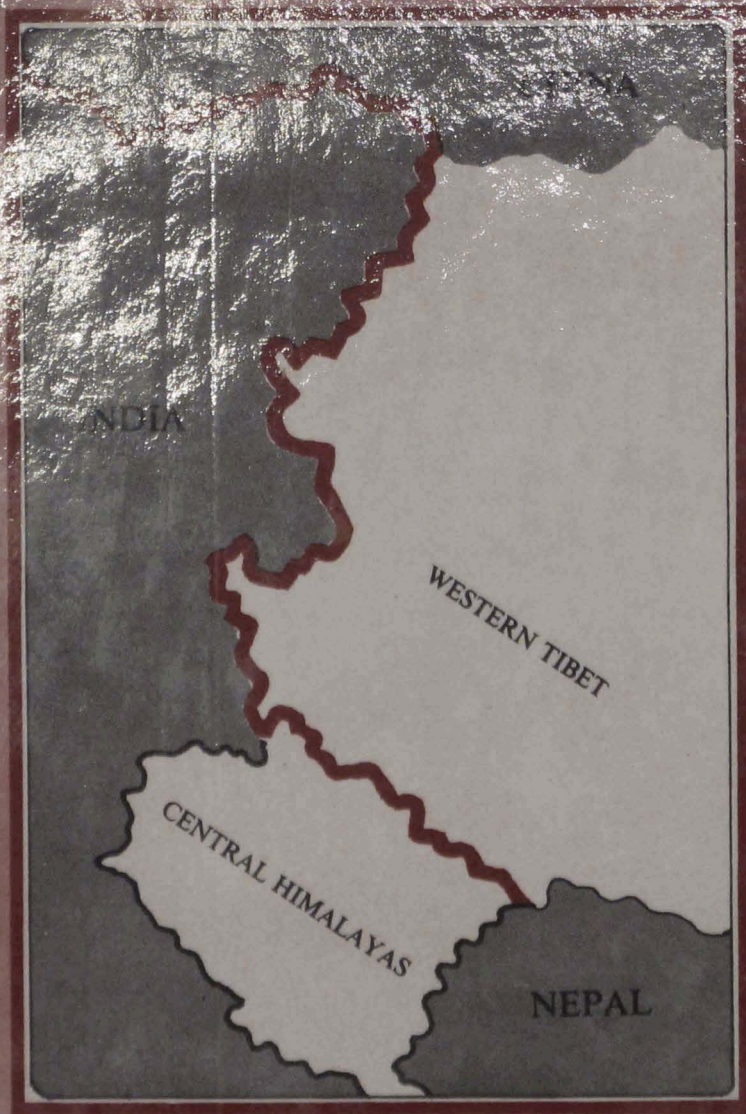


Across the Himalayas Through the Ages

A STUDY OF RELATIONS BETWEEN CENTRAL
HIMALAYAS AND WESTERN TIBET



KHEMANAND CHANDOLA

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Himalayas and Western Tibet

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PATRIOT PUBLISHERS
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Contents

Preface	vii
Acknowledgements	x
Introduction	xi
1. The Central Himalayas : Abode of Eternal Snows	1
2. Land and the People (Central Himalayas)	14
3. Land and the People (Western Tibet)	36
4. Religious Architecture	55
5. A General Mart	68
6. Trade Through the Ages	83
7. Trade Pattern Between Hundes and the Himalayan Districts	95
Bibliography	107
Index	111
<i>Photographs and Documents</i>	

Preface

The act of removing Buddha's statue from its seat at Barhat in Uttarkashi, Garhwal was, to say the least, a negation of history. No doubt those were the days when the Himalayas were passing through a kind of 'heat' it had never witnessed before in its history. However, the facts tell their own story. Hence this book.

Various aspects of life of the Himalayan man reveal themselves to the reader as he goes through the pages of this book and much before reaching the end of the story, a realisation dawns upon him that how selfish and how small have been those men who in their zeal to look taller, completely ignored the wishes and aspirations of the sons and daughters of the land of eternal snows.

The author has no desire to malign anyone. However, the accounts given in the book are sufficient to shake the conscience of those who claim to have it.

The organisation of the material used in this volume has been divided into seven chapters. The first half of the first chapter deals with the geography of the central Himalayas rather extensively. The author seems to impress upon his readers that nature has not deprived this land of every thing that is of human interest; on the contrary much has been shown to attract him to this region. The description of the mountains and peaks with the help of the references from well known mountaineers like Dr. Longstaff, E.E. Shipton and others is vivid and pleasing. The second half of the same chapter, which is a survey of the plateau of Ngnari-kor-sum, is equally vivid and knowledgeable.

The first part of the second chapter deals with the various tribes inhabiting the Himalayas within historical times and beyond. It is an attempt, probably for the first time, to put the Himalayan man in historical perspective and the job has been done rather satisfactorily. The chapter under discussion may give a jolt to the caste sentiments of a sizable section of the present generation of the Himalayan population, especially in the central Himalayas. Those interested in the subject of history may feel inspired to collect more knowledge from the past.

The second part of the second chapter is an account of relations between the princes of the central Himalayas and the rulers of the Ngnari-kor-sum. Here the reader learns how easy had been international frontiers over the Himalayas. Here he comes to know that relationship between the princes of central Himalayas and the rulers of Ngnari-kor-sum was never a subject of an external interference till their independent existence.

Third chapter onwards, the reading is quite absorbing. 'Suvarnagotra' (modern western Tibet) is one of the seventy countries of the seventh century India. The capital of 'Amazonian Kingdom' has been traced somewhere in Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh.

In the fourth chapter the information given to the reader is about the religious rituals and the objects of worship in the central Himalayas and Ngnari-kor-sum, which are either similar or have little difference. Vishnu, Siva and Buddha are among common deities. In subsequent chapters a history of trade between the two lands, mentioned above, has been traced within historical times and beyond.

The pattern of trade between the merchants of central Himalayas and those of Ngnari-kor-sum on the one hand, and between the traders of Tibet and the merchants of western China on the other, is an interesting comparison.

An interesting blending of commerce and family relations is witnessed around international frontiers in which trade correspondentship was considered a commodity which could be sold and purchased according to the circumstances.

The 'Gamgya' was not merely a document, it was a tradition.

In the end one can safely state that there is a lot in this book for scholars to ponder over, and for the managers of the modern states to make investigations.

The approach to the history of the Himalayan population in this book is most welcome, especially from the pen of a son of the soil.

3 Balbir Avenue

Dehra Dun.

31 March, 1986

KALPANA SEN

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In the end, let me acknowledge with thanks the cooperation which the editorial and production departments of the Patriot Publishers extended to me in bringing out this book.

KHEMANAND CHANDOLA

Introduction

This is the first part of the proposed four volume study of the relations between the peoples across the Himalayas. In this volume an endeavour has been made to narrate the story of the people of Central Himalayas with special stress laid on the territory between the Sarda and Sutlej on the cis-Himalayan slopes and the province of Ngnari-kor-sum, west of Mansarovar and east of Ladakh, on the trans-Himalayan side.

The cis-Himalayan territory related to the present study has been described by various names during historical times and before. It was known as Kulind Janpad, Kiratmandal, Khasmandal, Utrakhand and Garhwal-Kumaon. Similarly the trans-Himalayan territory under discussion is known by a number of names, such as Himavat, Suvarnagotra, Suvarnabhumi, Shanshung, Guge, Hundes, Ngnari-kor-sum and Western Tibet.

The cis-Himalayan part comprises two divisions of Uttar Pradesh, viz. Garhwal and Kumaon. In the course of the present study Nepal on the east and Himachal Pradesh on the west have obviously come to play a significant role.

The trans-Himalayan province of Ngnari-kor-sum consists of four Dzongs (counties) viz., Purang, Dapa, Tsaprang and Rudok. Their neighbours to the east, Tibet proper, and to the west Ladakh have to a considerable extent become a part of the study.

The territories merge into each other, not only geographically, but ethnically, historically, culturally and economically also. The relations between the two territories go back to the time of the *Puranas*, *Mahabharat* and even earlier.

The territories under the study have been the playground of various tribes, such as the Kirats, Nagas, Kulinds, Tankans, Khas, Huns, Sakas etc.

Within the historical times beginning from 250 BC till the end of the 17th century AD, the Lichchhavis of Vaisali played a significant role in the plateau on the far side of the Himalayas. Besides becoming a ruling dynasty, the Lichchhavis are credited with introducing and patronising the Pon religion in the ancient land of Shang-shung.

Between the 12th and 14th centuries AD, the Mallas of Dullu in western Nepal succeeded in building an empire on both sides of the Himalayas under discussion, eclipsing even the Lichchhavis for a brief period.

One of the Malla princes of the Dullu lineage is credited with installing a statue of Buddha (worshipped as *Duttatreya* by the local population) at Barhat in Uttarkashi district of Garhwal division. There is an inscription over the body of the statue in Tibetan giving the name of the donor of the statue and some other information.

The mysterious disappearance of the Buddha statue at a particular juncture of the Himalayan history, i.e., during the early sixties of the present century when sufficient heat was generated over the northern snows, was the reason for writing this book which seeks the return of the Buddha statue to its original place at Barhat.

24, Tegh Bahadur Marg

Dehra Dun (U.P.)

31 March, 1986

KHEMANAND CHANDOLA

1. The Central Himalayas : Abode of Eternal Snows

It is probably from the snowy ranges of Garhwal that the word Himalaya took its origin for it is this region which is connected with most ancient traditions of the Indo-Aryan race.¹

Though not an isolated tract detached from rest of the Himalayas, yet it differs somewhat in its physical geography from the other Himalayan regions.² The greater part of it is drained by the Ganga and those streams within the hills which flow into it. The Ganga basin with its subordinate systems to the north of the water parting, as a rule follows the Ghat lines of the Himalayas and on the extreme left separates the system of the Jad-Ganga, one of the head-waters of the Bhagirathi, from the Hop-Gad an affluent of the Sutlej. In the east, river Sarda separates the region from Nepal. In the south, the Tarai forests and a few valleys called "Duns" lie between the Himalayas and the Gangetic plains. The length of the Central Himalayas is 200 miles. This part stretches from the Kali to the Sutlej. There are bifurcations at Badrinath and at the Sutlej.

The whole region consists of a succession of deep gorges and steep hillsides; the height above sea level varies from over 1000 feet at Lachhmanjhoola to 25,660 feet on the top of Nanda Devi. Nowhere is there an unbroken stretch of as much as a square mile of even approximately level land. The ridges of the hills are, as a rule, so sharp and irregular that a path cannot be constructed along them. Here and there

the valleys widen out somewhat, and approximately level pieces of as much as one hundred acres are occasionally encountered. Not infrequently these level pieces of land flanking the rivers are ranged in a series of gigantic terraces.

The mountain system can be divided into five zones.

First Zone : The outer zone of mountains which is contiguous to the plains of India contains the small Siwalik ranges. "The valleys in the rear are formed by a long gentle declivity sloping inwards and meeting the foot of the next line of mountains that run on the whole parallel to the outer line but from five to ten miles further in. This longitudinal depression, as may be supposed, is by no means continuous but broken up into separate short valleys by the occasional parted confluence of the two ranges of hills that usually form distinct lines, as well as by the passage of the streams that drain the interior of the mountains".³ These valleys are called "Duns". The width of the zone varies from ten to fifty kilometres, being narrow in those places where the Siwalik range is jammed against the lesser Himalaya and wide where open valleys intervene.

Second Zone : The second zone is sixty to seventy-five kilometres broad and is covered with mountains. It is rather intricate. The peaks do not appear to follow distinct alignments of maximum elevation, but seem to be scattered throughout the region and to possess everywhere a uniform height of between six thousand to ten thousand feet. It is unlike the mountains which are found in Himachal Pradesh or Nepal, which assume the form of longitudinal ranges running generally parallel to the great range.

Agriculture is the predominant feature of this zone in Garhwal and Kumaon. It is very similar to that of the plains of northern India. The cultivation of wheat and barley which is carried on at about 300 feet above the sea level is extended with success to a height of 10,000 feet. The rain crops of plains mainly of rice, flourish upto an elevation of about 5000 feet. The climate in this zone, where the elevation of surface varies from less than 1000 feet to upward of 10,000 feet above the sea level, varies from the intense heat of the plains to the rigours of a snowy winter.

Third Zone : The third zone is fifteen kilometres broad, and is occupied by spurs projecting southwards from the great range, a few peaks of the zone exceed fifteen thousand feet in height.

With the increase of elevation a gradual change in the composition of the forests takes place ; the red Rhododendrons, deodars, and oaks succeed the 'raisulla' or king pine, 'thuners' or yew, 'naspoti' or white Rhododendron and 'bindhara' or juniper, while at the top is found 'bhoj' or birch on the very verge of perpetual snow.

During half of the year, the surface of this zone, barring the valleys, is wholly covered with snow. It begins to snow about the end of September and continues to accumulate until the beginning of April. The depth of snow varies from six to twelve feet and is dissipated by the first week of June. However in ravines and hollows it does not entirely disappear before the middle of July. The seasons of spring, summer and autumn are contained within five months from May to September inclusive but an interval of four months without a fall of snow is rare. Rain here is neither heavy nor frequent. However, there is a continued succession of dense clouds and mist.

The surface of the land is stony everywhere, though the soil is commonly black. Flowers are plentiful.

The pasture on ranges adjoining the Himalayas is found to be nutritious for sheep and goats. On the melting of the winter snows towards the end of March, these mountains or spurs of the great Himalayan range, though lofty but not precipitous, become verdant. It is said that a few days are sufficient to restore the starved animals to normal condition. The grass of these pastures is distinguished by the shepherds by the name Bugyal and has the universal reputation of being inexhaustible. The growth during the night compensates fully for the consumption during the day. This zone contains the Alpine valleys including the famous "valley of flowers". The glens here shut in by huge cliffs on either side, some of them of bare granite, present a carpet of sweet smelling flowers intermixed with many varieties of thyme and other romantic shrubs. At certain places these granite cliffs

look magnificent while at others they look menacing and threaten the herds with destruction. There are yet others; they are crowned with everlasting snow rising beyond the wildest imagination. Lower down, nearer the streams are belts of evergreen pine interspersed with dark shades of oak and holly.

Fourth Zone: The fourth zone contains the great lines of snowy peaks. With the exception of low ravines, the great part of this zone is situated above the limits of perpetual snow. This zone seems to rise suddenly like a wall of snow. "The great peaks in this zone are not found on a continuous ridge but are grouped together in masses and are separated from each other by deep depressions through which flow the streams that drain those part of the mountains that are immediately contiguous to the north" ⁴.

There are some forty triangulated peaks of over 20,000 feet above the sea level in this zone. They are roughly divisible into three groups. The first representing an axis of elevation considerably to the south of the present water parting, centres round the twin peaks of Nanda Devi which at 25,660 and 24,379 feet are the highest mountains in the Indian Himalayas. The Nanda Devi group is most complicated and irregular in structure. It is bounded on the west and northwest by the valleys of the Alaknanda and the Dhauli rivers, on the north by the valley of Girthi and the Milam peaks, on the east by the Milam valley and on the south by the river Pindar.

"Changabang", wrote Dr. Longstaff, "is the most beautiful mountain I have ever seen. Its north-west face, a sheer precipice of over 5,000 feet, being so composed of white granite with a pale pinkish tinge, that it is at first mistaken for snow lying on the cliffs at an absolutely impossible angle" ⁵. Changabang is a member of the Nanda Devi group of mountains. The topography of Nanda Devi presents difficulties of access which are unique. The mountain rises from the middle of an almost complete crater-like amphitheatre of mountains whose walls are 20,000 feet high. On the east the highest peak rises abruptly from the end of a buttress, two miles long and about 23,000 feet in height, which connects it with a separate mountain, Nanda Devi East, of 24,379 feet. On all other sides it

rises a sheer 10,000 to 12,000 feet from the glaciers which encircle its base. But this central 'crater' is only part of another almost complete ring of mountains measuring a full one hundred kilometres in circumference, from the east of which spring a dozen measured peaks of over 20,000 feet including Dunagiri on the north, Nanda Devi on the east and on the south Trisul and Nanda Ghungti, erroneously mentioned as Nanda Ghunti in the maps. For one hundred kilometres of this distance there is no known depression below 17,000 feet, and in this distance it is only being crossed by the Bagini pass, 21,000 feet.⁶

Rising from the western foot of Trisul and from the southern slopes of the next peak on the north-west which is known to the hill people as Nanda Ghungti (Nanda in her bridal veil), the Nandakini river flows in a westerly direction to join the Alaknanda at holy Nandprayag.

The two peaks of Nanda Devi are joined by a horizontal rock bridge some two miles in length. From this ridge the precipice falls in one unbroken sweep to the glacier which lies at its foot, 9,000 feet below the summit. The rock wall thus formed is perhaps without an equal anywhere in the world, writes E.E. Shipton. He describes the peak in a moonlit night thus : "Before us rising out of a misty shadow-lake of deepest purple stood the twin summits of Nanda Devi exquisitely proportioned and twice griled by strands of white nimbus. This was backed by white indigo, changing to mauve as it approached southwest where the pyramid of Trisul stood in ghastly attendance. Then after passing through every degree of shade and texture, the colour died leaving the moon to shed her silver light over a scene of ravishing loveliness, and to revive within me childish fancies too easily forgotten in the materialism of maturer years. I can never hope to see a finer mountain view".⁷

The second group, a prolonging of the same axis of elevation, fills the angle formed by the valleys of the Alaknanda and Dhaulī. This group is led by the mighty Kamet 25,450 feet which stands commanding and dominating far away in the background, a mile to the south of Hundesh frontier. Its northern slope lies in that country (Hundesh). The main axis

of elevation thus articulates with the water parting, although streams rising from the Hundesh slopes flow into the Sutlej and thus eventually reach India. Standing beside the Nanda Devi group and looking around Kamet, E.E. Shipton describes the scene thus, "Beyond, standing out above a belt of dark clouds was a wonderful panorama of the Garhwal mountains, close at hand on the extreme left rose the graceful head of Nilakantha in superb contrast to the massive shoulders of the Badrinath group. Then Kamet ruling despotically over the colony of peaks of the Hundesh borderland, then the glaciers of Hathi Parbat, and lastly to the north a wonderous mass of mountains of all shape and size."⁸

The third group belongs to Uttarkashi district and centres on the peaks around Gangotri, but the glaciers of its eastern slope discharge their waters into the valley of Alaknanda. This group comprises five magnificent snowy peaks called Rudra Himal, Vishnupuri Himal, Brahmapuri Himal, Udaygiri Kantha and Swargrohini, which start up boldly and abruptly from the head of the Gangotri glacier some miles above the Gomukh. These are mentioned in the maps as the Satopanth peaks of Garhwal. The features of this group correspond with the general physical features of the other two groups. "The peaks are massive in structure but soaring in outline connected by curtains of steepness, the whole being veiled and draped with a dazzling garment of snow"⁹.

Fifth Zone : The fifth and the last zone is about forty kilometres broad and contains the troughs of rivers rising behind the great Himalayas. The average height of the beds of the troughs is 1,400 feet and the mountains intersecting them 19,000 feet. The average height of the zone is considerably less than that of the snow zone.

The ranges covered with perpetual snow and the highest altitude of the Himalayas occur about 150 kilometres from the southern limits of the mountains.

The boundary range between the Himalayas and Hundesh is not the Ladakh range at all, but the Zanskar range. The great Himalayan range throws a bifurcation to the north from which arises this complexity. This bifurcation or rather only the northern bifurcation known as Zanskar range separates the

Great Himalayas from the Ladakh range throughout Hundesh. "The boundary range between the mountain systems like the Himalayas and Tibet is not purely a topographical question, because geography recognises the claims for consideration of ethnology and philosophy. Geography has always to consider the local population, their outlook, their views and their language. Because we have to make a topographical compromise that will be in harmony with the ethnological and linguistic conditions, we are led to place the eastern Himalayan boundary on the Nepal-Tibet watershed and the western boundary in the Zaskar range. The Zaskar range after leaving the Great Himalayas culminates in the peak of Kamet".¹⁰

Intervals between the snowy peaks are found in the neighbourhood of the principal rivers ; at the intervals are found the mouths of the passes—eight in number and commencing from the west as follows :

At the head of the Jad-Ganga, a tributary of the Bhagirathi, there are three passes.

At the head of the Saraswati, a tributary of the Alaknanda, is Mana pass.

At the head of the river D'hauli, a tributary of the Alaknanda there are four passes known to the local population as Jhidudhura (16,620 feet), Damjandhura (19,529 feet) Hotidhura (16,380 feet) and Ghirtidhura (around 16,000 feet). The last named was the most frequented during the trade season between Garhwal and Hundesh. There are three passes between Ghirtidhura and western Nepal border.

The Land of Snows or Ngnari-kor-sum

After traversing mountain after mountain one suddenly encounters spread out before the eyes an arresting spectacle of a plain that, without any sign of water, or vegetation, or of animal life, stretches away as far as one can see in a north-westerly direction and behind which are mountains that gradually fade away in the distance, with only a peak lightly tipped with snow here and there.

The plain is about 200 kilometres in length and 25 to 100 kilometres in breadth. Its northern border though mountainous is hardly snowy, neither are the peaks as high as the ranges of the Himalayas on its southern edge. Kailash is the highest peak about 22,000 feet above sea level and another peak to the west of Kailash is above 20,500 feet. The surface of the plain varies in elevation from above 16,000 feet along its southern edge to about 15,000 feet in the central parts where it is transacted by the river Sutlej. Eastern part of the plain is mountainous which rises abruptly from the level surface like islands and rocky coasts from the sea.¹¹

High and cold upland suitable for little but pastoral uses, occupies the greater part of Ngnari-kor-sum, Hundesh of hill Indians and western Tibet of modern times 'Ngnari' signifies clear and pure, which is appropriate enough to the fine air and water of the land. 'Kor-sum' means three circles, as the tract was divided into three parts by the geographers.

The division of Ngnari-kor-sum from Bod (Tibet) is quite natural. The elevation of this part makes it unfit for agriculture, whereas the eastern part is lower, warmer and thereby cultivable. The total area of this tract, Ngnari, is about 90,000 square kilometres.

The districts of Ngnari are Rudok on the north, Guge on the south-west, and Purang on the south-east. Rudok is encircled by lakes, Guge by rocks, and Purang by glaciers or snowy mountains. Rudok is traversed by the largest lake of Ngnari. There are many more, though smaller in size, giving the district a character of its own. The whole area is a succession of flat valleys similar to those that contain the existing lakes and exhibiting marks of others now extinct.

Guge is the central part (two districts of Tsaprang and Dapa) where the precipices of conglomerated alluvial earth are unequalled in all Ngnari and probably in the whole world.¹²

The mountains of Purang are pre-eminently snowy owing to the elevation, in southerly position and in close connection with the Indian Himalayas.

Guge that lies to the north of Garhwal consists of two valleys. Principal places are Chaprang and Tholing. These two places have been the residence of the princes who reigned there till the end of the seventeenth century ¹³

Origin of the Names

Hundesh otherwise called Ngnari-kor-sum occupies the upper basin of the Sutlej and the head-waters of the Karnali River. The origin of the name Hundesh is stated by Prof. Wilson to be derived from 'Hiun', the hill Indians' word for snow, and 'desh' means country. He says it should be 'Hundesh'. Mr. Traill, Commissioner of Garhwal and Kumaon has used the 'expression' in his writings. Capt. Henry Strachy believes this to be wrong and inclines to think that the true name should be Hundesh; from 'Hun' in Sanskrit signifying the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, north of the Himalayas. These people are mentioned in several Sanskrit works such as *Mahabharata*, *Markande Puran* and other books, which refer to the mythological history of this part of the world. Csoma-de-Cores, the great Hungarian scholar was led by a coincidence in the sound of this name to endeavour to trace the origin of his own nation, the European Huns, in this quarter. Another derivation—Hun also means gold in Sanskrit, so Hundesh would signify the gold country.¹⁴

The valleys of Ngnari are the lifeline of the country. Being the only habitable part, their names are generally identical to those of their inhabited places, which are often taken from the chief village, or from the Khar (i.e. castle or seat) of the local government.

In the drainage system of west Ngnari the lakes play an important role, as their basins occupy in all probability not less than 18,000 sq kms., the whole of which is in Changthan in Rudok. Here the flatness of the general level and absence of deep fissures favour such accumulation. Pangong is the largest of the lakes. Its basin has a mean length of about 190 kilometres with a breadth of 100 kilometres and is therefore 19000 sq. Kms. in area. It is hardly likely to be less. Henry

Strachy would put it as being very much more. There are several smaller lakes of fresh water.¹⁵

Many parts of Hundesh are called by other district names which are in no way connected with the fiscal division of the country. We already know about Guge. A second tract, somewhat larger between the Sutlej and Guge is known by the name 'Chumurti', a district famous for its breed of ponies, which are bigger and more powerful than any in the whole of Ngnari-kor-sum, including Ladakh and Baltistan. A third portion, east of Kulu, is called Rong-Jung and a fourth tract about the lake of Mansarovar is named Kangri. All these four names have significance of their own probably in connection with some distinguishing peculiarity of each tract¹⁶

The entire wool trade of Hundesh centres around Mansarovar in the district of Kangri. Whether the wool was exported to Garhwal, Kumaon, Ladakh, Nepal or Simla, it all practically came from this part of the country.¹⁷

The Tableland

For about six miles, after leaving the watershed line on the frontier, one finds oneself as a rule, hemmed in by steep though not rugged spurs, which suddenly merge into almost absolute plain. These plains slope gently to within a few kilometres of the Sutlej, where they break up into narrow ravines.¹⁸

The tablelands are intersected by numerous water courses, the beds of which lie very deep below the plains from 200 to 1,000 feet and more. The cliffs over hanging Sutlej a few kilometres below Dongpu, exceed 2,000 feet. The mountains on the north of Sutlej are rounded and undulating with groups of tiny peaks cropping up here and there. The average height of this range of mountains is not more than 2,500 feet above the general level of the plateau. These mountains can be crossed anywhere. Passes are generally flat defiles, the likes of which a traveller would hardly find when he is crossing the watershed.¹⁹

The view presented by the whole of the Hundesh valley from a central position is that of an extensive plain, interrupt-

ed here and there by a few groups of isolated low ridges lying principally towards the east of the valley and west of the lakes (Mansarovar). There is not a tree to relieve the monotonous landscape. 'Dama', furze, grow plentifully in many places but play no part in the landscape owing to its shade which merges into the colour of the ground. The poplar too, which is cultivated along the lower banks of large streams does not come into general view on the whole. All this makes Hundesh a desolate looking country.

