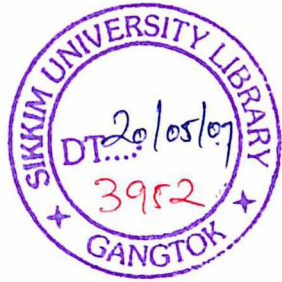


RECENT
RESEARCHES
ON THE
HIMALAYA

Edited by
PREM SINGH JINA



RECENT RESEARCHES ON THE HIMALAYA



Edited by

PREM SINGH JINA

Central Institute of Buddhist Studies,

Leh, Ladakh

Call No.
Acc. No.

INDUS PUBLISHING COMPANY

NEW DELHI



Call No. 001.40954
Acc. No. 3952

© 1997 Prem Singh Jina

First published in 1997 by
Indus Publishing Company
FS-5, Tagore Garden, New Delhi

ISBN 81-7387-069-1

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced
in any manner without written permission of the publisher

Published by M.L. Gidwani, Indus Publishing Company
FS-5, Tagore Garden, New Delhi 110027, and printed at
Elegant Printers, Mayapuri Indl Area, New Delhi

List of Abbreviations

A.C.P.	:	Annual Credit Plan
H.A.D.A.	:	Hill Area Development Agency
H.Y.V.	:	High Yielding Variety
I.A.	:	Indian Antiquary, India, Quarterly
I.P.D.S.	:	Intensive Poultry Development Scheme
I.R.D.P.	:	Integrated Rural Development Programme
J.A.S.	:	Journal of Asiatic Society, Calcutta
J.A.S.B.	:	Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Bombay, 1886 - 1935/36 (1 - XV, 6)
J.A.S.C.	:	Journal of the (Royal) Asiatic Society, Calcutta Branch (Asiatic Society of Bengal), 1832
J.R.A.S.	:	The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
K.R.B.M.	:	Kashmir Raj Bodhi Mahasabha
M.A.S.C.	:	Memoirs of the (Royal) Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1905/6
M.S.	:	Monumenta Serica, Journal of Oriental Studies of the Catholic University of Peking, Peking / Tokyo / Nagoya; 1935.
M.S.O.S	:	Mitteilungen der Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen, Berlin
P.R.A.S. C	:	Proceedings of the (Royal) Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1865 - 1904
R.A.S.	:	Royal Asiatic Society
S.P.A.W.	:	Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

Preface

Geographically the entire Himalaya is characterised by many diverse and complex landforms with wide variation in climate, life and culture. Whenever one speaks about the Himalaya, people throughout the world become attentive and a special eagerness and expectation light up their countenance. It is not only the concept of tremendous heights, the call of unconquered peaks, uncharted glaciers and valleys, or the unbelievable richness of vegetation and animal kingdom, but to the listener there is a greater and deeper significance in the word Himalaya. It is difficult to tell the glories of the Himalaya, as mentioned in the *Skand Purana*: "He who thinks of the Himalayas, though he should not behold him. In a hundred ages of the gods, as the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind by the sight of the Himalayas."

The Himalaya, the treasure of all natural things and spiritual lives, is now facing serious ecological imbalance by population pressure, decreasing wildlife and forest cover. The recent development activities in this region have changed the economy and living standards of the people. Today population has increased, transportation system has improved, new roads and dams have been constructed, agricultural patterns and land utilisation system have changed the traditional agro-pastoral life. New plans and modern activities have brought new problems in this region. Deforestation, landslides, soil erosion, and water pollution have threatened the Himalayan ecosystem.

The present volume is the product of twenty-five papers contributed by eminent scholars. The book covers an integrated view of history, geography, culture, religion and impact of modernisation on eco-cultural and environment of the Himalaya. It is an inter-disciplinary approach in which scholars have contributed their papers in their respective fields.

Prof. Pranab Kumar Chakravarty has studied the social geography of Sikkim. *Zain-ul-Abidin* gives some important historical information of Nubra Valley in his travel record. *Dr. Prem Singh Jina* describes in detail

the Chinese travellers in Himalaya. He also produced a detailed list of Dr. A.H. Francke's contribution in the history of Ladakh Himalaya. Prof. B.K. Deambi has tried to clear the confusion of the pillar inscription at Dras in Ladakh.

Abdul Gani Sheikh has discussed Ladakhi folk culture in details. *Dr. B.S. Bisht* gives his findings which hinder the development of tribals in Uttarakhand. *Dr. Prem Singh Jina* has discussed the socio-economic behaviour of Bhotias in Nepal. *Jamyang Gyaltzen* gives detailed information about the Mangtro Monastery and Rongtsen Kar Mar oracles. *Dr. Prem Singh Jina* discusses cultural history of Lamayuru Monastery. *Rev. Thupstan Chhostak* offers an insight picture of Rizong Monastery and its history. *Rev. Tsewang Rigzin* presented a detailed study of Hemis festival of Ladakh. *Dr. Prem Singh Jina* highlighted the influences of modernisation on Buddhism in Ladakh. *Nawang Tsering* and *Dr. Prem Singh Jina* have made an interesting information about two personalities, Kushok Bakula and Nawang Tsering (Tiapa) respectively. Bodhi is a language of the people of trans-Himalayan belt. *Rev. Tsewang Rigzin* makes an informative picture of this language in Ladakh. *Dr. Prem Singh Jina* has discussed as to how the forbidden land Ladakh is facing ecological problems caused by tourism. He has also highlighted some elements for promoting poultry industry in Nainital district of Kumaun Himalaya. The Nemo-Padam road is very important for Zangskar people. *Dr. Prem Singh Jina*, *Dr. (Mrs) Susma Mehra* and *Mrs. Manju Jina* have endeavoured to present the economic feasibility of this road. *Dr. Prem Singh Jina* has discussed Central Asian Trade activities through Ladakh during 1825-1925 A.D. *Prof. D.D. Sharma* has highlighted the issues of education in Western Himalayan tribal belt through their local languages. *Dr. Satish Chandra Saxena* has focused Begari (forced labour) problems of Ladakh. *Dr. P.S. Jina* has highlighted the recent politics of Ladakh. *R.P. Croston* analyses the agricultural activities in Bhutan. *R.K. Sharma*, *Prof. T.V. Moorti* and *Prof. S.C. Tewari* discuss at length the optimum cropping pattern in Western Himalayan tribal agriculture.

Acknowledgement: I owe a deep sense of gratitude to Prahalad Singh Mehra for the encouragement given by him. I must thank Mrs. Sarojini Rautela for her moral support. I am highly grateful to Lalit Mehra, Mrs. Kamala Mehra, B.L. Raina (C.I.B.S., Leh) and Meera Bisht for rendering help as and when required.

I am obliged to Pradeep Mehra for providing the support time and

again. I would like to express deep appreciation to Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsayayan, Academic Director, National Centre for Arts, New Delhi, whose keen interest on Himalaya has always been a source of inspiration.

I would fail in performing my moral duties if I forget to mention Mrs. Manju Jina, Hira Convent School, Haldwani who helped me in various ways in completing this book.

I am also grateful to all the scholars who have contributed their very important research papers for this volume.

