayer wheel. People rotate these wheels for prayer and also carry these wheels in their hands.

Mani Walls

Near every village there have been constructed Mani walls, as a sign of habitation. Every Mani wall consists of numberless stones and slabs, inscribed in Tibetan alphabets. Some possess inscriptions but on numerous stones, the holy mantra : "Om-mani-panmi-hom" is engraved.

Chortens

These chortens house ashes of the departed dead persons. These are in the shape of square platforms made of mud and stones, deco-

rated and painted. Near every village one can see many chortens, beautifully decorated in distemper colours.

Inscriptions

In every village and town, one could see long walls covered with inscribed stones. One of the oldest inscription was found at near Khalse dating back as 200 B.C. Some of these stones bear carved figures of Buddha and Buddhisativas.

At Drass there are two stone pillars, depicting two female figures with Brahmi inscriptions. The female figures wear Kashmiri ornaments,

Tankha Paintings

Ladakh is famous for its oil paintings, which are known as tankhas. In every gumpa, there is master artist, who paints from the life of Buddha and such paintings are hung on the walls. In every monastery are hung, painted scrolls on the walls. These wall paintings on cloth depict clouds, water, forests, heavenly bodies and episodes from the life of Sakya-muni Buddha. New paintings are sold in the market also and are beautiful souvenirs.

Scriptures

Buddhist scriptures are being lithographed in Ladakh. This is being done from wood-cuts, which method is prevalent since long. For this, black ink and hand made paper is used. These scriptures are litho printed in the Tibetan alphabets. The three repositories of Buddhism are contained in a voluminous work, known as Tangyur and Kangyur. It contains the *Vinaya*, the *Sutra* and the *Abhidharma*.

Religious Edifices and Rituals

We have spoken about gumpas, manis, and chortens before and now we wish to provide few details about them. Buddhist monastery in Ladakh is known as a gumpa. Such buildings are made on cliffs or summits so that the lamas remain away from the madding crowd. These buildings are a place for meditation. These gumpas consist of many apartments. The room meant for statues and images is known

as the room of God or Lah-Khang. The room for use of the lama is known as Labrang. Chrotens are pyramids for the dead Lamas, Mani walls are made of stones with the holy mantra-*om-mani-padmi-non*, inscribed on them. These stones are a sort of offerings for attainment of a wish. Ritual instruments include the prayer cylinder, the thunderbolt and the bell. Prayer cylinders are of two kinds : one which is rotated at the entrance of a monastery and the other which is carried in hand and is of small size and weight. The thunderbolt is known as dorji, and it signifies power and authority.

Education

Ladakh and Kargil are backward in education and literacy percentage is very low as compared to Kashmir. It was the Morovian Mission which established the first English school at Leh in 1875. This Mission did much researches into the history, culture and archaeology of Ladakh. At the same time it succeeded in introducing Christianity in the region. Now, the Government has introduced education upto High School level at important towns and villages through out Ladakh. The School of Buddhist Philosophy at Leh imparts religious as well as spiritual education to some youngmen. Its medium of instruction is Tibetan. Every gumpa houses a huge library of religious books, especially *Tangyur* and *Kangyur* is nearly two hundred volumes. The visitors would do well if they visit the Morovian Mission Church and the Buddhist School of Philosophy in Leh, Christian cemetery at Leh has graves of some European officers and travellers.

VII

Kargil

“Do you indeed disbelieve in Him,
Who created the earth in two days!
That is the Lord of the worlds!
And He made in it mountains above its surface,
And He blessed therein,
And ordained therein its foods, in four days.”

Kargil is known as Purik to its people. It was known as such in the past but Kargil, being the most important town in the region, the entire country come to be known as Kargil. Etymologically, Purik means a tube and the valley of Kargil is just like a long tube, with mountains on both the sides. The people speak the Purki language and are of the Turanian stock. They are cheerful, helpful and good tempered. They have preserved their ancient history and culture in their folk tales and songs.

Purik became a powerful state under the rule of Thi Mohamad Sultan, who was also known as Purik Sultan. He made extensive conquests in Purang and Kishtawar. The kings of Ladakh brought this region under their control, from time to time, but whenever, Purik

got a chance, it secured its independence.

Introduction

Like most other districts and tehsils of the State, Kargil is also named after its headquarter, the village of Kargil. Enquiries made, have not been able to trace the historical background, which led to the village being known as Kargil.

Kargil sub-division is situated to the north west of Kashmir. It is bounded on the north by Skardu, and on the south the Nun Kun range separates it from Wardwan. Seven rivers of considerable size flow through Kargil. Important among these rivers are, the Drass, the Phoo, the Wakha and the Indus. It includes the areas Drass, Soro, Kartse, Khrmang, Shigar and proper Kargil. Drass is the snowy and the coldest area. It extends from the Zojila to Changund on the Kargil road. Soro is also cold and the base Kun peaks.

The cold in higher areas is extreme and even in the lower areas, fruit trees can not bear good fruit. Kargil enjoys a more equable temperature than other parts. However the atmosphere is always cool. Heavy snowfall hinders cultivation of food crops. Appricots are the chief fruits of the area and it also forms an important item in the food of the people. The Kargil sub-division is also known as Purig.

Kargil is highly mountainous with an intricate system of mountain chains. The villages lie at an elevation varying from 8,500 to 11,500 feet above the sea level. The Zojila range stops most of the moisture bearing currents from the seas, the rains or snow falls mostly on the outer side of it with the result that hills on the other side of the range are almost bare of vegetation. However, poplars grow in abundance and willow plantations are in plenty, in those areas where there is some water for irrigation.

The principal rivers are the Indus, Drass, Suru, Wakha and the Shigar-Shingo. There is greater rainfall in Kargil than Ladakh. In Kargil, a farmer grows wheat, barley, gram, vegetable, trumba and fruits. The Government has introduced high yielding varieties of cereals, pulses and vegetables suitable for the area.

Boundaries and area

The tehsil is bordered in the north by Gilgit district and in the east by Leh tehsil. It is bounded in the west and south-west by the districts of Baramulla, Srinagar, Anantnag and Doda and is contiguous in the south with Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.

Except for the splitting up of the tehsil by the Cease-fire Line in 1948, as a result of which its 31 villages in toto and 5 partially have fallen in Pak-held State territory, the jurisdiction of the tehsils has remained unchanged during the two decades ending 1961. The Census Report for 1941 shows that the tehsil then extended to an area of 7,392 sq. miles as against only 5,824.8 sq. miles occupied by the tehsil at present.

History

There is a tradition that the whole of Purik was a lake in pre-historic period. This lake started draining up, when a similar lake in the valley of Kashmir started draining up, to geo-physical action. In the beginning, the Kashmiris would come to these areas for grazing of their cattle, but later on the tribes from Gilgit, Chitral and Baltistan came and settled in Purik, which is now called Kargil. The Burkpas of Drass are the descendents of the foreign tribes. The Dukpas are also foreign settlers and the Mons of Ladakh are also foreign tribes settled in Kargil and Ladakh.

Niathi-Seten was the founder of the ruling dynasty in Suru, Wakha and adjoining areas, and he came to power in 155 B.C. One of the rulers, Konga Namgyal, who died in 1660, divided his kingdom among his three sons. As such, he became responsible for its disintegration, which followed later on. The Namgyal came to power in 1660 and married Tila, who was a Muslim, and was a prince from Skardu. Thi Mohammad Sultan came to the throne after the death of his father 1700. He died issueless. But before his death, he nominated the prince of Leh as his successor.

Wakha dynasty ruled over Wakha for three hundred years as subservient to Ladakh. With the end of the kingdom of Ladakh at the hands of Zorawar Singh in 1834, all these small principalities and sultanates came to an end.

