

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LADAKH STUDIES**

**LADAKH STUDIES**

**\_ 19, March 2005**

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## EDITORIAL

I should begin by apologizing for the fact that this issue of Ladakh Studies, once again, has been much delayed. In light of this, we have decided to extend current subscriptions. Details are given elsewhere in this issue.

Most recently we postponed publication, because we wanted to be able to announce the place and exact dates for the upcoming 12<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of the IALS. We are very happy and grateful that our members in Kargil will host the colloquium from July 12 through 15, 2005. Elsewhere in this issue you will find a call for papers and more details about the conference.

On a sadder note, the present issue contains commemorative pieces about the lives of our late patron, Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, and of our late advisory committee member, friend and colleague, Nicky Grist. Sue Byrne describes a side of our late patron's life with which many will not be very familiar: his work for the reconstruction of Buddhism in Mongolia. Nicky Grist's unexpected death of came as a shock. She was among the very first researchers from the West to carry out long-term ethnographic field work in Ladakh after the region was reopened to foreigners. Nicky was the only anthropologist to have carried out extensive field work among Buddhist villagers in Leh district as well as among Shi'ite villagers in the Suru valley. An ardent advocate of greater scholarly attention to Kargil, she was instrumental in securing greater participation by people from Kargil district in our colloquia and was strongly supportive of attempts to realize an IALS colloquium at Kargil. John Bray has written an appreciation of Nicky's life which captures her many excellent personal and professional qualities.

An article by Seb Mankelov on watershed development in Zangskar and a number of book and thesis reviews, together with a new instalment of Bray's bibliography update, provide information about current research.

As to the timing for the publication of the next issue, we are hoping to bring out LS 20 soon after the Kargil colloquium. We already have a few contributions for that issue, but more are certainly welcome. As always, I would like to encourage members to consider sending us updates on their research, short reports from Ladakh, and other items which may be of interest to our membership.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to express my gratitude to Abdul Nasir Khan, who has supplied the majority of news items from various internet sources.

## FROM THE HONORARY SECRETARY

The next major event on the IALS agenda is the forthcoming colloquium in Kargil in July. I particularly enjoyed my own most recent visit to Kargil after the Leh/Choglamsar IALS conference in 2003, and I know that our local colleagues are very keen to welcome us there. As in previous conferences, the range of topics covered will extend across the whole of Ladakh, but the colloquium will provide a special opportunity to improve our understanding of Kargil and surrounding areas. I am particularly looking forward to meeting and exchanging views with local scholars. Please do come!

I am currently at the final stages of editing a collection of 24 history papers from previous IALS conferences. The title is *Ladakhi Histories: Local and Regional Perspectives*, and it will be published by Brill in the Netherlands. We also hope to bring out the collection of shorter papers from the Leh/Choglamsar conference in time for the Kargil colloquium. Meanwhile, Martijn van Beek and Fernanda Pirie have replaced the late Nicky Grist as the editors of the proposed Brill volume of anthropology papers. A book on the material arts of Ladakh, edited by Clare Harris and Monisha Ahmed, is now far advanced: 2005 should therefore be a vintage year for collective publications on Ladakh.

I am writing this during a spate of particularly cold weather, at least by Japanese standards. A few days ago, Tokyo even briefly became a 'land of the snows.' At the time, it seemed appropriate to be writing about Ladakh with a blizzard raging outside. Still, the freezing temperature makes me look forward all the more to warm and exciting summer.

## NICKY GRIST - IN APPRECIATION

19 April 1957 - 26 August 2004

by John Bray

It is still hard to think of Nicky Grist in the past tense. On April 19th, her 47th birthday, she was admitted to King's College Hospital, London, for treatment of a long-standing liver disease. At first, she was full of characteristic optimism, believing that she would at last find effective treatment-possibly in the form of a liver transplant. Sadly, that was not to be. I was able to visit her in April, June and finally in August a week before she died. Each time the news was worse, but even towards the end-when she could only communicate in whispers-she was still clear-eyed, courageous, concerned about her friends both in Britain and Ladakh. Now she's gone, out of sight but certainly not out of mind.

