

LADAKH HIMALAYA

PAST AND PRESENT

PREM SINGH JINA



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Past & Present



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Preface

Ladakh has been called by many names, land of Lamas, Peaks of Lamas, Moon land, Broken moon, The land of passes, the land of monasteries. As the names suggest, Ladakh was completely inaccessible during winter to the outside world, in summer Central Asian traders passed through and activate Ladakhis to involve in some economic activities. However, only a few of them exchanged their agricultural products with Central Asian traders. Chang-pa, Shyamma and Zangskaris were known popular traders from Ladakh who carried *pashmina*, wheat, *sattu*, wool, butter, dry cheese etc. and exchanged these with carpet, gold, precious stones etc.

Ladakh was an independent kingdom. In 1842 General Zorawar Sing annexed it into the Dogra Empire. In 1947 it became an integral part of India later Ladakhis were declared S.T. in 1989, in 1995 President of India approved the demand of 'Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Act.' Thereafter Ladakh Buddhist Association time and again demanded for 'Union Territory' status of Ladakh.

In summer 1974 Ladakh was opened for foreign tourists. Annually Ladakh and Kargil festivals are organised by J&K tourist department in order to increase tourist flux in Ladakh. Such steps are not only increasing the living standard of Ladakhis but also help to increase the foreign exchange reserves. Author, who came in Ladakh in 1981, thereafter, visited many places in Ladakh. This book is based upon the work, and a study over a longer period of time together with related travel and his stay in Ladakh.

Thus, this book will be useful for readers, tourists and research scholars of India and abroad who are interested to do their research on Ladakh.

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Dr. Prem Singh Jina

Abbreviations

B.J.P.	:	Bhartiya Janata Party
GRAF	:	General Reserve Engineer Force
J&K Govt.	:	Jammu & Kashmir Government
LAHDC	:	Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council
LBA	:	Ladakh Buddhist Association
LUTF	:	Ladakh Union Territory Front
MLA	:	Member of Legislative Assembly
NEFA	:	North Eastern Frontier Agency
PWD	:	Public Works Department
ST	:	Scheduled Tribe
UN	:	United Nations
UT	:	Union Territory

Introduction

Ladakh is bounded on the north-east by the high Karakoram mountains. The east and south-east by Rudok and Chang-Thang, the dependencies of Tibet now under China. On the south by Himachal Pradesh's district Lahul and Spiti, which also extended along the south-west to Kashmir and north-west touches the boundary of Pakistan.

It has two districts: Leh and Kargil. Leh is dominated by Buddhists whereas Kargil is by Shia Muslims. The following are the main valleys in these districts.

Nubra Valley

It is situated beyond Khardong la pass and surrounded in the north by Karakoram (Tib ka-ra-ku-ram) mountains and south by the Ladakh range. This beautiful valley has high density of vegetation, therefore, derives its name from *Idum-ra*, Idum means vegetation, and ra means place. In general Ladakhis say that Nubra means valley of flowers; according to them Nubra has not only vegetation, but represents flowers of varied colour.

Islam entered in Ladakh for the first time from Nubra when in 1532 AD Mirza Haider attacked and murdered the chief of Nubra along with many others. Later he converted forcibly many Buddhists into Muslims. As a result we can see Muslims in Parta, Bogdang, Turtuk, Tak-shi, Parcha-thang (Tib pa-tsa-thang), and Thang, in majority whereas other parts have Buddhists. In this part Gelupa-order of Buddhism has its supremacy as it has monasteries at Deskyit (Tib. De-skyit), Kya-gar etc.

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In Nubra, Sha-yok and Sya-chan are the two main rivers. Frederic Drew pronounced Sya-chan river as Nubra which flows from the north- north-west and meet Sha-yak near Khal-tsar. He say "This district consist of the valley of the Nubra River—which flows from the north–north-west and of a portion of the valley of the Shayok River, with which it unites. There are wide alluvial flats of the two rivers and the lofty mountains bounding them with ravines, seldom habitated, that lead down from the heart of those mountains."¹

At the junction of Shayok and Nubra rivers, the valley is about 10 km. wide and surrounded by huge barren mountains with sudden height varies from 7000 to 8000 feet bare rock. Drew remarks: "At the junction of the rivers the valley of the Shayok is some four miles wide, that of the Nubra River is from two or three. The flat is in part sandy and shingly, in part occupied by jungle-patches of a low growth of tamarisk and myricaria, or *umbu*. The line at the edge of the plain is sharply drown; the mountains rise from it suddenly in rocky masses, and they rise to a great height. Sometimes one see only the ends of spurs, but even these may tower above one with 7000 or 8000 feet of bare rock; sometimes the eye reaches to lofty yet massive peaks, may be rocky, may be snow-capped, of much greater height, with great spurs and buttresses coming forward from beneath them. The stupendous size and the suddenness of the mountains give a character of grandeur to the scenery of this district."²