Population and Density

Kargil is the next largest tehsil in the State ranking only after Leh. Its geographical area extends to 5,824.8 sq. miles but it is inhabited by an aggregate population of 45,064 only. On the basis of population, therefore, it ranks 29, the only other tehsil which have smaller population being Uri and Karnah.

The large disparity between the ranks held by the tehsil in population and area is explained by the topographical character and mountainous structure of the area due to which building sites are scarce and the buildings are disposed over long distances.

Religion

The following statement gives the distribution of the population of the tehsil by different religious communities :

Buddhists	8,995
Hindus	352
Muslims	35,642
Sikhs	75

As is clear from this data that over 79% inhabitants of the tehsil are Muslims. Buddhists rank next with the corresponding proportion of 19.96% only. Hindus and Sikhs together claim less than 1% population.

Occupational Classification

Majority of the workers other than those engaged in agriculture consist of craftsmen, production process workers and labourers, whose population stands at 1,138 or 43.3% of the total number of such workers. Those engaged in service, sport and recreation rank next and number 535 farmers and hunters etc. have more less the same population as the service and the recreation workers. The only other occupations in which sizeable number of workers are employed consist of professional and technical workers and sales workers whose populations stand at 207 and 97 respectively. Clerical and related workers do not exceed 68 in number, whereas the population of administrative, executive and managerial workers is limited to 36. The remaining 27 are engaged in transport and communication occupa-

tions.

Industries

In so far as industrial development is concerned, there is perhaps no other tehsil in the State which is as backward as Kargil. The inhabitants are still content with water-mills established many centuries ago, which represent about 100% of the manufacturing concerns of the tehsil. The data collected at the Census shows that the tehsil owns 903 workshops in all of which no less than 901 produce atta, flour, etc. by milling and dehusking processes. The other two workshops have been set up by blacksmiths for manufacturing crude implements and repairing of articles like locks, knives, etc.

It is true that the topographical character of the tehsil and the inaccessibility of its various parts operate as a bar against the establishment of heavy, medium and even many small scale industries. There should, however, be no difficulty apparently in introducing such of the cottage industries and handicrafts for which raw material is locally available. For instance, the tehsil owns no less than 28,241 sheep which could provide raw wool for the manufacture of woollen fabrics on handlooms. It should also be possible to set up small workshops for making of germinants. Similarly, some of the handicrafts of Kashmir such as manufacture of namdahs and papier mache could also be introduced.

Above all the mineral resources of Zaskar sector could be exploited to build up the economy of the tehsil. There are a number of areas which are rich in wild game. Ibex with its 56" long horn is found in large numbers on Zojila hill and the mountains of the animal provides an excellent raw material for homespun fabrics.¹

People

Kargil is making transition from semi-primitive stage into modernity. It takes only six hours for a light vehicle to reach Kargil from Srinagar. There is a regular bus service from Srinagar to Kargil and then to Leh. Motor cars can also be hired for this journey. Zaskar has been connected with Kargil and the 160 kilometre road is nearing completion.

¹ District Census Handbook, Ladakh, 1961.

Medical facilities are available at Kargil in the Government hospital. Educationally this area is backward. The total population of Kargil sub-division, consisting of Kargil and Zaskar is 52,539 souls. The area has an agricultural economy but depends on Kashmir for food requirements. Kargil is well known for its apricots.

The Muslims are the majority community in Kargil area. They are mostly Shia Muslims. Notable families among the Muslims are Aghas, Syeds, and Rajas. Ethnologically the Burkpas are every important because they belong to the Greeks. They live in Garkon in Dah, Haru and Drass.

In Kargil and around, a visitor can see Imambaras, religious edifices constructed by Shia Muslims for mourning. There are many mosques for prayers. In the Kargil bazar, there are two beautiful mosques. Kargil is a trade centre for the whole sub-division.

The people of Kargil wear modern dress but the traditional dress consists of a long black gown and black or white turban. Women observe pardha or seclusion and do not expose their face to outsider. The people on the whole are conservative and religious minded. They do not mix with others.

Climate and Rainfall

As no observatory has been installed in any part of Kargil tehsil so far, data showing the maximum and minimum temperature is not available. Since however most of the villages are situated at a height of more than 10,000 feet above the sea-level, the climate is generally dry in summer but very cold in winter when the temperature is below freezing point in every part of the tehshil.

Snow fall in the region is heavy and specially in the Drass area. Some of the village houses there are completely engulfed in snow during winter. Cattle are kept in the ground floor and fodder is thrown to them from the hole of the first floor, where the master of the house and his family live. The house is warm, due to these cattle, and there is hardly any window. As the summer approaches, the cattle are allowed to go out for grazing.

The climate of Kargil is milder than that of Leh. During summer, the villages situated on the river banks are warm and abound in

fruit trees. The daily range of temperature in the Kargil region is generally between 39.50 and 42.00 at the height of 11,500 feet.²

Villages and Towns

There is no urban area in the tehsil which consists only of 129 inhabited villages with a total population of 45,064 of whom 23,286 are males and 21,778 are females.

Like Leh tehsil, majority of the population is concentrated in villages with a population of 200-499 and 500-999 with the only difference that the proportion of the populations claimed by villages of populations size 200-499 is highest in Kargil when compared with the proportions of villages of other categories. In Leh tehsil villages with a population of 500-999 are inhabited by the highest proportion of population.

Imambaras

In Kargil there are beautiful Imambaras at Trespone and Sankhoo, representing Turkish architecture. Attached to these Imambaras are some famous Arabic and Persian-speaking Muslim divines known as Aghas.

There are few old mosques in the region and these are significant for their architectural design. The Khanqah at Baroo is visited by a large number of devotees every day. A big Jamia Masjid has been built very recently.

Literacy

Kargil is educationally one of the most backward tehsils of the State and ranks 30th on the basis of its literacy which stands at 5.9%. The only other tehsils which have returned lower literacy percentages than Kargil are Sonawari and Uri in each of which only 5.7% of the tehsil population consists of literate persons.

Education

There are 82 educational institutions in the tehsil with an aggre-

² Ladakh, Cunningham, p. 186.

gate student population of 2,444 consisting of 2,269 males and 175 females. According to the Census data, however, the number of students attending schools does not exceed 1,726 of whom 1,645 are males and 81 females. The variation is explained by the fact that the Education Department figures represent the number of students on roll at the end of September, 1961, whereas the Census data gives the number of students in educational institutions as on 1st October, 1960. It is, however, unlikely that there could have been an increase of 718 in the student population during a period of one year only even if the enrolments in the newly opened schools are accounted for.

Medical

There are 7 medical institutions in the tehsil consisting of 3 allopathic, 2 unani and 2 ayurvedic dispensaries. The 3 allopathic dispensaries have been established at Kargil, Drass (Ranbirpora) and Padamzanskar. Of the two unani dispensaries, one is functioning in village Shakar Chiktan and the other in Sankoo (Thangdambroo). One of the two ayurvedic dispensaries has been set up in village Shakar. Village Padamzanskar has, besides the allopathic dispensary, also been provided with an ayurvedic institution.

Communication

The tehsil is linked with Kashmir by a jeepable road measuring 70 miles in length. The road which takes off from Zojila Pass was built after the tribal raids of 1947. Till then, the journey from Srinagar to Kargil was being performed by ponies and could not be completed in less than a week's time.

There are two other jeepable roads, one measuring 25 miles and connecting Kargil with Gurgurdoo and the other 10 miles long which connects Suru with Kargil.