PREM SINGH JINA

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	7
<i>List of Contributors</i>	13
1. Sikkim: A Study in Social Geography <i>Pranab Kumar Chakravarti</i>	15
2. Nubra Valley at a Glance <i>Zain-ul-Abidin</i>	30
3. Travel Accounts of the Chinese Pilgrims in the Himalaya <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	35
4. A.H. Francke's Contribution in the Cultural History of Ladakh <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	43
5. The Pillar Inscription at Dras in Ladakh <i>B.K. Deambi</i>	53
6. Folk Songs and Dances of Ladakh <i>Abdul Gani Sheikh</i>	56
7. Nawang Tsering: A Brilliant Sculptor of Ladakh <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	61
8. Cultural Dimensions of Economic Development in Uttarakhand <i>B.S. Bisht</i>	65
9. Bhotias of Nepal: A Socio-Economic and Cultural Study <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	74
10. Buddhism and Mangtro Monastery of Ladakh <i>Jamyang Gyaltzen</i>	78
11. Lamayuru Monastery of Ladakh <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	82
12. Rizong Monastery of Ladakh <i>Rev. Thupstan Chhostak</i>	87
13. Hemis: The Richest Monastery in Ladakh <i>Tsewang Rigzin</i>	91

14.	Modernisation and Buddhism in Ladakh <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	105
15.	rGyalsras Bakula Rinpoche: A Great Political and Religious Leader of Ladakh <i>Nawang Tsering Shakspo</i>	114
16.	Religious Bodhi Literature in Ladakh <i>Tsewang Rigzin (Tr. Prem Singh Jina)</i>	117
17.	Impact of Tourism on the Ecological Set up of Ladakh Himalaya <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	122
18.	Utility of Nemo-Padam Road for the Economic Development of Zangskar <i>Prem Singh Jina, Susma Mehra and Manju Jina</i>	126
19.	Ladakh and Central Asian Trade during 1825-1925 <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	129
20.	Problems of Language and Education in Western Himalaya <i>D.D. Sharma</i>	141
21.	Begari System in Ladakh <i>Satish Chandra Saxena</i>	154
22.	Turmoil and Success in Ladakhi Politics <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	160
23.	A Background to the Agriculture of Bhutan <i>R.P. Croston</i>	205
24.	Optimum Cropping Pattern in Western Himalayan Tribal Agriculture <i>R.K. Sharma, T.V. Moorty and S.C. Tewari</i>	209
25.	Poultry Industry in Nainital District, Kumaun Himalaya <i>Prem Singh Jina</i>	216
	<i>Bibliography</i>	220

List of Contributors

1. ABIDIN, ZAIN-UL, Principal, J.N.V. College, Leh, Ladakh.
2. BISHT, DR. B.S., Lecturer, Post Graduate Study & Research Department of Sociology, M.B. Govt. P.G. College, Haldwani (Nainital).
3. CHAKRAVARTI, PROF. PRANAB KUMAR, Head, Department of Geography & Applied Geography, University of North Bengal.
4. CHHOSTOK, REV. THUPSTAN, Rizong Monastery, Leh, Ladakh.
5. CROSTON, R.P., Agricultural Scientist, F.A.O., Bhutan.
6. DEAMBI, DR. B.K., Former Director, Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, Srinagar (J & K).
7. GYALTSEN, JAMYANG, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar, Leh, Ladakh.
8. JINA, (MRS.) MANJU, Hira Convent School, Bari Mukhani, Haldwani (Nainital).
9. JINA, DR. PREM SINGH, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar, Leh, Ladakh.
10. MEHRA, DR. (MRS.) SUSMA, Research Fellow, Kumaun University, Almora College, Almora.
11. MOORTI, PROFESSOR T.V., Head, Department of Agricultural Economics, H.P. Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Palampur (H.P.).
12. RIGZIN, REV. TSEWANG, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar, Leh, Ladakh.
13. SAXENA, DR. SATISH CHANDRA, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar, Leh, Ladakh.

14. SHAKSPO, NAWANG TSERING, Cultural Officer, Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Culture and Languages, Leh, Ladakh.
15. SHARMA, DR. D.D., Professor Emeritus, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana.
16. SHARMA, R.K., Farm Economist, Regional Research Station, H.P. Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Bhuntar, Distt. Kullu (H.P.).
17. SHEIKH, ABDUL GANI, Yasmin Guest House, Leh, Ladakh.
18. TEWARI, PROF. S.C., Head, Department of Agricultural Economics, H.P. Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, SNS Nagar, P.O. Nauri, Solan.

1

Sikkim: A Study in Social Geography

PRANAB KUMAR CHAKRAVARTI

Sikkim, a landlocked tiny state in the lap of the Himalaya, is exposed to accelerating environmental changes. Although change is inevitable and desirable when it improves the living conditions of the local inhabitants, a methodology of change must be found which is consistent with the preservation of the unique flora and fauna, spectacular natural beauty, and distinctive cultures of this area (Lall, 1981). The slow but gradual changes are affecting the natural environment (habitat), economy and human society. An appraisal of various aspects of change reveals that tourism, industrial and economic developments are creating disharmonies in the ecosystems. Instead of arresting the changes which are taking place in the mighty mountain chain that possesses immense potentials (in the form of hydel power, irrigation water, raw materials etc.) we must find out a methodology of change which recreates while it utilizes, and sometimes inevitably destroys, in the process of realizing the latent potential for human welfare. Different ethnic stocks live in this small state having diversified problems due to complexity of change experienced during the last three decades. Man is everywhere, the principal agent of change. With gradual increase in population and their unending needs man pressed upon a limited available resource and slowly made inroads into the mountains. Extension of plantation, agriculture, building up hydro-electric power stations, laying out of new roads and buildings are taking place at the cost of depleted forests and defaced slopes. The mountainous state could not accommodate the suddenness of these changes. Landslides, erosion

of soil, change in climatic and hydrological regimes, flood, erratic rivers, sandy and gravelly river beds were the natural consequences. Everywhere the land and the forests have suffered most. With a gradual increase in population, supporting capacity of land has decreased. Huge stands of rich forests, in western Sikkim, have been depleted at a faster speed causing widespread damage to the soil. If the present trend of man's struggle for survival, within the mountainous territory, goes on unabated a major tragedy surely lies ahead. The physical layout of the land, being landlocked, did not allow much socio-economic changes in Sikkim till the beginning of the 1950s. Most of the communities living here were excluded from the benefits of development that were taking place in the plains below. They were being ruled by a God-monarch who looked after their well-being as well as the welfare of the state and the people were outwardly self content. When developments through Five Year Plans and financial-cum-technical assistance from Indian Government reached them, the autochthones could not absorb the harsh cultural shock whose consequences cannot yet be fully assessed. Another severe jolt was felt by the people, in 1962, when the Sino-Indian border dispute completely stopped the flow of trade with Tibet through Sikkim's Nathu La (pass). The economy of the northern communities and the Bhotias, in particular, faced a sudden unexpected change which took several years to adjust. Not only they survived the shock but made adjustments, accordingly, in their life-styles under a different socio-economic milieu. However, with the passage of time, people will bring in socio-economic changes with the help of technological skills and on them lies the preservation of the habitat which controls economy and human society. With the people's active participation and willing involvement much constructive and sustainable developments can be achieved. They will have to change their habits and socio-economic customs making it compatible with the ecological changes.

II

Sikkim is a vertical country, tiniest of all the states in Indian Union. It is completely landlocked, mostly inaccessible and has only one notable opening through the Teesta Valley in the district of

Darjeeling, West Bengal. This road, NH 31A, is the life-line of entire country through which all the processes of developments flow. A slight disruption of traffic during the rains, due to landslides, may cause a serious disruption of economy. A variety of climatic patterns—from tropical to alpine—can be fully experienced in this state within a short distance of few scores of miles. Location, altitude, slopes, aspects all control local climate; there is hardly any uniformity between regions of same altitudes. Harsh living conditions prevail almost everywhere except near the capital, Gangtok.