The vegetable products are nearly the same as in Indus valley viz. People grow wheat, barley and peas; besides vegetables such as potato, cabbage, cauliflower etc. among fruits—they grow apple, apricot, pear and grapes. Drew says:

"The vegetable products are nearly the same as in Central Ladakh. The naked barley is the most general crop, wheat is grown in nearly all the villages; but not in large quantity, as the people themselves do not consume it. There is little fruit—apples, walnuts and apricots; of apricots the sweeter sort ripen only in the Shayok valley below the junction of the rivers; in

this part also melon and water-melon ripen. Unmaru (or Udmaru) a village which has a southern aspect, is the best place for fruit in Nubra.”³

Today because of fast economic development, agriculture sector is also developed accordingly. Therefore, Nubrapas grow wheat in large quantity alongwith vegetables. Besides people who live on the high mountains grow barley (yang ma or Nas) and rear goats, sheep and yak. In every year they move to nearby Dok-sa (or pastures). Table 1.1 shows the details:

Table 1.1 : Some Important Pastures in Nubra Valley, Leh-District

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of Pastures</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Chhu-milk-kong-ma	It is near Di-gar valley
2.	La-sngon	In between Di-gar and Sa-bu valley
3.	Cha-gar-chan-la	
4.	Zung-lung-dok	
5.	Pho-long-nak-po	Along the stream Tang-yar-ri-tok-po
6.	Ang-shing-dok	
7.	Tag-lung-dok	Near the village khye-ma
8.	Rdo-zam-dok	
9.	A-ri-dok	
10.	Am-ri-dok	
11.	Zyung-le	Near the top Le-na-kong-ma
12.	Le-nak	
13.	Me-re-la	
14.	Le-na-yog-ma	
15.	Pang-Sen po	Ascend to the Kha-rdong la pass

Source: Compiled from : Sanyukta Koshal, ‘Ploughshares of gods Ladakh: Land, Agriculture and Folk Tradition, Vol-I, Om Pub., New Delhi, 2001, 116-132

This valley has ample water sources such as springs, lakes and streams which irrigate agriculture lands and pastures (Table 1.2)

Contd.

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**Table 1.2 : Springs, Streams and Lakes in Nubra Valley,
Leh-District**

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Sku-ru-yi-tok-po (stream)	On the west bank of Sha-yok
2.	Lchang-mar-ri-tok-po (stream)	Near Lchang-mar village
3.	Tur-tug-gi-tok-po (stream)	Near Tur-Tuk
4.	Tang-yar-ri-tok-po	Stream
5.	Tang-yar-ri-chhu	
6.	Di-gar-ri-chhu	Three streams close to the two mountains near Tang-yar village Lake called Khum-dar or Khum-dar of about 11 km in length and about one km is breadth.
7.	Khye-me-chhu	
8.	Nub-ra tsho	
9.	Pa-na-mik chhu	Near pa-na-mik village
10.	Pa-na-mik	Hot spring, have hot water of 167°C throughout the year.

Source: Compiled from : Sanyukta Koshal *op. cit.*

Though Nubra valley has most of the villages at the level of 10,000 to 10,600 feet (ASL), it has very high passes and cold deserts (Table 1.3). Besides, some places were centre for Central Asian traders who used to stay there. In olden days Leh to Yarkand via Nubra was known as silk trade route (Table 1.4).

**Table 1.3 : Important Passes and Deserts in Nubra Valley,
Leh-District**

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Wa-ri-la (pass)	12,610 ft (ASL)
2.	Nye (pass)	12,060 ft (ASL)
3.	Tya (pass)	12,320 ft (ASL)
4.	Kha-rdzong-la (pass)	18,380 ft on the Leh to Des kyt road
5.	Sta-lam-la	Pass
6.	Di-gar	Pass
7.	Pe-thang	Desert on the left-to Ko-yak-thang

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
8.	Sha-thang	Desert near to De-skyit
9.	Ko-ya thang	Desert near Ko-yak
10.	Thang-ma-chhen mo	A big desert near Om-be and par-to-pur villages
11.	Thang-chhen-mo	Desert left to Khal-trar and across Sha-yok.
12.	Pi-lam-chi-u-thang	Desert, near A-gyam village
13.	Thang-nak-pa	Desert, on the right of Khye-ma village
14.	La-rgyab	Pass towards Tak-shi.