Besides the three jeepable roads mentioned above, three bridle paths whose aggregate length does not exceed 4 miles have also been built. One of these is an extension of Kargil-Suru road and measures 2 miles only. Another measures one mile only and is a prolongation of Kargil Gurgurdoo road. The third bridle path

has been built between Drass and Yalboo.³

Routes

The most important road that connects Kargil with Kashmir is the Srinagar-Leh road. But the heavy snow at Zojila and Drass results in closure of this road for a few months during winter. If there is little snow at these places, the road becomes motorable early. There is another route to Kargil from Kishtwar, which runs through Suru over the Bhotkol Pass, which is 14,370 feet high. Another route from Kishtwar to Kargil is via Leh and it runs over Umasla-Buggan Hiwan-Padar-Ating-Zanskar.

Srinagar of Kargil Via-Suru

This route may be taken by trekkers from Srinagar to Kargil.

Srinagar to Avantipur

Avantipur to Anantnag

Anantnag to Shangas

Shangas to Nobug

Nobug to Anshan

Anshan to Sukhne

Sukhnes to Pajhoi

Pajhoi to Muskhalu

Muskhalu to Sheerinmat

Sheerinmat to Suru

Suru to Sanku

Sanku to Chaliskut

Chalskut to Kargil.

This route is nearly 170 miles long.

Zanskar

All the area lying between the two branches the river Zanskar was known as Zangaskhar, meaning the place of white copper. It is now known as Zanskar. It is bounded by Rupshu, Lahul and various mountain ranges of the Himalayas. It is at an elevation of 13,154 feet above the sea level. Its climate is very severe, and it remains cut off from Kashmir or Ladakh during winter. Due to heavy snow-falls and icy cold winds, the area is suitable for food crops or tree plan-

³ District Census Handbook, Ladakh, 1961,

tations. However, the peasants work hard and spread earth on snow and when it melts, they grow grain. Poplars have been grown in Zaskar. The season of cultivation is covered by a few months only. They also prepare woollen goods.

History

Shepherds of Kashmir were the first settlers in Zaskar. They were followed by other tribes. Zaskar invited its first ruler from Spiti. Later on it entered into some sort of political alliance with Kishtwar. Mirza Hyder Gorgan invaded this area in 1535. Later this area came under the administrative control of the Ladakhi Kings. Singe Namgyal annexed it and placed his son as ruler of Zaskar. Wazir Zorawar Singh conquered Zaskar and it became a part of Jammu and Kashmir.

Zaskar is surrounded by snowy peaks. Lachalang and Sing-gela are its important passes. During winter temperature falls down below minus. The following is the tentative temperature schedule :

January	...	-11
February	...	- 6
March	...	- 4
April	...	-26
May	...	-34
June	...	-44
July	...	-46
August	...	-41
September	...	-22
October	...	-20
November	...	-16
December	...	-13

Lachalang pass is about 16000 feet above the sea level.

Religious Belief

Inhabitants of Zaskar are Buddhists. There are numerous monasteries in the area. Some Muslims also live in Zaskar and they are mostly traders. The population is small in comparison to its area. Generally the narrow ravines of the river have been selected for habitation.

Routes

Zanskar can be approached from Kishtwar or Kargil. It is two days march from Kargil to Suru. The road goes along the river Suru. The route is as under :

Kargil—Sanku—Suru—Padam

The highest peaks in the area are Nun and Kun, which are 23,410 feet and 23,219 feet above the sea level. These peaks can be approached via Kargil- Suru—Gulmatonga-Shant glacier.

The route through Suru to Zanskar runs over difficult terrain. We have to follow the river Suru, until we reach Penzela, a mountain pass which is 14,440 feet above the sea level. We find hot water springs near the summit. The glacier and the streams are a beautiful spot which nature has provided there. Abring is the next village where from, we reach Karsha gumpa. Then we reach Padam, the main town in Zanskar.

The above route is given below in the table:

**Kargil—Sanku—Suru—Ringdom—Panzela—Abring—Phe—
Padam**

VIII

EPILOGUE

“Ultima Thule of our voyage or a resting place,
Whence we may start again for distant lands”!

We had a memorable trip of Ladakh and we hope to visit it again and again. It was a fascinating and extraordinary experience for us to reach this moonland on earth. As we drove to Leh on this 432 kilometre road, we met the cheerful people of Ladakh, cheering us with welcome slogans. We saw the Kargil mosque, the Mulbekh Chamba, the gumpas of Lamayuru, Likir, Sankar, Shay and Hemis. We saw the Leh bazar and the Leh Khar. We ate the Ladakhi dishes and we liked the chang. Above all, we liked the Ladakhi people, who were so kind to us and we carry their sweet memories with us. With this epilogue, we wish to quote some impressions and give general directions to those visitors, who are fortunate enough like us and plan to visit Ladakh, the moonland.

Impression

Our young friend, Ngawang Tsering Shaksop of Leh expressed his feeling about tourism in Ladakh in his article, which is reproduced

below with minor alterations :

Very few young people have heard of Ladakh and still fewer could point out its position on a map of India. Ladakh should be better known, for it is located on the far northern frontiers of India and has a unique culture which can be seen no where else. Its people, the rugged, but gentle Ladakhi's or Bhot-pas regard themselves as children of India and heirs of its once rich Buddhist culture. Devoted to the teachings of Buddha, the Prince of Peace, the Ladakhi's main desire has been to live peacefully and progressively.

Ladakh remains a magic land of curling mists and snowclad mountains; of strange monastery architecture, of tall buildings towering from high crags, and of red-robed monks living and dying in a way of life set in an age-old tradition. Ladakh is also the home of countless Gods and devils; prayer flags whipping in the icy winds hurtling out of Tibet, and mantra endlessly repeated by the many Lamas and painted on the very rocks that form most of this wind-swept plateau, which is from 9,000 to 15,000 feet above the sea level. The very starkness of the landscape, the deserts of bare rocks and eroded gullies twisted into startling shapes by the wind, hail and snow fills one with awe. And above all like brooding giants sit the colossal mountains. These include Nanga Parbat (26,629. ft.), Gasharbrum (26,470 ft.) and the peak of Godwin Austin or K2 (26,265 ft.)

Mystery

Salvador Dali's sense of timelessness pervades this surrealistic land through which rushes, deep within a canyon, the river Indus. It seems to be the only moving thing, for all is frozen in a static bareness—a bleakness not without a touch of mystery that deepens when a single drum begins booming from what seems to be the very roots of the crags. Then is added the sudden startling clash of cymbals, followed by a blare of trumpets heralding a deep solemn chanting which seems to come from the very air and vibrate through the very rocks. There, on a fantastic shape of a crag, upreared stone by stone, stands monastery. In this Lakhang or God house serried rows of red-robed, shaven-headed lamas chant long hymns and perform intricate rituals to the Buddha and his resti-
nues of fabulous beings. In contracts to the land, the temple is

laze with the massed glow of numberless butter-wick lamps and the vividness of mural and fresco revealing to the initiate, in all hideousness and splendour, the age-old battle of good against evil.

Such a drama is performed every year at the huge Hemis monastery, a mass of splendid architecture only thirty miles from Leh : the chief town of Ladakh. But whereas Leh is progressing rapidly into the modern era, Hemis monastery still remains covered with all the mystery of the hoary past of meditating monks and their visions and fancies-given life in the great sacred drama. In the courtyard of the monastery the blare of long long brass trumpets signals the beginning of the fight between good and evil. Dancing and prancing, leering and schowling the demons enter. Monks are beneath the grotesque masks of the dancers. Among them two skeltons ease the tension and frightfulness with antics. The forces of goods enter to give battle. Representing legendary human heroes and saints they strive to overcome the demons. Stately dance-steps and graceful mystic gestures are pitted against frenzy and madness. Slowly the devils are driven back. Only to surge forward in a swirling, whirling dance. They fling themselves at the stately, richly-dressed Masters of Virtue—but their violence cannot overcome the superiority of virtue resting out wisdom. They are driven from the arena.