Multiplication of population, in the recent decades, rapid colonialisation, gregarious activities, destruction of vegetal cover for agricultural extension, fuel and building materials all have destroyed valuable woods which have modified micro climates. Sikkim's international recognition as a store-house of botanical species, insects, orchids and butterflies have greatly been affected by the loss of vegetal cover. Serious consequences follow due to rapid deforestation. Even areas which had once abounded in springs and perennial streams have become bereft of water because of cutting down of forests. Much of the forests contain valuable specimens and abound in orchids, creepers, etc. which one cannot find elsewhere in the world. Moreover, the tropical and sub-tropical forests contain many insects and butterflies of unique character. Impact of man and technology are taking a heavy toll of nature. All this calls for a conservation policy for environment as the rational use of the environment to provide a high quality of living for mankind (Dasmann, 1972). Since the tempo of development has to be kept up with the help of advanced technology, the only realistic approach to the problem of the environment lies in setting apart sizeable natural areas in representative habitats, to preserve some of our ecosystems in pristine condition as benchmarks for conservation of the environment (Sahni, 1981).

The glaciers in the north give rise to the Teesta and a number of tributaries which have vast development potential for irrigation, power generation, water supply etc. Uncontrolled deforestation in the upper catchment areas has caused floods in the lower plains, rapid siltation of river beds, erratic flow of rivers which need immediate and careful handling.

Tourism, timber, fruit canning and liquor are the main revenue

earners of the state. Raw materials, money, market, means of communication are some basic needs of the state which need immediate attention.

Much of the natural resources of Sikkim have already been exploited by gregarious activities of man—the worst enemy—and the evil consequences are not far to seek. The terraced hill slopes, depleted of vegetable cover for varied human occupation have given rise to soil erosion, soil exhaustion and loss of supporting capacity, besides rapid siltation of the river beds, change in climatic and hydrologic cycles. Minerals that are mined here are non-renewable and irreplaceable like those of forests which take generations for regeneration. Indiscriminate use of these resources may lead to serious disharmonies in ecological balance. In order to check the eco-stresses we must formulate an integrated eco-development plan for an all-round development of the regional economy.

III

Sikkim, having an area of 7096 sq. km and a population of 316, 385 (1981) has witnessed unusual changes in every sphere of life particularly since 1947. Hemmed on all sides by countries (*viz.* Nepal in the west, Tibet in the north, Bhutan and Tibet in the east and India in the south) she has unusual distinctiveness. A state having diverse ethnic mix she has more influence of Tibet in religion and customs while her political and economic destinies are determined naturally by India. It was an Indian Protectorate till 26th April 1975, when it became the 22nd state of Indian Union.

The Lepchas are the indigenous of Sikkim while the Bhotias of Tibetan origin came and settled after 15th century. The British rulers induced large number of Nepali immigrants as labourers and farmers and this encouragement offered to the Nepali settlers actually changed the ethnic composition of the country. Sir Joseph Hooker in his travelogue has noted, next to the Lepchas, the most numerous tribe in Sikkim is that of the Limbus (Hooker, 1854). By the time Claude White left Sikkim he mentioned that there were about 6000 Lepchas, 6000 Bhotias and 50,000 Nepalis of an estimated population of about 80,000 (White, 1909). The cumulative result of the British

policy was that by 1947 the Nepalis outnumbered the local people in the ratio of 2 : 1 in a total population of about 1,50,000. In 1977 the Nepalis constituted nearly 75% of the population of about 2,68,000.

Certain characteristics regarding the population trend can be observed in Sikkim. They are as follows:

- (i) The phenomenal increase in the number of Nepali, immigrants during 1891 to 1931; the increase was five-fold mainly due to British encouragement. Later on though this trend of immigration was discouraged yet the increase in population was attributed to the high fertility rate amongst the Nepali settlers and the practice of polygamy.
- (ii) Population stagnation among the Lepcha population can be noted during 1931 to 1951. In certain areas it really dropped. The increase during the decade 1951-61 can be attributed to the presence of Tibetan refugees.
- (iii) Conversion of Sikkim from a Bhotia-Lepcha country to a predominantly Nepali country. The Bhotias and Lepchas have become a single composite community; the Nepalis preserved their ethnic identity.

We note two broad heterogenous ethnic groups in which the indigenous are in an unhappy position of being heavily outnumbered by the immigrant Nepalis which should safeguard the distinctive Sikkimese way of life which is threatened with extinction.

The Lepchas are believed to be indigenous to Sikkim. According to Lepcha tradition they originated in Mayel, a legendary valley in the vicinity of Kanchenjunga, and have no tradition of migration. Some opine that the Lepchas might have been part of the fifth century movement of people from South East Asia through Burma into present day Arunachal Pradesh. Later on when they were driven by the Monpas they appear to have found a vaccum in the secluded hills of Sikkim (White, 1909/Sikkim Gazetteer 1894). In the fifteenth century when Bhotia influx started in the north the milder Lepchas gave way before the more assertive Bhotias. The Lepchas retreated to remote valleys and forest-clad mountains while the best lands were occupied by the Bhotias. Bhotia culture had a tremendous impact on Lepcha life, economy and society; the Lepchas

even embraced Lamaistic Buddhism without losing their identity with nature. Tremendous impact of Tibetanization dominated Lepcha life and culture and happily they (Lepchas) assimilated them thoroughly. Inter-marriage between the two communities helped it more. Pure Lepcha culture can be perceived even now duly in one place in North Sikkim (Dzongu) where even today they observe some of the practices of their pre-Buddhist Mon religion (a belief in spirits combined with fairly elaborate rituals to control the evil spirits). The recent trend in census figures reveal that the actual number of the Lepchas is decreasing gradually because of their isolation at Dzongu. They were cut-off from the changes—social, economic and cultural—that were taking place outside. Recently the government has taken the decision of opening up the Lepcha reserve at Dzongu with a view to have more inter-mixture between different ethnic groups. The second important ethnic group in Sikkim is the Bhotias of Tibetan stock. They mostly followed the Tibetan life-style and culture and the economy was predominantly trade. The closure of Sino-Indian trade, since 1962, has compelled to shut themselves within Sikkim, assimilate the local culture, have inter-marriage and thus adjust themselves with the changing politico-socio-cultural conditions prevailing there. The old tradition of pure Tibetan culture was lost to a great extent. The religion which the Tibetans followed was Lamaistic Buddhism and this is still a major form of religion practised by many people in Sikkim. In present day Sikkim particularly in North Sikkim one can have a Lepcha-Bhotia composite culture and society and Sikkim was very often referred to, by the former Chogyal of Sikkim, as a Lepcha-Bhotia country.

The Nepalis, another important ethnic group, who migrated from Nepal have become the most important ethnic group so far as the number of people are concerned and they constitute more than 75% of the total population of the country as per the last census in 1981. With encouragement from the early British rulers they came over to this country, worked as labourers, farmers etc. and have settled here. But they always retained their original cultural identity distinct from the racial amalgam which had become Sikkimese. The Nepalese used to call themselves Paharias (Pahar or Nepal) which to a great extent they still maintain. The wave of Nepali immigration is going on unabated still now in West Bengal (Darjeeling district),

Sikkim, Bhutan and even in the north-eastern states of India giving rise to political and socio-cultural tensions among the indigenous people. At least in Sikkim they (Nepalis) have clearly outnumbered the Lepchas, Bhotias and have established their sway completely. These Nepalis hardly accepted any cultural or ethnic assimilation and retained most of their ethnic traits.