Source: Compiled from : Sanyukta Koshal *op.cit.*

Table 1.4 : Some Important Places and Bridges in Nubra, Leh-District

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Hunder	Historical place
2.	De-skyit	Tehsil headquarter of Nubra
3.	Ko-yak	Bridge on Sha-yok
4.	Chu-lung-kha	Bridge on Sha-yok
5.	Khal-tsar	10,060 ft., village, ascend to the khardzong-la
6.	Sumur	10,060 ft., village on the Silk route
7.	Panamik	10,610 ft., village on the Silk route

Source: Compiled from: Sanyukta Koshal; *op. cit.*

Indus Valley

It is the central part of Leh district. Leh, the district headquarter lies at the north-east of Indus river and, at the bottom of Khardongla (Tib. kha-rdzong-la). The average elevation of the valley is about 10,500 ft., surrounded by high passes viz. Khardongla, Taglangla Changla (or Sakti la) etc. Sanyukta Koshal explains :

“The Central Ladakh valley extends in the north up to the base of kha-rdzong-la pass, in the south upto the valley of Skyu-Ma-ka, in the east it embraces the valley of Sa-bu behind the mountain range; further up, behind another mountain range, is situated the valley of chem-sak before the chang-la pass; on the lower slopes along the Sindhu the valley stretches upto Sha-ra-l-gu, in the south-east, below the Tag-long-la pass has settled down its sub-valley Gya-mi-ru, and in the west, the centre of Ladakh stretches upto La-daks Kong-ka.”⁴

Indus valley is very fertile, more than 70 per cent population of Leh district has settled down here. They grow wheat, barley, peas, mustard etc. among vegetables—potato, carrot, spinach, onion, cauliflower, cabbage, radish etc. and fulfil the eighty per cent vegetable requirements of Indian army and paramilitary force stationed there. Besides, many of them sell their vegetables to Leh and Choglamsar markets, during summer season and earn Rs. 200-Rs. 300 per day from vegetables. The following are the important places in this valley.

Table 1.5: Important Places in Indus Valley, Leh-District, Ladakh

<i>Sl. No. Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1. Alchi	It is famous for Alchi choskar consisting old paintings of (10 th -11 th century) Rin-chen-bzang period
2. Saspol	Caves where ancient paintings are preserved. It is also famous for Horticulture
3. Skrubuchan	Drigung Kargyut monastery is located
4. Khalatse	Near bridge one can see old carvings
5. Da-Hamu	One can acknowledge Dardi or Dok-pa culture
6. Hemis	Bug-pa Kargyut monastery is located
7. Chusod	One of the longest village in Asia dominated by Balti or Shia cult Muslims
8. Choglamsar	Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, SOS, ITBP Camps are located here
9. Thiksey	Gelug pa monastery is located

Contd.

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
10.	Shey	Old palace, monastery of rBrug pa order and Sindhu Ghat are situated
11.	Takna	Monastery
12.	Daktog (Sakti)	Nyima pa order monastery is situated
13.	Phyang	Drigung pa monastery is situated
14.	Matho	Sa-skya pa monastery is situated
15.	Sankar	Gelug pa order monastery is situated
16.	Basgo	Monastery
17.	Rizong	Gelugpa monastery is situated
18.	Leh	District headquarter, old palace built by king Ta-shi Namgyal (1555-75 A.D.), known as Nam-gyal rtse-mo-khar and temple (rtse-mo gompa) are situated on the mountain top and at mountain's slopes nine-story palace of king Sing-ge-Nam-gyal (1616-41) is located
19.	Timasgang	Monastery
20.	Upshi	Pashmina goat breeding farm
21.	Chendey	Monastery.

There are many deserts and pastures along the mountain slopes. Table 1.6 shows the details:

Table 1.6 : Deserts and Pastures in Indus Valley, Leh-District, Ladakh

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	Tak-skyi-thang (Desert)	Opposite to Gum-pa village; Leh
2.	Ti-ri-ru-yi Thang	Desert, right to Shas-tang village
3.	Ti-si-ru	Desert near Ti-si-ru chhor-ten
4.	Kha-la-tse (Desert)	Near Ti-si-ru
5.	Lchang-ma chan-ni Thang	Desert below the Santi Stupa
6.	Kar-rtse-Thang	Desert surrounding to Army hospital
7.	Shar-ri-chhu-mig-gi spang	Pasture near the army hospital

Contd.