The houses in the district towns of Hundesh are made of uncut stones, like the houses in the villages of Central Himalayas. Clay cement structures are roofed with beams and rafters of poplar wood. The walls of the houses are plastered over with white clay. The houses are always two-storied, the lower one meant for the livestock. The houses in the villages, though hardly ten per cent of the population have them, are of the same construction.

The people of the upper part of the Suttlej and on the higher tablelands are entirely nomadic. Those residing in the vicinity of arable land which generally is along the lower parts of the river Suttlej and its larger tributaries are semi-nomadic and practice animal husbandry as well. Some members of the family are left behind for that purpose, while others take their herds and flocks to distant grazing grounds. The goats of the country are the celebrated goats whose hair is used in shawl making, which are found all over Ngnari-kor-sum.

The Maium pass (17,000 feet), is a great landmark in Tibet, for not only does one of the sources of the great Tsangpu (Brahmaputra) river rises on its south-east slopes, but it also separates the province of Ngnari-kor-sum from the U-Tsang, the central province of Tibet.

While travelling around Mansarovar and Rakes lakes, Sven Hedin found here "the finest ring on earth, which bears the name of Mansarovar, Kailash and Gurlamandhata; it is a turquoise set between two diamonds".²⁰

Another beautiful aspect of the land was described by C.S. Sherring thus: "The moonlight in Tibet is one of the most beautiful things of the country."²¹

The Climate

Winter is the least windy season in Hundesh. Strong southern winds blow during the summer in the southern districts of Ngnari-kor-sum, as those are next to the Indian Himalayas. In exposed situations the winds are often very violent. The force of the wind is greatest in the afternoon or the warmest part of the day, the nights and mornings being usually calm.

Winter is the cloudy season; the number of cloudy days exceed the finer ones; in spring they are nearly equal. In summer the sunny weather greatly exceeds the cloudy and in autumn the sunshine still predominates, but to a lesser degree.

Snow during the day time is unusual. It occurs between midnight and sunrise which is the coldest part of the day.

The snowline in central and western Ngnari attains the extreme height of nearly 20,000 feet, it lowers on approaching the Indian Himalayas.

The geographers Col. S.G. Burrard and H.H. Hayden had to state the following after their extensive survey of the regions, "The two names Himalaya and Tibet represent contiguous mountainous regions, which merge into one another and it has not been possible to define the boundary-line between them with absolute precision."²²

Notes and References

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2. Land and the People

Part I

'Kulind Janpad' and its Population

In the *Guptvas* period, during the year in which they had to live incognito the Pandavas reached the town of Sripur (Srinagar) the capital of Kulind Janpad, Subahu, the Janpad Chief, played host to them.¹ The Pandavas were on their way to the abode of most of the Aryan gods in and beyond the Himalayas. During their sojourn in Janpad they visited the mountains Ushirdhwaj, Mainak, Shwet Parvat; Kalshail, Mandrachal, Gandhmadan and Kailas; the sacred rivers Yamuna, Alaknanda, Nanda, Aparnanda, Kaushiki and Badrikashram situated in Kulind Janpad, the *Mahabharata* informs us.²

Kulind Janpad was a union of one hundred principalities.³ After the conquest of Indraprastha the Pandavas brought the Janpad under their sway to celebrate the Rajsooya Yajnya of Maharaja Yudhishtra.⁴ Arjun was responsible for the Himalayan expeditions.⁵

The six divisions, of which Kulind Janpad was composed, have been enumerated in Markandey Puran. The mountain region of the river Tons was called 'Tamsa'.⁶ Kalsi, Dehradun and Shrugghna Pradesh were grouped together under the name of 'Kalkut'.⁷ The upper reaches of Chamoli and Uttarkashi,

including Kailash and Mansarovar, were called 'Tangan'.⁸ Tehri Garhwal district was recognised as 'Bhardwaj'. Pithoragarh, including its Himalayan region, and the Upper Pindar Valley were known as 'Runku'.⁹ 'Govisan' had Almora and Nainital districts in its fold.

Ptolemy had found that Kulind Janpad extended over the upper reaches of the Vyas, Sutlej and the Ganga under the title of 'Kulindrain'. The other titles of the Janpad in Paniniya Bharat of the fifth century before the Vikram era were 'Kulin', 'Kulun', 'Kulind' and 'Ushinar'.¹⁰ Jaiswal in his '*Hindu Raj Tantra*' writes that the highest official of the Janpad was known as 'Kulindraja'.¹¹

The discovery of Kulind coins in Almora, Garhwal, Dehradun, Saharanpur and Ambala districts has extended the area of the Janpad which includes the entire Central Himalayan territory and the plains near the foothills which is the present Tarai.¹²

The coins discovered so far belong to the period from the third century before the Vikram era¹³ until the third century after the Vikram era,¹⁴ thus providing the Janpad a place in history.

Kulind Janpad Chief Subahu attended Maharaja Yudhishtra's Rajsuya Yajnya. He was accompanied by the Chiefs of various tribes such as the Khas, Jyoha, Dirghbenu (the people wearing plaited hair), Pradar, Pashup, Tangan and Partangan.¹⁵ The presentations for Chakravarti Yudhishtra from the tribal Chiefs were gold dust in leather bags (Pipalika gold) which on emptying made heaps on the ground, handsome yaktails shining like the moon¹⁶; sacred waters of the Ganga, honey and medicinal herbs from the Kailash mountain.¹⁷

We learn from the Adi-Parv of Mahabharata that the Varnashram system prevailed in the Janpad.¹⁸ Various colonies of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras and Malechhas are mentioned in the book.¹⁹ Among the Malechhas are enumerated the Khas, Jyoha, Kulind, Pradar, Tangan, Partangan, Tusar, Dard and Kirat. (Kulind Raj Subahu was also called Kirat Raj).²⁰ The tribes inhabiting the Janpad had permanent dwellings and had also turned nomads.²¹ Among

the tribes mentioned above the Khas, Tusal and Dard had fought on the side of the Kauravas as 'mercenary soldiers' in the great battle.²²

The Kulinds: The Kulinds have been connected with the kanets or Kunets or Kinnars by Cunningham. He describes them as being the inhabitants of the whole of the lower slopes of the Himalayas from the bank of the Indus to the Brahmaputra, and associates Kulinds with the Khasiyas and assumes that they had been inhabiting the Himalayas before the advent of the Aryans in India. He had not missed the discovery of Kulind coins in the region.²³

Kalyan Kumar Das Gupta, on the other hand, described the Kulinds as people of Indo-Aryan origin. He further opines that they were a mountain people inhabiting a narrow strip of land at the foot of the Sivalik hills between the Yamuna and the Sutlej or possibly a wider area including Garhwal.

Powell Price is inclined to connect the Kulinds with Kartipur, mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar inscription and observes that the Katyuris, a comparatively modern people of Garhwal-Kumaon region, are the successors or perhaps the actual descendants of the Kulind Dynasty.²⁴

The Kulinds and Pulinds are considered to be one and the same people, the difference of the initial 'K' and 'P' being a characteristic of Asiatic languages but unknown to Indo-European and Dravidian languages.²⁵

Kirats

The Kirats had been a very important tribe from the standpoint of the ethnography of the Himalayan people on either side of the mountain system. 'Kirat' is defined by Rai Sarat Chandra Das as "one who constantly walks on the extreme boundaries". The word has an identical significance in Sanskrit grammar. He further states that the Aryans familiar with the term mention 'Kirrhada' who used to bring musk from the Himalayas for sale to Indians.

The word 'Kirats' in Tibetan dictionaries is defined as

Mons' signifying 'others', who inhabited the plateau of Ngnari-kor-sum and the Central Himalayan districts, such as Kulu, Garhwal etc. and lived by hunting from remote antiquities.²⁶

Ptolemy would tell us that the Kirats occupied the territory between the Yamuna and Sarada, the Tangnoi sub-division, in company of the Tangans. They associated with the Ijikas along the lower reaches of the river Ganga.²⁷

The *Kashyap Samhita* finds a Kirat centre in the Yamuna valley and the river Bhagirathi is called 'Kirati' in the *Mahabharata*. Obviously the inhabitants of these regions were Kirats. Kalidas in *Kumar Sambhav* also discovered the Kirats in the Gangotri region.

The Kirats played host to Guru Vashistha and Arundhati in the Hindav mountains of the present Tehri Garhwal district. The pair lived like the Kirats, wearing black blankets and eating the food of the mountain dwellers. This information we get from chapter 206 of *Kedarkhand*. The same book has described the hosts of Vashistha and Arundhati as Khasiyas who were inhabitants of Khasmandal also known as Kiratmandal in the ancient times.²⁸

The Kirats, along with the Khas, have been identified by Dr. D.N. Majumdar as one of the three ethnic groups of Central Himalayas, the others being aborigines of the Dom caste, and various tribes of Mongol origin. The Kirats have also been described as Kimpurus and Kinnars in ancient literature.²⁹ They came across the Tibetan Mongols around Mansarovar and in the Valley of Nepal, informs Dr. S.P. Dabral and says "the Kirats were definitely 'Mons' or 'Monpas'".³⁰ In Garhwal they accepted Sivans (offerings to Siva) and were called Bhildas or Bhairas.³¹ Probably this leads Cunningham to conclude that the population of Himalayan districts like Garhwal is a combination of various tribes, most prominent among them being the Kol, Kirat, Khas and the Sakas.³²

All the tribes of Tibeto-Burmese origin who were spread over the Himalayas and the country around the mouth of the Ganga were designated 'Kirat' by the Hindus. They were pushed to the east in the Nepal Valley which they inhabit

in modern times under the caste names of Khambus, Yakhas and Limbus while some of their kins were absorbed by the Aryans, states W. Brook Northy. He states that the Kirats occur in the *Mahabharata*, in the company of the people whose territories border on the frontiers of India i.e. the Yavanas, Sakas, Pahlavas and Chinas³³.

H.C. Roy does not differ much from Brook Northy and expresses the possibility of the Kirats being the people of Tibeto-Burmese origin and the inhabitants of the high Himalayan plateau, around the mouth of the Ganga and the neighbouring sea coast.³⁴ Dinanath Sharma adds that the Kirats ruled over the Nepal Valley by supplanting the Gopals and Abhiras after the visit of Emperor Ashok to that country around 250 B.C.³⁵

In the middle ages also the Kirats continued to find a prominent place in the Central Himalayan region. The Bageswar inscription of Bhudev describes a Kirat prince, who held the territory of eastern Uttarakhand and who was a friend of Katyuri chief Tribhuwan Raj of the 9th century.³⁶

In the 12th century A. D. the territories of Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti were a part of the Kingdom of Guge. The population spoke a dialect of the Tibetan language as their sole or partial means of communication. Their features were of Mongol origin and they were Kirats. The dialect they speak now consists of sixty per cent words from Kirat language. It is said that some of them migrated to Nilang west of Gangotri in Garhwal and are known by the title 'Jads'.

The Khas

The Khas are expressly mentioned in the *Mahabharata* among the mountain tribes of the north. Khasa was a daughter of Daksha, wife of Kashyap and mother of 'Yaksha'. It was by this title (Yaksha) that the Khas people were known upto the first century A.D. They inhabited the region between Mounts of the Meru and Mandara towards the river Sailoda i.e. in the heart of Hindukush and Pamir.

The Khas have also been listed among the tribes who

had brought gold-dust (Pipalika gold) to the Rajsuya Yajna of Yudhistara. The other neighbours of the Khas were Dard, Tangan, Pulind or Kulind, Prasthala, Madra, Gandhara, Vasati, Sindhusenvira and one more, Bahlik, has been added by Bharat Muni.³⁷

The Sabha-Parv of *Mahabharata* describes the Khas as an agricultural community, they also practised husbandry. They inhabited the Tangan district of Kulind Janpad and lived in permanent dwellings.³⁸

Pliny mentions the dwellings of the Khas northwards of all the Indian communities bordering on the city of Kaspatyrus and the country of Paktyika.³⁹

In the *Markandeya Puran*, the land of Khas, which has been described as just 'Khas', and Swarnabhumi both are on the same side of the Brahmaputra. On the other side is Vanarashtra, perhaps the black land, the Gya-nak (China) of the Tibetans. The 'Khas' is Garhwal-Kumaon region and 'Swarnabhumi' is the Suvarnagotra of Huen Tsang and is identified with Ngnarikor-sum.⁴⁰ The Khas have been described by Atkinson as being the principal inhabitants of the region to the west of Kashmir, of Kashmir itself and of the hill countries as far as Nepal. Even now they can be traced from the sources of the Kabul river to the Tista. The author further opines that the Khas were a very powerful race who came from Central Asia and left their name in Kashgar, Kashkara, Hindukush, Kashmir, in the hills between Kashmir and Nepal including Khasmandal, (Kedare Khasmandale) which are the hills of Garhwal and Kumaon and in the plains. 'Kusha' is a dialect spoken in Kashmir, Punjab, Chamba, and northern Kangra.⁴¹

Baramihir had different ideas. "The Khas entered from the Khasiya hills", he wrote (Adhyaya 14, Shloka 5 and 6). Pandit Hari Krishna Raturi believed that the Khas came from the north and were related to the Nagas, the worshipers of the serpent deity.

'Su' was the principal diety of the Khas, and various place names were suffixed with 'Su' or 'Shu' (in the Himalayan countries), The district of 'Maha-su' in Himachal Pradesh, 'Dhara-su' in Uttarkashi, as well as the 'Syun' of the *pattis* and *parganas* in Pauri district such as 'Barasyun', 'Guradsyun'.

'Chalansyun' etc. are some examples.

Atkinson described the customs of the Khas inhabiting the wilder parts of the Himalayas. "They shave their heads clean like Kara-Tangutans while the more settled allow it to grow long and plait it into a queue or tail like the Tangutans proper". The Tanguts have been described by Rahulji as one of the four tribes in the territories of the Mongol-ruled countries. The Amdos of eastern Tibet are descendants of the Tanguts.

Poet Rajshekhar of Jahangir's Court has described the Katyuri rulers of Garhwal-Kumaon as 'Khasadhipati'. In the Katyuri inscription a Thakurra or Khasiya or Kshatriya is mentioned as one of the grant receiving officials.⁴²

The copper plate inscriptions of Prasant Roy of the seventh century and the inscriptions of Narayanpal, Mahipal I, Madanpal and Yashovarman Chandel of the tenth and eleventh century call Garhwal-Kumaon 'Khasdes'.

The name 'Khas' like the name 'Naga' is far too significant to be that of a single tribe, writes Atkinson, and its use at the present day to distinguish the cis-Himalayan people of Khasmandal (Garhwal, Kumaon) from the Huniyas of Ngnarikor-sum is more generic than particular.⁴³ Hodsen finds an Hindu element in the Khasiyas ingrafted within historical times upon an originally Mongolian stock. In the *Imperial Gazetteer*, race relations in the Central Himalayan society of the 19th century have been described in these words: "The connections and inter-marriages divided the Khasiyas into 'Khas-Rajputs' and 'Khas-Brahmins' but 'Rajputs' and 'Brahmins' descended from immigrants from the plains".⁴⁴

The Khasiyas accounted for nine-tenths of the population of the Central Himalayan districts and were extensively spread over the western Himalayas and over the greater part of the Nepalese territory. The race is the most important numerically in almost all the Himalayan countries.

The Khasiya Brahmins perform the duties of priests in almost all the Siva temples of the region including that of Kedarnath, this diety being the original god of the land of the Khas or Khasiyas. The Budheras of Dharali performed similar

duties in the temple of Gangotri and were called 'Khas-Brahmins'. The Budheras according to Pandit Hari Krishna Raturi were 'Kirats'.

Now in the Central Himalayan districts the Khasiyas are more mixed, though the difference is scarcely discernible. Among the Khasiyas there is a great admixture of immigrants from the plains and most of the better classes look down with contempt on the purer members of the Khasiya class, who appear to represent the oldest inhabitants of the region, though now much modified by centuries of close connections and inter-marriages with the population of the plains. The line of division between the Khasiyas and the immigrants from the plains is daily becoming fainter, and has practically reached the point of disappearance.

The Nagas

In the Central Himalayan territories the Khas and the Nagas share equal importance. Naga is a 'mountain' and 'Naagah' is a 'mountain dweller'. The Nagas are the descendants of the sage Kashyap from Kadru, whose progeny were a thousand powerful many-hooded serpents of immeasurable might, according to *Vishnu Puran*. They were a race of trans-Himalayan origin, according to another opinion, who adopted the snake as their national emblem hence their name Naga which is Cobra.⁴⁵

The Nagas, under their king *Takshak*, were inhabiting the great Khandwa forest in the valley of Yamuna near Indra-prastha or Old Delhi, according to the Mahabharata. They were expelled by fire and driven to take refuge in the hills. The Aryans continued their progress and preceded by *Agni*, the God of fire, occupied the whole country as far as Sadanira and Gandak.

Arjuna, during his exile, visited holy places and at Hardwar met Ulupi, the daughter of Nagraja Basuki whom he married. The same record gives a vivid description of the city of Nag Raja saying that it contained two thousand crore Naga inhabitants and the wives of all these Nagas were of

consummate beauty. The city contained more jewels than any person in the world had ever seen and there was a lake there which contained the water of life and in which the Nagas used to bathe.⁴⁶

Pandit Hari Krishna Raturi says that the Nagas who worshipped the serpent as their deity came from Tartary.⁴⁷ Mahidhar Sharma Barthwal shares this view. He says that Hun Rajputs of the Naga race came into Garhwal from Tartary. The 'Negis', a populous caste in Garhwal, trace their origin in the Naga dynasty ruling over the region around the fourth and the fifth century A.D.⁴⁸

There is no doubt that Naga worship had been and is a common practice in the Himalayan countries. According to Francke, Naga worship was probably the most ancient religion of Lahaul and symbolised the creative powers of 'water'.⁴⁹

There are several stories in circulation from Kashmir to Nepal on the prowess of the Nagas in flying from one mountain to another rendering the former waterless. Rahulji mentions this legend and adds that the reason for deserting a mounsain and rendering it waterless has been attributed to the grievances of the diety against the local population.⁵⁰

In Kinnaur the Nagas are called Nagus. Each mountain is ruled over by a Nagus and they have been divided into various categories. Some of them command great respect. The Nagus of Sapni for example are worshipped in the far-flung villages of Brueyi, Kilba, Panoong, Jani, Ramni, and Sapa, to the extent that once a Sadhu, who had come from the plains, declared the Nagus of Sapni as the real 'Sheshnag'.⁵¹

Between the Sutlej and the Sarda there are a great number of Vaishnav and Siva temples dedicated to the Nagas. The Vaishnav temples to the Nagas are at Pandukeswar, Ratagaon, Talor, Margaon, Jelum and Khetrapal Pokhri. There are sixty-five other temples where Siva as Bhairav and Vishnu as Nagraj along with their Shaktis are conjointly worshipped. As a matter of fact small 'Nagraja-temples' have been installed in each and every village, the diety being worshipped by all sections of village society. The Harijans greet the god from a distance.

The Sakas

The homeland of the Sakas in the territory of Gobi and in the Carpathian mountains was suddenly invaded by the Huns about 200 B.C. The Sakas were driven away in all directions. A large caravan reached the Indian plains through Sistan and Balochistan where their chiefs designated themselves as kings. Bhog, Kadfisis, Kanisk, Huwisk and of course Basudev are historical figures among them. Another caravan poured down the Himalayan passes around 126 B.C and made the hills as their home. This could be the reason that they were called Antacharas and Tusharas (the borderers).

It appears from the bulk of evidence available that there were several colonies of Sakas in the hill regions during the Puranic times. Most scholars pointed out the typical graves discovered from various regions of the cis-Himalayas and the trans-Himalayan kingdom of Shang-shung as of the Sakas. Similar graves have also been discovered in South Russia, Altai mountains, Iranian Plateau and Central Tibet.

The descendants of the Sakas in Himalayan regions, according to Rahulji, are the Guddis of Chamba, Lahul and Mandi in Himachal Pradesh and the Gujjars in Jammu, Bushahr and Tehri Garhwal. The latter were forced to grow beards during their visits in the Muslim ruled Indian plains, which they were compelled to visit for the purpose of protecting their cattle, particularly the buffalo-herds, from the Himalayan cold. Their original flocks and herds, acclimatised to cold, were given away in exchange for buffalos because they felt the need for milk and other dairy products, which they found nourishing.

The Khas and the Saka were one and the same people, according to Rahul Sankrityayan. We have it on the authority of *Vishnu Puran* that the Khas were born from 'Kashyap and Khasa', and the Nagas from 'Kashyap and Kadru', though it is yet to be ascertained whether there was only one Kashyap or two different individuals with the same name. Pandit Hari Krishna Raturi's assertion must have been based on the assumption that the Khas and the Nagas were fathered by one

and the same Kashyap. Panditji refers to the ancient literature which says that the Khas tribes were also called Nagas and Kulinds.

The Himalayan studies undertaken by the Anthropological Survey of India are of the opinion that the Khas and Kirat both were originally Mongols. Their descendants in modern times are scattered all over the Himalayan countries under various appellations.⁵² The Khas entered the Himalayas from the west while the Kirats penetrated from the east⁵³ The Kulinds or Pulinds also inhabited the Himalayas during Mahabharata times. Perhaps the tribes including Kirats, Nagas, Khas, Sakas etc. inhabiting Kulind Janpad were called Kulinds.

Rahulji further informs us that the Sakas were kith and kin of the Aryans. Now let us have observations of the great Manu : the Kshatriya tribes of Pandurakas, Ordras, Draviras, Kambojas Yavanas, Sakas, Pradas, Pahlavas, Chinas, Kiratas, Dardas and the Khas became Vrishhalas or outcastes due to the extinction of sacred rites and for having no intercourse with the Brahmins. Further, he declared that "all the tribes which by loss of sacred rites and the like have become outcastes from the pale of the four castes, whether they speak the language of the Malechhas or of the Aryans, are called Dasyus". Most of the Dasyus were descendants from the sage Viswamitra, according to the author of *Aitreya Brahman*.

PART-II

THE DYNASTIES

Naga Dynasty

The Kulind Republic is followed by a dark period of many centuries. In the 4th and 5th centuries the Naga princes appear on the scene. They ruled over the territory between

the Bhagirathi and Alaknanda and in the foothills around Hardwar. Five kings of Naga lineage are inscribed on the two tridents of Gopeswar and Barhat. The script of the inscription of Ganpati Nag on Gopeswar trident and of Guha son of Ganeswar on Barhat trident is Harha. The design and construction of the tridents are identical.⁵⁴

Harha script is also used in the inscriptions of Sarvarman Moukhri. This could fix the period of the Naga lineage in Garhwal at around 5th century A.D.

Two Naga rulers, Ganapati Nag and Nagsen, were defeated by Samudra Gupta. The emperor claims to have extirpated a number of Aryavarta princes in the fourth century A.D.

Sarvanag, a Naga chief, was appointed Vishyapati (Provincial Governor) of Antarvedi district (between the Ganga and the Yamuna and Prayag and Hardwar) by Emperor Skandh Gupta in 466 A.D.⁵⁵

The Katyuris

Another dark period follows and in the 9th century A.D, the Katyuris of Kartikeyapur appear on the scene in the Alaknanda valley,

The Katyuris are the first historical dynasty in the Himalayas. The dynasty had been ruling in the valley of the Alaknanda since the times of the great Sankaracharya. He visited the region towards the end of the 8th century.

The Katyuris are also known as 'Khasadhipati' and 'Kulindraj'.

The earliest traditions record that the possessions of Joshimath Katyuris extended from the Sutlej to as far as the Gendak and from the snows to the plains, including the area of Rohilkhand.

The Katyuris, according to one opinion, were descendants of Basudev, who was said to be the original diety of the Kirat tribe. From the *Mahabharata* we learn that among the Bangas, Purandras and Kirats a powerful king was worshipped as Basudev.

Tradition has it that Basudev (850 A.D.) was the founder

of the Katyuri dynasty and of its capital Kartikeyapur. He was a Buddhist but accepted Brahmanism as his creed towards the end of his life.⁵⁶

Rahul Sankrityayan considers the Katyuris to be the descendants of the Kusan lineage of the Sakas. It has already been recorded that, according to Powell Price, the Katyuris were the 'actual descendants' of the Kulinds.

The geographical situation of the Katyuri capital at Joshimath, close to Hundesh, and the Huns and Chinas as subject tribes of the kingdom, could be an indication of Katyuri extension over the trans-Himalayan region.