With such a religion, built on constant warfare between good and evil, one would expect the people to be gloomy and devilridden-but they are the reverse, and are known for their cheerfulness, honesty and hard work. There are just over one lakh people in this area covering over 40,000 square miles. They wear one long robes over narrow trousers, felt boots and a fur-lined cossack cap. The women wear long striped dresses and woollen jackets. Their hair style is fabulous. A border of narrow plaits, liberally smeared with butter, which hang around their heads in a long fringe. This is not all for from their foreheads, back over their heads and down to their waists is hung a narrow strip of cloth studded with coarse turquoises, which in the past used to represent the wealth of the woman. Nowadays sarees for the women are becoming more popular and western dress for the men, but as yet this is only in Leh and a few of the largest villages,

Ladakhis

Ladakh once was known for the scarce practice of polyandry in which the lady acquired a number of husbands, usually brothers, used them as she wished and disposed of them at will. The husbands were ruled with a strong hand which did not hesitate to grasp a stick if the occasion called for it. Today there is 'Women's Lib., yesterday in Ladakh there was 'Men's Lib., that resulted in freeing most men from the domination of their wives. Polyandry is fast becoming a thing of the past and only exists in the most isolated areas of the region.

The caravans have long since stopped arriving in Leh and the town slumbered for many years. On the coming of Independence it began stirring, and now its streets are filled with jeeps and buses. The shops boast a wide variety of goods, two huge cinema screens the latest films and even a dry-cleaning shop has been opened. Still aloof on its crag towers the Kings palace, the Potala of India and down the main street walks an old wrinkled lama unmoved by the busy bustle about him. One hand clasps a mala, the other a spinning prayer-wheel. His lips constantly intone the sacred mantra : *Om mani Padma hum*, which he believes will save him from all evil. Thus the old still, not lingers, but is apparent everywhere.

Monasteries, unique examples of an architecture no longer being used and filled with exquisite art-work, not the land. In them are to be found painting and sculpture of fascinating imagery that once seen live long in the memory. Then there are the colourful rituals and fascinating festivals. The awesome scenery is often bleak and forbidding, but it has been softened by the cheerful Ladakhi, fond of dance and festival, *Chang* the local beer and a good time. He is what makes Ladakh an unforgettable experience.

Ladakh's future progress would seem to be connected with tourism. But facilities are limited and need to be much improved. Recently the area has been opened to tourists, and with the increase in the number of visitors, tourist facilities will rapidly increase. Because of its uniqueness, it is one of the most interesting places to visit in India, especially for young people with a sense of adventure. They will enjoy roughing it while on their way to explore remote shrines and monasteries in which lie the best in Ladakhi arts and crafts as well as ancient Buddhist manuscripts. In the past, Ladakh

was very remote and the land journey arduous and tedious. Now it is only one hour from Srinagar by air and two hours from Chandigarh. Such a short gap, but the journey goes far back to that magic time when de-mons lurked and spell really worked.

Ladakh : New Look

The following information is reproduced from a brochure issued by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir:

Ladakh provides a signal example of the dogged determination of the people to emerge steadily from the malaise into which they had drifted over the centuries past. A background area about which it was once said that time always stood still there has now a different story to tell. It verily, presents a new look. The people of the area go about their daily round of work with an air of earnestness and robust faith in their future.

A new chapter of all-round economic development unfolded itself in Ladakh during the last decade. The progress has been particularly spectacular since 1964. For the first time in the history of Ladakh, a massive programme of economic reconstruction and development was taken in hand with a view to making available fruits of progress to the people of this far-flung area. The opening of the Srinagar-Leh road was a big stride in this direction aimed at throwing open the region to the current and cross-currents of modernity.

Ladakh is the biggest district of Jammu and Kashmir State, comprising an area of 47,200 sq. miles. Its population, according to the provisional figures of Census of 1971 is 10,5001.

Ladakh could not obviously make much headway during the first and second five year plans because of the fact that centuries old ills can not be undone overnight. Towards the close of the second five year plan, a solid base for development in the fields of minor irrigation, community development, health, education, animal husbandry, sheep breeding and agriculture was laid and the region has started marching steadily towards progress.

About 90 per cent of the population living in the district is dependent on land for their livelihood. The principal crops grown in the region are barley, gram and wheat. The total area under cultivation

is about 45,000 acres, which is mostly artificially irrigated. As a result of the introduction of improved varieties, the yield of wheat and barley have shown considerable increase. Agriculture Department has set-up four agricultural farms, one each at Nubra, Changthan, Suspol, and Kargil. The total area covered by these farms is 37 acres.

An agricultural farm has been set-up at Padam in Zaskar. Experiments for introduction of potato cultivation have proved successful at Drass. The use of improved varieties of seeds, application of fertilizer and recourse to modern farm practices have encouraged the people to boost up production. A scheme has also been launched for developing horticulture in the district. Under this scheme, exotic types of various fruit plants particularly apples, apricots, grapes and pears planted at Suspol farm have shown appreciable results.

To develop the possibilities of irrigation potential on which depends the future development of forest, agriculture and animal husbandry, an investigation division was set-up by the Government in 1965. The Abicohan-Marthang, and Khumbathang canal and other minor irrigation canals are nearing completion.

An appreciable progress has also been registered in the field of education. On an average almost every village in the district has a school now. Health service in the district has expanded side by side. From mere two dispensaries in the whole of the district a decade ago, there are now two full-fledged hospitals at Leh and Kargil, with adequate bed strength for in-door patients and other specialist facilities.

Ladakh has a good livestock population. Poor livestock farms have been set up at Shanspa, Nubra, Mathua and Kargil. Veterinary hospitals have been established at Leh, Kargil, Drass and Sankoo.

The cooperative movement in Ladakh has shown useful results in as much as it has helped not only in maintaining the price level of the essential commodities but also in improving the quality of products as well.

The State Transport Undertaking has started operating buses on

the following routes:

Kargil-Sanki	(alternative days)
Leh-Gir	(fortnightly)
Kargil-Salmo	(weekly)
Leh-Nayoma	(weekly)

The electric supply at Leh and Kargil has been augmented). Two 90-KV generating sets have been installed in Leh and one diesel set at Kargil respectively.

Leh-Manali Road

Leh is connected by road to Manali (Himachal Pradesh). Four wheel drive vehicles can operate on the 500-kilometre long road. There are two high passes of about 17,500 ft. to be crossed on the way. No lodging, servicing or any other facilities exist enroute. It is, therefore, advisable to go fully equipped in all respects on this road. No bus service or any other civil transport is available. A trek along the road takes about a month to reach Manali from Leh. The road is usually open from the middle of June to middle of October.

Route to Manali

Special permits would be needed for journey on this route because there are no board and lodge arrangements on this route. The stages on this route are given as under:

Leh
 Chachot
 Marchlang
 Ugshi
 Miru
 Gya
 Darsa
 Rukchin
 Langalacha
 Sumdu
 Charpa
 Baralacha
 Mongba
 Darcha

**Kolang
Kardang
Gundla
Sisu
Rotang
Manali**

Simla to Leh Via Kulu

The following are the stages on the Simla-Leh route:

**Simla to Sultanpur
Sultanpur to Nagar
Nagar to Jaghat Sak
Jaghat Sak to Pulchun
Pulchun to Rotang Pass
Rotang Pass to Rahla
Rahla to Koksar
Koksar to Sisu
Sisu to Gandla
Gandla to Kailang
Kailang to Kulang
Kulang to Darchu
Darchu to Fatsu
Fatsu to Baralachha pass, 16,200 feet above the sea level
Balcahahra to Zingzing
Zingzing to Kallang
Kallang to Charap
Charap to Chargot
Chargot to Sumdu
Sumdu to Lachhalang Pass, 16,630 feet above sea level
Lachhalang to Kangalzal
Kangalzal to Sumkil
Sumkil to Kiangchu
Kiangchu to Rukchen
Rukchen to Debring
Debring to Gya
Gya to Upshi
Upshi to Marchalang
Marchalang to Stakna
Stakna to Chachut
Chachut to Leh**

This route is nearly 430 miles long. It was measured by Mr. A.R. Ramsay in 1890.