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<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
8.	A-bi-chhat-pe-Thang	Desert to the right of Kar-rtse mountain
9.	Pe-thang	Desert near Leh
10.	Skam-pa-ri Thang	Dry desert, snow does not settle here
11.	Gal-ldan-ga-we-kat pe Thang (Desert)	Below Skam-pa-ri mountain
12.	Kad-mo-chha-thang	Near Deputy Commisnror's office, Leh
13.	Chhak-tshal-gang Thang	Desert above the nine-story Leh palace
14.	Ki-gu-yi-rong	Desert to the left of Mahadeva religious here now All India Radio and other Govt. buildings are built.
15.	A-lu-yi Thang	} Touch the Villages Mi-tshig-gi-chhu-lung, Ska-ra and choglamsar.
16.	A-bi-chhat-pe thang	
17.	Me-long-Thang	
18.	Mu-rtse-Thang	Near Mu-rtse village
19.	Ag-ling-Thang	Near Ag-ling-village
20.	Ag-ling-spang	Pasture towards Sindhu
21.	Dam-bu-shan-ni-Thang	Skal-zang-ling village has developed here
22.	Spi-tug-gi-Thang	Desert, near spi-tug-village
23.	Go-puks-si Thang	Desert near Gu-puks village
24.	Man-kang-Thang	Desert near phyang village
25.	Thang-kar-Thang-nak	Desert gradually slopes down to the village
26.	Ta-ru-yi-Thang	Desert beyond the Ta-ru village
27.	Um-le-Thang	Desert near Um-la village
28.	La-dasks-kong-ke Thang	Desert downwards to narrow strip to Sham side
29.	La-ma-Guru desert	It is near La-dasks-kung-ke Thang

Contd.

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
30	Das-si-pe-me Thang	Desert, across to chog-lam-sa village
31.	Chog-lam-sa-Thang (Desert)	Near Chog-lam-sar village
32.	Sa-bu-thang (Desert)	Near Sa-bu village
33.	Zyi Ve tshal	Pasture near Choglamsar bridge on Sindhu
34.	Stag-me-Thang (Desert)	Below stag mo village
35.	Nang-ngi-Thang (Desert)	Near Thiksey village
36.	Ram-bir-pur-ri Thang (Desert)	Near Ram-bir-pur village
37.	Shi-Sher-ri-Thang (Desert)	Near Stag-na-Hydel Project
38.	Stok Thang	Desert above stok village
39.	Tu-chik Thang (Desert)	Near stok village
40.	Mi-ru-tse-Thang (Desert)	
41.	Ma-so-e-Thang (Desert)	Near Ma-so (Matho) village
42.	Stag-no-che-Thang	Desert near Stag-na village
43.	Chang-ga Thang	Desert near Chang-ga village
44.	He-mis-si-Thang	Desert near Hemis monastery.
45.	Phar-ka-Thang	Desert on the bank of Sindhu near Phar-ka village.

Source: Compiled from Sanyukta Koshal *op. cit.*

The above deserts belong to the valley, next to this valley has the following deserts ⁵:

1. Chhak-tse-yi Thang
2. Ka-la-kuk-ti-yi-Thang
3. Kha-ru-do-e-Thang
4. Kha-ra-yi-Thang.

Later to move further ahead towards Tag-lang-la pass along the Leh-Manali road, in Gya-mi-ru valley, find the following thangs⁶:

1. I-gu-yi-Thang
2. To-lo-lo-tse-Thang-chhan-mo
3. Ku-lum-mi-Thang
4. Up-shi-Thang
5. Za-rok-Thang.

In lower Ladakh along the Sindhu (Indus) river we come across the following Thangs⁷.

1. Thang-rde-mo (near Snye-mo or Nimo)
2. Chas-ge-Thang
3. Basgo (Tib-Ba-zgo)-Thang (near Basgo village)
4. Li-kyir Thang (near Li-kyir village)
5. Phar-ke-Thang (near Nurla or Snyur la village)
6. Tak-tal-Thang (near Ba-lu-khar)
7. Kha-tse-Thang (near kha-tse or kha-la-tse village)
8. Yu-ru-thang (at the foot of yuru mountain to the end of Plateau)

After Khal-tse (or Kha-la-tse), turn to Da-Ha-nu valley along the Indus river you will see the following Deserts⁸:

1. Thang-go desert near Dom-khar village.
2. Chhu-mik-Thang was one barren near Le-do village.
3. Tsa-na-pa-Thang, 3 km along the right bank of the Sindhu after Le-do village.
4. Be-Thang, now converted to Wa-so-do village.
5. Ha-nu-Thang, near Ha-nu-gong-ma village now being converted into Ha-nu-Thang village.