Nicky was a member of the IALS committee, and had been at the centre of an ever-widening circle of Ladakh friends since the 1970s. She first travelled overland to India as an enterprising teenager in 1976, before going up to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, to study Archaeology and Anthropology. In Cambridge, these two subjects are combined in a single faculty. Nicky was initially more attracted to classical archaeology, having studied Greek and Latin at school, but it was anthropology that caught her imagination. In 1977 she joined the Cambridge undergraduate research expedition to Ladakh. From then on, Ladakhi anthropology was her prime focus of interest.

The Cambridge expedition's research concentrated on Matho, Gonpa and Saspochey villages. Their first report contains unsigned essays on demography, kinship, marriage and inheritance, polyandry, childhood, the village economy, the monastery; and a signed paper on spatial hierarchies by Patrick Kaplanian, who had met up with the expedition in Ladakh. In 1979, the team produced a revised version of their findings: Nicky's particular contribution consisted of essays on social stratification, kinship, marriage and inheritance, polyandry, land tenure, and village organisation. Those early essays still make impressive reading, both as fresh and original contributions in their own right, and as precursors to subsequent research.

I first caught sight of Nicky-pink-faced and wearing a Ladakhi goncha-in Leh bazaar in late March or early April 1980. By that time, she had left Cambridge and was about to start work at the Lamdon School, while I was going to teach at a rival establishment-the Moravian Mission School. At that time of year, there were few foreigners in Leh and it wasn't long before someone introduced us. We soon discovered that we had much in common, and that early meeting was the start of a long friendship.

I saw Nicky quite frequently in the course of that year, and she in turn introduced me to her friends. These included Judith Sim who joined her at the Lamdon School, and a wide variety of Ladakhis from all communities. In the summer we were joined by another Englishwoman, Liz Lynes, who also taught at the Mission School. On November 5th we organised a Guy Fawkes party, an English contribution to the eclectic mix of festivals already existing in Ladakh. I can't remember if we had a bonfire, but we certainly had fireworks, and I recall explaining in Urdu what this festival was supposed to be about-a goonda had tried to blow up the British Maharajah and the Lok Sabha with a 'bomb'.

Nicky continued her anthropological researches alongside her teaching. Then in 1981 she left the Lamdon School and, together with Liz Lynes, began research project on child nutrition on behalf of Sir Robert Folkes of the Save the Children Fund (SCF). The SCF assignment took her for the first time to the Suru valley, thus laying the seeds of her future Ph.D research. Other anthropologists were beginning to work in the Indus Valley and in Zaskar, but the Muslim areas of

Ladakh were-and remain still-largely neglected by Western researchers. At first sight the cultures of the Buddhist and Muslim communities appear starkly different, but of course they have much in common, and the differences and similarities were among the main themes of Nicky's later research work.

Nicky returned to London in 1982 where she worked first as a housing worker for a refugee charity and then-after studying for an MSc-as an information technology specialist. She moved to Brixton where she lived with her husband David and her children Laurie and Jimmy. I too lived in Brixton for ten years, within walking distance of her home. Nicky continued her research on Ladakh alongside work and motherhood. Much of her research had a historical side to it, close to my own particular interests, and I remember the shared excitement of finding new sources at the India Office Library in London.

Successive Ladakh and Tibet conferences gave both of us a stimulus to write up our findings. Nicky was still in Ladakh when the first 'Recent Research on Ladakh' conference took place in Konstanz, Germany, in November 1981, but she helped her friend Tsering Mutup of Gonpa village prepare an article on the Kesar saga which was published in the conference proceedings. The second conference on Ladakh was organised by Patrick Kaplanian and Claude Dendaletche in Pau, southern France, in 1985: Nicky submitted a paper on 'Ladakh, a Trading State'. In 1987, we travelled together with Henry Osmaston to the third conference in Herrnhut, then still part of the German Democratic Republic, and the IALS was formally established there. Nicky was a frequent participant at subsequent colloquia, and her published papers from these events are listed below.