There is another alternative route to Leh which is given as under:

Simla—Wangton—Dankar—Narbu—Sumdu—Para river—Kiangdam—Karzok—Puga—Thugey—Debring—Leh.

Leh to Kangra

Various stages of Ladakh-Kangra route are given below :

Leh—Chachut—Marachalang—Gya—Debring—Rukchin—Sumkil—Sumdu—Sarchu—Kilang—Zingzing—Fatsu—Darcha—Kulang—Kardung—Gandla—Sisu—Koksar—Rahla—Pulchun—Lagatsak—Nagar—Sultanpur—Karam—Budwani—Jutingri—Dalu—Brijnath—Palampur.

Palampur is flourishing trade centre in Kangra.

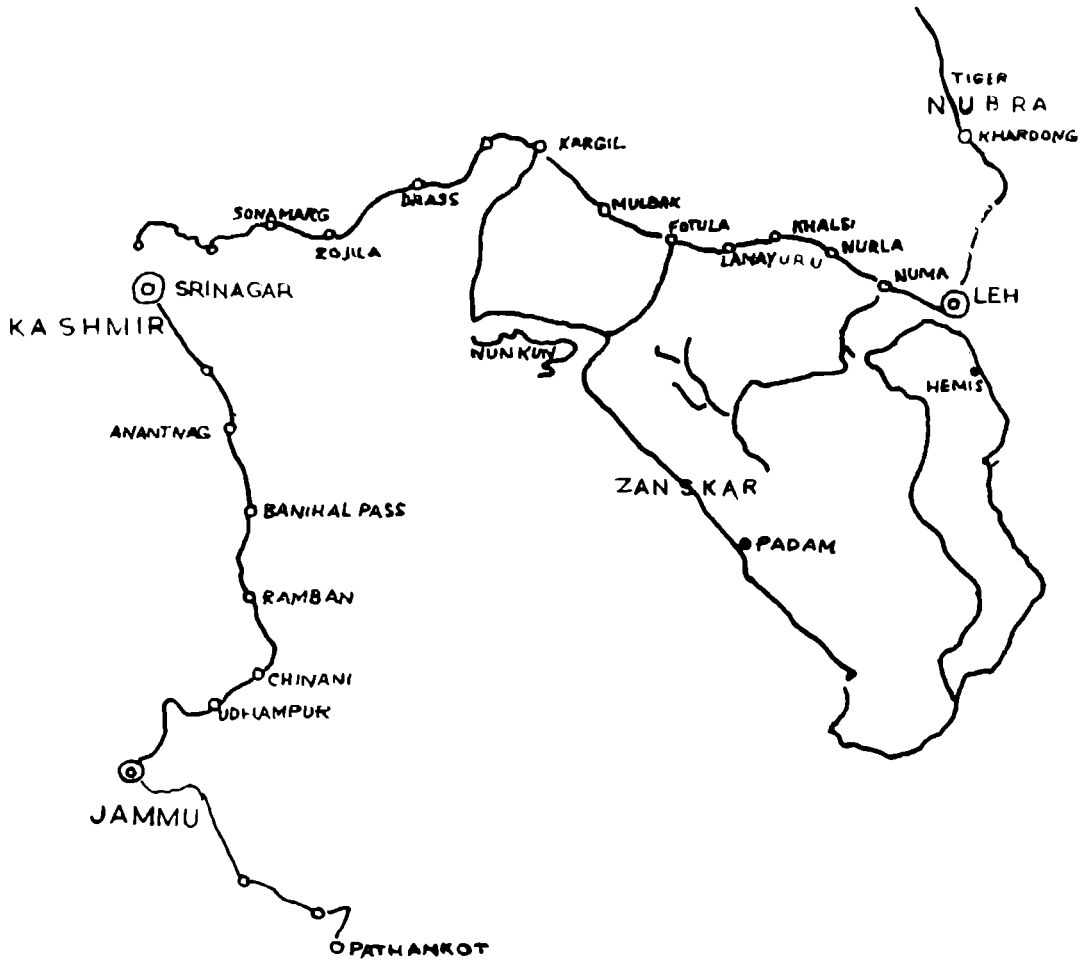
Passes

A mountain pass is known as la in Ladakh. Some of the passes are mentioned here for the benefit of mountaineers:

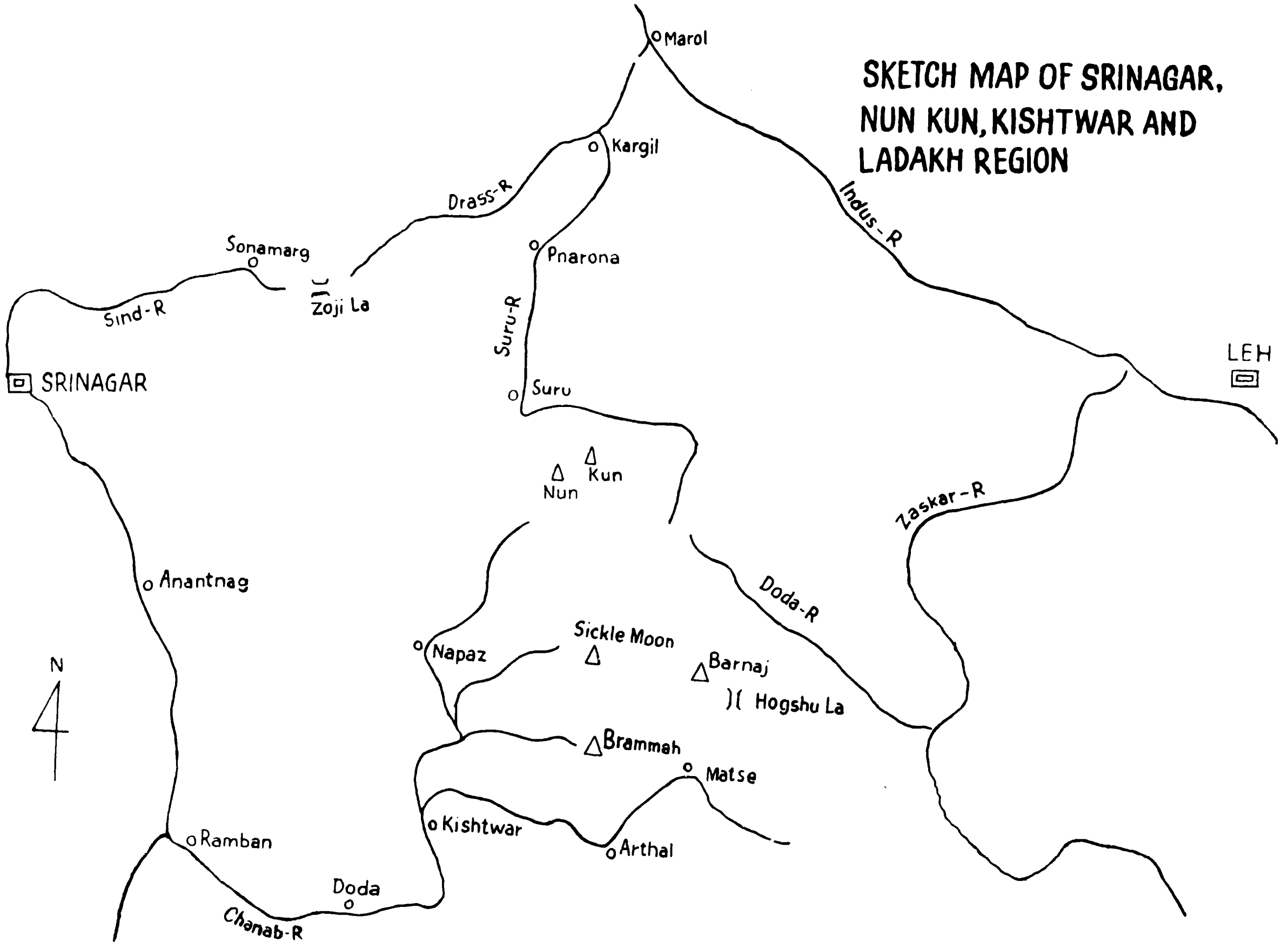
Lanakla	18,746 feet	Tsomoriri
Karakuram	18,666	„ Nubra
Khardungla	18,376	„ Nubra
Umasila	18,128	„ Between Zanskar and Kishtwar
Nakpogund	18,000	„ Tsomoriri
Digarla	17,900	„
La	17,666	„ Between Leh and Nubra
Thunglung	17,500	„ Kulu-Leh route
Sasserla	17,500	„ Nubra
Lunglacha	17,000	„ Between Zanskar and Rupshu
Singela	16,952	„ Between Lamayuru and Zanskar
Hanu	16,890	„ Between Indus and Shyok rivers
Laccha	16,660	„ Kulu-Leh route