Today we can understand that with the help of Indian Govt. Development plans and investments deserts along the Indus river after 1947 gradually converted into cultivated fields finally through the ages maximum deserts in Leh valley along the Sindhu either converted to colonies or to Government buildings.

Chang-Thang Valley

It is the lofty part of Ladakh where the lowest ground touches the plains of 13,500 feet, the above portion has long flat valleys at 15,000 feet, where the mountains that keep the height from 20,000 to 21,000 feet⁹.

Chang-Thang Valley consists the following sub-valleys:¹⁰

1. La-Lok¹¹
2. Rong¹²
3. Ko-yul¹³
4. Han-le¹⁴
5. Chu-mur¹⁵
6. Kor-dzok¹⁶
7. Rup-sho¹⁷
8. Khar-nak¹⁸

The climate here is extremely severe, even in summer, day temperature does not increase upto 20-30°C, winters are cold and arid and temperature always remains below zero, sometimes goes down to -40°C. There is rarity of air, therefore, poeple other than Ladakhis feel oxygen problem.

Zangskar Valley¹⁹

It lies south-west of Leh towards the watershed range, named after Zangskar river and under the Kargil district, dominated by Buddhists. The south-west part of this region is covered with wide snowy range, however one can approach here from the north-west and south-west sides. Federic Drew says:

“From all sides the approach of Zānskar (or Zangskar), placed as it is, in a maze of mountains, is of considerable difficulty. To the south-west of it the wide snowy range make a barrier, to cross which must be a laborious and may be a dangerous business. From the north-west and the south-east, indeed, roads lead in from Surū and from Rupshu respectively, to traverse which is less difficult, but these lead over long uninhabited

treats. That way which first one would look to for communication with Leh—by the valley of the Zānskar River—is quite impossible except when the winter's frost makes a road over the waters of the river. Instead of this, in summer time, the traveller from Leh has to make a long detour by Lāmāyūrū, he has to traverse fifteen stages in which several passes have to be surrounded, before Zānskar is reached."²⁰

Today during summer, there is regular bus service from Leh, which takes two days after a night halt at Kargil. In winters helicopter service is provided by defence for civilians.

The climate here is severe, winter is long and receives heavy snowfall. Drew remarks:

“The climate here is severe. The spring, summer, and autumn together last little more than five months, after which snow falls, and at once winter closes in, confining the people and the cattle within doors for the space of half the year. A much greater depth of snow falls here than in Central Ladākh. In the spring it causes avalanches from the mountains to such an extent that in the Nunak valley the people cannot till a month has passed get about from village to village for fear of them.”²¹

Zangskar is surrounded by high mountains from all sides. Settlement areas found mainly along the Lung-Nak and Stod rivers, Padam is the main town. Agriculture is the main profession of Zangskaris, however, they rear livestock viz. yak, demo, dzo, zomo, sheep, goat and cow. Zangskari Butter and horse are famous throughout in Ladakh. In olden days they sold these to Chun-pa,²² now a days in Leh market butter cost Rs. 120/kg and Rs. 12,000/horse.

The following are the main Buddhist monasteries in this valley:

1. Phugtal	Yellow sect	Gelugpa order
2. Tantok	—	—
3. Mune	Yellow sect	Gelugpa order
4. Bardhan (or Bardan)	Red sect	Drug pa
5. Dzongkal	—	—
6. Tarimo	—	—

7. Sani	Red sect	Drug pa
8. Rangdum	Yellow sect	Gelugpa order
9. Karsha	Yellow sect	Gelugpa order
10. Stongde	Yellow sect	Gelugpa order

Suru Valley

Here Kargil, the headquarter of Kargil district lies. It is 204 km. from Srinagar in the West and the second largest urban centre of Ladakh. It was once Central Asian trade *Mandi*, served as an important trade and transit centre in the Pan-Asian trade network. Numerous caravans passed through this; carried exotic merchandise, viz., silk, brocade, carpets, felts, tea, poppy, ivory etc.; transited in the town on their way to and from China, Yarkand and Kashmir. Till 1975, Caravan Sarais in ruined condition would be seen along the town side, now these are not there.