Besides these major ethnic groups there exist two highland communities, in northern Sikkim, at Lachen and Lachung in the valleys above Chungthang. Trade and animal husbandry were their principal activities and they moved freely in Tibet. The Sino-Indian border dispute in 1962 sealed the border and their movement was restricted within Sikkim itself. These Lachenpas and Lachungpas, as they are called, gradually assimilated the local culture and became slowly Sikkimized retaining their own ethnic traits to a great extent which may be obliterated in course of time. They have now switched over to other economic activities like agriculture, horticulture, road labourers etc. which have affected their life-styles. It is in the organization of their community life that the people of northern Sikkim are specially distinctive. The village assemblies take the most important decisions and it can be construed as a perfect form of democratic government. The monastery is also a focus of the community life. These northern communities have shown remarkable resourcefulness in adapting to the cataclysmic change in their area, which differed from the normal processes of social change because it was induced by events outside their control and entirely external to them. Their strength lies in their community organization which has enabled them to face with conspicuous success the far-reaching changes of the last two decades (Lall, 1981).

IV

Social changes are taking place in Sikkim since the fifties and more rapidly after its merger with India in 1975. Development plans are being implemented, much financial expenditure is being incurred for overall development of the state. The economic changes are influencing the socio-cultural life of the people. People who come back here after retirement or immigrant settlers bring with them a foreign culture and tradition which they slowly implant here

necessitating changes on a modest scale widening the mental horizons of the people. But the people who live far away from the main urban centres and important arterial roads are cut off from these processes of change due mainly to physical inaccessibilities and absence of infrastructures. The huge amount of development activities that is taking place in Sikkim would induce unpredictable side effects, but the resilience which its people have shown so far is the surest guarantee of its future stability (Lall, 1981).

The political manoeuvre of the British policy-makers in pre-Independent days, to encourage large scale influx of Nepali settlers have created a hiatus among the diversified ethnic groups in Sikkim. The original inhabitants, the Lepchas and Bhotias, became apprehensive of being swallowed up by the surging waves of Nepalese immigrants while on the other side there is wide resentment among the majority of the Nepalis that they are not being accorded their due share in political activities and public services. It is very difficult to foresee how long it will take for removing the distrust prevailing among different ethnic stocks.

No society remains perpetually static though may be cut-off by physiographic handicaps and other constraints. Change are inevitable even in this remote land. Actually since the days of the Chogyal dynasty's rule in Sikkim it was a 'contact zone' of Lepcha and Bhotia cultures. When the British encouraged the immigration of the Nepalis to check the evil designs from the north, a substantial part of the country's population was the Nepalis who retained much of their socio-cultural traits while there was inter-mixture of cultures among the Lepchas and Bhotias. So it can be said that Sikkim acted as a meeting place of three broad ethnic stocks viz. the Lepchas, the Bhotias and the Nepalis. It is again a place where religious amalgam of Hinduism and Lamaistic Buddhism has taken place. The Lepchas belonged to separate religious sect practised Mon religion (spirit worshippers) and later on assimilated Lamaistic Buddhism. Certain general conclusions regarding social changes among different ethnic communities can be summarised below:

- (i) The various ethnic groups have responded in different ways to the changes in the economic climate brought about by external factors. These factors are firstly, the

restrictions on trade with Tibet and secondly, improvement in communications inside the state itself which has helped the import of commodities from the south (India). Social change is the decisions made by a significant number of individuals regarding the manner in which they apply their energies to their best advantage.

- (ii) The Nepalis had been the first to make a conscious change in their aspirations and the way they applied their resources.
- (iii) The Bhotias who were primarily traders and herdsmen before switched over to other economic pursuits with the cessation of Sino-Indian trade since 1962.
- (iv) Two events originating outside the local social scene forced upon the inhabitants a reassessment of their position and reorientation of the economy: (a) the Sino-Indian border dispute in 1962, and (b) the restructuring of the political system.
- (v) Abolition of monarchy and merger with the Indian Union in 1975 made social changes.
- (vi) As the earlier influence of the great monastic centres of Lamaistic Buddhist civilisation faded because of the changed political situation beyond the northern border, Nepalese influence and a new cultural wave of orientation started. Though the Nepali language is spreading at a wider scale yet there are no indications of an erosion of the interest in Buddhist rites and ceremonies, and the great annual festivals which are being performed in the traditional style.

These examples of the reaction of different ethnic groups to political events impinging on their traditional social and political structures suggest the great variety of adjustments to the novel situation. Social change has progressed along various lines, but despite the constraints imposed by history and a harsh climate, alternatives between different courses of action have remained available throughout. There has been no attempt on the part of the government or any official agency to mould the process of change according to any preconceived pattern, and individual choices to

be made in a situation of extreme cultural and social flexibility.

The ecological influences on economic structure are clearly discernible in Bhotia society as well as among the Lachenpas and the Lachungpas. Their occupations of farming (jhuming) and other non-agrarian activities are restricted during the winter months when the region becomes snowbound and more southwards along the lower valleys. As a whole the area is deficient in food which has to be imported. The Bhotias established a monopoly of trade through the border with their keen sense of business and amassed considerable amount of wealth. Much of their old prestige is lost due to the stoppage of trade with Tibet; harsh climatic conditions and the nature of their trading practices induced a high degree of mobility. The stoppage of trans-border trade, since 1962, has had a traumatic effect on the Bhotia society of the region and has been a single most important factor for change. The entire social organisation of the Bhotia community revolved around it and radical changes in the life pattern succeeded the sealing of the border. In the changed circumstances agriculture was the only available alternative which involved a departure from the age-old life-style. Since environmental conditions in the higher regions were unfavourable to this new occupation, the population was forced to shift to more fertile lands in the lower regions. In course of time this occupational diversity is bound to stimulate the evolution of radical changes in the Bhotia society and will deeply affect their relationship with other local groups of people.

There has been a decline of traditional social, religious and cultural institutions in the eastern and southern areas of Sikkim. Old skills are yielding place to new social order and change. A new cultural nexus is developing between the people of the north and west and urban population which is symbolic of the new social situation. Trends towards modernization are clearly discernible. Outside influences are gradually corroding the local culture; money economy has become widespread; and ever-increasing range of imported goods is flooding the Lal market at Gangtok. Slowly but noticeably the offshoots of the consumer world are penetrating the society, corruption and theft are on the increase; disparities in the living standards are gradually becoming apparent. Young men are being lured away from the traditional work by attractive financial

rewards elsewhere.

Some of the characteristic traits of the Sikkimese population can be enumerated here:

- (a) Combination of sheer hard work and an economic use of natural resources.
- (b) Population control by the Lepchas and Bhotias compared to ever-increasing population increase among the Nepalis. Actually there is a decrease of population among the pure Lepchas in the Dzongu reserve area.
- (c) Co-operative labour is an important feature of traditional life and encourages the maximum utilisation of human resources. Farm instruments and draught animals are often shared. Irrigation also is a communal activity.
- (d) Mutual support is in fact seen in all areas. The needs that the individual does not satisfy for himself will almost be met from within the village in which he lives, so that reliance rarely has to be placed on anyone outside the immediate community of which he is a part.
- (e) The hill people are hardy, simple, good natured and contented inspite of many shortcomings. Everywhere there is a spirit of friendliness and mutual trust.
- (f) The lamas and priests influence the life and society of the people very much and the temples and monsteries hold great power in Sikkim. Though the old tie with Tibet has been severed yet they continue to serve the spiritual needs of the people and hold a valuable place in the community. The different groups of people live in complete harmony, each respecting the beliefs of the other.
- (g) Mention must be made of tourism service, of all the threats to the local culture, this may well be the most dangerous. Inter-mixing may debase traditional culture in course of time.