In this region the migrations from the south to north and vice versa seem to be a common practice during those times. The Milamwals of Pithoragarh came from Guge to the valley of Milam. They are of Rajput origin. Their forefathers served one of the Garhwal Rajas who gave them Jola in Badhan in Jagir. Hence they were called 'Rawats'. One of these Rawats went through Malari of Niti into Hundesh and entered the service of the Suryavanshi Raja of Hundesh. (Hundesh princes, being descendants of the Lichhavis, called themselves Suryavanshis). One of the successors of the Rawats in Guge came to Milam and built his habitation in the valley. This information we get from the Johar traditions⁵⁷

The village administration in the northern reaches of Katyuri kingdom was in the hands of the Budhas. In the neighbouring state of Kinnaur the 'udheras' performed similar duties. The 'Bhdhas' and the 'Budheras' have been described as Kirtas, the border dwellers of the Mahabharata times, perhaps they were assigned administrative duties owing to their early settlement in the area.

The script of all the six copper plate inscriptions of the Katyuris is Kutila. It is also the script of the 'Pal' inscriptions of the same period, informs Rahul Sankrityayan. In the 9th and 10th century A.D. and a little later Kutila script was used in the birch bark inscriptions in Tibet.

In the 12th century the Mallas of Dullu, a seat of an independent kingdom in western Nepal, invaded the Katyuri kingdom and with this 250 year-old rule of the dynasty came to an end in the Central Himalayas.

The Mallas

The Mallas had brought the entire territory from the Sutlej to the Sarda under their sway. Their rule, however, proved short-lived. They left behind a few inscriptions as symbols of victory in Manaskhand and Uttarakhand (Kumaon and Garhwal). The Malla rulers visited Gopeswar in 1191 A.D. and Barhat in 1209 A.D.

The Mallas divided the territories under their rule into small 'Mandals' and appointed a 'Mandalik' as chief of each territory. After the Gorkha withdrawal the Mandals were cornered by the local chiefs, and in due course of time turned into individual principalities. Every glen or hill became subject to its own chief.

Hundesh, the northern neighbour of the Central Himalayan kingdoms, was also undergoing similar experiences between the 13th and the 15th century A.D. Purang, Guge Daga and Rudok, the districts of Ngnari-kor-sum, had been divided amongst a number of local chieftains. The headquarters of a chieftain was called 'Gar' in the plateau and 'Garh' in the Himalayan region. Both expressions signified 'a camp'. The expression had also travelled as far as Central Europe with the 'Maggyars' (from 'Mag-gar', a 'military camp') of Hungary.

The Panwars

The Panwars had been gaining in strength under their chief Ajaypal in the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand. Ajaypal had already brought a number of 'Garhs' under his sway. During this period, the plundering expeditions into his domain of their northern neighbours, the Huniyas, had increased to such an extent that they did not spare the temples of Badrinath and Joshimath. It appears that Ajaypal could not prevent this and in the meantime he died, His successor Sahajpal also failed to prevent the operations of the Huniyas.

By the end of the 16th century Dapa, the nearest northern 'camp' of the Huniyas, came under a local chieftain

named Kakwa Moar. During this period the plundering operations of Dapa Huniyas had increased manyfold over the upper reaches of the Alaknanda Valley.

Raja Man Shah, a descendant of Ajaypal (1591-1611), decided to protect his territory from the looting activities of the Huniyas. He invaded Dapa Dzung with a large army. Kakwa Moar was defeated and forced to pay an annual tribute of one seer of gold dust and one 'four-horned' Hundesh ram. He was further required to take upon himself the responsibility to stop the plundering of Garhwal territory in future. He was required to give all the conditions of the treaty in writing to the Garhwal chief.

In the year 1611 A.D. Man Shah died and with his death plundering operations of the Dapas were resumed. Sham Shah (1611-1630), son and successor of Man Shah, attacked and defeated the Dapa chief and added one more article of tribute, a *chauri* (yak), to the items already imposed during his father's time.

It was the period of the second Lde dynasty over the kingdom of Guge. Although the reign of the dynasty was confined to a small territory around its capital of Tsaprang, being the *de jure* head of the local chiefs, Lde princes were considered responsible to a certain extent for the plundering operations of the Huniyas into the territory of Garhwal. This resulted in the relations between the rulers of Guge and the princes of Garhwal becoming strained.

The period was particularly a difficult one for the prince of Tsaprang as he had been facing hostilities from his own lamas, a powerful community in the contemporary kingdom of Guge. It is said that the lamas had taken a hostile attitude towards the temporal authority because of their leanings towards Christianity. A Portuguese Jesuit, D' Andrade, had succeeded in reaching Tsaprang through Srinagar, Badrinath and Mana pass in the year 1624, and had managed to gain concessions for his missionary work in the kingdom of Guge.

Raja Sham Shah had probably learnt of the lama revolt against the Guge prince and, seizing the opportunity, attacked the country from Niti, Mana and Jelukhaga passes.

Jesuit D' Andrade was an eye-witness to the invasion which he recorded. "The force which was despatched in the beginning had 12000 men with 11,000 matchlocks and 20 small cannons ; the second force had 20,000 men, and the third one was smallest. Tsaprang armies fought bitterly over the passes and successfully repulsed the Srinagar attack. Garhwal Raja had no option but to retreat.

Tsaprang which had been the capital of Guge was the largest town in the entire trans-Himalayan land for nearly seven centuries together with the nearby monastery of Tholing, a political and religious centre of Ngnari-kor-sum. It exerted an influence that extended to the farthest corners of Tibetan plateau. (At that time Lhasa had not attained its present renown).

D' Andrade had reached Tsaprang in the early days of August 1624 and had met king Jod-yo of Lde dynasty. Having been accorded a customary Buddhist welcome in the court of the prince of Guge, D' Andrade hurried to Goa to get reinforcements for his missionary work over Hundesh plateau. He again reached Tsaprang on August 28, 1625 and impressed upon the prince to build a church in his kingdom. And on April 11, 1626 he laid the foundation stone of a Christian church at Tsaprang. The kingdom unfortunately by then had reached the verge of collapse. D' Andrade and his companions saw it in the last days of its glory and perhaps "unwittingly" they blamed the foundation laying of the church for the downfall of the kingdom.

D' Andrade left for missionary work in the east for Lhasa and within a few months of his departure from Tsaprang the Jesuit mission collapsed. "The lamas had seen their authority gradually being whittled away by the king's enthusiasm for another faith and had finally come out in revolt, aided by soldiers from the neighbouring state of Ladakh. After a month's seige Tsaprang fell, the king was overthrown and the town sacked. With the deposition of the king the power of ancient dynasty of Guge was broken, its territories were absorbed briefly by Ladakh and then came under the dominion of Lhasa. Within 20 years Guge had disappeared from the map of Tibet and its former capital lay in ruins ⁵⁸

It appears from a letter of a companion of D' Andrade,

Father Nuno Coresma, that the ill-fated Jesuit mission was not happy in the land of snows.⁵⁹

After the collapse of the Jesuit mission at Tsaprang, three of its missionaries were put under arrest. Garhwal Raja Prithvipati Shah intervened and got them released.⁶⁰ One of them Malpik, reached Srinagar in 1650 A.D. and initiated the missionary work in the capital of Garhwal. A plot of land was allotted to the mission for the construction of a church. The place now is remembered as 'Padri Bara'. Malpik continued at Srinagar till 1657 during which period he succeeded in converting five Garhwalis to Christianity. One of them later re-entered his original faith and nothing is known of the others. In 1657 the Jesuits wound up the establishment and left the country for good.⁶¹

Raja Mahipati Shah ruled over the kingdom of Srinagar from 1631 to 1635 only. As soon as he took over the reins of administration from his father Raja Sham Shah, the Huniyas on northern borders became once again active plundering the country in the west from Takhnor near Gangotri to Dasoli in the east which is near Joshimath.

Raja Mahipati Shah decided to attack Dapa and marched at the head of a large army with his chosen generals to punish the Huniyas. Dapa did his best to check the opponents over the passes but failed. Garhwal troops advanced swiftly and reached the Sutlej plains. Meanwhile, the Dapa chief died. The troops of Srinagar Raj captured the castle of Dapa and took possession of the Gompa also, which was the seat of administration. According to the treaty which followed, the stream of Sutlej near Tholing became the frontier between Garhwal and Guge.

Raja Mahipati Shah handed over the administration of the territory to his two generals, the famous Bartwal brothers, and marched back to Srinagar. One of the Bartwals took over the reins of the administration and the other stayed over as the head of the army stationed in Hundesh.

With the advent of winter the cold of the plateau became unbearable for the ill-clothed troops of Garhwal. A great number of them fell ill and a still greater number died. Meanwhile Dapa had received reinforcements from a neighbouring country. The combined forces of Hundesh princes

attacked the soldiers of Garhwal and annihilated them probably to the last man. The two Bartwal generals were also slain.⁶² The Dapa Huniyas preserved the swords of Bartwals in the Dapa Gompa probably as a trophy.⁶³ Dr S.P. Dabral writes, "The swords of Bartwals were worshipped in the Gompa along with the idol of Buddha."⁶⁴

Madho Singh Bhandari, the legendary general of Garhwal, was despatched by the Raja of Srinagar to Dapa on learning of the tragedy that had befallen his troops in that land. The general succeeded in bringing round the Huniya chiefs to his view. Since both lands had learnt the lessons of hostilities, the boundaries were decided over the Himalayan ridges near the passes and pillars fixed, making it a durable arrangement for future.⁶⁵

Raja Fateh Shah had taken the reins of Srinagar Raj in the year 1699. The new rulers of Dapa had stopped paying the annual tributes imposed earlier, probably during the negotiations with Madho Singh Bhandari. Raja Fateh Shah attacked Dapa from Niti Pass and forced it to resume the payment of tributes; the Raja left behind a matchlock, a cloak, a hat and a sword as souvenirs to the Dapans. The articles were kept in a Gompa. Rahul Sankrityayan informs us that he had the opportunity of viewing the said articles during his visit to that country.⁶⁶

'Garhwal Raj' lost its freedom in 1803 A.D. with its defeat at the hands of the Gurkhas. The Gurkhas too had to yield to a superior force, the East India Company within a short period. The British had reached the Himalayas in search of the wealth of Hundesh. They had defeated the Gurkhas in 1815 and had taken control of Garhwal and Kumaon. The British East India Company had gathered that Niti pass in Garhwal was the easiest amongst the 'ghats', (passes) to Hundesh which further on leads to Khotan via Gartok. The territory where Gartok is situated was mentioned as Chinese Tartary by the Britishers to appease the Chinese. However, it was realized that the Company could no longer deal with Tibet from China hence "the southwest section of Central Asia, which extends from the Himalayas to the Kuen-luen and includes the hill states of Kashmir and Tibet. This country is both geographically and politically a

mere outwork of India. The various states of which it is composed paid tribute to the Mughal Emperor of Delhi, and must again in due course naturally and necessarily come under British jurisdiction. Kashmir, rescued from Afghans by Ranjeet Singh, may indeed be considered a direct dependancy of Punjab, and Little-Tibet has already on two occasions both through Moorcroft and Dr. Henderson professed its allegiance to the British crown as a means of escape from Sikh domination. Politically perhaps we should derive no strength from the extension of our frontier four hundred miles beyond the plains of the Punjab but the possession of Kashmir and the two natural adits of Central Asia, one by the Bajour and Chitral valley to the Pamir plateau, and the other by the Niti pass and Rudok to Khotan, would commercially be of vast importance, and moreover in view of the undoubted tendency of Russia to encroach in this direction, it would be well we think to preoccupy the ground against the possible extension of a foreign influence, adverse to our interests within the boundary of Karakoram and Kuen-luen", Observed Maj. Gen. Henry Rawlinson.⁶⁷

On the other hand, finding no utility for a part of Garhwal Raj, west of the Alaknanda, known as Tiri (foreign Garhwal) the British handed it over to the Raja under the tutelage of the Company. The reasons for the decision were that there were no easy passes to Hundesh in the territory of Tiri and a large section of the population in the region was unruly, according to their estimates, therefore it would be just a tax on the Company's resources.

The township of Tiri was founded as capital of independent state of Tiri at the confluence of the Bhagirathi and Bhilangana. Moorcraft on his second Central Asian expedition visited the town and wrote, "at Tiri, Pritam Shah, the son of the last Raja of Garhwal came to meet us and accompanied us to our tent. I had several interviews with him during my stay and found him an active intelligent man, very desirous of improving the state of his country. According to his assertions an annual tribute was paid by Hundesh to Garhwal very few years back and was suspended only by the Gorkha conquest. The Raja therefore had sent a mission to Tsaprang to claim

its renewal and had been informed that his demand would be referred to the Court at Peking.⁶³

The state of Tiri had on another occasion approached the authorities at Tsaprang to settle the dispute caused by the disturbance brought about by Gorkha rule. A number of Jad families, mostly from Kinnaur, who had migrated there long back, had made Nilang and Bhatwadi their home; a few new comers from Hundesh, known as Bahir Jads, had joined the Jads. All of them were traders and related to the marts of Puling, Tholing and Dapa in Hundesh. During Gorkha reign Hundesh trade had come almost to a standstill. There also had arisen a border dispute with Tsaprang, a district under a Dzong-pon (district official). A delegation of Tiri state visited Tsaprang. The delegation received the simple reply, "Tsaprang would apprise of its views after consulting the Chinese authorities."⁶⁹ It was a common practice in Tibet to dismiss the foreigner with a sweet reply expressing their helplessness to do any thing on their own.

Capt. H. Bower during his visit to that country in 1893 A.D. had a similar experience which he has narrated to his readers: "When I pulled the Chinese passport out of my pocket and asked them what was the meaning of Amban's presence at Lhasa if that was not to be read or to come into the discussion. They replied that Amban was allowed to live at Lhasa as a visible sign of the friendship existing between the two countries, but Tibet was in no way under China. At the same time they produced a letter that had been sent after them from Lhasa, in which they were instructed to take no notice of any Chinese passport but send us back the way we had come".⁷⁰ Capt. Bower continues, "The fact that the Tibetans do not allow Chinese women to come into the country is itself enough to show how shadowy are any claims the Chinese may have to Supreme Sovereignty. I do not suppose any one will advance the theory that the order issues from the Peking government". The authorities at Tiri once again made an attempt to regularise trade. In 1917, the Raja of Tiri sent a timber merchant in the person of Ghananand Khanduri to settle the outstanding disputes which were immediately solved to the satisfaction of both the parties.

The trade relations became normal.⁷¹

There is no recorded dispute between Tsaprang (West Tibet) and Tiri Garhwal state from 1917 to 1948, i.e. till the time of its merger with the Indian Union.

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3. Land and the People

PART I

Yaksha and Salanu

Yaksha, an ex-minister of Emperor Ashok, while in exile, was camping on the bank of river Shel-Chab-Kengma of Wu-than (Khotan) with his family and seven hundred followers. Just at that time Salanu, son of Chinese Emperor Che-hwangte, the builder of the Great Wall of China and a contemporary of Ashok Maurya of India, had reached the town of Mekar on his way to Wu-than with ten thousand troops to conquer the countries of the west. Two of Salanu's servants came across the men of Yaksha and knowing each others intentions the two sides decided to live in peace together. As differences cropped up they decided to divide the country of their settlement. Salanu and his men received the territory below the river Wu-than, below Della Mekar and Kamshing which thereafter belonged to China and was named Chen-than or 'China-sthan' by the Indians. The entire region above the river Wu-than towards India was given to Yaksha and his followers and thenceforward belonged to India and became Arathan or 'Arya-sthan' of the Chinese. The two peoples having settled in the land, founded towns and colonies giving the land a composite culture; the characters and the language

greatly resembling those of India and the customs and manners those of China.

Yaksha and Salanu were the earliest rulers of Wu-than (central place). After Salanu's death, his son Yeula became king and founded the city of Wu-than, now called Khotan. This was one of the points where two great empires, the Indian and the Chinese, embraced each other.¹

This account together with a short history of Khotan was obtained by a Tibetan historian from a roll of a birch bark manuscript in the grand library of Sakya—White Land—in the 13th century. He said that the early Patriarch King of Tibet obtained it from the Buddhists of Wu-than in the 7th century.

The Lichchhavis

Tibetan writers described the country around Khotan, as the land of "the lion people" whose first king (250 B.C.) was derived from the Lichchhavis of Vaisali. The chief prince of the Lichchhavis was called the "Great Lion" or "the Noble Lion".² An Indian refugee prince of the family of Lichchhavis of Vaisali has come to light from Tibetan sources. The emigration to Tibet took place in 250 B.C. and this dynasty of Indian origin ruled there for many centuries.

The earliest mention of the Lichchhavis in Sanskrit literature is in Kautilya's *Arthshastra*. They have been invariably represented as Kshatriyas in the ancient literature of India and of Tibet. The *Mahāparinibbana Sutta* relates that they claimed a share of the Buddha's remains on the ground that they were Kshatriyas like the Buddha himself. "The Exalted One was a Kshatriya and so are we, so we are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Exalted One". In the Jain *Kalpasutra*, Trisala, sister of Chetaka, the Lichchhavi leader of Vaisali, is called Kshatriyani.

The Lichchhavis were the most powerful of the clans of the Vajian confederacy and were always found amongst the foremost champions of non-Brahminical creeds like Jainism and Buddhism.³

“The Lichchhavis were Tibetan in origin”, according to V.A. Smith. This theory is supported on two grounds: the custom of exposure of the dead and their judicial procedure. This theory has been contested by Yogendra Mishra; he says that the Lichchhavis practised the custom of the exposure of the dead as was done in the Vedic age and it is pointed out that the Tibetans borrowed their judicial procedure along with their religion from the Lichchhavis. The Lichchhavis enjoyed a degree of prestige not usually accorded to foreigners.⁴ The Buddha compared them with the Tavatimsa gods.* The high pedigree of the Lichchhavis also appeared from a passage in a work of Jain sacred literature, the *Sutrakritanga*, (1-13-10), where we find, “a Brahmin or Kshatriya by birth, a scion of Ugra race or a Lichchhavi, who enters the order eating alms given him by others is not stuck up on account of his renowned *gotra*”. In Buddhist sources and Jain records the Lichchhavis are Vashistha by *gotra*. The *Aitareya Brahman* informs us that the *gotra* or *pravara* of a Kshatriya is the same as that of his *purohit* or family priest who makes him perform the sacrifices. Thus the Vashistha *gotra* was the *gotra* of their family priest and the Vashisthas were the family priests of the kings of the solar race.

One of the reasons for the Lichchhavis coming into prominence was their emergence as masters of Vaisali and Nepal in the coming period.⁵ In the Nepal *Vamsavalis* the Lichchhavis have been allotted to the solar race. There are twenty-three rulers of the Lichchhavi lineage mentioned in the rock inscriptions of Nepal, headed by Supushy who went to Nepal and made the town of Pushpapur his capital.⁶ Kumar Devi, daughter of the Lichchhavi ruler of Nepal, was married to Chandra Gupta. She was the mother of the great Samudra Gupta. Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya appears with ‘Lichchhavayah’ on his coins.⁷

After the conquest of Nepal the Lichchhavis might have conquered Tibet also. The dynasty of Prasanjit, a Lichchhavi

* *Tavatimsa gods are in the heaven of the Great Thirty Three: the principal deities of the Vedic Pantheon.*

prince, is credited with the great Tibetan ruler Sron-btsain-gain-po, probably seventeenth from Prasanjit in the lineage (Chinese date 600 to 650 A.D.).⁸ "The royal family who reined in Middle Tibet (Ngnari-kor-sum) from about 250 years before Jesus Christ till the 10th century, was probably derived from India from the Lichchhavi race and it is certain that their religion and their literature were of Indian origin.⁹ Csoma-de-Corose gathered the information from Tibetan sources. In Tibetan annals the existence of a Trans-Himalayan Kshatriya kingdom is undoubtedly mentioned. The kings of Tibet and Ladakh trace their origin from the Lichchhavis.¹⁰ The Khalate inscriptions in Brahmi and Kharoshthi characters of 200 B.C. are a pointer.¹¹

Indian rules (religious) were practised by the common folk and the Shramanas around Khotan in the land of Shanshan, and also by the masses of neighbouring kingdoms in that region, informs Fi-hsian, the Buddhist pilgrim from China on his way to the "western countries". The difference in observing the religious practices as noticed by the pilgrim were: 'the common people did them loosely and Shramanas exactly'. He further describes the inhabitants: "the clothes of the common people are coarse and like those worn in our land of Han, some wearing felt and others rough serge or cloth of hair. This was the only difference seen among them. The King professed (our) law, and there might be in the country more than four thousand monks who were all students of Hinayana".¹²

Fi-hsian next reports from Udyana or the valley of Swat river, that this region is "indeed a part of North India. The people all use the language of Central India. The food and the clothes of the common people are same as in the Central Kingdom".¹³

Huen Tsang the most renowned of the Chinese pilgrims to India, also mentioned Khotan. It was on the northern borders of Suvarnagotra, "one of the seventy countries of India". The land of Suvarnagotra is surrounded by the kingdom of Fan (Tibet) on the east and Sampala (San-pa-ho) on the west. It is inside Brahmapur. The northern country, Suvarnagotra, is a "continuation of mountains and hills, its ground is dry and

salty".¹⁴ The country is in the midst of mountains.¹⁵ It is called Suvarnagotra because a superior variety of gold is produced here. The country is extended from east to west and contracted from north to south. It produces winter wheat, cattle, sheep, goats and horses. The climate is extremely cold.¹⁶

Modern Ngnari-kor-sum (W. Tibet) is the land known as Suvarnagotra in ancient times.

Amazonian Kingdom

Huen Tsang further describes the country as being ruled by a woman, therefore called as "kingdom of women". For ages women have been the rulers of the country. The husband of the reigning woman was called the King, but he knew nothing of the affairs of the state. The men managed the affairs of war and agriculture. This country is professed in *Vishnu Puran* by the name of Musika "which would be possessed by the Konakas or Konas". It was also called "Stri-Rajya" or Amazonian kingdom. The statement of Huen Tsang is corroborated by the records in Chinese annals and proves that Amazonian kingdom was a reality.¹⁷ The tribe of eastern Tibet, known as Nu-wang due to the fact of their being ruled by a woman has been described as the Tung-nu in the Tung history to distinguish them from a tribe possessing similar institutions to the west. They are also mentioned in the northern history.¹⁸ An account in the Sui history recorded in 586 A.D., states that, "the people in each successive reign make a woman their prince. The surname of the sovereign is Supi. They build cities in the mountains with the houses of many storeys, the sovereign's house having nine in which there were several hundred of female attendants and a court is held every five days, the men having nothing to do with the government. They only fight and cultivate the land. They live principally by hunting. The weather is very cold. The natural products are copper and gold ore, musk, cinnabar, yaks, and two breeds of horses, in addition to salt in abundance which they carry to India. They gain much from this

traffic. When the queen dies they collect a large sum of gold money. They select from the family two clever women, of whom one is made the queen and the other vice sovereign. The title of the queen is 'Pinchiu' and of the female ministers of the state 'Keopali'. The sons take the surname of the mother. The written characters are the same as those of India. At the burial of their sovereign several tens of great ministers and relatives were buried at the same time".¹⁹

The land between Khotan and Brahmpur, and Tibet and Sampala, (probably Swat valley), has been described as the situation of the country of this Amazonian kingdom. Tall houses of upto nine storeys is not a practical proposition in the plateau of Ngnari-kor-sum, because "not a vestige of any sort of wood grows—the land only being covered with short grass". According to Prof. G. Tucci, "Chaprang, the capital of Guge, is an enormous troglodytic town peeping from empty caves".²⁰ On the other hand, at Kanum on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, Capt. Johnson found, "flat roofed houses, some of them seven to eight storeys high and looking like watch towers".²¹ Rahul Sankrityayan observed that in the villages of Kinnaur, "the Thakurs own small Garhs (Castles) 50 to 60 feet in length, a little less in width and five, six or seven storeys in height".²²

In Rawain Pargana of Uttarkashi district in Garhwal division, an eastern neighbour of Kinnaur, tall houses up to six storeys is a common feature of the landscape. Therefore the capital of the Amazonian kingdom could be situated in the cis-Himalayan region.

Polyandry as an institution exists in certain pockets of Kinnaur, in the Rawain area of Uttarkashi, and in the plateau of Ngnari-kor-sum. The territories were a part of the kingdom of Guge in the past. Polyandry together with the 'women's kingdom' carries some weight.

The custom of burying women attendants, food, drinks and utensils along with the body of a sovereign was prevalent amongst the princes of Kinnaur region. According to Frazer, three queens, two ministers, twelve women and one attendant were buried with the body of Raja Ugar Singh in the year 1811.²³

The boundaries of Shang-shung and that of Suvarnagotra or the Amazonian kingdom by all accounts are one and the same. "Shang-shung", as Rai Sarat Chandra Das informs, "is a country which is called Guge or Upper Bushahr".²⁴

Brahmpur of Huen Tsang is recognized as the present Uttarkashi district and as the Chinese traveller would inform us the country of Suvarnagatra was situated to the north of Brahmpur. Kinnaur is the north-western neighbour of Brahmpur.

Guge is mentioned in the Tung-buang documents (p 156 where it might be understood as being just another name for Shang-shung. Its capital at a certain time was at Khyanglung to the west of Mount Kailas.²⁵ The country appears to have consisted of the entire area of the present Ngnari-kor-sum.²⁶

The Tibetan Empire

Shang-shung gave birth to the great conquerer and first Emperor of Tibet Srong-btsain-sgain po. He was a descendent of the dynasty of Prasanajit and was seventeenth in the lineage. This must be one of the reasons that the kings of Ladakh and Tibet trace their origin from the Lichchhavis of Vaisali.²⁷ Srong-btsain-sgain-po was born in the house of a chief of Zanskar in Ladakh. The Emperor founded the city of Lhasa and shifted the capital from Yar-lung, thereby changing the 'place of goats' (Ra-sa) to 'the place of gods' (Lha-sa).²⁸ This is Barantola 'Brahmashala of Mongols'.