LADAKH

— ROUTE MAP —



SKETCH MAP OF SRINAGAR, NUN KUN, KISHTWAR AND LADAKH REGION



Polokonka	16,500 feet	Kulu-Leh route
Nira	16,000	„ Kishtwar-Kargil route
Singe	16,000	„ Kishtwar-Kargil route
Penzela	14,440	„
Botkol	14,370	„ Kishtwar-Kargil route
Futula	13,400	„ Leh-Srinagar route
Rotang	13,000	„ Leh-Kulu route
Namikla	13,000	„ Leh-Kargil route
Zojila	11,578	„ Srinagar-Kargil route.

Tourist Guide

1. Tourists should get themselves registered at the Srinagar airport at the time of disembarcation. Subsequently, they must also get themselves registered in the visitor's Register at the Police Office, Leh. Tourist Office at Leh may be consulted in this respect.

2. Visitors are advised not to sell their equipment or belongings in Ladakh nor purchase any curio, statue or any work of art, because export of such antiquities is punishable under law. Any work of art which is more than hundred years old is termed as antiquity.

3. Souvenirs like carpets, rugs, dress, caps, shawls, metal-ware, wood-carvings, new oil paintings, rings, semi precious jewellery etc. can be purchased provided these are less than hundred years old.

4. You can stay in the Dak bungalow, tourist, hut, hotel, tent or a private house in Ladakh, without any apprehension.

5. Visitors are advised not to eat raw fruits in the way or drink water of the streams. It is better to take tea or coffee instead, for health reasons.

6. In case of any difficulty, visitors are advised to report to the nearest Government officer.

7. Visitors are advised not to take arms or ammunition into Ladakh, nor kill any bird or animal.

8. Visitors are advised not to take photographs of bridges, defence equipment or military installation.

Travellers Equipment List

Personal

Sleeping bag
 Ruck-sak
 Jackets
 Gloves
 Socks
 Rubber-sole shoes
 Toilet paper
 Paper and diary
 Ball point pens
 Pencils
 Shaving blade and shaver
 Tooth paste and brush
 Face cream
 Vaseline
 Goggles
 Needle and thread
 Handkerchiefs
 Cap
 Torch
 Mirror
 Comb
 Hair cream
 Talcum Powder
 Soap

Cooking equipment

Oil stove
 Kerosine oil
 Matches
 Pots and panes
 Small jug
 Tumbler

Food

Condensed milk
 Tea
 Coffee
 Sugar
 Tin fish
 Tin meat
 Tin Vegetables
 Biscuits
 Instant soup
 Alcoholic drinks

Photographic equipment

Camera with flash
 Film reels
 Camera stand
 Equipment bag
 Binocular.

Medicines

Tourists are advised to carry high altitude medicinal remedies with them for head-ache, nose-bleeding, fever, lose-motion, bad-cold, vomitting, travel sickness, sleeplessness, eye troubles and muscle and back-ache.

Buddhist Lamas

Rev. Kushok Bakula
Rev. Thiksay Rinpoche
Rev. Kashok Togdan
Rev. Stakna Rinpoche
Rev. Sas Rinpoche

Buddhist

Desmochey : 8th February
Hemis : 17th to 19th June
Losar : 3rd December

Notable Families

Rani Parwati Devi of Stok
Kaloon Rignen Nyamgal
Ghulam Mohammad Chowdhry
Mirzaiz Khaja Family

Famous Writers

Tashi Rabgyas
Morup Namgyal
Gelong-thupton-Paldan

Famous Painter

Wangdus Nymopa

Famous Singers

Morup Nyamgyal
Mohammad Shafi Relli
Mrs. Tseshoo Lamo

Famous Doctor

Dr. S.T. Phuntsoj, M.B.B.S., M.S.

Famous Mountaineer

Sonam Wangyal—conquered Everest.

National Hero

Maj. Chewan Rinchin who won Mahavir Chakra twice.

Hotels and Restaurants

Everest Hotel
Yak-tail Hotel
Burman Hotel
Himalaya Hotel
Green-way Hotel and Restaurant
Glacier View Hotel
Ileen hotel
Dreamland Hotel

Medical Shops

Ali Shah and Co.
Shadi Lal Goyal and Co.
Vinay Kumar and Co.

Photo Shops

Lalit Studios
New Light Studios
Wonton Studios

Dry-Cleaner

Isai Dry Cleaner

Love Song From Kargil

O ! my prince,
Thou are going to Hanu Handangamin,
For Ibex hunting !
Tell me, my love,
What will bring thou,
From there for me ?
Oh ! No
I need no roasted meat of Ibex,
I need thy love; thy eternal love,

Thy love harder than rocks,
And, longer than rivers.

Advice to Children

Nyagi fayuli Badakhsi thugugun jojolaiy,
Rignestang yontan lob,
Tani fala yellou yewa suskyany mani mazat.
(Ladakhi children, Obtain knowledge,
Do not waste your time from today).

Love Song From Leh

Nomo Angmo Laiy,
Siki Angmo Laiy,
Tongraiy Zammpani Lokty-skodang,
Nomo Angmo Laiy,
Siki Angmo Laiy.
(Beloved Angmo Please
Beloved Angmo Please
Return from Tongrai bridge)

Prayer

Namah Samanta Buddha-nam
Sarvaklesha nishodhana
Sarvadharmā Wahiprapyā
Gagana sama sama swaha
(Glory to Buddha
Reliever of miseries
Virtuous teacher
Equal to heaven : Adoration).

Government Order

Two extracts, from Government orders, regarding entry of the foreigners into Ladakh are reproduced here for guidance of visitors. They are advised to follow the "inner line" strictly, for proceeding beyond which, special permits are required to be obtained, for bona-fide purpose from:

(a) in case of domiciles of the Jammu and Kashmir State, from

the Superintendent of Police of the concerned district.

- (b) in the case of non-residents of the State, from D.I.G. (C.I.D), Jammu and Kashmir.
- (c) in case of foreigners, the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi.