In any reference of developmental activity the supreme consideration of man should be given the topmost priority; this may be less attractive politically than the traditional alternative because human contentment is a difficult task to achieve.

V

The variegated landscape has on the one hand contributed to the making of man and human institutions, and, on the other, bears the mark of man's capacity to make and unmake his environment. The Himalaya and humanity have been confronting and negotiating with one another through the ages (Roy Burman, 1981).

Compared to the western Himalaya, the eastern part seems to have been populated at a comparatively later date. The total number of population and its density varies from place to place depending upon the location, altitude, climate, aspect, slope etc. Another indicator of the level of techno-economic adaptation is the settlement pattern in diverse ecological settings. Maximum human concentration can be noted within a belt having an altitudinal range between 1000 and 2500 metres where the climate is conducive. With the increase in altitude we find harsh climatic conditions restricting human habitation only on the sunny slopes.

Density of population in the urban areas gives a better basis of comparison than when total areas are considered, as it can be assumed that within urban areas there will not be many uninhabitable places.

An analytical study of census figures will reveal certain features regarding the social structure of population in Sikkim:

- (a) The trend of urbanisation has been much below the national average.
- (b) In the hills the predominance of villages with small population is obviously related to the constraints of the physical environment to a large extent. But the possible role of techno-economic factors, injected from outside, in determining the size of rural settlements should not be ignored.
- (c) Participation rates of males and females in the working force show that participation rate in Sikkim is higher than the national average. In Sikkim as many as 81% of the workers are cultivators. Much cultivation is done on terraced land, which requires a very heavy input of labour and capital. This leads to the concentration of ownership

- of land on the one hand, and a growing number of landless labour on the other. Here the females participate in the working force as a way of life and not as a forced necessity.
- (d) Female literacy rates, in Sikkim, are much lower than male literacy rates. Again if the urban and rural areas are considered separately we find urban literacy rates are higher. Rural literacy is around 14% in Sikkim whereas the corresponding urban literacy is 46.17%. There is a sharp discontinuity in Sikkim.
- (e) The population distribution by religion is entirely different from in the rest of the country. Again within the state itself there are considerable inter-sectoral differences. So far as migration statistics are concerned we note that there is a general tendency to move from the higher altitudes towards the lower valley bottom. This is almost invariably related to the expansion of settled cultivation by clearing the forests. In this part of the country there is still an unending stream of migration of Nepali infiltrators who are posing serious socio-economic tensions alongwith diverse political problems within the state itself.

Tribal communities are identified with reference to the stage of development in technological complexity and the scale of social and economic interaction. Intensity of interaction as well as sources of social control and management are also taken into account in the characterization of the tribal communities.

- (f) The diverse ethnic tribes who live in Sikkim have distinct traditions and ways of life of their own which have been mixed to a great extent in recent years due to inter-mixture of various racial groups. But at the same time a trend towards expansion of their identities by selective emphasis on particular aspects of traditions and cultures is also noticeable among them.

VI

The Sikkim Himalaya is exposed to rapid social change; although change is inevitable and desirable when it improves the living

condition of the local inhabitants. Sikkim acted as a 'contact zone' between the Tibetan culture from the north and the Hindu culture brought from west (Nepal) and south (India). Though throughout the years of Chogyal era Sikkim tended to isolate itself from foreign and particularly western influences till 1960s, yet its people maintained a variety of commercial links with both Tibet and India crossing the Himalayan range by passes of great altitude in the east and along the Teesta valley in the south. The cessation of trans-Himalayan trade has led to profound socio-economic changes. The Lachenpas and the Lachungpas who inhabit the northern areas are fundamentally trading communities who for long periods enjoyed a virtual monopoly of trade with Tibet before the Sino-Indian hostilities. They operated a mixed economy based on trade and animal husbandry. Now with the changing political scene the socio-economic conditions have also changed; some of the northern communities have shifted towards the lower valleys for practising agricultural operations to which they have shifted after the closure of the Tibetan trade. As cultivators they appear to be rather inefficient; with the decline of the trade the number of pack animals have also declined. The decline of economy has also affected the religious life. The wealth of the Bhotia traders who had amassed great riches during the time of trans-Himalayan trade have become comparatively poor after shifting over to new activities which do not fetch sufficient money. Occasionally emigration of individuals or whole families to the west and the terai in the south takes place. Near Lachen and Lachung economic decline among the local inhabitant and partial depopulation are to be noted. Growing contact with the people in the lower valleys have given them a taste for goods brought from outside; they are not self-sufficient in food supplies also. Some items which were beyond the aspirations of previous generation are now-a-days found in the possession of many. Intensified contact with the people of the middle and lower valleys has transformed the pattern of consumption and trade patterns. The governmental development plans have changed the socio-economic life-style of different ethnic stocks to a great extent and this re-orientation is only the beginning.

REFERENCES

1. Bose S.C. (1972): *The Geography of the Himalaya* (New Delhi; National Book Trust).
2. Dasmann R.F. (1972): *Environmental Conservation* (New York: John Wiley).
3. Gazetteer of Sikkim (1894): Reprinted in 1972 (New Delhi: Manjushri Publishing House).
4. Hooker J.D. (1954): *Himalayan Travels* (London: John Murray), p. 137.
5. Lall J.S. Edited (1981): *The Himalaya: Aspects of Change* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).
6. Roy Burman B.K. (1981): 'Population and Society in the Himalaya', in J.S. Lal et al. *The Himalaya: Aspects of Change* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).
7. Rustomji N.K. (1971): *Enchanted Frontiers: Sikkim, Bhutan and India's North Eastern Borderlands* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press).
8. Sahani K.C. (1981): 'Botanical Panorama of the Eastern Himalaya' in *Himalaya: Aspects of Change* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press). p. 48.

2

Nubra Valley at a Glance

ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN

I

In the north-western part of Ladakh, lies Nubra Valley. If anyone who wants to go to Nubra, he has to cross Khardong La (pass), which is lying between Leh and Nubra. This pass is located at 18,380 feet ASL and is the highest pass of the world.

While travelling to Nubra, as soon as I reached at Khardong La top, my heart beating increased and I was also feeling little headache, perhaps it was due to air rarity. Here I have noticed that towards Nubra side Khardong glacier steep down and has 'C' shape. Now the Government has constructed a bridge here which is the highest bridge of the world.

After travelling further down, there is a meadowland, called 'Spang Chhenmo', popularly known as North *Pulu*. During summer season local inhabitants come here with their animals for grazing.

Little further ahead, there is a village, called Khardong. It is surrounded by mountains, which keeps it cold even during summer. At this village there is a P.W.D. rest-house, State Government Livestock Development Centre and a Primary School. Despite State Government Education Department efforts more than 80 percent villagers are still illiterate.

Thereafter comes village Khalsar, which is situated along a stream. It is a Buddhist village and has one P.W.D. rest-house and a

Government Primary School.

After travelling 12 kms ahead from Khalsar, the road is divided into two parts. One goes towards Diskit, Hunder and Turtuk, and the other which is on the right side goes to Sumoor and Panamik.