With the transfer of the capital, it appears that the Emperor lost his hold on the country of his birth. He has been mentioned as attempting to subjugate Shang-shung.²⁹ Failing in this he forged a matrimonial alliance between Lhasa and Shang-shung, resulting in a close cultural relationship between the two.³⁰

The Population of Shang-shung

Shang-shung, till the end of sixth century was inhabited by

the Mons. In due course of time they were absorbed by the Tibetans.³¹ The present population of the region is the result of a long process of blending of the Mon-pos, Mongolians and Aryans.³² It may be the reason for the ethnologists having observed two principal strains in the Tibetans—one tall, long head and long limbed, the other, shorter in stature with high cheek bones, flat nose and round head.³³

'Mon' is defined in the Tibetan dictionaries as the general name of different nations and tribes as Kirats and Hindus inhabiting the Indus Valley and higher Himalayan valleys from Kulu to Garhwal and further away. They were pushed by the waves of Aryans and other peoples who migrated into the Indo-Gangetic plains. Mon families are found in every village of Ladakh. Most of them are musicians and carpenters. In Zaskar district the people belonging to Kashmir, Jammu and India are called 'Mons'. If the Indians of present day are called 'Mons', there is a very strong possibility of ancient 'Mons' being of Indian origin. They were subjugated by the Tibetans and named 'Mons' meaning 'others'.³⁴

Mon gompas, Mon castles, Mon stupas and Mon fields are found all over the territory, west of Ma-yum-la, east of Gandhar, north of Gangetic plains and south of Pamirs and in the former kingdom of Shang-shung.³⁵

In spite of the universally accepted Mongol origin of Tibetans there is a difference between them and the present nomadic Mongols. "Partly to the early civilisation of the Tibetan race, and partly to the admixture of Hindoo blood, the form of skull in my possession and more particularly of the frontal bone also shows a considerable affinity to the Hindoo race",³⁶ says Alexander Cunningham, and adds, "the same physical characteristics, both in outward form and in their bony structure, as those with modification, which are most probably due to their connection and occasional mixture with the Caucasian (Khas) race of India".³⁷ According to Francke, the present population of Western Tibet is the result of a long process of blending of at least three distinct peoples, two of whom are of Aryan stock, whilst one which is numerically superior to the other two is of Mongolian origin. The Aryan nations are the Dards of Gilgit and Mons of

north India, perhaps from Kashmir, but the Mongolians are of the Tibetan stock.

Continuation of the Dynasty at Tholing

However, Shang-shung had the occasion to receive the descendants of Srong-blasain-sgain-po by the beginning of the tenth century. The power and prestige of the dynasty at Lhasa had weakened. At Lhasa proper, two sons of Lang-dar-ma quarrelled over the possession of royal throne. With the result the empire was divided into two parts. Pal-khor-ba-tsun, a grandson of Lang-dar-ma, ruled between 905 and 922 A.D.: by this time the empire had broken into pieces, local chiefs and governors carving out small principalities for themselves. The conditions had further worsened for the descendants of Pal-khor-ba-tsun who had to satisfy themselves with a small territory around Lhasa. Soon after the last vestige of power slipped from the hands of Khri-skyid-lde-nime-gon, a descendant of Lang-dar-ma, and he was forced to seek refuge in his ancestral land of Ngnari-kor-sum. With the help of one hundred cavaliers he succeeded in establishing a kingdom for himself. The extent of his kingdom in due course of time became Baltistan on the west, a couple of populated territories in the cis-Himalayan region and Purang in the east. A strong base thus was laid for the Lde dynasty at Tholing, some sixty miles to the west of Khyang-lung, the ancient capital of Shang-shung.

Reformation of Buddhism

Having established itself at Tholing, the dynasty once again took up the cause of Buddhism which had fallen into disrepute. Who-keho-lde made great sacrifices for propagation and reformation of the 'Dharma'. He became a monk and is credited with the construction of the Tholing Gompa. As the Lha Lama Ye-shes-hod (Jnan Prabha) he became very

famous. He sent a group of 21 promising youths to Kashmir to study Sanskrit and to acquire knowledge of Buddhism. Only two of the group survived, one of them was great Rin Chen Zang-po the Lochhava. He was born in Shipke, in District Rudok of Western Tibet.

On his return from Kashmir Rin Chen Zang-po brought manuscripts and also teachers to help in the translation of sacred texts. He brought artists, some of whose names are recorded, to build and decorate the shrines their royal patrons were erecting throughout the country. In the temple of Tholing and also in Tsaprang splendid Kashmiri bronzes were preserved. The shrine also preserved murals and paintings on cloth in the style of Kashmir. A.H. Francke adds, "It is likely that the famous temple of Tholing was built by Ratna Bhadra. The temple was locally known by the name of 'rNam Snang' which is the abbreviated name of rNampur-snang-mdzad (Vairochana) and for the most part the temples erected by Ratna Bhadra are called by that name. Either the temple as a whole or one of the halls is called rNam-par-snang-mdzad, the chief of the Dhyani Buddha of the five regions."³⁹

Dipankar Shri Jnan in Tibet

The Royal Priest was unsatisfied with the efforts already made for the revival of Buddhism. He decided to invite the great savant from India and succeeded in persuading Dipankar Shri Jnan (982-1054 A.D.), the renowned scholar of Vikramsila to visit the kingdom of Guge. The Royal Priest had written a letter thus—"Tibet has been for a long time a land bereft of its religion. If you are the kind of person that I think you are, a great teacher and a great champion of Buddhism, you will come to our aid. I am a weary, thirsty person, thirsty for the water of knowledge from your lips. I await your arrival with great impatience".⁴⁰ Unfortunately the Royal Priest died before the arrival of Dipankar Shri Jnan in the kingdom of Ye-shes-hod.

Dipankar Shri Jnan, accompanied by 22 disciples,

reached Tholing in the year 1042 A.D. The great Guru was received with great honour on the frontier of Guge and Nepal. Four military generals with one hundred horsemen escorted the party in a procession with flags flying high and musical instruments being played all along. The journey through the country was of the nature of a royal procession.⁴¹ Every where the procession was hailed by the people of all strata. In the capital, the King, son of Lha lama Ye-shes-hod, arranged a grand reception. The King, Byang-chub-hod in the company of his ministers and the members of the Clergy, among whom was 85 year old Lachhava Rin Chen-Zang-po, received the royal guest.

Being the elder member of the Sangha, Rin Chhen Zang-po remained seated when Dipankar Shri Jnan entered the congregation. But after the Great Guru had delivered his first religious discourse, Rin Chen Zang-po was so deeply impressed that he got up and paid his respects.⁴²

Dipankar Shri Jnan was honoured with the new name of 'Atisa' in Tholing. He spent two years in the capital of Guge, during which period he wrote his famous treatise *Buddhipathpradipa* ('Change-chub Lamgye Donme' in Tibetan), 'Lamp of the path of enlightenment!'. Then he proceeded to Central Tibet or Tibet proper, where he preached for eleven years then left for his heavenly abode in the year 1054 A.D. at the age of seventy three.

The mission of 'Atisa', the great teacher from India, was the greatest stimulus to religious development in Guge in the eleventh century, with the result that for nearly seven centuries Tholing and Tsaprang were the political and religious centres of Ngnari-kor-sum, exerting an influence that extended to the farthest corners of Tibet.⁴³

The Mallas

The descendants of king Byang-chub-hod of Guge failed to retain the kingdom for a long time. The principal dynastic line came to an end and was followed by the Mallas.⁴⁴ One

Nagdev, the first name engraved on the Dullu slates of the Malla lineage, replaced the Lde kings of Guge, the descendants of the Lhasan Empire, in the 12th century. The Malla dynasty continued, son succeeding father, down to the last ruler Prithvi Malla in the fourteenth century. This was the period when the Malla empire reached the zenith of its power. Unfortunately it broke suddenly into pieces and disappeared.⁴⁵

The Mallas also had migrated from the country of Buddha in India. The ancient Malla Rashtra of *Mahabharat* was split into two territories having two capitals, one at Kusinara and the other at Pava. The people of the two regions were known as Mallas proper and the Dakshina Mallas or southern Mallas⁴⁶

The Mallas often appear in Jain and Buddhist literature.⁴⁷ They are called Vasisthas in the Mahaparinirvana Sutanta. At the time of Buddha the Mallas formed a non-monarchical confederacy with the Lichchhavis of Vaisali.

The territory of the Mallas has the distinction of providing the place of eternal rest to the two great sons of India viz., Gautam the Buddha and Mahavir the Jina. The *Manusmriti* mentions the Mallas by the side of the Lichchhavis in its social organization. In due course of time both the clans, Lichchhavis and Mallas reappeared in the land of Nepal.⁴³

To avoid merger with the empires of the plains, the Mallas preferred to retire to safety and they carved out independent principalities in the cis-Himalayan region of north west Nepal.⁴⁹ The Lichchhavis who were more fortunate, succeeded in finding a place for themselves in the valley of Nepal. There is evidence of conflicts between the two old confederates in Nepal.

The Mallas appear in the *vansawalis* of Nepal, in the manuscripts and on the pillar inscriptions in 911 A.D. and in 998 A.D. One of the Mallas, Arimalladeva, seized the royal power in the valley some time before 1197 A.D. Then follows an obscure period. However, the Mallas reappear around 1223 A.D. with Abhayamalla. According to *vansawalis* he had two sons, Jayadevmalla and Anandevmalla. The younger

brother allowed the elder one to rule at Kathmandu and Patan. He himself migrated eastward and founded Bhatgaon and seven other cities. The last of the Mallas of the valley was Anantmalla who reigned from 1279 to 1307 A.D. Then follows another period of uncertainty.

A branch of the Mallas moved up the Karmali valley and probably other river valleys also and took possession of them. They continued their forward march and reached the 'land of snows', "probably attracted by the gold mines of Thok-Jalung and rich wool and salt market of Ngnari-korsum".⁵⁰ The possession of western Tibet caused the Mallas to establish their capital at Taklakhar on the far side of the Himalayas, where ruins of the great castle exist.

Taklakhar or Taklakot (Tiger's fortress) is situated on the right bank of the Karnali in Purang. The fort "consists of a series of excavations, in a huge mound rising abruptly to a height of about 800 feet one mile distant from the river. The houses excavated are from one to three storeys high. The compartments are neatly cut. The entrances into these curious habitations are low and narrow. The sides of mound intended for defence purposes are loop-holed. The store rooms are situated at the top. These are also excavated and have very narrow apertures. The magazine is reputed to contain immense store of grains and ammunition. A curious thing in connection of Taklakhar is its selection as a place of defence, for the water is a mile off to the south west and about 800 feet below. Formerly a carved road way led down to the water. This was probably excavated also. One hundred yards here and there of this road way still in excellent preservation". Thus E. Ryall of G.T. Survey described the capital of the Mallas.⁵¹

Amongst the names of the Malla rulers, two names could be easily identified with reference to Indian epigraphs. Paramsaugata Krachalladeva Jina of Kantipur is the name mentioned in the inscriptions of Baleswar, dated Saka, Pausa Krishna 2, 1223.⁵² In this inscription Krachalladeva claims to have over-run Kirtipur (Kataripur) defeating the ruling princes of the region. Asokach all iscommonly mentioned in

at least five inscriptions, three of which are traced in Bodh Gaya and two in Garhwal, at Gopeswar and at Barhat.

In one of the Bodh Gaya inscriptions Asokachalla speaks of his conquest of Kedarbhumi (Garhwal region). He addresses himself as the scion of the Gaud family, (*Gaudbansodbhava*), and Bairathkutilaka as well as Abhinavabodhisattvavataara, Parambhattaraka Maharajadhiraj.

Obviously Krachalla and Asokachalla ruled over the territory of Garhwal and Kumaon. There are two inscriptions, one at Gopeswar over a 16-foot tall trident and the other over a 21-foot high *ashtadhatoo* trident at Barhat. The latter reads: "By the end of the 12th century (1191) Asokachalla took the possession of the territory between the Alaknanda and the Bhagirathi in Garhwal".⁵³

The grand Buddha statue, worshipped as Dattatreya at Barhat, which disappeared from its seat in early sixties of the present century, was established, according to the inscriptions on the statue by a Bhot Raja of Guge descendant of Nagraj.⁵⁴

In the Gopeswar trident Asokachalla has addressed himself as a 'prince of Gaud clan (*Gaudbansodbhava*) Bairathkutilaka, Abhinavabodhisattvavtar, Awanipatitilak, Parambhattaraka, Maharajadhiraj Sriman Asokachalla'. The inscription states that Asokachalla conquered Kedarbhumi and made it a part of his kingdom.⁵⁵

Rahul Sankrityayan writes: "Asokachalla according to the inscription on Barhat statue was the ruler of the Danav Bhootal which could be another name for Guge. The ruler who established the statue at Barhat was a descendant of Nagraj. This was the period of the Malla reign over western Tibet; it was in the 12th century".⁵⁶ Rahul Sankrityayan further writes: "Krachalla (Jinikulotpanna) was probably from Dullu".⁵⁷

The Mallas must be credited with successfully founding the most extensive kingdom within the Himalayas which included Nepal, Garhwal and Hundes. For the first time an empire arose uniting the Tibetan kingdom and Indian princes under the double standard of Hinduism and Lamaism.⁵⁸

After the conquest of Hundes the Mallas "became

associated to the extent of taking Tibetan names but nonetheless they did not abandon their old ones and enjoyed a two-fold nomenclature which indicated the two-fold composition of their empire. It was two fold also from the religion point of view, since, perhaps by tradition, being worshippers of Shiva, they became Buddhist in Tibet where the echoes of the Buddhist apostolate of the twelfth century were still alive and where their predecessors, now reduced to vassalage, had built the wonderful temple of Tholing. North of the Himalayas they used Tibetan in their documents and in the south Sanskrit," records Prof. Tucci.⁵⁹

The inscription of Asokachalla in Tibetan on the Barhat statue must have been for the consideration of the local population, a sizable section of whom spoke the language.⁶⁰

West of Barhat the territory of Kinnaur has also Tibetan speaking population. The votive tablets found in Kinnaur by A.H. Francke carry the name of Ladakh or Guge Kings.⁶¹ An inscription in Tibetan dialect found in Kinnaur, according to Francke, was one of the national anthems of the population. The song reads - "Jambudwip of the south is a famous country amongst the direction of the world. There is a mountain Tisa (Kailas) with its neck of ice, the dwelling place of those who have conquered all enemies (Arhats). There is the turquoise lake Ma-spang, (Mansarover) the abode of the Naga Ma-gros. On the right bank of the murmuring river which proceeds from an elephant's mouth (Sutlej), there is the great castle Skukhar, the abode of the King. In it dwell the rulers of the men, father and son. May you be always victorious. Under the rule of this religious king all the ten virtues were prominent here in the capital of Hril-skyes (Shipke)".⁶²

Last days of Guge

In the fourteenth century with Prithvi Malla, the Malla dynasty came to an end in the land of Hundes also. A prince of the side branch of the Lde dynasty was invited to become the king of Guge. The new rulers could not restore the kingdom

of Guge to its old glory. Their reign remained confined to a small territory around Tholing. In the rest of the territory a number of principalities cropped up, leading to a period of obscurity in the history of Guge.

Last days of Lde Dynasty

The inscriptions on Mani walls found by Francke in Kinnaur carry the name of King Khri-kra-shis-grags-pu-lde. This name is not found in the genealogical tree and therefore he must be one of the latter members of the second Lde dynasty. Since Mani walls were hardly ever constructed before 1600 A.D. this king must not have reigned before that time, nor can he be assigned to the period later than 1630 A.D., for about that time Indra-Bodhinam-Krgyal a younger brother of the King of Leh, was made the vassal king of Guge and by 1638 the country was annexed by Lha-sa. It is, therefore a strong probability that Khri-kra-shis-grags-pu-lde was the same king who received the Portuguese Jesuit D' Andrade in the year 1624 at Tsaprang.⁶³ The discovery of a votive tablet from Kinnaur which contains the name of the same king and describes Tsaprang as his residence strengthens the possibility further.⁶⁴

Ladakh Lost the Territory

Ladakh ruler Jamya (1622-1670) was succeeded by his eldest son Singe Namgyal. He defeated the invader Ahmad Khan the chief of Balti. After this victory the king proceeded against Guge, Tsaprang and Lomostang and quickly reduced them. He also annexed the district of Rudok, to the east of his kingdom. Next he proceeded to attack Lha-sa itself and reached as far as Srikirker (half way between Leh and Lha-sa). Here he was met by a deputation from the people of that country, headed by Deba Changpa, with several mule loads of gold, silver, tea and other articles as peace offerings. Singe Namgyal consented to vacate the Lhasan territory. After

wards he took possession of the districts of Purang, Guge, Zanskar, Spiti, Purik, Mangyumla and Shakyamcho. Singe Namgyal divided the kingdom into three parts and gave away Guge to his son Indra Namgyal. The Ladakh kings received from Guge 2186.25 gms and from Rudok 1918.10 gms of gold as annual revenue. This gold had various uses, such as for the painting of scrolls, and *thankas* and books etc.

Ladakh was invaded by Mongols (Sok-pas) accompanied by the Tibetans for two consecutive years around 1685-86 A.D. During the second invasion Ladakh sought the help of the Moghal Governor of Kashmir who with the permission of Aurangzeb despatched a force of 60,000 troops under Nawab Fateh Khan, Murid Khan, Lashkar Khan, Khegan Sultan Khan, Yahiya Khan and Jahangir Khan to the assistance of Ladakh Gyalpo. They completely defeated the Sok-pas who were fighting under the leadership of Galden Shewang son of Dalai Khongteji a Mongol. Having failed to defeat Ladakh by military force, Lhasa secured the territory of Guge and other areas by cunning with the help of the Incarnate Lama of Bhutan. The Ladakh king had to hand over the entire area east of Lhari stream, Demchog to Sde-pa-Zhan (Lha-sa) except the village of Menser (Missar)* situated near Kailash and Mansarovar.⁶⁵

In return for the help the Gyalpo received from Mughals, Ladakh had to pay tributes to Kashmir.⁶⁶ Otherwise also the Moghuls of Delhi from Akbar to Aurangzeb had control over Ladakh through the Governor of Kashmir. Moorcraft, during his travels in 1822 examined few documents in the monastery of Lamayuru with the seal of Aurangzeb, Fidakhan and Sher Khan the purpose of which was to direct that the 'Gelums' should not be disturbed in their religious usages and that their land should not be encroached upon".⁶⁷

The boundary between Ladakh and Rudok is well defined by piles of stones, which were set up after the last expulsion of the Sokpas or Mongol invaders in 1687 A.D. with considerable assistance from the Moghal Governor of Kashmir.⁶⁸

* Missar was a revenue village of India till the year 1962

Thus it was around 1687 A.D. that Hundes was amalgamated with Lha-sa, bringing to an end the rule of the princes of Indian origin over Ngnari-kor-sum which had begun around 250 B.C.

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4. Religious Architecture

The physical peculiarities of the Himalayas have been responsible for the disposition of Himalayan man towards various aspects of life including that of religion. On either side of the mountain system religious architecture has taken the shape of an edifice which is a combined handiwork of Animism, Brahmanism and Buddhism which has remained intact for centuries and influences the mind of the Himalayan man even today.

The existence of animistic practices such as spirit worship of various kinds is still prevalent. The spirits are pleased by the offering of presents. In the Himalayan districts of Garhwal and Kumaon the types of spirits worshipped are Masan, Khabesh, Ayer, Bhut, Pret, Hantya, Dakini, Churail and so on.

The Masan type is specially found on the confluence of two streams, which is a burning ground or a burial place. It is supposed to be of black colour and hideous appearance and chases people.¹

The Khabesh type resembles Masan and is met with in dark glens and forests. It has more than one shape, and can make various sounds. It grunts like a pig, cries like a goat or bellows like a buffalo. Khabesh can assume the guise of a 'Sadhu' or quietly join the travellers on their journey. Masan and Khabesh both possess many of the attributes of Chamunda Devi, one of the Shakti forms of Siva.²

The Ayer is a typical deity. Its temples are found on hills and desolate tracts, never within a village or inhabited

places. The Ayer is represented as hideous and repellant, with eyes on the crown of its head, and with more than two arms filled with various weapons. It comes from hills and forests at night and wanders in the company of 'parees' (fairies). The Ayer's feet are turned backward not forward like those of men. If Ayer is seen face to face it means certain death, either through fright or else the victim is burnt up by a flash from its eyes. It also has the victim's liver extracted by the 'parees' who accompany him. But should any one be fortunate enough to see Ayer and survive, the god discloses hidden wealth to him.

Sorcerers and Bogsas in the Central Himalayas are supposed to have the same power as 'Bhut' and 'Bhutini' and can cause injury or illness. They have the power to assume the form of an animal, wild or domestic to destroy an enemy.

When a person is possessed by a Masan, Khabesh, Bhut, Pret, Dakini or similar spirit the manifestations are high fever, various pains in the body and so on. An illness which can not be interpreted other than possession of a spirit is unconsciousness. Tetanus is a sure sign of a spirit possession. The remedy is to invite the beneficent spirit which manifests itself through a member of the family or a neighbour or the priest invited for invoking the beneficent deity. The priests are chiefly from Harijan class, who are supposed to be the most efficient in the job.

One of the causes of their efficiency appears to be that they are the original inhabitants of the area and the representatives of Animism in the present social set up of the region.

The priest while treating a sick person performs a kind of dance and some times belabours the body of the person possessed by the spirit until a cure is effected. There are instances when under drastic treatment the patient perishes. Some of the sick person's hair and nails along with *sindur*, (red powder) half cooked chapatis, saltless and colourless *khichri*, a comb, a looking glass etc. are offered to the spirit as presents.

In serious instances, sacrifice of a cock is demanded by the spirit through either the sick person or one who represents the beneficent spirit. If the illness is grave a ram has to

be sacrificed and its body buried at a road crossing in the dead of night.

Similarly the sickness of the Huniyas, the inhabitants of western Tibet who are closely allied to the Tibetans and are Buddhists and nominal Hindus both at the same time, is caused directly or indirectly by the evil spirits.³ The fever 'demon' is a spirit. But there are yet other demons who are good and bring happiness and riches. For example, when a man after a dangerous illness visits a cave or a river gorge which these demons are supposed to haunt, he might have a relapse and die or he might be instantly cured and live happily ever after.

The evil spirits assume the semblance of wild animals, such as snow leopards and bears. They are also met in the shape of human beings or dogs, sheep, goats, ponies, buffalos and so on.

In south-western Tibet the Huniyas have the strange notion of transmigration of evil spirits.⁴ If a man falls ill, the remedy is to drive away the spirit which has entered the body. Evil spirits enter a living body to satisfy their craving for blood, therefore to get rid of this craving is to please the spirit. A small animal such as a bird or a dog is brought, if the illness be slight, and placed close to the patient. If the illness be grave, a sheep is produced and exorcisms are made in the following fashion: A bowl of water is whirled three times over the head of the sick man, then again over the body of the animal selected, upon whose head it is poured. These circles described with certain *mantras*, or mystic words, have the power of drawing the spirit out of its first quarters and causing it to enter the head of the second, upon whose head the water was poured to prevent its returning back. If a present is given to the evil spirit in the shape of a living being that will satisfy him and he will depart quite happy. For slight illness a small present is enough but if the disease is serious nothing less than a sheep or a goat or even a yak will be sufficient. As soon as the evil spirit has changed its temporary residence the animal is quickly dragged away to a crossing of four roads. A cross is previously drawn on the ground where a grave for the animal is dug into which it is buried alive.

The Pon-Pos

The notions regarding the sickness and the methods of healing have been incorporated in the theory of the 'Pon-Po'. According to the theory of Pon-Po sickness is caused by the evil spirits. Healing takes different forms depending on the cause of the sickness. In some cases a ceremony against a 'don',⁵ which is some thing like a ghost or a bad spirit, found in rivers, under rocks, glens, atop a tree and lakes⁶, can be performed by making an effigy of the sick person and offering it to a 'don' as substitute together with some of the sick person's flesh and hair and clothes.⁷

In Tibetan language 'Pon' conveys the meaning 'the way of life' in the sense of basic law.