All tourists are permitted to visit Ladakh but they are advised not to enter restricted areas without permits, as mentioned above.

The "inner line" has been defined as under:

Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, Order No. 15011-6-73 F.I. dated 4th June, 1974 reads as under:

- (1) This order may be called the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Amendment Order, 1974.
- (2) In Schedule I to the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order 1958, for the words, "The Inner Line" runs as follows :

"Occuring before the heading : Himachal Pradesh, the following shall be substituted :

"The inner lines runs as follows : Jammu and Kashmir..... thence one mile north of road, Zojila--Drass--Kargil--Budh-kharbu--Khalsti--Nimu--Leh (upto and including gompa) --Karu--Upshi--one mile south of Upshi--thence west of road Upshi--Manali upto Chumikgiarsa on Ladakh--Himachal Pradesh border."

Notification, dated the first of June, 1974, issued by the Home Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, reads as under:

"the Government of Jammu and Kashmir hereby declare that the areas in Jammu and Kashmir, bound by international border --Line of Control, on the one side and line hereinafter, declared from the other side, shall be the protected areas with effect from the first day of June, 1974;

“thence one mile north of road Zojila-Drass—Kargil—Budhkarbu—Khalse—Nimu—Leh—upto and including Gompa—Karu— one mile east of road—Upshi—Manali upto Chumikgiarsa on Ladakh—Himachal Pradesh border.”

Alphabetical List of Villages Leh Tehsil

Aigoo
Alchie
Anlay
Bazgo
Bogdang
Chamrie
Chamsham Charasa
Changa
Chhachoot Shoman
Chhachoot goma
Chhachotyakma
Chilingsumda
Chomathang
Chuglamsar
Dah
Damchook
Damkhar
Degar
Diskit
Durbok
Fai
Fiang
Fotoksar
Geraman Goo
Gia
Hamis

Hano
Hemishopa Chan
Hemlya
Hundar
Hundar Dog
Hundar
Kanfok
Kangia
Kangam Choshul
Karzok
Kengum
Kerey
Khalsar
Khalse
Khardong
Kharnak
Kharnoo
Khemakhumroo
Khemi
Kiomarkha
Kitmang
Kobat
Koyul
Kurbochan
Lodo
Laggon

Lamayuru
Lankoor
Largiab
Lengshet
Likehe
Likir
Manpangan
Manser
Marchlang
Matho
Meroo
Mood
Nang
Ney
Nimmo
Noila
Noma
Odmaroo
Panamik
Partap Pora
Phokche
Pitak
Rambirpora
Rumbuk
Saboo
Saktie
Samad Rakchan
Samoor
Saspochi

Saspol
Seekoro
Shachokol
Shai
Shang
Shara
Sharangoos
Shinding
Stagna
Stook
Tagmachik
Tanche
Tanyar
Tarchat
Tarhipti
Taroo
Tegar
Temisgam
Thiksey
Teri
Tai
Tirche
Tukla
Umla
Upshie
Warisfistan
Wanla
Youlachong

Alphabetical List of Villages Kargil Tehsil

Achambur
Akchamal
Apati
Barche
Baroo
Barso
Bartu
Batambis
Batokul
Bimbat
Bodhkhumbu
Chiktan
Chokial
Choskor
Chulichan
Chuliskambo
Darket
Derchiks
Faron
Garkon
Gindial
Gund Mangalpur
Goshan
Gyaling
Haknis
Hardas

Haripora
Hanaku
Hulyal
Ichu
Jugund
Kaksar
Kanor
Karamba
Karchekhar
Kargi
Karit
Karkit
Karpokhar
Khasagamthvena
Khache
Khandi
Khans
Kharbu
Kochik
Kuksho
Kukste
Lalung
Lamsuaand
Lankarche
Lochum
Malbek

Matayan
Minji
Muradbagh
Mushku
Nagmakusara
Namsuru
Nunamche
Pandras
Panikhar
Parkachik
Partap Ganj
Phuh
Phultuks
Peon
Pranti
Purtikche
Pushkum
Rambirpur
Rangdum
Safi
Saleskot
Samray
Sangroh
Sanjak
Shakar
Shergandi

Shergol
Shilikche
Shimsha
Silmo
Skambo
Stakpa
Staktse
Tache
Tambis
Tangol
Tesuru
Thangdumru
Thasgam
Thrangos
Thulspursa
Tingdo
Toumel
Trankuchan
Tringspon
Umba
Wakhah
Yibu
Yogmakharbu
Yourbaltak
Yuljuk

Alphabetical List of Villages Zanskar Tehsil

Abran
Akshlu
Ating
Chah
Hamiling
Icher
Kargyab
Karshah
Lungmi Regin
Padam
Phe
Pipcha
Pipting

Rantaqshah
Remala Kaigam
Rugrug Nuruk
Rurumeng
Sclapigalpak
Seni
Shunshadi
Techa Khasar
Testu
Tungdi Kmi
Tungri Thangam
Zangla

Index of Villages, Rivers and Mountains in Ladakh

Alchi

is a village on the left bank of the river Indus near Suspol and a route from this village leads to Zanskar.

Baltal

is situated at the foot of the Zojila pass above Sonamary. The famous cave of Amarnath can be reached from this place.

Baralachha

is a pass on the Leh-Kulu route, between Zingzing Bar and Kano-nor-kilang.

Boghdan

is a village in Nubra and lies on the banks of the river Shyok.

Chamshan

is a village in Nubra.

Changla

is a pass on the route to Changchenmo. It is also known as Sakti pass. It is 17,590 feet above the sea level.

Chunglung

is a village in Nubra where hot springs exist.

Charsa

is a village in Nubra, which was a seat of the government in ancient times. The houses of earlier chiefs are built on steep rocks which have been polished by rubbing. People live in these caves like houses during winter for warmth.

Chiling

is a village in Zaskar, where gold was found in the past.

Chimre

is a major village in Ladakh. It is adjacent to Sakti village.

Chimre

is a village near Thikse and is famous for its Buddhist gumpa. The monastery belongs to red lamas.

Chipchuk

is a spot near the Charchar pass on the route from Leh to Padam.

Chumathang

is a village on the banks of the river Indus in Hemis area. Hot springs exist here.

Diskit

is a flourishing village in Nubra.

Digar

is a village between the Digarla pass and Shyok river. A colossal image of Chamba has been carved here in a rock.

Digarla

is a pass 17,900 feet above the sea level between Leh and Polo.

Drass

is a village in the Drass valley between Zojila and Kargil. It is a place where there is a heavy snowfall. There are two stone pillars on the road side which are called "the women", because figures of women are carved on these pillars.

Drass river

is a tributary of the Indus and starts from the Zojila pass. DUNDUL is a village on the Drass river.

Futula

is a pass 13,400 feet high, between Buddhkharbu and Lamayuru on the Kargil-Leh road. The monastery of Lamayuru can be seen from this place.

Futtoksar

is a village on the route between Kishtwar and Zanskar.

Garkon

is a village on the right bank of the river Indus near Kargil, inhabited by an ancient race of the Dukpas.

Gon

is a village between Sanko and Kargil on the route to Zanskar.

Gya

is a village on the banks of the Gya stream on the route from Leh to Kulu near the Thunglung pass.

Hanle

is a village on the banks of the river Hanle. Here we have a famous Buddhist monastery built on a summit of a hill. Streams here are abundant with fish.

Hemis

is the most famous monastery in Ladakh 18 miles from Leh. There is a forest of cedars and poplars here where one finds deer.

Hinskut

is a village on the Kargil-Leh road between Namikla and Futula.

Hopta

is a village on the route between Kishtwar and Zanskar near Sassarla pass.