There are two main rivers in Nubra Valley: Siachen and Shyok. Siachen river comes from the north and Shyok from the east side glaciers. Both the rivers join each other near a forest lying in between Lagjung and Diskit. Then this river flows towards Turtuk and joins with Indus river at Kerex in Baltistan.

Although, there are many modern irrigation techniques, yet in Nubra, people hardly use river water for irrigation. History tells us that the villagers who are residing on the bank of Shyok river, had suffered many times by river floods. So it may be one of the reason, that Nubra inhabitants do not want to use Shyok river water for irrigation. It is said that once flood came and destroyed half of the Lagjung village. Thus every summer when water level in Shyok river increases, it cuts banks and causes huge soil erosion. Even sometimes trees and shrubs are uprooted. As a matter of fact during summer it is difficult to cross the river. People of the adjoining villages viz. Utmaru, Hunder etc. use 'Bips' (cow skin boat) for crossing the river. About Shyok flood Wazir Hazamattullah writes (Hazamattullah, *Tarik of Jammu, 1939*):

“During Yabgo Salim-ul-day-Raja Thursay Khar reign, a terrible flood came in Shyok, which destroyed most of the population of 'Chang-Thang' town of 'Khapulo' and people became homeless. Some of them from 'Chag-Thang' went to 'Chhorbat' and 'Dao' villages for shelter. Some of them migrated to Ladakh and settled down in 'Chuchot'. Some came in 'Parkta' and 'Dogni' for settlement.”

In Ladakh Muslim Shia people are called 'Baltis'. Because they migrated from Baltistan to save themselves from Shyok flood and settled down in 'Chuchot' village. People sometimes confuse and recognise them with Balti religion. In fact, 'Balti' is their caste not religion. There are Baltis in Sunni, Shia and Norbakhshi in Turtuk and Tyakshi villages of Nubra Valley. It is a surprise to know that there is one Buddhist scholar called Balti Lotsava. This is one example which reflects our mind that once Baltis were Buddhists

too.

It is said that the second time flood came in Nubra in the beginning of 20th century and destroyed Sumoor side. Villages on the opposite side remained unaffected. The villages of Diskit, Hunder and Partapur then remained safe.

Nubra is also pronounced as 'Dumra', which means "flower garden". But I do not find flower garden there. On the other hand if I say Nubra is a garden of thorny bushes it would be more better to rename this valley. Nubra people of central part use thorny bushes for fuel. Thorny logs are used for building construction and fencing.

People of Nubra are cheerful, social and hospitable in nature. They are always ready to work for the welfare and say "Kasa O" which means "Yes Sir".

In Nubra, Diskit, Hunder, Sumoor, Panamik, Bogdang and Turtuk are the main villages. Among all the other villages, Hunder is the most beautiful. It has greenery and fruit trees viz. cheery, apricot etc. It has about 1,150 Buddhist population. Only a few people are Muslims. Both the communities live together peacefully. They invite each other to dinner, lunch and other religious ceremonies.

It is said that Hunder was once the capital of Nubra. We can see here number of ruined forts and palaces like the two temples: white and red, called "Lhaxhang Karpo" and "Lhaxhang Marpo". Both carry Buddha statues.

History of Hunder tells us that during olden days Hunder was at the foot of hill. King of Nubra then built his palace called "Langchen Khar" meaning thereby "Elephant Palace". Today we can only see its ruins. Besides, there is a fort at the top of the hill, called "Gula". Here we can see "Lhato" is redecorated by Buddhists with new items in the month of June.

Nubra Valley is famous for "Flower festival". In Hunder, people celebrate this festival in the month of June. On this occasion people, especially young generation, go to 'Lhaxhang Karpo' and 'Lhaxhang Marpo', and offer flowers to the statues of Buddha.

Besides, one can also see red temple on the roadside near the bridge. One big chamba statue and a wooden statue of eleven heads and thousand hands are lying there. About wooden statue,

people say that this statue was donated by Queen of Hunder Zumskhang.

There is an old house, popularly known as "Tsamskhang". People say that during olden days "Onpo" of Hunder village used to say there for prayer. Just opposite to "Tsamskhang" on the left side of the road, there is a 30 yards long 'Mani-wall' called "Mani Skalzung Namthar". It was constructed by Geshes Konchok. This Mani-wall is located just below the ruined fort and palace. It reveals that during olden period Mani-wall had been used as a gateway to the palace. On the Mani-wall at the corner stone one may see the following historic Tibetan inscription:

"Ton nit Tharchin Stonba Sangyas tang, Zdibag nesi monspel Tampay chos, chosni lzokay Phakspay Gindun-Skyap nis Konchok Sumla chak-chalo, Lupon Chenpo Dolma Zangla Lus nag-itsum Gaspas chak-sala-Kay Kay lacks, Photang Chenmo Rdechen Tsemo-dir Miwang Chenpo Rgyalpo-Bikram Mir tang yum Rgyalmo-staegjal nesgi skuchag stan-Gyur shik Kay Kay Lacks, Khait Ki chhab hrit Zangpo-Ang thopna-Lastas chhosla-Karway pardu yung Rdakpo-Tundup Tashi Tang, Chenbay Rdakmo zomba skit nam negis iktuk Gyatsa Jangs, Nam Khen Zokpay Sangyas nur-Thup shok, Gay Konchok Tashis Giur chhek Hai-Hai"

The inscription reveals that during olden days "Rdechen Tsemo" was a king palace. King Bikram Mir lived with the queen Yum-Rgyalmo there. For the construction of "Ektuk-Gyatsa", Tundup Tashi and Mrs. Zombaskit had contributed a lot.

There are two more Mani-walls on the road side. Both these Mani-walls were constructed by queen rGyal Khatoon. After the death of King Jamyang Namgyal, queen rGyal Khatoon went to Nubra and lived at Hunder Palace. Later she had constructed two Mani-walls and died at Hunder. After her death mosque and graveyard were construed in a garden opposite to "Zumskhang". Wazir Hashmatullah visited Hunder before the flood of 1926. He stated (Hazamatullah, 1939):

"The mosque and the grave are in a miserable condition. Therefore, repaired these with the help of Jamshed of Hunder. I talked with the present generation people related

to queen rGyal Khatoon at Khapulo at Leh, about the construction of "Golden Umbrella" over the grave. King of Ladakh agreed with my suggestion and constructed "Golden Umbrella".

Today, there is no sign of grave and mosque at Hunder. Both these historical monuments were destroyed completely by the horrible flood of 'Dok Nallah', which came on 26th July 1929. That time flood not only destroyed the historical monuments at Hunder, but also more than 50% of farmer crops were destroyed.

In conclusion Nubra valley has dense vegetation, water potential, and consists rich Buddhist culture. At the border the Nurbakshi Muslim culture is flourishing.

REFERENCE

1. Hazamattullah Khan Lucknowi Wajipha Koor : Tareeki Jammu, 1939.

3

Travel Accounts of the Chinese Pilgrims in the Himalaya

PREM SINGH JINA

Since antiquity man has been an inveterate traveller. Recently due to the development of modern means and communication facilities the motivations for travel have changed. In the Kushan period the main motivation for travel was through land routes only. Land routes to India then covered the north-eastern and north-western boundaries of the subcontinent. Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, Tibet, China and Burma were the countries through which travellers passed before arriving to India. To the north-east, travellers were coming from China and covered numerous routes. Starting from Burma and after crossing northern Burma travellers came to Assam. Normally they used the following routes.