The place of origin of the systematic Pon order and of the first sacred Pon text was the country of Shang-shung. The texts were subsequently translated into Tibetan but were originally written in the dialect of Shang-shung.⁸

Numerous relics have been found of the 'Pon-Po' in Hundes, around Kailas, particularly in the upper Sulej valley.⁹ The Pon religion probably had followers earlier in the Indian and Chinese frontier districts, and certainly in eastern Turkestan, where buried texts have been found.¹⁰

In the beginning of the Middle Ages a Pon-Po religious council was held, in which the priests of the Pantheon from western lands such as Ta-zing (Tazikistan), India, China and Tibet participated. The venue was Mang-khar to the west of celebrated monastery of Sakya.¹¹ The religion had spread far and wide. Traces of its existence have been found in regions of Arakan. Ladakh monastery of Lama-yurru is still called Yum-drung Gompa or the monastery of the mystic cross.¹²

According to Tibetan accounts, Pon-Po borrowed a lot from Hinduism. The first ruler of the Pon was an Indian prince Rupati. After a long interval another Indian prince called Nah-Thi-Tsanpo, a Lichchhavi of Vaisali arrived in Tibet and established a second Indian dynasty amongst the Pons who were called Debchin Pon-Po of heaven and the Yang Pon-Po of the mountains and valleys. The dynasty ruled over

Shang-shung from its capital town of Tholing until the end of the seventeenth century.¹³

The Pon religion was theoretically established in Shang-shung in its first stage as 'Jola-Pon'. King Di-gum-Tsangpo, eighth in descent from Nah Thi-Tsangpo was slain and for the rites of the dead, three priests were invited from three countries viz, Kashmir, Gilgit and Shang-shung. This was the second stage of Pon and was called 'Khyar-Pon'. The religion borrowed largely from the Saiva doctrine of the Tirthankaras. The third stage of Pon-Po still existing is called 'Gyur-Pon' or the resultant Pon.¹⁴

The prince Nah-Thi-Tsanpo is popularly supposed to be the first protector, if not organiser, of the Pon religion. Since Swasti was the tutelary deity of his house hence the mystic emblem Swastika is still in the use of the Pon-Pos under the name 'Yundram'. In the Pon-Po Swastikas, the arms are turned in the opposite direction to the Buddhist Swastikas, from right to left. In the same way a *Parikrama* is performed by the Pons from right to left.

The Lichchhavis of Vaisali professed full faith in 'Swasti' from which they derived their name 'Swastikas' or followers of the "mystic cross". This is a monogram formed by the letters 'Su' and 'ti' making the Pali form 'Suti' which is a corruption of Sanskrit 'Swasti', meaning 'it is well'. They believed in eternal annihilation after death from which Tibetan name of Mu-stags-pa or "finitimist" was derived. They called themselves Tirthankaras as "pure doers", the synonymous name of 'Punya'. This name was carried with them into Tibet, it still survives as Pon in various regions including the eastern province of Kham. These were the regions where Buddhism was strongly impregnated with Brahmanism. "On the stones, composing manes figures of Hindu gods are often seen and in one house I saw a brass image of Ganesha", informs Capt. H. Bower of the 17th Bengal Cavalry who visited that country in the year 1893.

The central figure in the Pon religion is its legendary founder gShen-rab-mibo, "gShen-rab the ma". This person is credited with proclaiming the gospel of Pon religion. The

'gzer-myg' signifying "key for memory" is the text containing the life history of gShen-rab.¹⁵

'Naga Hundred Thousand' is another well known Pon text. According to the text gShen-rab, like Hindu incarnates, looked for a suitable place and parentage to be born from. He decided to leave his abode in heaven and favoured the land around Kailas, gyung-drung dgu-brtsegs of the Pons, where four great rivers Ganga, Sindhu, Oxus and Tarim originate. This land was also favoured by Hindu gods and the gods of Tibetan Buddhists. Also the traditions identify the Bhadra with the Indus or 'Lion-river', the Sing-chon-Kamba of the Tibetans on the north, the Chaksu or the Brahmaputra or 'Horse-river' the Tamjyak-Kamba of the Tibetans on the east, the Satadru or Suttlej or 'Bul-river', the Lang-chen-Kamba of the Tibetans on the west, whilst the fourth river is Karnali or Mapchu-Kamba or 'Peacock-river' on the south. All these rivers take rise in Manas and Rakas lakes or in the mountains near them known as Kailas. This region was called ol-mo lung-ringa by Pons. The place was called phar-po so-brgyod, where the prince Rgyalbon thoddkar of the dMu-line resided and where stood the Pon temple of Sham po lha-rtse.¹⁶

The master in the text is compared to a sandal wood-tree and other living beings to its leaves, fruits etc., with a sea and the Nagas, dragons, otters dwelling in it.¹⁷

The female deity of Pon-Po is Lu (Klu) associated with water, who can adopt the forms of snakes. She can be propitiated with the offerings called three whites and three sweets. The three whites are milk, curd and butter and three sweets are *gur*, sugar, and honey, the latter three being the products of the Indian plains.

In Pon doctrine attempts have also been made on the lines of Brahmanism to have rituals for the entire human life span from the cradle to the grave. The instructions for the funeral of a Pon priest are: "When a casket of a stone slab has been prepared in a spirit shrine on an appropriate rocky mountain for the burial of a shaman Pon-Po, the dead man should be clothed in blue silk and placed on a seat in the form of Swastika (probably in kneeling posture): two drums should be put in his hands and before him should be placed the white

feathered divine arrow with silk strings of five different kinds and also excellent wine. Amidst the smell of scents and the smokes of various kinds of wood, bind the forehead of the dead man with adornments of white wood (*chandam*) and then place his body between grains and corn and wood".¹⁸

"A casket of stone slab on an appropriate rocky mountain" makes the Pon-Po a typical faith of the hills. The graves discovered over a large Himalayan tract from Almora to Ladakh are not different from one another and resemble the grave prescribed in the text for Pon priest.¹⁹ The places where such graves have been discovered are Dwarahat in Almora, Malari near Joshimath in Chamoli Garhwal, Burha Kedar in Tehri Garhwal, Namgya in Kinnaur, Chamba, Lahaul and Ladakh.²⁰ The graves have also been discovered all over the territory of Shang-shung.²¹ Near Lhasa, Aufschnaiter in the course of his excavations came across a grave containing perfectly preserved skeletons, probably thousands of years old, together with bowls and semi precious stones.

In the graves discovered in Shan-shung and those over the cis-Himalayan territory the corpses are buried in a kneeling posture. The graves contain ornaments, metal utensils, bowls and porcelain cups for taking wine.²²

The bodies of the kings in Huen Tsang's Amazonian kingdom were similarly disposed off and the 'Sati custom' of Kinnaur princes prevalent till recent times is not very different. The custom was prevalent among the Kumaon Bhotias till the closing years of the last century.

"To the manes of dead are sacrificed goats and sheep, then follows a bull, mule, yak which is killed in a very brutal manner",²³ wrote E. Ryall during trans Himalayan operations undertaken by G. T. Survey in the year 1877. The surveyor witnessed a funeral ceremony of a Bhotia woman which was similar to the instructions described for the disposal of a dead body of a Pon priest.

The Bhotias of cis-Himalayan countries burn their dead after which they perform a curious ceremony, describes the surveyor. The bull yak being untethered, the nearest relative of the deceased is called upon to deliver the first blow which he does by striking at its neck with a *khukri* or Gorkha knife.

The animal if not killed at the first stroke, which rarely happens, and rushes away quite infuriated, a crowd of men and boys follow with swords and knives hacking the victim while it is running. This cruel chase frequently lasts one hour. When this is over some of the ashes of the dead are collected in an urn which is subsequently carried away by the nearest relatives and placed in a niche in his house. An effigy of the deceased is then prepared by the 'Barhayi' or village artist.

Prior to the introduction into the house of the urn and effigy, the room selected in which they are to be placed is decorated with tapestries, the richness of these varying according to the circumstances of the bereaved. The one witnessed by E. Ryall was most handsomely furnished. It was the celebration of the funeral rites of an old aunt of a rather wealthy trader trafficking in Hundes salt. The effigy was placed in a kneeling posture under a gorgeous canopy of rich *kimkhab* (silver cloth) manufactured in Delhi, erected at one end of the room. The walls and the ceilings were covered with shawls and embroidered cloth. The figure was decorated with all the ornaments which were in possession of the deceased at the time of her death. Before it were placed offerings of spices, tea, grains of sort, ghee and two descriptions of liquor, all in porcelain cups. While these arrangements for the display in state of the effigy were being made inside, the assembled crowd outside conducted a symposium, which was carried on through the night, accompanied with music, dancing and general uproar. When the festivity came to an end the outside public were allowed to have the view of the effigy, which was carried outwards to the banks of the river, into the sacred water of which after being burnt partially, it was thrown.²⁴

A Curious Blending

In the Himalayan countries the propitiation of various spirits continues under the title of domestic cults which are the objects of worship in the domestic ceremonies, while Brahmanical deities such as Vishnu and his Shakti are worshipped in the temples.

Siva too has temples along with his Shakti. These temples were Buddhist fanes and the deity has also been made the chief of the Bhutias, the 'Bhuteswar,' requiring no special priest-hood. All Siva temples were served by the Khasiyas. Later on the priest class came to be known as Khasiya Brahman. They had no title to their name.²⁵

Basudeo, a Kirat deity, has temples at Pandukeswar, Joshimath, Urgam and Animuth in Garhwal. At Pandukeswar Basudeo is worshipped as Lord Vishnu in the temple of Yogbadri. Similar practices are followed in other temples of Basudeo.

In the land of Shang-shung, on the other hand, the concept of Shakti among Buddhists and Saivites has a terrible form which can be related to the pre-Buddhist beliefs of the Pon religion. The drawings of the Pon-Po deities given by Hodgson are very near to the Saiva Shaktism of Kali type.²⁶

A favourite subject with the Tibetan painters and sculptors is *Trilochan* or Chan-sum-pa. His body is nearly always blue but some times red. His loins are covered with leopard skin. He carries a *Vajra* or sword in his right hand and a snake is generally wound round his waist. He is exhibited trampling human beings beneath his feet, frantic with anger, eyes staring, nostrils dilated, and mouth wide open while his body is surrounded with flames.²⁷

Kali is represented as blood red in colour with a garland of skulls round her neck, right hand holding the *Vajra* and left hand carrying a cup of blood to her mouth. She is also represented as *Trilochana*, the three eyed, and is surrounded by a circle of flames.²⁸ The common scene in Tibetan Gompas is a stuffed Dong (wild yak horn) standing in front of the image of Mahakali at whose shrine the animal is figuratively sacrificed.

The God Vishnu is also an object of worship among the Buddhist population of Tibet. There is a huge statue of Badrinath and another depicting Kali in the central hall of Tholing monastery.²⁹ According to the tradition of the border residents in Garhwal, Badrinath escaped from Tholing Gompa and reached its present seat in the days gone by. The story of the escape is narrated in the following words: 'The abode of

the God (Badrinath) was Tholing Muth on the bank of the river Sulej. The lamas, although the priests of the deity, scarcely cared for the sanctity of the shrine. They indulged in eating the flesh of various animals and kept the place dirty and unclean and not fit for an abode of the deity. Finding opportunity the deity escaped through a narrow path. The lamas who meanwhile had learnt of the escape tried their best to block it, but in vain. The deity reached at the spot of Badri on the bank of the river Alaknanda'. The Gompa from where it escaped and the narrow path it took during the flight could be seen even today, according to the legend.³⁰

Until very recently on the opening of the shrine of Badrinath each year a letter would be received from the priests of Tholing Gompa in which the deity was described as "our own god".

"Tibetan priesthood is still practiced in Badrinath. The Malpas, one of the five clans of Mana village, quite close to the shrine, are really Tibctans and have others of their clan living north of Tholing near Bogo-la", wrote Charles Sherring in 1904.³¹

The Malpas are a part of Panch Dimris connected with the Badrinath temple. The temple was on Bhotia land for which the inhabitants of Mana village received an annual payment of fifty rupees in cash, twenty seers of grain and a *Pugri* (turban). This was a fixed payment and was given on the condition that on the day of *Janmashtami* festival, when the idol of Badrinath is carried through Mana village for the purpose of giving it a bath at the waterfall and a meal at the temple of Mata Murti, the women of Mana village led by Malpa women clothed in their festival attire, shall sing songs in honour of the deity.

Tholing Gompa was also called Adi Badrinath (original Badrinath). It might be true that the central hall of Tholing Gompa where the idol of Badrinath is kept even to day was the original house of the deity. The place, it appears, could not be freed from Buddhist influence as Tholing had become a powerful centre of reformed Buddhism during the Middle Ages. It is quite possible that a second idol was installed at the spot where the temple of Badrinath stands now. Accord-

ing to a legend regarding the origin of the idol, in remote ages it was an object of veneration and worship in the adjoining region of Hundes. According to the second version and more favourable, the idol was originally found in the river pool near the present temple, to be exact in Narad Kund. It was then erected and dedicated to the great God Vishnu by Adi Shankaracharya.

It might have been the intention of Shankaracharya to convert Tholing Gompa, as other Gompas in India, into a Vaishnavite shrine. Unable to cross the difficult terrain he installed the idol at its present spot, the idol ressurected from Narad Kund of the river Alaknanda. The idol in the shrine of Badrinath bears a resemblance to the human form and has evidence on it of having been worn out and polished by the action of water.³³

There is yet another temple of Narayana (Vishnu) in the neighbouring district of Dapa in Western Tibet, at its capital town of the same name. It is an irregular building of red colour, according to Moorcraft, surrounded by horns having rough figures drawn on its walls and tiled with brass gilt. The parapets of the building are decorated with *chowris* (Yak tails) with iron tridents on top. In the room inside the temple there is a statue of Narayana made of copper gilt. The 20 feet high statue is in a sitting posture, hands aloft with the palms gently inclined forward as if in the act of benediction. The body of the deity, at the time of Moorcraft's visit, was covered with silken robes. On the right of the idol was a smaller figure of Lakshmi and on the left that of a lama wearing a conical cap and the robes of a pontiff. Both the figures were made of gilt copper. On a row of small benches were arranged a great assembly of Hindu deities. The visitor had never before witnessed such well proportioned images. In the same room covered wooden effigies of the deceased lamas were kept with their mothers and other important members of their families. "On a low table were ranged several rows of brass, silver, and gilt or golden bowls containing water for the use of the deity. A small quantity was poured into my hands, part of which I drank, the rest I threw over

my head, as directed by the officiating priest".³⁴ On leaving the room the traveller, along with his companion, was asked to circumambulate the temple seven times.

The shrine of Narayana at Dapa was regularly visited by the Garhwal traders. The priest in the temple used to be a lama. Sven Hedin records his visit to the temple of Dapa where he met the chief lama called Tugden Nima. He observed there a number of Garhwali traders.³⁵

The traders from Central Himalayas having trade relations around Tholing Gompa visited the temple to pay their respects to the deity as it was considered by them as their own. An annual exchange of tributes between Badrinath temple and Tholing Gompa continued until human will overpowered the wishes of the deities and the ancient friendly practices were discontinued.

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5. A General Mart

Pashm

The rigours of the climate have subjected Hundes to almost a perpetual sterility, making it dependent on the surrounding countries for almost every commodity, both of necessity and luxury. At the same time nature made up for these deficiencies by furnishing the area with a variety of valuable products. Hundes's needs and resources naturally attracted numerous traders from every quarter and in consequence it became a general mart where the demands of its inhabitants were met and requirements of foreign merchants were supplied. The most important article of the trade was *pashm*: this is the wool of a particular type of goat, called the shawl goat. Only the layer of wool right next to the skin is used.¹

In the middle ages pashm had become a popular commodity of trade which the inhabitants of Hundes themselves carried to the cis-Himalayan countries on the back of their pack animals after collecting it from various hill districts of Hundes. In Iran and other West Asian countries the product came to be known by the name of 'Tibbat'. Mirza Mohammad Haider informs through his *Tarikh-e-Rashedi*, "There is a class of people among the nomads of the 'snow land' who go out in the different mountain districts with their sheep and buy up the 'Tibbat' or Pashm of the goat from half a huqqah to ten huqqahs and purchase the male goats also that the natives

had to sell. In the course of two months of collecting pashm from different places they manage to load a thousand sheep or more. In winters they descend from the mountain parts towards the west and south which is Hindustan and bring down with them 'Tibbati' goods including shawl (fabric) and carry on traffic with the Hindus of the mountain outskirts of Hindustan".²

Kashmir, being one of the countries of "north-west" of India where the nomads had been taking wool, (pashm) utilised the product to its best advantage. The country manufactured 'shawls' and made them popular all over Asia and Europe. The great king Zainul Abdin (1423) introduced weavers from Tashkent and is credited for laying the foundation of wool industry in his country (Kashmir).³

Kashmir lost its independence in the sixteenth century, having been annexed by the Great Moghul Akbar. During the reign of Jahangir and Shahjehan, the Moghuls had built beautiful summer residences on the shores of Kashmir lakes resulting in the development of a heavy traffic between Kashmir and Hindustan. Famous Shalimar and Nishat gardens were laid out during Jahangir's reign, Noorjehan exerting her influence all along. Kashmir shawls became an article of prestige amongst the Moghul officials, thus giving an impetus to the wool industry. The product pashm was imported from Ladakh.⁴

Aurangzeb (1658-1707) had been contemplating to take control of the wool trade. The opportunity soon presented itself. Around 1688 A.D., Lhasa invaded Ladakh using the pretext of a religious conflict between the red cap sect of Ladakh and yellow cap sect of Tibet. Ladakh's monopoly of Hundes pashm is said to be the actual cause of the invasion in which the fifth Dalai Lama perhaps had played a role. Delek Namgyal, the king of Ladakh, appealed to the Moghul Governor of Kashmir. Emperor Aurangzeb sent his troops and the Tibetan invasion was repulsed. In recognition of the military aid King Delek was obliged to guarantee the export of pashm to Kashmir merchants.⁵

With the advent of Europeans in India, pashm gained still more importance.

“Pashm goat is perhaps the most beautiful species”, Samuel Turner reported to the Governor General of India “among the whole tribe of goats and even more than Angora King. It has various colours such as black, white, of a faint bluish tinge, and a shade something lighter than a fawn. They have straight horns and a lower stature than the smallest sheep in England”.

“Control of Garhwal and Kumaon would give us control over pashm”, said Lord Wellesly, the Governor General of East India Company in Hindustan, while touring the northern parts of Moradabad district from where he had a glimpse of the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas on December 2, 1814. He remarked, “By snatching away Garhwal and Kumaon from the Gorkhas we can reach beyond these mountains; there are easy passes from there into Tibet. We can pay for pashm by exporting our broad cloth, grains and shearing instruments”.⁶

Lord Wellesly had already collected information from Garner about the Himalayan passes leading to Hundes, which the latter had received from the enterprising Haider Hearsay. In his description Hearsay had said that through Niti pass in Garhwal, laden animals could reach the marts of Dapa in Hundes within four days.⁷ Lord Wellesly collected some more information from various other sources and took a decision to annex the territory east of the Alaknanda and west of the Sarda.

Haider Hearsay had travelled with Moorcraft who “undertook an arduous and perilous journey from the motives of public zeal to open to his country the means of obtaining the materials of the finest woollen fabric”.⁸ Moorcraft was a veterinary surgeon in the employment of the East India Company at Calcutta. He travelled through Niti pass into Hundes, in the year 1812 and visited Kailas and Mansarover in the guise of a ‘Vaishnav’ assisted by the headmen of Niti and Gamsali villages which are situated near Niti pass.

Moorcraft to his dismay found that the shawl wool produced in Hundes was monopolised by the Ladakhis. In Hundes he stumbled on a Kashmiri, Kazalbash, the Wakil or agent of the Raja of Ladakh, deputed for the purchase and sale of Pashm. Moorcraft learnt from Kazalbash that the amount

of pashm bought annually by the Raja was worth between two to three lakhs, the greater part of which was resold to the Kashmiri merchants who waited for the return of the agent and paid for the goods immediately. The rest of it was taken away by the merchants from Amritsar. The agent used to purchase shawl wool by paying an advance sum of thirty 'Negi' per rupee. There were two qualities: the first one sold in Kashmir at twelve Negis and the second quality fifteen Negis a rupee. The best pashm came from the neighbourhood of Mansarovar in Hundes.⁹

During his second journey in 1822, Moorcraft learnt that the wool was formerly supplied almost exclusively by Hundes and Ladakh, but he was surprised to know that considerable quantities had been procured of late from the neighbourhood of Yarkand and from Khotan from the families of the great Kirghiz hordes. It was brought chiefly by the Moghul merchants who exchanged it for manufactured shawl goods in Kashmir, "for which the country was celebrated throughout the world, a light warm and elegant article of dress which they sold advantageously in Russia, not less but a very valuable portion which will be possible for Great Britain to partake largely in trade in shawl goods".

Having surveyed the entire cis-Himalayan countries and Hundes through the "travellers" the British had planned out a strategy to procure the pashm of Tibet. An agency for the purpose was set up at Kotgarh around 1820, "for encouraging the export of shawl wool to British territories from where it was sent to England to be manufactured".¹⁰ In exchange small quantities of copper, steel, chintz and woollen goods were bartered. The project did not succeed, because the Huniyas preferred to trade with the population of higher Himalayan tracts. They were not in favour of undertaking journeys to the warmer valleys. After a few years the Kotgarh project was abandoned".¹¹

The Huniyas preferred their old compatriots, (the inhabitants of the higher Himalayan tracts) the Bushahris, for trade, which they continued, between Hundes and three well-known cities of Punjab, viz. Amritsar, Ludhiana and Nurgur. This

trade chiefly consisted of pashm and borax for which the Huniyas were supplied coarsely made shawls, the coarse English made broad cloth and cotton goods.¹²

Niti and Mana passes in Garhwal were thought to be favourable routes, easy accessibility being an added advantage to the proximity of the best pashm producing region around Mansarovar. The Officer-in-charge of Garhwal administration wrote to his senior, "much benefit might accrue to commerce by a judicious negotiation especially on the wool (pashm) trade, as it was not a prohibited product any more as formerly. Garhwal affords a most eligible route for the finer wool of Hundes to be exported and forwarded to the different marts situated at the foot of the hills in the plains for transmission to Europe".¹³ The changes in Hundes had taken place owing to the invasion of Zorawar, the Dogra commander in that part of the country.

Pashm was procurable in all the marts of Hundes including those of Taklakhar, Tsaprang, Gangri, Dapaling, Horba, Chhyulinthol, Bambuwathol and Magna, the chief marts being those of Rudok and Gartok, where the product was procurable from ten to twelve annas per pound.

After the defeat of Zorawar, Ladakh once again became the pashm outlet. All their efforts having proved fruitless the British had started showing a sign of weariness. "From the earliest years of British rule much attention has been paid to collecting information regarding the pashm or shawl wool trade with Tibet but with little practical results".¹⁴ Atkinson further said, "There does not seem to be much prospect of any important trade arising in wool with Tibet. Pashm trade is still practically a monopoly in the hands of the agents of the Kashmiri and Ludhiana manufacturers".¹⁵

Sheep wool was another important product of Hundes which used to be imported almost entirely into the north and midland 'parganas' of the cis-Himalayan districts. The people here manufactured it into blankets and serges for home consumption.¹⁶

In commerce the wool was known as Berjengi. In Garhwal and Kumaon alone, it was imported to the extent of five

hundred to six hundred mounds a year in the first half of the nineteenth century at the rate of fourteen to fifteen rupees a mound. The supply was almost wholly obtained from the flock of Huniya sheep, which visited the Himalayan valleys laden with salt and borax and then were shorn there. The Huniyas manufactured a variety of blankets by mixing sheep wool with pashm. The finest of this variety was called 'chugta' and was sold to the inhabitants of the cis-Himalayan countries. Lha-sa proper specialised in chugta manufacture.

The wool was produced from four principal varieties of sheep. 'Chang Loog' or northern sheep, which is very large with fine wool; 'Sok Loog', rare but greatly prized, it was a Doomba or heavy tailed breed of east of Lhasa in the province of Sok, whose wool is not very fine; 'Lho Loog', a very small sheep generally white, but some times black, bred principally about Lhasa with very fine wool like the pashm; and the fourth, 'Changumpo Loog', abundant about Garoo and in Dingchan generally. It is very large, very fine sheep with white wool, very fine and soft.¹⁷

The wool in Tibet is of peak quality and perfection when the sheep is two years old. The ram furnishes the best.¹⁸ Loog and Mamo are the names of the ram and ewe, and the wool is called Changbal. The Himalayan traders call it 'Byangi un'. The shawl wool is called 'Lena' and by the hill Indians 'pashm'.

Gold, Borax, Salt, Tea etc

Gold: Hundes is the land which has been described as Swarndesh, Swarnagotra or Haimvarta, signifying gold country. Rudok was the district from where gold was chiefly excavated, gold mines being about one hundred miles north of the provincial capital of Gartok. The Gold Commissioner called 'Sarpon', who was appointed by Lha-sa, supervised the operations and collected an yearly tax amounting to $\frac{2}{5}$ of an ounce from each digger¹⁹. Gold fields were carefully watched by Lhasan authorities. Besides the 'sarpon' each gold field

had a separate master. Nine gold fields in Hundes were—Thok-Sarkong, Thok-Dikela, Thok-Ragyak, Thok-Thasang, Thok-Maroooolam, Gungee-Thok, Thok-Nianmo, Thok-Sarlung and Thok-Jalung.

Gold was also found in small quantities in the Hundes valleys round about the river Sutlej. It was produced by washing the sands of the Hundes streams, big and small. Very little of it found its way into India. Fine gold dust was sold in Gartok at the rate of one rupee, and an eighth in weight, for sixteen rupees. The largest demand was in Lha-sa. Gold dust was calculated by "Sarswo" or "Phetang", equal to seven and a half 'masas'²⁰ Gold dust separated into Phetangs, each tied up in a bit of cloth was current as coin at eight rupees per Phetang.

Gold was mainly exported to China. Imports into the Himalayan countries were rare and in very small quantities.

Salt: In Himalayan India the natural produce of the Hundes lakes was preferred for culinary purposes to the Sambhar and other cheap kinds of salts from the plains. The latter descriptions were used for cattle. The total quantity of salt imported into Garhwal alone from Hundes could have been at about ten thousand mounds a year.²¹

Three sorts of common salt were known in commerce: 'Sarcha', white and dusty, 'Chama' reddish and good, and 'Pencha', yellowish and inferior.