In the Suru valley hills along the Kargil are bare, rocky and lofty, but eastern side has lower hills of a softer material and have beds of clay and sandstone. Drew says:

“At Kargil is another of the wider openings between the hills; upto this spot the granitic hills had continued—bare, rocky and lofty; but now on the east there appear lower hills of a softer material, alternating beds of clay and sandstone. Between the Paskim stream and the Surū river is an alluvial expanse of some square miles, a succession of terraces of alluvial gravel.”²³

The villages in this valley are about 8900 feet above the sea; partly may be less than that and comparatively moist. During winter receives less snow fall and summer has greater force of sun which helps to grow vegetation. As a result wheat and barley here flourish very well. Fruit trees as well as willows and poplars also grow well along the watercourse.²⁴

The majority of population belongs to Shia Muslims. They are cheerful, good tempered and always ready for a laugh, do not quarrel, simple in character and by no means ingenious. Their features resemble with Turanian caste, something to the Chinese race and speak Purik, now mix Ladakhi language.

In summer 1974, when Ladakh was first opened for foreigners, it developed as night halt station for travellers. Till 1988 it had received thousands tourists annually. Now due to Kashmir problems tourists percentage reduced to the minimum side. However, J&K Tourist Department now started Kargil festival every year during summer season in order to increase the number of tourists into the Suru Valley.

Dras Valley

It is surrounded by high hills. The Dras river enters the valley by a gorge, flows through it 25 feet below the level of the lowest alluvial terrace. According to Frederic Drew:

“The valley of Drās is an opening among the hills which leaves a space nearly flat with a width of a mile and a half or two miles, and a length of near three; it is not one flat, but consists of alluvial plateaus of different levels. This space is bounded on the north by low irregular-shaped spurs of hills, whose higher parts are some miles back but can often be seen jutting up in rocky peaks or as a jagged ridge; the surface of these hills is thoroughly bare of vegetation; they show a barren brown expanse of stone and rock-furrowed rock, loosened stone, and talus of fallen masses. On the south side of the valley there is first a low ridge, and then above that tower great precipices of limestone rock. The Drās River enters the valley by a gorge, flows through it 25 feet below the level of the lowest alluvial terrace, and leaves by a similar narrow rock-passage.”²⁵

The Dras valley is the most watered valley in Kargil district and was known Hem-babs, because of great depression. Dras river allows the constant humid vapours to the north of the mountains where after condensation precipitate in the form of rain or snow according to the season of the year. In nutshell winter in the valley is very hard; waterways, waterfalls and stored water freezes, not only this the water vapour also freezes to break into the most intricate and attractive crystal pattern. Summer season is exactly opposite have sunny days, average temperature is about 20°C.

However, high aridity and low temperature leads to sparse vegetation along the mountain range, and as such caused landscape desert like with sandunes.

In conclusion Ladakh is extreme barren land, snow capped mountains, huge lakes, has many fertile tracts, pastures with luxuriant crops and greenery. The beautiful monasteries at the top of hillocks attract not only tourists but give the Buddha teachings of peace and harmony.

Notes & References

1. Drew, Frederic, *Jammoo and Kashmir Territories*; Cosmo Pub., New Delhi, 1976, 272-73.
2. *Ibid.*, 273.
3. *Ibid.*, 274.
4. Koshal, Sanyukta, *Ploughshares of Gods Ladakh: Land, Agriculture and Folk Tradition*, vol. I, Om Pub., New Delhi, 2001, 11-12.
5. *Ibid.*, 152 & Desert means in Ladakhi language as Thang.
6. *Ibid.*, 154.
7. *Ibid.*, 227-233.
8. *Ibid.*, 252-59.
9. Drew, Frederic, *op. cit.*, 285.
10. Koshal, Sanyakta *op. cit.* 13-14.
11. La-lok: It is situated across the Chang-la pass on the east of Leh. Here Chhu-shal (Cu-shul), Tang-tse, Sha-chu-kul, Dar-buk- and Pang-gong-tsho are situated.
12. Rong: It is a part of Chang-Thang, lies in between Lik-tse to Mut; Chhu-ma-thang (or Chumathang), Nya-ma (or Nyoma) and Teri (or Ti-ri) are the important villages.
13. Ko-yul: Below Mut and across the Sindhu to the left along the river upto Dam-chok.
14. Han-le: Across the Sindhu, right to Sindhu.
15. Chu-mur: To the right of Han-le valley.