Kagani

is a brick edifice near every village in Ladakh, which serves the purpose of entrance to the villages. People walk beneath the Kagani.

Karakuram

are the mountain ranges towards the north of Ladakh and also known as "black mountains". There are many passes in these mountain ranges.

Kargil

is a famous town on the Srinagar-Leh road. It is situated at the junction of Suru and Pushkum rivers. There is a market here and visitors to Ladakh stop here for the night. There are a few hotels as well as a Dak bungalow for the visitors. A beautiful mosque has been constructed in the main market.

Karsha

is a village in Zanskar,

Karzok

is a village near the Tsomariri lake on the Leh-Spiti route. There is a Buddhist gumpa here.

Khalse

is a town on the Kargil-Leh road. It is famous for appricots and walunt trees.

Khardongla

is a mountain pass 18,376 feet high above the sea level on Leh-Nubra road.

Langalachha

is a pass on the Leh-Kulu route between Samdu and Sumgal near Baralachh pass.

Lamayuru

is a famous monastery on the Leh-Kargil road in the village of the same name. A road leads to Zanskar from this place.

Leh

is the capital town of Ladakh and head quaters of the Ladakh district. It is 11,538 feet above the sea level. There are many Buddhist monasteries and relics in and around Leh.

Markim

is a village between Umasila and padam in Zanskar. It lies on the route from Padam to Kishtwar.

Matain

is a village on the Zoilja-Dras road.

Mulbek

is a village on the road leading to Leh from Kargil. There is a colossal Buddha carved here in a living rock.

Namikla

is a pass on the Srinagar-Leh road. It is 13,000 feet above the sea level.

Nubra

is a valley towards the north of Leh.

Nun and Kun

are the two peaks in the Zaskar area. These two peaks are 23,410 feet and 23,421 feet above the sea level, and look very conspicuous.

Ombala

is a difficult pass between Drass and Suru.

Padam

is a major town in Zaskar. Two routes lead from this place to Leh; one through Zangla, Yelchung and Lamayuru.

Panamik

is a village in Nubra.

Pankpola

is a pass between Baralachha and Tsomoriri lake

Pashkyum

is a village 5 miles from Kargil on road to Leh.

Fayong

is a village on the Leh-Srinagar road, nearly 9 miles below Leh. The famous monastery of Gouon is situated here.

Penzela

is a pass between Suru and Padam. It is 14,440 feet above the sea level.

Pitok

is also known as Spitok. It is situated 5 miles, south west of Leh. There is an isolated rock, on which the famous monastery of Spitok is built. The road to Leh passes by its side.

Rupshu

is the loftiest habitated area in the world. It lies towards the north of Leh.

Sabu

is a village near Leh.

Saichar Gainri

is a glacier at the source of the Nubra river.

Sakti

is a town near Chimre on the route to Nubra.

Sasserla

is a mountain pass between Nubra-Shyok rivers.

Suspol

is a town on the Srinagar-Leh road between Nurla and Bazgo. Alchi and Likir monasteries are near this town.

Shang

is a village in the Hemis division and a stream flowing through it joins Indus at Marsalang. A road goes from this place to Gya on the Leh-Kulu road.

Shyok

is a river and a principal tributary of the river Indus. Shyok is a famous village on the banks of this river on the Leh-Nubra route.

Stakna

is a village on the banks of the river Indus in the Leh division on the route from Chachot to Marsalang.

Suru

is a village on the Kargil-Kishtwar route. It is situated nearly 18 miles above Sanko, in the north east of Botkol pass.

Tiksay

is a town on the banks of Indus 30 miles above Leh. It has the famous monastery of Tiksay in it.

Umasila

is a difficult pass, 18,128 feet high on the Kishtwar-Zanskar route. There are many glaciers here.

Upshi

is a village 35 miles above Leh on the route to Manali. Two roads connect it with Gya and Marsalang.

Zojila

is a mountain pass on the Srinagar-Leh road above Sonamarg 11,578 feet high above the sea level. It is closed due to snow during winter for nearly 3 months after December.

Vocabulary

The Ladakhis use the Ka-ga alphabtes, which are given as under :

ka	cha	ta	pa	tsha	zha	ra	ha
kha	chha	tha	pha	tsha	za	la	a
ga	ja	da	ba	dsa	ha	sha	
nga	nya	na	ma	wa	ya	sa	

The following translation may be useful for the tourists :

One	gChig
Two	gNysis
Three	gSum
Four	bZhi
Five	sNa
Six	gTug
Seven	bDun
Eight	bGyat
Nine	dGu
Ten	bChu
Twenty	gNysis-bChu
Thirty	gSum-bChu
Forty	bZhi-bChu
Fifty	sNa-bChu
Sixty	gTug-bChu
Seventy	bDun-bChu
Eighty	bGyat-bChu
Ninety	dGu-bChu
Hundred	rGya

Good morning

Thankyou

What is your name ?

Where do you live ?

Where is Post office ?

Where is medical shop ?

Where is hotel ?

Where is tea shop ?

Where is theatre ?

Where is Library ?

Where is gumpa ?

Where is dak-bungalow ?

Where is Radio-station ?

Where is tailor-shop ?

Where is dry-cleaner ?

Where is barber ?

Julaiy

Thugishi

Nyanrang-ni-ming-na-chai-zer ?

Nyarang-Karwar-Zuksat ?

Dakkhana-kaga-Yotkyak ?

Manai-hati-karwayot ?

Hotel-karwayot ?

Cha-hati-karwayot ?

Cinimai-karwayot ?

Librari-karwayot ?

Gumpa-karwayot ?

Dakbangla-karwayot ?

Radiostashun-Karwayot ?

Tsampo-pa-hati-karwayot ?

Dryeleenar-karwayot ?

Tsra-daken-karwayot ?

Give me water

Give me tea

Give me food

Give me chang

Give me meat

Give me soap

Give me hot water

Give me tobacco

Give me candles

Give me matches

Give me kerosine oil

Give me stove

Give me blanket

Give me pen

Give me paper

gNya-chu-sal

gNya-chha-sal

gNya-kharji-sal

gNya-chhang-sal

gNya-sha-sal

gNya-saboon-sal

gNya-chu-stante-sal

gNya-cigret-sal

gNya-moom-bati-sal

gNya-machi-sal

gNya-sammar-sal

gNya-stobv-sal

gNya-kambal-sal

gNya-nygo-sal

gNya-shugo-sal

Please take tea

Take food

Take chang

solja don

Kharji don

chhang-don

Take me to gumpa

Take me to palace

Take me to market

Take me house

Take me to hotel

Nya-gumpa-Khyrazat

Nya-khar-khyrazat

Nya-bazar-khyrazat

Nya-khampa-khyrazat

Nya-hotel-khyrazat

Take me to theatre
Take me to taxi

Nya-cinimi-khyrazat
Nya-taxi-khyrazat

Boy **Nono**
Brother **Acho**
Father **Abba-laiy**

Girl **Chocho**
Sister **Achay-laiy**
Mother **Ama-laiy**

Bibliography

- CUNNINGHAM : Ladakh.
CRUMP : Ride to Leh.
DREW : Northern Barrier of India.
EDAIR : Sport in Ladakh.
FRANCKE : Antiquities of Indian Tibet.
GERGAN AND HASSNAIN : History of Ladakh.
HASSNAIN : Buddhist Kashmir.
HASMAT ULLAH KHAN : Tarikh-i-Jammu vo Kashmir.
LAMBART : Trip to Kashmir and Ladakh.
MOORCROFT : Travels.
SUMI TOKAN : Himalayan Culture.
TORRENS : Travels in Ladakh.
VIGNE : Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh and
Iskardu.
WARD : Sportsman Guide to Kashmir
and Ladakh.