Borax: Another natural produce of Hundes lakes, Tincal, was exported to the Himalayan countries in its natural state as procured from the lakes. The Tincal or natural crystals were picked for the European market and the dust was made into refined borax. Tincal had its best days between 1815 and 1822 when it turned out to be the most profitable article of Hundes trade. During Gorkhali rule, up to 1815 A.D. in the districts of Garhwal and Kumaon, not more than a thousand to fifteen hundred mounds of Tincal ever reached Indian plains during a year. The Gorkhas in their zeal to teach a lesson to the defiant Garhwalis, totally smashed the economy of Garhwal. Manpower was sold in slavery. Trade links with Hundes were broken by unbearable exactions. Tincal trade was the worst sufferer.

The English East India Company had apparently known of the borax production in Hundes since 1644. A letter to the Company in London from their representatives in India dated January 27, 1644 discusses the Company's monopoly of the export of borax proclaimed in the previous year and speaks of enclosing particulars concerning its place of origin which was Hundes—though the letter does not specifically say so and the enclosure has not been published.²²

Large advances were made by British merchants to the Hundes bound hill traders even before the annexation of Garhwal and Kumaon, for the provision of borax.²³ Competition among merchants brought about a situation in which advances were rapidly augmented. In 1818 the import quantity exceeded twenty thousand mounds. In 1819 and in 1820 the tempo was somehow kept up. Soon after the import compared with the demand in England proved an excess. Heavy losses followed consequently, the capital was withdrawn, resulting in a decrease in supply, showing a total of about 8,000 mounds a year by 1822.

During this period of ups and downs the price of Tincal had been subjected to fluctuations, Till 1814 the market rate of Tincal had arisen to fourteen rupees a mound and partial sales were at sixteen rupees. During the two following years, 1819 and 1820, the price ranged between twelve and fourteen. Then it came down to eight and at this price it was quoted for a fairly long time.

Following figures of export to Britain during a period of nine years indicate the fluctuations.²⁴

<i>Year</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Value</i>
1814	10,620	1817	32,573	1820	2,09,175
1815	59,200	1818	76,666	1821	57,657
1816	1,03,301	1819	2,15,591	1822	25,268

Horses : Livestock was another export item of the land of Hundes. The horses bred in large numbers in the districts of Chumurti, Chaprang and Rudok, though of a small stature, seldom exceeding thirteen hands and were very fine. Chumurti produced the finest, being strong and well put together.²⁵ The male ponies were called 'Gunts' in the Himalayan districts. They were remarkably sure-footed and consequently well

adopted for the rocky and precipitous roads of the hills and did not require shoes and were ridden unshod.

A ready market for the Gunts was found at the different hill stations such as Almora, Ranikhet, Nainital, Mansuri, Simla etc. where they fetched from one hundred to four hundred rupees each. Before the advent of Europeans the Gunts were sold for sixty to one hundred rupees. The merchants of Niti Ghati in Garhwal and Joharis of Almora had been dealing in the trade largely.

Pashm goat was another article of trade. The animal was selling in quantities of 3000 to 4000 every year to the Himalayan countries at the rate from one to two rupees each. Import was mainly for sacrificial purposes

Yak tail: It had always been an object of veneration among the Hindus. The shrines of Yamnotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath have been thronged by the Hindu devotees from time immemorial, and they come from all quarters of India and even abroad. Yak tails were readily disposed of by the Jads of Nilang among the pilgrims of Gangotri and Yamnotri and by the Marchhas of Mana to the pilgrims visiting the sacred shrines of Kedarnath and Badrinath.

Tea: Tea was imported by Tibet from China and sold to the countries of Central Asia, Ladakh and Kashmir. A part of it was taken to Amritsar where the Kashmiri residents there chiefly consumed it.²⁶ Some of it was also purchased by Himalayan merchants who in the last century preferred it to the Indian varieties.

Eight different varieties were introduced into the Tibetan market from Tachienlu in the north-west of Yunan.

<i>Name of the tea</i>	<i>Cost per pound</i>
1. Do Thang	Rs. 6.00 to 8.00
2. Rikong Karbo	Rs. 4.00 to 6 00
3. Golden Chioba	Rs. 3.00 to 6.00
4. Koar Chioba	Rs. 2.00 to 8.00
5. Sirsio Chioba	Rs. 1.00 to 8.00
6. Chung, Jung (Wooden)	Rs. 1.00 to 8.00
7. Jangja	Rs. 1.50 to 4.00
8. Jangja Pari	Rs. 1.00 to —

Brick tea was in general use throughout Tibet though good leaf tea could sometimes be procured in the provincial capital Gartok at about two rupees per pound. A brick of tea was eight pounds in weight and was sold for about one rupee per pound, considerably above its intrinsic value.

Musk : Musk was an important article of export from all parts of Tibet including Hundes. The trade in Musk amounted to £ 160,000 in 1915²⁷. The product was of considerable importance in the European perfume industry. Two French firms were maintained at Tachienlu and Atuntzu solely for this commodity.

Skin and medicines were other important articles which Tibet exported. Medicines being shrubs and other vegetable drugs for the Chinese market. The most interesting was *Chungtsao* or insect grass which was a dried caterpillar about two inches long which had been killed by a fungus of about the same length growing out of its segments.²⁸ It was supposed to be excellent restorative for weak constitutions. Other articles of export for the Chinese market were various objects of worship such as small statues, yellow caps, books and the like. Some types of Tibetan cloth manufactured at 'Gyantze' city called Getha, Nambu, Chuktu and Purek Nambu, the last being very superior, were also exported. Yellow caps exported to other countries were valued at £ 10,000 every year by M. Tsybikoff during his sojourn at Lha-sa.²⁹ The Buryat further informs that all trade to Mongolia was carried on by caravans.

Requirements of Hundes

The greatest demand of Hundes was grain. From Garhwal and Kumaon alone grain to the tune of twenty to thirty thousand mounds of every kind was exported to Hundes. The high prices and rapid sale were an indication of high demand³⁰. The traders of Garhwal and Kumaon brought their supplies from Ramnagar and Kotdwar but the bulk of the supplies were collected from the northern parganas of Nagpur, Dasoli,

Badhan and Chandpur in Garhwal and Kali-Kumaon in Almora.

The demand for Indian piece goods such as broad cloth, Delhi worked brocades, real and imitation, gold and silver laces, precious stones etc. were supplied by the well-to-do traders of the Himalayan valleys³¹. The merchants from India resorted to the September fair of Gartok where a ready market existed for such articles.

The sundries in demand were looking-glasses, beads, matches, pen-knives etc., supplies being met through the traders of cis-Himalayan districts.

During the season the entire adult population of different Central Himalayan valleys turned into traders. The inhabitants after sowing their fields used to go with barley, rice, flour and a small quantity of gur laden on goats and sheep to Tholing, Tsaprang and other marts of Hundes. According to one estimate, over three thousand goats were working in Mana sector alone. By the two passes of Niti and Mana, the calculation was that about 8,000 sheep and goats were regularly employed in the carriage of grains to Hundes, besides the flock and a few animals belonging to the traders of Hundes. The annual estimated value of the export in 1841 was around 33,000 rupees.³²

To meet the demands of Hundes, British East India Company's administration in Garhwal district constructed a new road from Srinagar to Kotdwar by spending five hundred rupees, in the year 1840. The pilgrim road from Hardwar to Joshimath and further on to Niti and beyond right upto the pass was repaired, to make the thoroughfare easy for sheep, goats and the cattle to bring about a more extensive trade. The Marchha traders and also Hundes nomads used to come down to Hardwar and Dehradun with their sheep, goat, mules, ponies and asses for grain in the main and other piece goods.

The Huniyas use woollen clothes throughout the year. Therefore, consumption of cotton fabrics was less. The demand was confined to coarsest varieties and quantity was the first consideration with Huniya purchasers. The aggregate value of cloth from the five passes of Garhwal and Kumaon into Hundes was about ten thousand rupees a year.³³

Among hardware products cooking utensils, copper, brass and iron, coarse cutlery, swords, matchlocks etc. were in demand and exported to the extent of ten thousand rupees.³⁴

Coral and bead were always in demand and from two districts Kumaon and Garhwal the supply averaged about five thousand rupees in value every year.³⁵

Wooden vessels, cups for tea, gur, sugar-candy, spices and dyes were other articles in demand in Hundes and were supplied from Garhwal and Kumaon.³⁶

Timber in the shape of spars and planks for building were also in the demand-list of the Huniyas which were supplied from Garhwal and Kumaon. "Indigent Bhotias who had no other capital but their labour carry on the traffic,"³⁷ informs Trail.

Aggregate value of the wares supplied to Hundes was estimated at about ten thousand rupees.

The trade figures from Garhwal and Kumaon for three years were as following³⁸.

	1901-2	1902-3	1903-4
Nilang Pass	Rs. 55,000/-	Rs. 78,000/-	Rs. 27,000/-
Mana Pass	Rs. 33,000/-	Rs. 37,000/-	Rs. 43,000/-
Niti Pass	Rs. 1,63,000/-	Rs. 1,42,000/-	Rs. 1,31,000/-
Johar	Rs. 3,05,000/-	Rs. 4,21,000/-	Rs. 3,92,000/-
Lipu Lekh Pass	} Rs. 5,76,000/-	} Rs. 4,98,000/-	} Rs. 4,87,000/-
Mangshan Pass			
Lampiya Kuti-La			
Neo Dhura			

The demands of Hundes were met by other countries also. Russia supplied glasswares³⁹. The Kafilas of Russian merchants visiting the September fair at Gartok were reported to Moorcraft during his travels in Hundes. "The 'Ooroos' (Russians) were in a strong Kafila of 500 to 600 men on horse back", reported Kazalbash. He further informed the British traveller that the articles of merchandize which were marketable at Ladakh, such as coral beads formerly brought from Delhi and Banaras, though exceedingly dear were in great demand in Hundes and earned huge profits. But within three years their value had fallen greatly due to the import of the commodity from Yarkand. The beads were brought by the

'Ooroos' who had been in the habit of trading with that country and in the course of three years had promoted a lively traffic in Kashmir through agents.⁴⁰

Moorcraft reported that some of British manufactures had found way from Russia across the whole of the intervening region, even to Afghanistan and Punjab and into Hundes.⁴¹ The Russians were visiting Leh during a fair with their leather and woollen goods, glass wares and sundries. These goods were meeting some of the demands of Hundes through Leh which was a gate-way to Hundes from the west.

The Huniyas were always demanding fire arms, for self defence against the Khampa decoit-gangs. The exporters of the commodity besides Garhwal and Kumaon traders, were Russian merchants⁴².

Smaller traders from Ladakh resorted to Gartok with dried fruits such as apricot, resins, which they transported on asses and bartered for sheep's wool.

Every two years under "Lopchak" 250 to 300 Yak-loads of goods were exchanged between Kashmir and Tibet. Under this system, a privilege of free transport on Tibetan territory and a similar facility in the opposite direction stood between the two countries.⁴³

The merchants who resorted to Lha-sa and other marts of Tibet during the month of December belonged to all parts of Asia. They came from China, Mongolia, Darchando, Chando, Kham, Tawang, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, Darjiling, Azimabad and Ladakh⁴⁴.

From China came silk of all varieties, carpet and chinaware; from Jiling and Mongolia were brought gold lace, silk, precious gems, carpets of superior manufacture, horse saddles, a very large kind of Dumba sheep and valuable horses.⁴⁵

Dharchando is situated north-east of Lha-sa at a distance of about sixty marches. From the country came immense quantity of tea. Chando city is in Kham province, east of U-Tsang, central Tibet, from where a huge quantity of musk perfume was brought and which eventually found its way to Europe.⁴⁶

Rice and other grains were imported from Nepal also. Grains also came from Tawang in Bhutan. Sikkim exported

rice and tobacco.

Broad cloth, silk, satins, saddles, precious stones, coral, pearls, sugar, spices, came from Nepal, Darjeeling and Azimabad.⁴⁷ Kashmir and Ladakh exported, with other articles, saffron and charas (Hashis).

The merchants who came in December left in March before the rains rendered the rivers impassable.⁴⁸

Lha-sa population included a large number of foreigners of diverse nations such as Mongols, Chinese, Moscovites, Armenians, people from Kashmir, India and Nepal, all established there as merchants and who had made large fortunes.⁴⁹

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6. Trade Through the Ages

Kulind Janpad of the *Mahabharata* days had the tribe of Tangans operating as traders. 'Tangan' means borax in Sanskrit, and in Pali language it was called 'Tankan'. Tangan was also a breed of horses of the same region on either side of the Himalayas, viz. Chumurti and Tankanpur.¹ The horses either gave it or took the name of Tangans². The tribe had also been dealing in borax.

Kulind Janpad is described in *Kadambari* as a country of the Kirats where gold dust is produced in the mountains³. The Tangans had also been dealing in gold-dust. Probably the Kirats practising trade were called Tangans.

The inhabitants of the trans-Himalayan region are called Tanguts, so named by the Mongol rulers⁴. The reason might have been the same as that of the name 'Tangans'.

Kulind Janpad exported, according to *Ashtadhyayi*, salt, guggal, ushir, munga, babad-grass, flowers of Debbaru, wool, woollen clothes, blankets, deer-hides, leather bags, milk, butter, ghee, minerals, precious stones, iron and so on⁵. The *Mahabharata*, on the other hand records yak-tail, gold dust, borax, medicinal herbs, and sacred water of the Ganga as the articles of trade in which the Tangans had been dealing⁶.

'Laincha' was the name of the variety of salt which Tangan traders had been exporting along with the above mentioned goods to the cities of the Indian Plains⁷. One of the commodities which was in great demand all over India was yak-

tail, a monopoly of the Tangans. Other interesting articles of trade Tangans handled were peacock feather, tiger cubs, hawks, rams, pheasants, hill partridges and a species of dogs which the Romans imported to improve the breed in their own country⁸.

The spread of Buddhism over the Himalayas and beyond, gave an impetus to the trading activities of the Tangans. New articles of commerce such as Thankas, Buddhist manuscripts in Sanskrit and Pali were in great demand in the Gompas and temples of Bhot (Tibet), Central Asia and beyond. The Potala in Lha-sa preserves the evidence of a number of articles.⁹ The ashes of Tibetan Lamas and the remains of the Indian Gurus were exchanged through the Tangans to be preserved in the Chortens¹⁰.

A much frequented and most ancient route from Tankanpur to Swarnabhumi was through the Mana Pass or Chirbetla (Manas Dwar and Hans Dwar of ancient literature). The route ran along the beds of the river Alaknanda, Vishnuganga and Saraswati¹¹.

To have a safe journey, all along the track a number of deities such as Ghantakaran, Kuber and Yaksha were installed by the pilgrims. In due course of time the abode of Vishal Yaksha, 'Nagri Vishala', became famous under the name of 'Badrikashram',¹² a beautiful resting place under the shadow of great mountain Nilakantha, and by the side of milky Rishi Ganga.

The activities of the Tangans continued in the middle ages. The Bhotias, Marchhas, Rongs, Rong-pas etc. descendants of the Tangans, had their permanent interests in continuing to be the medium of commercial intercourse between the Huniyas and the inhabitants of Central Himalayas. One of the commodities of trade handled by them was the Tangan breed of horses from Chumurti in Hundes and from Tanakanpur in the upper reaches of the Alaknanda. The animals were in great demand in the kingdoms of the Gangetic plains. Akbar, the great Moghul, had in his possession a battalian of Tangan horses.

Till recently the descendants of the Tangans had been dealing in wool, salt, borax, etc., and sacred water of Gangotri is a

fast moving item in the Indian plains even to-day.

The Tangans had also been acting as travel guides to the pilgrims visiting Tirthapuri, Mansarovar and Kailas in Hundes from time immemorial. Ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were immersed in the waters of Mansarovar and the party which accompanied the ashes from Joshimath onwards right up to the lakes were descendants of Tangans.

We learn of continued commercial transactions during the middle ages between Hundes and the Himalayan districts from the accounts of Mirza Mohammed Haider through his *Tarikh-e-Rashidi*. The pashm in the Muslim countries of West Asia was known as 'Tibbat', according to the Mirza; it was collected by the Huniyas from trans-Himalayan region and sold into the Himalayan countries.

For pashm, weavers from Tashkent were introduced by King Zainul Abidin of Kashmir (1423 A.D.) and a foundation of pashm (fabric) industry was laid in that land.

During the reign of Jehangir and Shahjehan pashm fabric had become a status-symbol among the Moghul aristocracy.

Aurangzeb took control of pashm trade in the 17th century after rendering assistance to Ladakh Gyalmo against a Mongol-Tibetan invasion

The accounts of the 17th and 18th century travellers from the Western countries speak volumes about commercial exchanges between Himalayan countries and Hundes.

In 1624. D'Andrade, a Portuguese Jesuit, visited Tsaprang, the capital of the independent kingdom of Guge where he succeeded in establishing a mission. He passed through Srinagar (Garhwal) while on his way to Tsaprang. One of his associates, Father Nuno Coresma wrote a letter to his parent mission which gives an evidence of the trade links between Hundes and the Central Himalayan districts. Writes the Jesuit, "The utter poverty of the country of Guge made it quite impossible to provide for the material sustenance of the missionaries. Supplies from Srinagar (Garhwal) could only be obtained at prohibitive cost. The carriage of a quantity of rice bought for one rupee at Srinagar is ten or twelve rupees as everything has to be carried along the passes".¹³

Srinagar was a commercial link between Hundes and the plains of India as "it was common for men of opulence and extensive trade in other parts of India to send their agents here to establish a kind of central communication between Bhootan (Hundes) and lower Hindustan", observed Capt. Thomas Harwick in 1796.¹⁴

"Srinagar imported bullion and coins for the purpose of converting it into Timashas (three masha silver coin), the currency of the hills, and as a constant coinage of them is kept up at the mint the supplies are furnished by the 'surravs', who receive a premium agreeable to the quality of silver, amounting to one and a half or two per cent on the Farrukhabad or Bareli rupee".¹⁵

The Timasha was also in circulation in Tibet.

Srinagar received from Bhootan [Hundes] the 'chaur' or cowtail, musk in pods, saffron, borax, salt, drugs of different kinds and a few shawls¹⁶. The above articles of trade as described by Capt. F.V. Raper are identical to the goods mentioned in the *Mahabharata* and *Ashtadhyayi*.

Capt. Raper further writes that Hundes was closely connected to Srinagar and "a free communication formerly existed with the people of Bhootan (Hundes) who were in habit of bringing their goods for sale to this market and taking hence other commodities in exchange. They have discontinued the practice and very little direct intercourse is now maintained".¹⁷

The visit of Capt. Raper to Srinagar was made during the Gorkha reign over Garhwal Raj. The cruel exactions of the Gorkhas forced the Huniyas to abstain from visiting Srinagar. However, they had to keep up the supply of grains from these quarters, for which they made arrangements with the population inhabiting villages close to the Himalayan passes. The area was free from the Gorkha menace, being practically unapproachable to the outsiders. The arrangement worked well and the population of the passes supplied the requirements of the Hundes inhabitants. The two peoples within a very short period became so engrossed with bartering that the British invasion of hill states in 1815 A.D was considered of no

consequence. During the period of the British invasion exchange of goods continued across the passes in full swing. The system continued till the last days of independent Tibet.

The Traditional Border

If ever interruptions in trade were witnessed it was owing to epidemics such as small-pox in the Himalayan villages. The diseases of cattle were no hindrance. On such occasions the traders of the Himalayan valleys carried their goods up to a certain spot, from where the Huniyas loaded it on their own back and after walking a distance shifted the burden on to their flock and herd. Thus the flock of two sides were not allowed to mingle.

To avoid the mingling of the flocks in Niti Ghata of Garhwal the traders carried the goods up to the bank of a small stream and the Huniyas brought theirs to the opposite bank of the same stream which was thus considered the traditional frontier. It was recognized by the post—1688 A.D. Tibet Government, and lay on the commencement of the tableland¹⁸.

During the British period also Hundes was entirely dependent for the supplies of grains on the neighbouring territories of the cis-Himalayan region. Lieutenant Richard Strachy records, "Whole of this part of Tibet (across Niti, around Dapa) is absolutely at the command of our government, for by stopping the export of grain across the frontier the whole of Guge would be starved".¹⁹

British Efforts

The East India Company employed various methods to attract the Huniyas to the places away from the passes towards south "The road up to Dhauli river also from Joshimath to the Neetee pass is one, requiring constant repair both to the road and bridges, and both might be much improved if funds

were available being the principal route for traders to Tibet and one for the good of commerce requiring every attention",²⁰ advised Assistant Commissioner of Garhwal.

The calculation made by the British establishment in 1841 of the sheep and goats "regularly employed in the carriage of goods to and from Tartary by the two passes (Niti and Mana) in the district was about 8,000 on this side besides the flock of sheep, goats and a few animals belonging to the traders of the other side who before the last year's invasion of Hundes by the Sikhs used to come to Mana and Niti but none has come this season. There are also near double the number of sheep and goats in the northern parganas used for the transport of different articles from Mana and Niti to the several parts of the district and so they make several trips during the season. I do not think my annual estimated value of total imports and exports by these passes is too high, but rather falls short of the actual state of the case", wrote Assistant Commissioner of Garhwal H. Huddleston to the Commissioner of Kumaon, G.T. Lushington on October 7, 1841²¹.

In another letter H. Huddleston wrote, "I am fully of the opinion that the extent of the same (trade) by the two passes (Niti and Mana) in this district with Hundes does not fall much short of 30 to 33 thousand rupees annually the value of the import exceeding in a small degree that of the export which may be placed to the credit of the carrying traders, our own Bhotias".²²

Huddleston kept on putting pressure on his superior for the improvement of the roads in his district, "You are aware that the pilgrim road from Hardwar to Joshimath and a continuation of it up the Dhauli river to Neetee and beyond and a much improved path even to the pass which is now being carried on - as well as the new road to Koh-Dwarra (Kotdwar) from Sreenaggur made last year for which the Government allowed 500 rupees - admits of a more easy means of traffic for sheep, goats and the Bhotias' cattle than what formerly existed in the district. There is every reason to hope for a more extensive trade being carried on if due encouragement be afforded to the carriers thereof/our own Bhotias/and even a few occasional parties of the Huniyas who every year

came down to Hardwar and Deyrah (Dehra Dun) with their sheep, goats, mules, and ponies and asses—but the difficulties of the road up in the high parts would require some expense being incurred to render the route more easy to travel for cattle than it is, especially where from the nature of country annual mendings, cleanings and repairs become necessary to build up portions carried away by land slips, avalanches, rocks and heavy rains.

The object of the letter is to hope that the British Government relative to the benefit of the traders between the two countries which would do more to ameliorate the condition of our own people, as well as benefit the Heoneas (Huniyas) and ruling authorities themselves than anything else".²³

The Official Missions of the Fonya and the Sarji

The commercial operations between Hundes and cis-Himalayan countries used to commence with the arrival of Huniya traders into the Himalayan valleys. The superior strength and hardiness of the Hundes flock enabled them to cross the snow earlier than their southern friends. Sometimes grain shortage was an additional reason for their earlier arrival. From July and till the middle of October the flocks of both the lands were employed in carrying the loads between the marts of Hundes and the villages situated in the higher Himalayan valleys such as Mana, Niti, Johar, Darma and Byans.

Formerly, special missions were despatched by Indian traders after the melting of snows and the upper parts of the Ghats becoming passable, to their respective marts²⁴. The missions were known under different titles in different Ghats such as 'Vakil', 'Agent' and 'Fonya'. The Vakils were each attended by a single follower only and used to carry a small offering of established value. On reaching their destination they used to make a full report of state of politics and health in their land²⁵. The information given by Vakils was taken down in writing for transmission to the Garpon (Viceroy) at Gartok, the provincial capital of Hundes, and then they were sent back together with a return of tribute equivalent to the

offering brought by them. A Huniya official either accompanied or immediately followed the Vakil for the purpose of verifying the statement made by him and collect the tributes due from the Bhotias.²⁶ On the report of the official depended the opening of the intercourse.

Later, the practice of sending a Vakil to Hundes was abandoned. An emissary of Dzung-pon (district official) known as Sarji visited the Ghat villages to collect the necessary information.

The Sarji used to enter a curious form of agreement with the Indian traders. He was presented with a stone and the Bhotia of India promised to forfeit its weight in gold should they introduce any disease into Hundes. At the same time the Sarji was entitled to an initial fee of one Timasha (three annas) and two Manas (one seer) of rice from every family in the village he visited and four Timashas for every hundred goat loads as final fee after business had been done. Another tax which he used to exact at the rate of six Timashas from each family was known by the name of La-thal, a fee for crossing the pass. This particular tax the Sarji used to exact at the pass; two-thirds of the pass tax was meant for the Dzung-pon and the rest he pocketed.²⁷

Besides being an envoy of a Dzung-pon the Sarji himself was a trader and carried with him forty to fifty goat loads of salt. He visited each village in the valley and stayed with the headman as a guest of honour. He used to give two 'Phanchas' (24 seers) of salt to each headman. This tribute was called 'Sarji-Phancha'. For this he received an equal amount of rice. Over and above he was given one Timasha and two seers of rice from each village-panchayat of the Ghat. He was given an assurance in writing by each headman stating that the village was free from epidemics. A false statement was liable to incur a penalty.