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16. Kor-dzok: To the right of chu-mur valley.
17. Rup-sho (or Rupshu): Behind Kar-dzok valley.
18. Khar-nak : On the other side of Rup-sho.
19. Zangskar valley: Zanskar valley.
20. Drew, Frederic, *op.cit.*, 281.
21. *Ibid.*, 283.
22. Chun-pa: Brokers (or Middlemen).
23. Drew, Frederic, *op. cit.*, 229.
24. *Ibid.*, & Fruit trees are : Apricot and mulberry.
25. *Ibid.*, 223-24.

PART—I : HISTORY AND TRADITION

1

King Jamyang Namgyal and Islam in Ladakh

King Tsewang Namgyal was the elder son of Nawang Namgyal (Tib, lha dbang rNamgyal). After the death of his father he succeeded the throne of Ladakh. He was a great king during 16th century. He conquered many neighbouring states and extended his kingdom upto Guge and Baltistan, but died before long. The Ladakh kingdom then divided into two small states viz. Guge and Baltistan. Thus the chieftains of these states got chance to regain their freedom. Internal disturbance took place in other parts of Ladakh. In lower Ladakh region vassal princes in one place after another lifter up their heads.¹

King Tsewang Namgyal died childless, after his death fratricidal quarrels took place for the next successor. At last Jamyang Namgyal succeeded his brother.

Turmoil in Lower Ladakh

During king Tsewang Namgyal the Chigtan and Sot were under Khukur Bagram. When king Tsewang Namgyal had full control over Ladakh, the Shey and Timagong dynasties were under him. He was then planning to attack on Baltistan, Khukur Bagram made friendly relations with king Namgyal and appointed his younger son Tsering Malik as governor of Chigtan and kept his elder brother Gyal Malik with him at Sot. Tsering Malik thought to become King of Chigtan and Sot. Therefore he appeared before

king Jamyang Namgyal at his palace. He then established family like relation with king Namgyal. Later the relations became so deep that king Jamyang Namgyal fell in love with queen of Tsering Malik. Malik latter divorced her. She became the queen of Jamyang Namgyal and popular with the name Tsering Gyalmo. It is said that in response of this king Namgyal married daughter of his first queen with Tsering Malik and said he would help him.²

Tsering Malik returned to Chigtan and declared him the king of Chigtan. In the meanwhile his father Khukhur Baram in order to avoid friction between two brothers he divided his kingdom between his two sons; gave kyungkhar and its surrounding areas to his elder son Gyal Malik and the rest i.e. Shagar, Chigtan, Le-Do, Tagmachik area to Tsering Malik. In Ladakh king Jamyang Namgyal was not happy with the decision of Khukhur Baram. To know that king Jamyang Namgyal would be engaged in his internal problems, king Skardu Ali Sher Khan attacked on Baltistan and occupied it. The Ladakhi soldiers ran away from Kartaksha. Skardu soldiers also followed him upto Mrul and Gani, but unable to catch them.³

Differences between Tsering Malik and Gyal Malik

Though Khukhur Baram gave Chigtan and its surrounding areas to Tsering Malik, he was not considered full-fledged king of Chigtan, so he went to Ali Sher Khan for help. Ali Sher Khan agreed and attacked on Sot. As a result of Sher Khan's intervention Tsering Malik got full power of king in Chigtan. In order to give thanks he gave Bodkharbu and its adjoining villages to Ali Sher Khan, who later appointed his soldiers at Bodkharbu fort and his kharpon (Governor) to look after the administration of this region, thereafter he returned to Skardu.⁴

Occupation of Bodkharbu

As soon as Ali Sher Khan returned to Skardu, King Jamyang Namgyal thought that this is the right time to attack on Bodkharbu, he ordered his soldiers to follow him and attack on Bodkharbu. Accordingly via phothola pass he entered into Bodkharbu and with the help of Buddhists he made a tricky plan and occupied

Bodhkarbu fort. When he attacked on Bodhkarbu fort, Balti soldiers were offering *Namaj* at *chorbis spang*, the fort was free from Balti soldiers, thus he occupied Bodhkarbu without any bloodshed. Thereafter Ladakh soldiers run after Balti soldiers, in this incidence some Baltis were killed and other few some how reached Skardu and informed Ali Sher Khan about this event.⁵

Ali Sher Khan Attack on Ladakh

As Ali Sher Khan came to know about the destruction and occupation of Bodhkarbu by Ladakhi soldiers, he made a plan to attack on Ladakh, in this connection he met with king of Baltistan; later with the help of Baltistan king he attacked on Ladakh. The Ladakhi army gave hard battle, but were defeated. Ali Sher Khan victoriously entered the capital of Ladakh. This time king Jamyang Namgyal was in Sot, he hurriedly returned to Leh, but was taken prisoner by Ali Sher Khan.⁶ Later king sent to Skardu as state prisoners. In order to release king Jamyang Namgyal Yabgo Sher Ghaze (Ghazi) met Ali Mir with the following proposal :-