1. From upper Burma through the Ratkoi range and its passes to Brahmaputra valley.
2. From the Chindwin valley via Manipur through the Irrawadi valley to Arrakans.

Besides travellers from Tibet crossed Sikkim through passes—Chorten Nyima La, Kangra La and Gora La and came to India. Some of them crossed the western Nepal via the Kangra pass. Many traders came to Kumaun and Garhwal Himalaya in India after crossing Lipu Lekh and Mana-Niti passes. They could reach Lahul-Spiti in Himachal Pradesh after crossing Baralacha pass. In

the extreme north travellers from Tibet could reach Leh through the Khardong and Karakoram passes. These north-eastern routes were frequently used to diffuse Buddhist art and culture from India in Central Asia.¹

The routes on the north-west have remained alive before and after the Kushan for traders, adventurers and invaders from ancient times. Travellers after crossing northern Iran and the Oxus region could proceed to Kabul and through the Khyber pass to the Indus. Those crossing central and south Iran used to go to Kandhar and then to the extreme southerly regions of India or Makran and then to the Indus delta. Besides they used Dorah, Shandur, Karambar, Chillinji, Mintaka and Mustang passes for coming to India. During those days they frequently used ancient route via Hindukush, south-east of ancient Bactria and then followed the routes of northerly line of the Kabul river to Charsada, a historic town north-east of Peshawar. Other important routes are through the Kurran valley, the Peiwar pass, the Tochi valley and the Gumal valley. From Quetta, a south-eastern route via the plains of Sibi and western camel entered Kirman and south and west Iran. In the end of the first millenium B.C. the connection between India and West Asia, Africa, Central Asia and East Europe was mostly through the overland north-western routes. Invasions, commerce and human migration occurred via the Iranian plateau and Oxus valley through these routes. The well known travellers like the Chinese monk Fah-Hien came to India via Yarkand and the Indus, and another Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang came via the Hindukush.²

In the first century B.C. there were a section of Yueh-che tribes who had settled in Bactria. Thereafter they started raiding India, and established a vast empire here. They were followed by the Huns who invaded India from Central Asia during 4-5th century. Later under the leadership of Toramana they established an independent state in Malwa.³

On the other side Indian missionaries were also developing their ties with China during the Kushan period, but the maritime contacts of China with India date from about 600 B.C. It was the time when sea traders of the Indian ocean, mainly Hindu, moved eastward selling Indian products such as rubies, pearls, sugar etc. They were pushed back by the gradual advance of China which

made many Indians settle down in Cambodia and other eastern countries. This resulted in the establishment of Indian colonies in Pegu, Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, Borneo as well as trading settlements in southern China and Malayan peninsula.⁴

Indian trader settlements in southern China and adjoining countries encouraged some Chinese scholars to visit India and explore different aspects of the socio-economic, cultural and religious life of India. Among the Chinese scholars who came to India were Fah-Hien, Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing.⁵

The first Chinese traveller who visited India was the Buddhist priest Fah-Hien. He belonged to a place in China called Shan-hsi or Shani.⁶ Regarding his life history only a little information is known to us. His family surname was Kung. He had three elder brothers who died at a very young age, then his parents offered him to the Buddhist temple at a very young age.⁷ When he was ten years old his father died and soon after his mother also died. He, therefore, had to lead a Buddhist monk life. In 399 A.D. he started his journey by land to India via the south Gobi desert and Yarkand.⁸ He remarks:

“In this desert there are a great many evil spirits and hot winds; those who encounter them perish. There are neither birds above nor beasts below gazing on all sides as far as eye can reach in order to mark the track, no guidance is to be obtained save from the rotting bones of dead men, which point the way.”⁹

Fah-Hien along with his friends Hwei-King and others reached Yu-thian (or Khotan) in the fourth century which was then an important centre of Buddhism. Here he saw about ten thousand Buddhist monks. He stayed there for three months to see the procession of images, in which monks of all fourteen large monasteries and Viharas had to participate. On this occasion the king, queen and the royal ladies of Khotan also joined the procession.¹⁰

In Khoten, Fah-Hien stayed in the Gomati Vihara, which was the biggest learning centre of Buddhists in Central Asia.¹¹ As he says:

“At the sound of a gong, three thousand priests assemble to

eat. When they enter the refectory, their demeanour is grave and ceremonious; they sit down to regular order; they all keep silence; they do not call out to the attendants to serve more food, but only make signs with their hands."¹²

From Khotan Fa-Hien came to Kashgar to witness the Pancha Parishad or the Moksha Parishad (i.e. the great quinquennial assembly) of the king of that country.¹³ This was also important Buddhist centre in Kashgar. It is said that Fah-Hien here saw Buddha's teeth. But I feel this statement would be doubtable as Buddha relics were found in the north of Leh. Cunnigham says:

"But the other details, recorded by Fah-Hien seem to identify the place beyond all doubt. The country was 'mountainous, and so cold that not grain or corn ever ripened', which is exactly the case with Ladak, Kie-chha. Moreover, possessed a stone vase of the same colour as Buddha's alms dish, besides a tooth of Buddha, Now, one of these relics (the alms dish) still exists in a temple to the north of Le. It is a large earthenware vase."¹⁴

Thus from the Buddha's tooth one can infer that before 10th century Theravadi Buddhism may have spread in Ladakh. Because a tooth of Buddha is also preserved in the 'Dalada Maigaon' temple in Sri Lanka, which people of this country pronounce as 'Datha Dhatu'.¹⁵ About 'Datha Dhatu' Bhiksu Dharamrakshita says:

"When Lord Buddha had achieved parinirvan his dead body was burned, but Maharidhiman Arhant (Arhat) Bhiksu Chemani had taken up the left side tooth from the dead body of Buddha before burning. Later on he brought it to Kalinga and placed it in a temple. Since then this temple is known as a Datha Dhatu temple."¹⁶

Since then the followers of Theravadi Buddhism worship the Datha Dhatu temple as a pious place of Lord Buddha. The same kind of description is found in the 'Mahaparinibban Sutta', a Buddhist text. According to this text during the first Buddhist Religious Conference, there were Chaksuman's (Lord Buddha) eight drona bones, out of which seven drona bones were worshipped in India. Purshottam's (Lord Buddha) one drona was worshipped by

the king of Naga in the village Ramgram. One drona was worshiped by Devtas, one was in Kalinga and one belonged to the king of Naga.

So, from the 'Mahaparinibban Sutta' it is clear that king Naga was the follower of Hinyana. Besides we also find similar records in the Tibetan books, Gergan Sonam remarks:

"When dGra-bcom-pa-Nyi-ma-Gung-pa, a Buddhist scholar came to Kashmir and sat down near a lake. King of Nagas and his colleagues did not like his presence in Kashmir, and became angry with him and made persistent rain showers. But it could not affect dGra-bcom-pa-Nyi-ma-Gung-pa. The Nagas then attacked by weapons, but unfortunately they became flowers. This incident astonished Nagas. Then they appeared in real faces.¹⁷ dGra-bcom-pa-Nyi-ma-Gung-pa then asked: "What do you want?"

Nagas replied:

"We want small and beautiful piece of land."

dGra-bcom-pa-Nyi-ma-Gung-pa asked:

"How much do you require?"

Nagas said:

"Only that much which is reversed by you when you sit on the land."

dGra-bcom-pa-Nyi-ma-Gung-pa then with his devine power covered nine villages under his 'Cheever', and gave these villages to Nagas. Nagas again asked :

"How many colleagues are with you?"