The Sarji was accompanied or followed almost immediately by a representative of the traders in the valley to the headquarters of the Dzung-pon. The traders of Niti valley used to send their envoy, the 'Fonya', with customary offerings to the Dzung-pon of Dapa in western Tibet, which included two hundred yards of 'sattoo', a variety of cloth meant for burning lamps in the

Gompas, forty yards of 'Kharba', a variety of cloth used as lining, five cakes of jaggery each weighing two and a half seers, four seers of 'Basmati' rice, dry fruits up to one seer and a quantity of 'chyura' (beatan rice). He had to undergo once again the whole exercise of assuring the Dzong-pon that his valley was free from epidemics.

The Fonya at Dapa was a state guest and resided with the Dzong-pon during his stay, which was normally for four days. The Fonya was offered the best food and best liquors available, his flocks were looked after by the host and the loss of animal if any was compensated. The Fonya on receiving the permission to return was given a tribute consisting of a bag of Bala-wool (wool of ten lambs), one Shyokhang (a little above one half of a tola of gold dust) two or three seers of butter, and four seers of 'thoottoo' (A Hundes sweet, mixture of curd, sugar and butter).

The Fonya was eagerly awaited in his valley as the journey to Hundes could commence only after the final permission had been received from the Dzong-pon.

The Fonya institution came to an end in the thirties of the present century owing to a litigation which the Fonyas lost and Sher Singh Sayana, a Niti valley trader of extensive commercial operations, won from the court of sub-divisional magistrate of Chamoli Garhwal. The subject of litigation being Fonya's traditional position to remain first among the Hundes bound traders.

The Journey

First group of traders from the Himalayan valleys used to leave for Hundes in the month of July after celebrating Haryala festival. Various Poojas were performed the night before the commencement of the journey. The whole population of a village would spend the entire night, singing and dancing.

Next morning practically every soul from a trader's village walked with Hundes bound merchants up to a spot where first water spring was met and a temple stood erected. The traders

marched to the sound of various musical instruments up to the parting point. Here the traders after embracing their kith and kin slowly walked away leaving behind their sobbing, family members ; the journey being hazardous and a risk to life.²⁸

Each party of traders was led by a senior member of the community (the Fonya led the group in the past) spinning wool with his 'Takli' he walked, followed by the tallest goat of the flock, a collar of bells jingling around its neck, walking at the head of the entire flock, closely followed by other members of the party, the jubus, a cross of yak and Himalayan cow ; ponies and the watch-dogs brought up the rear. In these groups sometimes were seen very young members of eleven to twelve years of age.

A party took with them a large flock of sheep and goats besides a number of jubus, yaks, ponies and asses. A sheep carried a load of five to eight seers, a goat from six to twelve seers of dry commodities, the weight of which was equally apportioned on both sides of these animals ; grain, salt, borax, gur and such articles were sewn up in small saddle bags called 'Karbich' made of worsted and cased with leather. These were laid across the back and were secured merely by crupper and breast band. Wool was formed into packages and loaded in the above mentioned mode but without bags.

Laden sheep on short journeys accomplished seven to eight miles a day, on long journeys the animal could not keep up a greater pace than five miles per day. They travelled only for a short time in the morning and in the evening. During the heat of the day which is scorching in the Hundes plateau they were unloaded and allowed to graze. While marching, goats were chosen for their superior boldness and activity as leaders of the flock and were furnished with bells. For cloth transportation the animals used were yaks, jubus and asses. Ponies were usually not used as pack-animals on account of the difficulty a pony found traversing a track which served for roads in the passes. They were kept for riding over the sandy deserts of Hundes.

Many of the traders possessed flock of Hundes sheep. a

powerful long legged animal which produced an additional number of horns. This animal used to carry from fifteen to twenty seers. The wool it produced was also of a superior quality, known under the name of Byangi whereas at the same time price was not greater than that of the common hill sheep. These flocks were kept by their owners at some adjoining village in Hundes and were brought into use on the opening of the upper parts of the valley²⁹.

Each party was headed by a merchant of some wealth as the owner of the merchandize ; two to three persons walked as working partners and the rest as simple wage earners making the party of eight to nine members. Working partners shared in the profits of the journey while wage earners received a fixed amount of thirty rupees for the season, a period of three months from mid-July to mid-October. Considering the wages prevailing in the valley the amount was quite handsome as salaries of the domestic assistants were from one and a half to two rupees for full year.

The merchants carried with them abundant foodstuff and drinks. 'Sattu' of barley or wheat accounted for the bulk of the ration. Other items were wheat flour and rice. 'Chhang', the most popular drink throughout the entire Himalayas, was of course an essential item. Equally essential were tents. A cover over the head in the plateau is rare. In the marts most of the traders used tents. A few rich merchants who possessed property in the plateau had sizeable constructions of four to six rooms.

Gartok turned into a tent town during summer months ; it attracted not less than 500 merchants at any one time during the season. The whole plain of Gartok used to be covered with tents of every size, hue and description, including white tents of the Lhasan merchants and black of the Dokpas, while traders from various Indian passes, such as Niti, Johar, Byans lived in comfortable tents of various colours.

The interests of the merchants from the Himalayan districts operating in the plateau and those of the Huniyas were looked after by a Dzong-pon, a district level official of the Lha-sa government. The treaty of Lha-sa of 1904 had created the position of a trade agent at Gartok also. Thakur Jai Chand,

Registrar of Lahul, was appointed as the first trade agent and Lachhman Singh from the family of Pandit Nain Singh of Himalayan Exploration fame from Johar in Pithoragarh district was the last one.

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7. Trade Pattern Between Hundes and the Himalayan Districts

The summer colonies of the Huniyas used to spring up into existence on the bank of the Sutlej some twelve to fifteen 'marches' from the Ghat villages of Central Himalayan districts where the Huniyas received their Indian friends. The Huniyas used to be aware of the date of arrival of their 'Mitras' as it was already fixed during the previous season. Being the carriers of grains, the traders from the Himalayas were eagerly awaited in the tents of the Huniyas.

The Himalayan merchants pitched their tents close to the tents of their trade correspondents. Each group of tents had its nomenclature along with administrative and judicial arrangements etc.

Most of the tent dwellers were signed customers of the traders from the southern slopes of the Himalayas. They called each other 'Mussey' and 'Mitra'. 'Mussey' signifies 'Arhati' and 'Mitra' was a friend from India.

Other expressions they used for each other were 'Dok-pa' (highlander) for a Huniya and 'Rong-pa' (low lander or valley dweller) for the inhabitants of the Himalayan valleys.

It is said that the merchants of either side of the Himalayas in the distant past belonged to one and the same tribe. They were voluntarily divided to maintain the supply of grains etc., from Himalayan countries to Hundes.

When political boundaries came into existence the members of the tribe were separated from each other and became

members of two different nationalities. From that time onwards they have been calling each other by their geographical situation viz. 'Dok-pa' and 'Rong-pa'.

In British records they have been described trade correspondents of each other. In olden days the correspondents took food together as it was an essential part of trade relations ; the Indian traders having become more Hinduised in due course of time avoided the custom, although taking tea together remained a gesture of friendship till the end.

Another noteworthy aspect of the trade was house connections ; so far was the custom stressed that the merchants of certain Himalayan valleys could not partake in any market other than the assigned one. In this direction Kumaon Bhotias led the way. They resisted the custom and in the mart of Taklakhar some of the rigid rules were relaxed giving some advantage to the traders of the Himalayan slopes. A dread of grain scarcity in the plateau worked in favour of the Indian traders. The beneficiaries of the concessions were the traders having wider commercial operations, those who had means to purchase more and sell in abundance and had large flocks and herds. Whereas smaller traders were reduced to wage earners.

The 'Dok-pas' and the 'Rong-pas' used to become very active from mid-July to mid-October. Flocks of both the peoples from across the Himalayas were employed in plying loads between the marts and summer colonies of Hundes and the Ghat villages of the Himalayan slopes. "About thirty thousand mounds of grain of every kind annually was exported to Hundes from the passes of Garhwal and Kumaon. The high prices and rapid sale of the commodity in the plateau leads to the assumption that the prevailing state of supply was insufficient for the needs of the inhabitants. The supplies were drawn from the northern parganas of Garhwal and Kumaon".¹

The Himalayan traders had been employing a method of collecting grains. With the advance of winter in October the traders used to transport the remainder of their Hundes merchandize to the south and for this purpose they had depots in the upper midland parganas. The principal one in

Garhwal were Nandprayag and Karnaprayag and in these encampments the families remained for the winter. On the way and on further journey to the plains excursions were usefully made into the nearby villages on either side of the route where salt and wool was sold and grain purchased. Finally, the goods which had not been sold on the way, and which included all the borax, reached the plains of Kotdwar and Ramnagar where it was sold for cash and exchanged for grain at advantageous rates.

During cold months this system was extended to the midland parganas around Srinagar and Pauri in Garhwal and around Ranikhet and Almora in Kumaon.

From March the flocks plied the northern parganas and from the beginning of May the sheep were employed in transporting the grain from the foot of the valleys to the Himalayan villages. For the convenience of this traffic the traders had accordingly established three depots—one at their Bhot village, the second at the base of the Himalayas and the third, at some three or four days journey below.

The grain to a partial extent was transported by the Khadwals of Garhwal, yet another set of carriers from northern parganas, on their own sheep to the Himalayan villages and thus similarly bartered for salt. The rate of barter which prevailed in the first quarter of the 19th century may be stated as follows : In the midland and northern parganas three to four of wheat or rice for one of salt and within the Himalayan valleys two of wheat or rice for one of salt. To the Huniya, however, the traders gave only one of wheat or rice for one of salt in the Himalayan villages while in Hundes they exacted double the ratio. The coarse grain such as Mandua, Cheena etc., generally averaged half the value of wheat and rice in this system of exchange.² The advantages of this system to the inhabitants of northern parganas can be appreciated by studying the state of prices prevailing in the first half of the 19th century. At Almora wheat was selling at 25 seers a rupee. In the southern parganas of Garhwal and Kumaon from where the grains were exported to Rohilkhand, the price was nearly the same. "In western midland parganas of Garhwal, to which none of these demands was extended,

wheat was selling at two mounds per rupee and purchases even at that rate were not forthcoming".³

There were two modes of computation in weighing and measuring commodities. Grains, salt and borax etc. were sold by measures of capacity as follows :—

8 handful made	1 Phurwa
8 Phurwas made	1 De
12 Des made	1 Dabu or Guama

The Dabu was equivalent to a Kachcha mound of twenty seers ; in some articles it contained 18 Des.

Wool, sugar, hardware etc., were weighed by the steelyard which was divided into 'Nega'. The 'Nega' was about ten 'Sicca' weight.

Prepared tobacco, gur etc., were divided into small flat cakes, called 'Pola', of which from ten to twelve were sold for the rupee.

Cloth was measured by the 'Thu' or Cubit or by the 'Khagam' or breadth.

Gold was calculated by the 'Phetang' equal to seven and a half 'Mashas'. Gold dust tied up in a piece of cloth was current as coin at eight rupees per 'Phetang'. Silver was computed at the 'Jyu' or 'Timasha' and the 'Gorma' or current Bareli and Farrukhabad, rupee, both equivalent to four 'Jyu'. "The 'Jyu' was coined at Ladakh, of very uncertain standard. In Garhwal it was called Gangatashi and passed for more than five to the minted Farrukhabad rupee. In large payments, ingots called "Lakalo" or 'Doja' were used. These had the Lhasa stamp on them and were very pure silver. The 'Doja' weighed seven hundred and sixty 'Jyus' and were current for something less than two hundred rupees".⁴

Grain was exchanged by the bags or baskets ; utensils, sundries and cloth were sold for cash.

Srinagar 'Timasha', Ladakh 'Jyu', Bareli and Farrukhabad rupee and the 'Naktang' or 'Tanka' the Tibetan coin, all were accepted in the marts and tent colonies of Hundes. Post 1954, period however, witnessed the entrance of 'Dhayang', the Chinese coin which in due course of time forced the rest of the coins out of circulation.

The rates of all commodities and animals varied on the

southern slopes and in the northern plateau, according to circumstances. The Huniyas received better price for their borax and salt during their first trip to the valleys which was made in the month of July.

A Huniya preparing for the journey to the Indian side, moved slowly towards the frontiers with his flock and family, tending and resting ; on finding a suitable place he pitched his tent where the family made itself comfortable and stayed till his arrival. The Huniya left for the valley with his chosen flock of sheep laden with salt and borax. The journey used to be generally of four marches. On reaching the village he could knock at the doors of his correspondent.

A warm welcome was accorded to the Huniya at the residence of his Bhotia friend.

He was escorted into the drawing room and made comfortable. Within minutes tea was served, then his flocks were unloaded and the goods deposited in a room, an indication of having been bought in total. Family welfare used to be the first topic of conversation in Huniya dialect (Tibet language), in the meantime an uninterrupted supply of tea was kept up.

Other formalities having been completed, the Mussey used to come out with the presentation articles : Chhura Khurd, a preparation of curd, cheese and gur ; which used to be reciprocated with a 'Bheli', a jaggery cake weighing two and a half seers.

The Mussey used to be accommodated, in the house of his 'Mitra' during his stay in the valley. The meals were served by the host whereas the Huniya prepared his own tea. The mid-July trip of a Huniya was happier one by all reckonings. He received one measure of oat or barley or 'Fapar' for one measure of salt or borax, and two Timashas for the wool of each sheep shorn by the Mitra. The flock was tended by the host and for any loss of animal-life appropriate compensation was paid. All these facilities revolved round the wool of his flock. At the time of his departure the Huniya received presentations of a quantity of beaten rice, sugar-candy, nuts and dates.

The trip undertaken in the month of September was not as

rewarding as the earlier one because his flock had already been shorn. The wool being most profitable article of the barter from the Mitra's viewpoint. The rates paid to the Mussey during his second visit were two salt for one oat or Fapar and even less. The facilities of tending the flock and compensation for the loss of animal-life were not allowed. Farewell presentations were few and of less value.

The Trade Pattern Between China and Tibet

The trade pattern between China and Tibet was different. It was unlike the pattern existing in cis-Himalayan districts where bonds of friendship played a significant role in the marts and in the colonies, and where the traders visited each other in their homes and commerce had become a tradition which continued through the generations.

Sheep wool being the major article of trade, it was exported to China at the rate of 2,70,000 pounds every year. Till the closing years of the nineteenth century trade in Tibet was handled by the Tibetans, and though the Chinese were engrossing trade in the border districts of Tibet the trade remained in the hands of Tibetans till the last day of its independence. The China-bound trade was monopolized by the merchants of the eastern province of Kham; either private people trading on their own account or on behalf of monasteries or the monasteries themselves. The wealthiest merchants in this quarter belonged to the Horpa states.⁵

A trader interested in the business of the east would assemble a caravan of ponies and mules and load them with Tibetan goods. Such as woollen clothes, rugs, incense, foreign sundries from India and gold and silver in bullion or coin. He proceeded to Tachienlu selling his stock as he moved on so that little reached Tachienlu, where he would put up at one of the 'Tsang' or 'Kwochwang'. The houses were those of the local Tibetan gentry who undertook to entertain the merchants on the condition of being their go-between and interpreters in dealing with the Chinese.

When business was to be arranged, the 'Kwochwang'

owners took the Tibetan round to the Chinese merchants he wished to see. The Tibetan then worked out his contracts. The general custom was for the buyer to pay one half of the price on the spot in cash and to give a promissory note for the remainder. The balance was paid when the Tibetan next visited Tachienlu. Meanwhile he had been paying off old debts and purchasing sundries and silk. Cash in full was generally paid for these. The negotiations for tea contracts were a long business which kept the merchants some months in Tacheinlu. During this time he was able, if he wished, to have silk piece goods made to order at Chengtu.

Everything having been settled and his purchases made, the merchant collected the pack animals which were let out to graze in the mountains, load them with his silk and sundries, ready for the return journey. The tea would not arrive till he had left and he had to arrange with the 'Kwochwang' landlords for its packing and transport, after his departure.

The tea was brought in day by day from China and as it came, was repacked and stored till sufficient was collected for a caravan. As delivered in Tachienlu the tea was in packages of 3.5 feet long 8 inches wide and 4 inches thick wrapped in bamboo matting. For transportation by animals the packages were cut in half, the halves placed side by side and wrapped in raw hides, which were tightly stretched and sewn while fresh and damp. A stiff unbreakable bale, 22 inches square by 8 inches thick was thus made. It weighed about 66 lbs., and two or 133 lbs., formed one animal load. Generally all kinds of merchandize for Tibet whether in boxes or not, were packed in similar fashion in raw hides.

By the time the tea was ready, a caravan of yaks had been hired from one of the firms who specialized in the business and the tea was loaded on the animals and despatched. Such caravans did not make the complete journey to Lhasa, but were changed at every half a dozen stage or so. They were almost always consisted of yaks and their slow rate of travel and delays in changing over made the journey to Lha-sa a very long one. Mules and ponies were hardly ever used for this purpose, being preferred for more valuable merchandise, such as silk and sundries. The merchant was in Lhasa long before

his tea and it might be a couple of years from the time he first set out to Tachienlu till the last consignment arrived. The merchant used to settle the payment of the balance on his next visit to Tachienlu and the Chinese themselves expressed that defaulting was a very rare occurrence.⁶

The Gamgya

The Huniyas sometimes received a rough treatment at the hands of their 'friends' in the Himalayan districts,

There are instances of two traders contesting for a Huniya customer in the civil court of Garhwal. "In one of such cases one trader sued another for the exclusive right to trade with a particular Huniya. Neither party ever referred in the slightest degree to the wishes of the Huniya who was thus to be disposed of and it was evident that his acquiescence in any decision arrived at was regarded as certain. The officer who tried the case met the same Huniya shortly afterwards, who humbly expressed a hope that he would not be transferred to the person who instituted the suit".⁷

The incidents creating bad blood did arise although rarely, in spite of various bindings such as the custom of 'Sulji-Mulji'. Two individuals engaged in commercial dealings from the two sides of the Himalayas took tea or 'Chhang' from the same cup, an expression of brotherhood. 'Kundakhar' was another custom through which the parties demonstrated their honesty towards each other in their dealings, by placing either a miniature statue of a deity or a religious book on one's own head and swearing by it to remain honest to his trade correspondent.

Most common and legally valid among such customs was that of 'Gamgya', an agreement in black and white, outcome of a long experience which was trustworthy. The 'Gamgya' or contract used to be signed between a Huniya and a merchant from the Himalayan valleys. A Gamgya was written either on a birch bark or on a locally manufactured piece of paper called 'Pahari Kagaz'.

The document used to be a short one. The day of commencement of the trade-friendship and the name of the parties were mentioned in the main text of a Gamgya. The language of the old Gamgyas was Garhwali in Nagri script and new contracts were in Hindi in Nagri, and Tibetan language. Most of the documents carried the Vikram era and not the official one from any one of the establishments. Two copies of a Gamgya were prepared for the parties. The Indian trader would sign the document, the alternative was a thumb impression. The Huniya affixed his seal known as 'Thaje', a couple of witnesses were also brought in to sign the 'agreement'. The occasion was followed by celebrations, of which tea and 'Chhang' were essential items.

The Gamgya was signed only in Hundes tents where Indian traders visited their 'arhatis' during the seasonal operations. After the signing ceremony a Huniya became 'Mussey' and the Indian trader was called 'Mitra'.

The origin of Gamgya is yet to be traced, however the documents as old as two hundred years are available in the possession of the traders of Niti valley and, according to Rahul Sankrityayan, the number of Gamgyas in the valley is not less than two hundred⁸

The Gamgya holders had definite advantages. A signed Huniya sold the goods to his correspondent in the Ghat villages without botherations involved in the commercial dealings of the times. The goods were bought by the Mitra under this arrangement.

The traders working under Gamgya system used to hold a kind of individual monopoly. The Mussey could sell his wool only to the signed correspondent. A defaulter was liable to punishment. A law suit, though rare, was not unknown under the system. For an erring party the traders also had their own customary penalties. A sum of fifteen 'Surchangs', seventy five Tibetan coins (Tankas) were fixed as a 'Dund' (penalty); 'Surchang' was an expression for 'five Tankas'

A defaulter amongst the Ghat valley Mitras was considered one who refused to buy the goods brought into the valley by his trans-Himalayan correspondent. Since a Mitra was always

earning handsome profits out of these transactions, a refusal was hardly likely.

A 'contract' ran through generations which in due course of time had become a tradition. Not individuals alone but entire families from two sides were involved in the commercial activities around a 'contract'. As the size of the families increased, more members visited each other's country. The amount of trade was divided among the members of the family according to the traditions.

A 'Gamgya' was applicable to sons and daughters of a correspondent without discrimination whatsoever. A son joining the family of his spouse and daughter on becoming a member of the in-laws household were considered as part of the set-up.

New members of a 'contract' visited their correspondents and received customary reception in each others' territory.

A son or a daughter of a Huniya, on joining a family already signed to a Gamgya, bartered one-third of the total transaction with the Mitra of the father's house, while an unsigned family automatically became 'Mussey' of the parental correspondent.

A Mussey was a disposable 'property'. The Mitra unable to visit his 'Mussey' in the tent colonies of Hundes had the right to sell his correspondent. The name of the buyer was required to be recorded in the body of the Gamgya along with the date of transfer. The flock of the Mussey determined his price. An owner of one thousand strong flock of sheep and goats fetched a sum of six hundred rupee upwards.

A temporary agreement under the title of 'Dwapchak' stone Gamgya, and another, 'Singched' wooden Gamgya, were in vogue in the marts of Hundes. The contract served the parties for a single season. A stone or a wood piece was made the object of an agreement which was then divided into two equal parts for the contracting parties. A defaulter was made to pay gold dust equal to the weight of the 'piece' of Gamgya the party had in possession.

The Dokpas and the Khampas who reached the Hundes marts by mid-July wished to visit the mart for the second

time before the season was out. They quickly disposed of their goods and fixed up with some one in the mart from the Himalayan side. The contract in practice was a temporary one under the name of either 'Dwapchak' or 'Singched'.

On his second trip a Khampa or a Dokpa usually carried either borax, wool, sheep or goats for sale. The Khampas came from east of Lhasa to earn better profits in the marts of Ngnari-kor-sum.

The Gamgya was a legal document, acceptable in all institutions imparting justice, on either side of the Himalayas. In Hundes the local 'Pons' (officials) including the Garpon and Dzungpon had the judicial powers to decide a dispute arising out of a 'Gamgya'. On the Indian side, the law courts accepted the suits. The Britishers state that the law courts in India were preferred for better judicial procedures. A Hundes official with judicial powers was a broker of Lhasa and deputed on a fixed sum to deliver a decision. Therefore a very high court fee from the contesting parties was always expected. The amount was meant for the pocket of the magistrate.

A Gamgya could be discontinued. There was a provision for such an eventuality. A ceremony for the purpose was arranged, the disagreeing parties attending. A woollen thread was banded over to the correspondents who would then pull it till broken. The ceremony was known as 'Kutpa-ched' (cutting thread).

However, a provision always stood for restoring the friendship till it had not gone beyond the reach of the two peoples.

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3. Shri Madho Singh Pal, Village Bampa, Niti Valley, Garhwal Himalayas.
4. Shri Madho Singh Fonya, Village Ghamsali, Niti Valley, Garhwal Himalayas.
5. Shri K. S. Fonya, Village Ghamsali, Niti Valley, Garhwal Himalayas.
6. Shri Narayan Singh Sayana, Niti Valley, Garhwal Himalayas.
7. Shri Pan Singh Bampal, Niti Valley, Garhwal Himalayas.
8. Shri Hukam Singh Pal, Mana, Garhwal Himalayas.
9. Shri Bir Singh Pal, Village Nilang, Uttarkashi, Garhwal Himalayas.
10. Shri Kesar Singh, Milam Vailey, Pithoragarh, Kumaon Himalayas.