“I offer my daughter rGyal-khatun for the service of king Jamyang Namgyal; if king likes her, he has to marry under the condition that rGyal-khatun’s son will be the next king of Ladakh and he has also preserve and protect Islam in Ladakh.”⁷

King Ali Mir accepted the proposal of Yabgo Sher Ghaze. His daughter rGyal Khatun was very beautiful and sent in the service of king Jamyang Namgyal at the skardu prison. King fell in love with rGyal Khatun. Later Ali Sher Khan (Ali Mir) put the following conditions in order to release king Jamyang and his kingdom:

1. He has to marry with rGyal Khatun.
2. The son with rGyal Khatun will be the next king of Ladakh.
3. He has to preserve and protect Islam in Ladakh.
4. He has to give proper shelter to Baltis in his Kingdom.

5. He has to exclude two sons from his previous Buddhist wife as succession to the throne.

Jamyang Namgyal Returned to Ladakh

King Jamyang Namgyal accepted the conditions as proposed by Ali Sher Khan and got marriage with rGyal Khatun. Then returned to Ladakh with his new bride and some Skardu Balti musicians.

Boundary between Ladakh and Skardu

Before releasing king Jamyang Namgyal, there was an agreement taken place between two regimes, under which boundary demarcation was decided. The Ganokh district and Gargara stream taken by Skardu.⁸

Payment of Annual Tribute to Skardu

During war Ali Sher first attacked on Bodhkarbu and easily reoccupied it from Ladakh. But he was not interested to include it in his kingdom; instead he imposed an annual tribute. Lama Gonpo was appointed for this purpose. He collected the tribute and deposited the same at the court in Skardu even after the war.⁹

Propagation of Islam in Ladakh

The Baltis who came with rGyal Khatun later settled down in phyang and along the Indus belt and, propagated Islam in Ladakh.

Notes and References

1. Datta, C.L., *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics: 1819-1848*, Munshiram Manoharlal Pub., New Delhi, 1973 pp. 55-56 & Francke, A.H. '*Antiquities of Indian Tibet*,' vol-II, Calcutta, 1914-1926, p. 106.
2. Khan, Kacho Sikandar, '*Kadeem Ladakh*', p. 203. It is said that when Tsering Malik had established family relations with king Jamyang Namgyal, king Namgyal was thinking to attack on Purig, he ordered his soldiers to send Tsering Malik and queen into prison at Matho and Stok respectively. However, when this

incident came in Chigtan, Tsering Malik faithful soldiers attacked on Ladakh and released his king Tsering Malik. King Jamyang Namgyal agreed with the peace agreement. Thereafter Tsering Malik officially declared the king of Chigtan.

3. Khan, Kacho Sikandar, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
4. *Ibid.*, & According to Al-Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah Khan, 'when Ali Sher Khan come to know about internal strife of Chigtan Kharpon with the king of Ladakh, he attacked on Sot (Sut) and conquered. Choserang & Adam from Sultan Malik, giving them to the hairs of Chigtan and Pasham. In return he annexed Bodhkharbu c.f. Khan, Al-Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah, '*History of Baltistan*,' Tr. Lok Virsa Translation Islamabad, 1987, pp. 13-14.
5. Khan, Kacho Sikandar, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
6. Khan, Al-Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah, *op. cit.*, p. 14. According to another historical information that the king Jamyang Namgyal when decided to march to Purig, his troops were suddenly overtaken by a violent snow storm at the passes towards Purig. The royal troops were disappeared. The rebellion army who had taken the help of Ali Mir, the Duke of Kapulu, had immediately attacked on them. Jamyang Namgyal taken into prison and sent Skardu. cf. Jina, Prem Singh; 'Ladakh: The land and the people', Indus Pub. Co., New Delhi, 1996, p. 111.
7. Khan, Al-Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah, *op. cit.*, p. 15. According to other information it is said that when king Jamyang Namgyal defeated by Ali Sher Khan; some Ladakhis met Ali Sher Khan in order to release his king. Under the agreement king Jamyang Namgyal offered his daughter for marriage to Ali Sher Khan. After the marriage ceremony Ali Sher Khan returned to Skardu with his new bride and father in law cf. Khan, Al-Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
8. Khan, Al-Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah; *op. cit.*, p. 14.
9. *Ibid.*