He replied:

"He has 500 colleagues."

It is said that after 500 Buddhist scholars came to Kashmir from Varanasi and Ushir and constructed many monasteries there.¹⁸

After Kashgar, Fah-Hien with this friends followed the routes along the Bolor-Tagh range and reached Fie-Chha in fifteen days.

The pilgrims then went to Tho-ly, and reached after one month.¹⁹ It is said that there were two roads from Khotan to Ladakh.

- (i) In the west via Kukyear,
- (ii) From the south via Ruthog (or Rudok).

Fah-Hien came to India via Tsu-ho, Tsung-Ling, Kukyear and Karakoram mountains. According to Fah-Hien the higher Himalayan belt was covered by a debased form of Buddhism.

After Fah-Hien, Che-mong came in Kashmir. Here he visited all the important Buddhist places.²⁰ The next Chinese pilgrim Fa-Yong came to India through the Central Asian routes.²¹ In 518 Sung-Yun of Tun-hwang and Bhiksu Hwei-sang came in India via Shen-Shen, Cher Chen, Khotan and Yarkand.²²

In 629 Hiuen-Tsang set out for India via northern overland routes. He came to Mo-kia-Yen desert via Kwa-chow. Later further moving towards the north-west direction, he crossed the desert and reached to I-gu. At the invitation of Khio-wen-t'ai, the king of Kucha (Turfan) he went to Kau-chen. After staying one month there, he went to the kingdom of Yenki (O-ki-ni) and thence to Kucha. From Kucha, he reached the city of Su-yeh. Through the iron gates he came to Tu-ho-lo. He then via Oxus and Balkh came to Bamiyan.²³

After spending fifteen days in Bamiyan, Hiuen-Tsang accompanied Prajnakara and reached at Kapisa. Thereafter he moved eastward and came to the country of Nagarhara or Jalalabad through Langhan. Here he stayed for sometime, then came to Gandhara which was then the learning centre of Buddhists. Many eminent Buddhist scholars were staying there. Among them popular were Narayanadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dharmatrata, Manorhita, Parsvika etc.²⁴ Hiuen-Tsang here saw a Kanishka stupa and a precious tower of alms-bowl of Buddha. Later he came to Udyana, which was also an important Buddhist centre.²⁵

Here it is interesting to know that Hiuen-Tsang in his travel accounts mentioned about a place 'Ta-li-lo', which comes after travelling one month to the west of Kie-chha. It was also an exact transcript of Darel, one of the Daru districts of the Indus. In Darel, Hiuen-Tsang saw wooden statues of Maitreya Bodhisattva. He says:

"To the north of the city Mugali, crossing many mountains

and defiles, sometimes passing across iron chains and sometimes over flying bridges going a thousand li or so you come to the valley of Ta-li-lo Darel, identical with the capital of U-change-na. In this valley there is a large Sangharama by the side of which is a carved wooden statue of Maitreya Bodhisattva, of gold colour and very majestic in appearance. It is about 100 ft. in height."²⁶

According to Hiuen-Tsang's travel records, we can believe that in Ta-li-lo and its surroundings areas, Buddhism was in a flourishing position. We can infer some historical facts from the wooden statue of Maitreya Bodhisattva. It is said that Arhat Madhyantika led the Buddhist missionaries and went to Kashmir and Gandhara for the dissemination of Buddhism after the third Buddhist Council, held at Patliputra during the reign of Asoka. We also come to know from his records that there were Hinayana schools in some parts of the Himalaya.²⁷

In conclusion Hiuen-Tsang's travel account acquaint us with the fact that when he visited the Darel region, he saw Hinayana Buddhism was prevalent there. Cunningham expeditates about Darel location quoting the Hwang-Thang places to the westward of Po-lu-lo-Bolor, is the modern district of Balti. As Darel is just one month's journey from Le, the district of Ladakh corresponds exactly in geographical position with the ancient kingdom of Kie-chha.²⁸

REFERENCES

1. Kaul, H.K. "Travellers' India an anthology", Delhi, 1979: p. XXV.
2. Ibid., XXVI.
3. Ibid., XXIV.
4. Phillips, G. Cf. Royal Asiatic Journal, 1895, p. 525.
5. Sen, Surendranath, "Indian Through Chinese Eyes", p. 2.
6. Ibid.,
7. Ibid., p. 4.
8. Ibid.
9. Sen, op. cit., p. 5.
10. Bapat, P.V., "2500 Years of Buddhism", p. 226.
11. Majumdar, R.C. (ed), "The Age of Imperial unity", p. 641.
12. Bapat., op. cit., p. 226.

13. Kazra, Kanal Lal, "Buddhism in India (Based upon the records of Chinese pilgrims)," New Delhi, 1983, p. 3.
14. Cunningham, Alexander, "Ladak: Physical, Statistical and Historical with notices of the surroundings Countries", New Delhi, 1977, pp. 2-3.
15. Dharamrakshita, Bhiksu, "Bodh Dharma Darshna tatha Sahitya", Varanasi, 1963, p. 201.
16. Ibid., p. 201.
17. Sonam, Gergan, "Buddhism in Kashmir", paper presented in National Conference, C.I.B.S., Leh-Ladakh; 1983.
18. Ibid.
19. Sen, op. cit., p. 10.
20. Ibid., p. 19.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Hwui Li, "The Life of Hiuen-Tsang", p. 48.
24. Ibid., p. 63.
25. Ibid. p. 64.
26. Giles, H.A. "Travels of Fah-Hien", p. 8.
27. Upasak, C.S. "Early Buddhism in Ladakh—A Probe", paper presented in the National Convergence, C.I.B.S., 1984.
28. Cunningham, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

Other Books of Related Interest

- **Glimpses of the Western Himalaya: Pen Drawings and Description of Mountains, Valleys and Monuments**
By O.C. Handa
- **Tours in the Himalaya**—*By Alexander Gerard*
- **The Himalaya in My Sketchbook**—*By Geeta Kapadia*
- **Cold Deserts of India**—*By S.S. Negi*
- **High Himalaya Unknown Valleys (3/e)**
By Harish Kapadia
- **Environmental Protection of the Himalaya**
By Aamir Ali (ed)
- **Himalayan Wildlife: Habitat and Conservation**
By S.S. Negi
- **Himalayan Rivers, Lakes and Glaciers**
By S.S. Negi
- **Himalayan Forests and Forestry**—*By S.S. Negi*
- **Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development in the Himalayas**
By Pradeep Monga & P. Venkata Ramana (eds)
- **Ladakh: The Land and the People**—*By Prem Singh Jina*
- **Phyang Monastery of Ladakh**
By Prem Singh Jina & Konchok Namgyal
- **Famous Western Explorers to Ladakh**
By Prem Singh Jina
- **High Pasturelands of Ladakh Himalaya**
By Prem Singh Jina
- **Tourism in Ladakh Himalaya**—*By Prem Singh Jina*
- **Ladakh Through the Ages: Towards a New Identity (2/e)**
By Shridhar Kaul & H.N. Kaul
- **Medicinal Plants of Kashmir and Ladakh**
By M.K. Kaul
- **Shaiv-Agams: A Study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir**—*By V.N. Drabu*
- **Kashmir: History and Archaeology Through the Ages**
By S.L. Shali

INDUS PUBLISHING COMPANY
FS-5, TAGORE GARDEN, NEW DELHI