Index

- Abdin, Zainul 69, 85
Abhayamalla 47
Abhiras 18
Afghanistan 80
Ajaypal 27, 28
Akbar 52, 69
Alaknanda 4-7, 14, 25, 28, 32, 49,
64, 65, 70, 84
Almora 15, 55, 61, 76, 97
Altai 23
Amdos 20
Anandevmalla 47
Anantamalla 48
Antacharas 23
Antarvedi 25
Arathan 58
Arimalladeva 47
Arjun 14, 21
Arthasastra 37
Arundhati 17
Ashok 18, 36
Asokachalla 49, 50
Atkinson 19, 20, 72
Aufschnailter 61
Aurangzeb 52, 69, 85
- B**
- Badrinath 1, 6, 27, 28, 63, 64, 66
Bageswar 18
Bahlik 19
Balti 51
Baltistan 10, 44
- Baramihir 19
Barantola 42
Barhal 25, 27, 49, 50
Barthwal, Mahidhar Sharma 22
Basudev 23, 25, 63
Basuki Nagaraja 21
Bhagirathi 1, 7, 17, 25, 32, 49
Bhandari, Madho Singh 31
Bharat Muni 19
Bhardwaj 15
Bhatgaon 48
Bhildas (Bhairas) 17
Bhog 23
Bhudev 18
Bod (Tibet) 8
Bower, Capt. H 33, 59
Brāhmapuri Himal 6, 41
Brahmaputra 11, 16, 19, 42, 60
Buddha/Buddhism 37, 28, 45, 47, 55,
57, 63, 84
Budheras 20, 21
Burrard Col. S. G. 12
Bushahr (Guge) 23, 42, 71
- C**
- Carpathians 23
Chamba 19, 23, 61
Chamoli 14, 61
Chamunda Devi 55
Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya 38
Changabang 4
Chaprang 9

Che-hwangte, Chinese Emperor 36
 Chetaka 37
 China 18, 26, 33, 36, 37, 39, 42, 58,
 74, 76, 80, 100, 101
 Chumurti 10, 75, 83, 84
 Coresma, Father Nuno 30, 85
 Csomo-de-Cores 9, 39
 Cunningham 16, 17, 43

D

Dabral, Dr. S. P. 17, 32
 Daga 27
 Daksha 18
 Damjandhura 7
 D' Andrade 28, 29, 51, 85
 Dapa 8, 28
 Dard 15, 16, 19, 43
 Das, Rai Sarat Chandra 15, 42
 Das Gupta, Kalyan Kumar 16
 Dasoli 30
 Dehli 52, 62
 Dehra Dun 14, 15, 78, 89
 Demchog 52
 Dharali 20
 Dhaulī 4, 5, 7,
 Di-gum-Tsangpo 59
 Dipankar, Shri Jnan 45, 46
 Dirghbenu 15
 Doma 17
 Dongpu 10
 Dunagiri 5

E

East India Company 75, 78, 87

F

Fateh Shah Raja 31
 Fi-hsian 39
 Francke, A. H. 22, 43, 45, 50, 51
 Frazer 41

G

Gandak 21, 25
 Gandhara 19, 43
 Gandhi, Mahatma 85

Gandhmadan 14
 Ganeswar 25
 Ganga 1, 15, 18, 25, 49, 60
 Gangotri 6, 17, 18, 21, 30
 Ganpati Nag 25
 Garhwal 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16-20, 22,
 25-37, 41, 43, 49, 55, 61, 63, 66,
 70, 72, 74-78, 80, 86-88, 91, 96-
 98, 102, 103
 Gartok 31, 72, 77, 78, 80, 89, 93
 Ghirtidhura 7
 Gilgit 43, 59
 Girthi 4
 Goa 29
 Gobi 23
 Gomukh 6
 Gopalas 18
 Gopeshwar 25, 27, 49
 Gorkha 27, 32, 33, 61, 86
 Govisan 15
 Guadis 23
 Guge 8-10, 18, 26-30, 41, 42, 45-47,
 50-52, 65
 Guha 25
 Gujjars 23
 Gurlamandhata 11
 Gya-nak (China) 19

H

Haider, Mirza Mohammad 68, 85
 Haridwar 21, 25, 78, 88, 89
 Harsha 25
 Harwick, Capt. Thomas 86
 Hathi Parbat 6
 Hearsay, Haider 70
 Hedin, Sven 11
 Himachal Pradesh 2, 19, 23
 Henderson, Dr. 32
 Hindukush 18, 19
 Hindav 17
Hindu Raj Tantra 15
 Hodson 20, 63
 Hotidhura 7
 Hop-Gad 1
 Huddleston, H. 88

- Huen-Tsang 19, 39, 40, 42, 61
Hundesh-s 5-12, 26, 27, 29, 31-33,
49, 53, 68, 70, 71, 73-75, 77, 78,
80, 84-86, 88-91, 93
Huniyas 20, 27, 28, 30, 31, 57, 71-73,
78-80, 86, 87, 90, 95, 99, 102-104
Huns 23, 26
Huwisk 33
- J**
- India 2, 16, 32, 36, 37, 39, 41, 43,
44, 46, 58, 69, 85
Indra Namgyal 52
Indraprastha 14, 21
Indus 16, 43
- J**
- Jad Ganga 1, 7
Jai Chand Thakur 93
Jain-Jainism 37, 38, 47
Jaiswal 15
Jambudwip 50
Jammu 23, 43
Jamya 51
Jayadevmalla 47
Jelukhaga 28
Jhidudhura 7
Johar 26
Johnson, Capt. 41
Joshimath 25-27, 30, 61, 63, 85, 88
Jyoha 15
- K**
- Kabul 19
Kadffisis 23
Kadru 21
Kailash 8, 11, 14, 15, 42, 50, 52, 58,
60, 70, 85
Kakwa M̄ar 28
Kalidas 17
Kalkut 14
Kangra 19
Kanisk 23
Karakoram 32
Kantipur 48
Kartikeypur 25, 26
Kashgar 19
Kashmir 19, 31, 43, 45, 52, 69, 71,
76, 80
Kaspatyrus 19
Kalshail 14
Kalsi 14
Kamet 5-7
Kangri 10
Karnali 9, 48, 60
Kartipur 16
Kashmir 27, 32, 44, 80, 81,
Kashyap-Samhita 17, 18, 21, 24
Katyuri 18, 20, 25, 26
Kauravas 16
Kaushiki 14
Kautilya 37
Kedarkhand 17
Kedarnath 20, 76
Khalate 39
Khambus 18
Khanduri 33
Khar 9, 17
Khas 15, 16, 18-21, 23, 24
Khasmandal 17
Khasiyas 16, 17, 19, 63
Khotan 36, 37, 39-41, 71
Khri-Kra-Shis-Grags-pu-lde 51
Kimpurus 17
Kinnaur 17, 18, 22, 23, 41, 42, 50,
51, 61
Kirat 15, 17, 18, 24, 43, 13
Kirtipur 48
Kulin 15
Kulind Janpad 14-16, 19, 24, 26, 83
Kulindram 15
Kulu 10, 17, 43
Kumaon 2, 9, 10, 16, 19, 20, 27, 31,
49, 55, 70, 72, 74, 75, 77, 78, 80,
96, 97
Kumar Sambhav 17
Kusan 26
Kutla 26

L

- Ladakh 6, 7, 10, 29, 39, 42, 43, 51,
52, 58, 61, 69, 72, 76, 80, 81, 85,
98
Lahul 18, 22, 23, 61, 94
Lang-dar-ma 44
Lde 29, 47, 51, 53
Lha-lama-ye-She-hod 46
Lhasa 29, 33, 42, 44, 47, 50, 51, 61,
69, 73, 74, 80, 81, 84, 101, 105
Lichhavis 26, 36-39, 42, 47, 58, 59
Limbus 18
Lomoslang 51
Longstaff, Dr. 4
Lushington, G. T. 88

M

- Magyars 27
Mahabharat 9, 14, 15, 17-19, 21, 24-
26, 47, 83, 86
Mahavir 47
Mahipal I 20
Mahipati Shah 30
Mainak 14
Majumdar, Dr. D. N. 17
Mallas 26, 27, 46, 47, 49
Mana 7, 28, 60, 72, 76, 78, 79, 84,
88, 89
Manaskhand 27
Mandara 18
Mandi 23
Mandrachal 14
Mangyumla 52
Mansarovar 10, 11, 17, 50, 52, 70,
71, 85
Maohuh 28
Manu 24
Manusmiriti 47
Markandey Puran 9, 14
Mekar 36

- Meru 18
Milam 4, 26
Misra, Yogendra 38
Mongol-Mongolians 17, 18, 20, 24,
43, 44, 52, 83
Mons (monpas) 17, 43
Moorcraft 52, 65, 70, 71, 79, 80

N

- Nagas 19, 21-25, 60
Nagdev 47
Nah The-Tsangpo 46, 59
Namgyal, Delek 69
Nanda Devi 1, 4, 5, 6
Nanda Ghungti 5, 14
Nandakini 5
Nandprayag 5, 97
Nainital 15
Narayanpal 20
Nepal 1, 2, 7, 10, 17, 19, 22, 26, 38,
46, 47, 49, 80, 81
Ngnari-kor-sum 7-12, 17, 19, 20, 29,
39, 40-42, 44, 48, 53, 105
Nilakhantha 6, 84
Niti Pass 31, 32, 70, 72, 76, 78, 87-
89
Northey, W. Brook 18

P

- Pahlavas 18
Paktyika 19
Pal-khor-batsun 44
Pamir 18
Pangong 9
Pandavas 14
Paniniya Bharat 15
Panwar 27
Partangan 15
Pashup 15
Patan 48
Pauri 19
Peking 33

Pindar 4, 15
 Pithoragarh 26
 Pliny 19
 Pon-Pos 58, 60
 Pradar 15
 Prasanjit 38, 42
 Prasthala 19
 Price Powell 16, 26
 Pritam Shah 32
 Prithvipati Shah 30
 Ptolemy 15, 17
 Punjab 19, 32
 Pulind (Kulind) 16, 19
 Purang 8, 27, 44, 48, 52
 Purik 52

R

Rahul Sankritayan 20, 22-24, 26, 41, 49
 Rajshekar 20
 Rakash Lakes 11
 Ranjeet Singh 32
 Raper Capt. F. V. 86
 Ratna Bhadra 45
 Raturi, Pandit Hari Krishna 19, 21, 22, 23
 Rawlinson, Gen. Henry 32
 Rin Chen-Zang-po 46
 Rohilkhand 25
 Rong-Jung 10
 Roy, H. C. 18
 Roy, Prasant 20
 Rudok 8, 9, 27, 32, 45, 51, 52, 72, 73, 75
 Rudra Himal 6
 Russia 23, 32, 71, 79, 80
 Ryall, E. 48, 61, 62

S

Sadanira 21
 Sahajpal 27
 Sham Shah, Raja 30
 Saharanpur 15

Sailoda 18
 Sakas 17, 18, 23
 Salanu 36, 37
 Samudragupta 25
 Sankaracharya 25, 65
 Sapni 22
 Saraswati 7
 Sarda 1, 17, 22, 27, 70
 Sarvang 25
 Sarvarman Moukhri 25
 Satopanth 6
 Shahjahan 69, 85
 Shang-shung 42-44, 53, 59, 61, 63
 Sharma, Dinanath 18
 Sankaracharya 52
 Sherring, C. S. 64
 Shipke 50
 Shipton, E. E. 56
 Shrugn Prades 14
 Singe-Namgyal 51, 52
 Sistan 23
 Simla 10
 Sindhusenvira 19
 Sivalik 2, 16
 Spiti 18, 52
 Smith, V. A. 38
 Sripur (Srinagar) 14, 28-31, 78, 85, 86, 97, 98
 Strachy, Capt. Henry 9, 10
 Strachy, Lieut. Richard 87
 Strong-blsain-sgain-po 42, 44
 Subahu 14, 15
 Sutlej 1, 6, 8-11, 15, 16, 22, 25, 27, 30, 58, 60, 74, 95
 Suvarnagotra 19, 39, 40
 Swargrohini 6
 Swarnaohumi 19

T

Taklakot 48
 Tangan 15, 19, 83-85
 Tangnoi 17

Tangutans 20

Tarai 1

Tarikh-e-Rashidi 68,85

Tartary 22, 31, 88

Tashkent 69, 85

Tehri Garhwal 15, 17, 23

Tholing 30, 44-46, 50, 51, 59, 63-66,
78

Thok-Jalung 48

Tibet 7, 11, 19, 20, 23, 29, 33, 34, 38-
41, 43-46, 48, 50, 52, 57, 58, 60,
65, 69, 71, 73, 76, 77, 80, 88, 100,
101

Tiri 32-34

Tista

Tons (Tamsa) 14

Traill 9, 79

Tribhuvan 18

Trisala 37

Trisul 5

Tsaprang 8, 28-30, 32-34, 45, 46, 51,
78

Tucci, Prof. G. 50

Turner, Samuel 70

Tusar 15, 16

Tusharas 23

Tysbikoff, M. 77

U

Udaygiri Kantha 6

Ugar Singh Raja 41

Ulipi 21

Ushinar 15

Ushirdhwaj 14

U-Tsang 11

Uttar Kashi 6, 14, 19, 41, 42

Uttarakhand 18, 27

V

Vaisali 37, 38, 42, 47

Vanarashtra 19

Vasati 19

Vashistha 17, 47

Vellasu 91

Vishnu Puran 21, 40

Vishnupuri Himal 6

Vishwamitra 24

Vyas 15

W

Wellesley, Lord 70

Who-keho-Ide 44

Wilson, Prof. 9

Wu-than (Khotan) 36, 37, 39-41,

Y

Yaksha 18, 36, 37

Yamuna 14, 16, 17, 21, 25

Yarkand 71

Yashovarman Chandel 20

Yeula 37

Yudhistra 14, 15, 19

Z

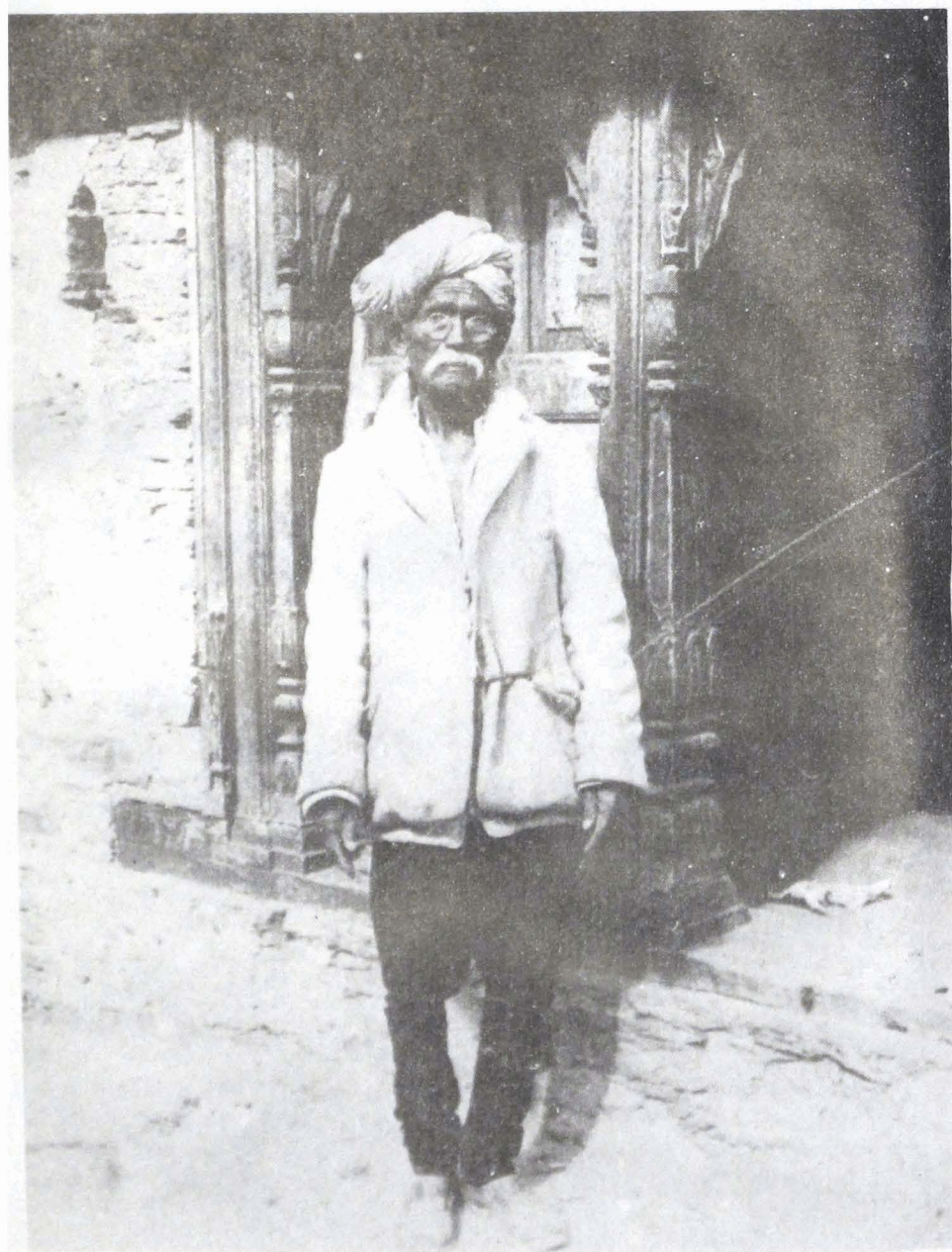
Zanskar 6, 7, 42, 43, 52



Thimon, Senior Governor of Ngnari-kor-sum, with his wife and Bala Singh Pal, his friend and trade counterpart from Bampa Village in Niti Valley, Garhwal Division, Central Himalayas.

(Thimon's father was a Cabinet Minister of Dalai Lama.)

Courtesy : Omolunga, former Zong-pon of Rudok.



Late Shri Amar Singh Pal (1856-1951).
Shri Amar Singh Pal , father of Bala Singh Pal,
visited Tibet at the age of 11. He was the founder of
the firm M/s. Amar Singh Bala Singh Pal, which continued till 1962.

Shri Narayan Singh Sayana, a trader from Niti Valley in Garhwal, Central Himalayas.





Junior Governor Marlampa with his wife.
Marlampa was Junior Governor of Ngnari-kor-sum during forties.

Courtesy : Omolunga, former Zong-Pon of Rudok.

Shri Jaman Singh Sayana, a trader from Niti valley, Garhwal, Central Himalayas.





Shri Madho Singh Fonya (right) from village Ghamsali, Niti valley, Garhwal, Central Himalayas.

Courtesy : Shri K.S. Fonya.



Shri Sher Singh Sayana, the man responsible for the end of Fonya tradition.

Courtesy : Narayan Singh Sayana





Quite a good number of traders from Central Himalayas owned houses in Western Tibet.

The photograph shows the house of Shri Bala Singh Pal (of Garhwal, Central Himalayas) in Western Tibet. The tricolor of India is fluttering over the house. The house is partly covered by tents.

Inset : Shri Bala Singh Pal

Shri Bala Singh Pal (b.1899) is a well known social worker of Chamoli Garhwal. He had been running a shop at Gartok the capital of Western Tibet. His first visit to that country was in the year 1910, when he was just 11 year old. Since then he had been visiting that country practically every year during summer months for next 48 years. He was a guide, friend and trade counterpart of Gartok governors during the forties and the fifties of this century. His trade operations come to an end in 1958. The man is still going strong.



A bill prepared by M/s. Amar Singh Bala Singh & Co. Niti Valley, Garhwal. The bill stands in the name of two governors of Western Tibet for the supply of timber from Garhwal to Ngnari-kor-sum, for the construction of a Dharmsala at Tirthapuri.

A Typical Gamgya (agreement)

The Agreement reads as:

In the Iron-Hare year, month and day.

I, Tsewang Yangkyi, resident of Gaar owe to Bala Singh a sum of Rs. 28/- towards the price of a commodity

A sum of Rs. 5/- is being paid now, and the balance Rs. 23/- will be paid either in cash or kind.

Seal of Tsewang Yangkyi

P.S: This is to acknowledge receipt of Rs. 13/- till the 19th of the 8th month in Water Dragon year.

མགས་པོ་འབྲུག་གི་ལོ་ལྟར། རྒྱ་ལྟོ་ལོ་ལྟར།

གསལ་བྱེད་པའི་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་གསལ་བྱེད་པའི་
ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་
ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་

3720 

ཧེ་ཡཱ་ཏི་ཀི་པཱ་པོ་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་
བཞུགས་པའི་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་
ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་

93/5/2000

ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་
ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་
ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་ལོ་ལྟར་

Handwritten text in Tibetan script, likely the main body of the agreement. The text is dense and covers most of the upper half of the page.

Gamgya (Agreement)

An agreement between
 Sher Singh Sayana, an
 Indian trader and Molam,
 his Tibetan counterpart.
 Signed at Shipchalam on
 the 7th day of
 Asoj 1937, Vikramiya
 (1879 A.D.).

प्राप्त के लिये अथवा अन्यथा प्राप्त करने के लिये
 काको के लिये अथवा अन्यथा प्राप्त करने के लिये

Handwritten text in Tibetan script, appearing to be a continuation or a specific clause of the agreement.

मौजान के साथ नाम के हीत व हीसा नगद ६ म ६
 हीसा तीवरी उवा वाती जो चौ प्रनरा कापटमार
 में माय ६ मेसात फोडा २४ दोपतनी मोरना
 करेगा जो शेरसांड उती त दे वदर रहा सन १९३७
 के अमोज ७ गते मका म तीव सीवरीम इनो साण
 मीसा मानायार ७ वा देवा उवा तीवरीला

Handwritten text in Tibetan script at the bottom of the page, possibly a signature or a concluding statement.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥

मीयचीलें मे मीयकेह छाए... साले सात आठ गणेशे पा माडे
 साले होती मे ३५० हुनेगी... मुहागाय हुनेसा आठ गणेश आठ
 कनगोना भादु उवाडे ५५ पाअडे... मुहागाय हुनेसा
 हुनी गणेशीया ३५ हुनेसा... उने हुनेगी... कनगोनी कनगोनी
 मेक सिचाग गमगीया देना... दया गौंग कोडे...
 ३५ कजा लीया मे साह सालेसा

A Barter Agreement

Gamgya (agreement) between Sighed Cherring, a Tibetan trader, and Ram Dayal, his Indian Counterpart on 28th Bhadon, 1957 Vikramiya (1899 A.D.).

The agreement reads as :

- We, Sighed Cherring and Ram Dayal have signed an aggrement for :
1. 350 Hunure (goat-load) of Suhaga (borax) with wool, half in cash and half in grains—Ooa (Oats). Exchange rate will be 10 goatloads of oats for 11 goatloads of borax. Cash payment will be done for rice. The rate of wool would be Rupee one for one phancha (bag). If any side fails to reach Hoti, the specified place, a penalty of One Sarchang (about Rs. 10) shall be charged on him, and the case shall be forwarded to Dapa-Zong-pon (District officer of Dapa).
 2. Borrowed Rs. 2/-; shall pay next year.

Octroi Receipt issued by Tibetan authorities to Bala Singh Pal, a trader from Niti Valley in Garhwal, for 7.50 Yen on October 6, 1958

བོད་རང་ཀློང་རྒྱུ་མཉམ་སྲུང་ལྷན་པོའི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་ལུགས་སྐུ་ལེགས་སྤྱོད་པའི་སྐབས་སུ་

西藏自治區財政廳稅務處 稅務局

Handwritten signature/initials

完稅証

收執字號 000557

ཁོར་དངུལ་ འཇགས་ལུགས་ 納稅義務人	མིང་། 名 稱	ལས་ཁྲུང་། 業 別		ལུང་། 住 址		ཇི་རུ་མ་། 所屬日期	འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་སྐད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་། 經濟性質							
རྒྱུ་མཉམ་སྲུང་གི་མིང་། 類別名稱	འཇགས་ཚད་། 單位	སྐུ་ལེགས་ཚད་། 課稅數量	འཇགས་ཚད་ འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་སྐད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་། 單位稅額	འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་སྐད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་། 計稅總值	སྐུ་ལེགས་ཚད་། 稅率	ཇི་རུ་མ་གྱི་སྐུ་ལེགས་ཚད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་། 應 納 稅 額								
ཇི་རུ་མ་། 地 稅 稅						མ་ལ་། 百	འབྲུག་ལྷན་པོ་། 十	ཇི་རུ་མ་། 萬	ཇི་རུ་མ་། 千	འབྲུག་ལྷན་པོ་། 百	ཇི་རུ་མ་། 十	ཇི་རུ་མ་། 元	ཇི་རུ་མ་། 角	ཇི་རུ་མ་། 分
ཇི་རུ་མ་། 地 稅 稅												7	5	0
བསྐྱོར་བའི་ཚུ་གྲྭ་། 合 計												7	5	0
བསྐྱོར་བའི་ཚུ་གྲྭ་། བོད་རྒྱལ་སྐད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་། 是計人民幣(大寫)				མ་ལ་། འབྲུག་ལྷན་པོ་། ཇི་རུ་མ་། འབྲུག་ལྷན་པོ་། ཇི་རུ་མ་། འབྲུག་ལྷན་པོ་། 百 十 五 十 十 零 元 伍 角 分										
ལུགས་ཁྲུང་། (འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་སྐད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་།) 稅 額 (算 代 價) 稅 額		ལུགས་ཁྲུང་། 負責 人	ལུགས་ཁྲུང་། 經 手 人	ཇི་རུ་མ་གྱི་སྐུ་ལེགས་ཚད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་། 1% 的 釐 金 按 每 天 1% 計										
ལུགས་ཁྲུང་། (འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་སྐད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་།) 稅 額 (算 代 價) 稅 額		ལུགས་ཁྲུང་། 經 手 人												
ལུགས་ཁྲུང་། (འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་སྐད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་།) 稅 額 (算 代 價) 稅 額		ལུགས་ཁྲུང་། 經 手 人												

第二聯：收據開支的稅人收執

ཇི་རུ་མ་གྱི་སྐུ་ལེགས་ཚད་ལྡན་གྱི་སྲིད་ཁྲུང་།
1958年 10月 6日

दिनांक = ७ मार्च १९५०
 अनापत्ति पत्र नं. ५०५

दिनांक	७-३-५०	कुल मूल्य	२१२-००
प्राप्तकर्ता	अमर सिंह	अपवक	३२-००
पते	बम्पा	निर्दिष्ट	१००-००
अपवक	३२-००	अपवक	३००
कुल मूल्य	२१२-००	कुल मूल्य	२१२-००
प्राप्तकर्ता	अमर सिंह	अपवक	३२-००

अनापत्ति पत्र दिनांक ७ मार्च १९५० को अमर सिंह बाला सिंह को बम्पा, भारत में निम्नलिखित वस्तुओं का निम्नलिखित मूल्य पर निम्नलिखित प्राप्ति का प्रमाण पत्र जारी किया गया है।
 १. ३०० कार्ट्रिज
 २. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 ३. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 ४. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 ५. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 ६. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 ७. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 ८. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 ९. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 १०. १ गैर-संचालित बंदूक
 कुल मूल्य २१२-००

Gun Licence

Receipt Amar Singh Bala Singh
 Bampa
 Trader
 Gun No. 93200

Witness Kedar Singh
 Kailaspur

Birth Place Niti Garhwal

Village Bampa

Nationality Indian

Number of Cartridges 300

Garpon of Gartok issued the receipt in 1950.

Map showing the Central Himalayas and the Western Tibet