In 1993, Nicky took time off from her IT work, and returned to Ladakh for Ph.D fieldwork in the Suru valley, taking Laurie and Jimmy with her. Alongside her fieldwork, she became involved in the newly founded Noon Public School in Taisuru, first as a volunteer teacher and then as a member of the management committee. Her thesis, which was completed in 1998, discusses the politics of the yokma-pa, a Shi-lite faction in Suru. The thesis is the first serious academic study of a region that has otherwise been neglected. It introduces the history of the Suru valley, and discusses the social context of the yokma-pa and a rival group, the Goma-pa. Drawing on her own direct experience, it analyses the role of modern education, and then discusses local marriage practices, and the relationship between Suru agriculture and the urban bureaucracy.

After completing the thesis, Nicky returned to her work as an IT consultant. In the last year, after she had given up her IT work because of ill-health, she was thinking about projects she could continue from home. These included writing up her Ladakh research but also a possible new project-prompted by her own condition-into the problems of disabled people in the workplace. She was also editing a collection of Ladakh anthropology papers from recent IALS conferences. She remained full of enthusiasm for Ladakh, and for new discoveries yet to be made.

My abiding memory of Nicky will be of her talking, nineteen to the dozen, while doing several other things at the same time. At one of her friends said at her memorial service, she would have been able to 'talk for England' at some putative international championship. She always had interesting things to say, switching from good-natured gossip to the complexities of high politics; followed by an update on her Ladakh research; a review of the latest adventures of her children; and a return to practical topics such as what to eat for supper.

Nicky's most distinctive characteristic was a special capacity for friendship. From her I learnt never to underestimate or undervalue anyone. Her openness to people of all national, social and religious backgrounds made her a better scholar. It also won her the loyalty of an amazing variety of people, as testified by the queues of friends who came to see her in hospital during her final illness.

Nicky loved life, but was not afraid of death. In the last few months of her life, she displayed a clear-headed courage that was both humbling and inspiring. In all sorts of ways, she was a model of how to live, both in good times and in adversity.

## NICKY GRIST: PUBLICATIONS ON LADAKH

1977. *Cambridge Undergraduate Ladakh Expedition. Matho: Continuity and Change in a Ladakhi Village*. Typescript. 136 pp. Nicky contributed to the report together with Hilary Dewhurst, Peter Farrington, Patrick Kaplanian, Maria Phylactou and Jill Reynolds.
- 1979 *Cambridge Undergraduate Ladakh Expedition. 1979. Reports on Ladakh 1977 1979*. Revised typescript. 250pp. Nicky's particular contributions consisted of essays on social stratification, kinship, marriage and inheritance, polyandry, land tenure, and village organisation.
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2002. Book review: Horse of Karbala. Muslim Devotional Life in India, by David Pinault. *Ladakh Studies* 17 (September 2002), pp. 36-38.

**THE SURU VALLEY FUND  
IN MEMORY OF NICKY GRIST**

Nicky's family and friends are setting up the Suru Valley Fund in her memory. The fund will support projects in and around the village of Panikhar in the Suru Valley, particularly the Noon Public School where Nicky taught while doing her Ph.D research.

Judith Sim is co-ordinating the Fund, and her address:  
Flat 5, 38 Montpelier Park, Edinburgh EH10 4NH, Scotland  
(Judsim@blueyonder.co.uk).

Cheques can be sent direct to Judith, made out to the Suru Valley Fund, or paid directly into the Fund's account. This is held at the Royal Bank of Scotland, Bruntsfield Place, Edinburgh. The Bank's sort code is 83-18-25, and the account number is 00625530.

# **12th IALS Colloquium at Kargil 12-15 July 2005**

## **Call for Conference Papers**

We are delighted to announce that our 12th colloquium will take place in Kargil from 12-15 July. It has been our longstanding ambition to hold a colloquium in Kargil, and we hope that as many IALS member as possible will be able to attend.

Further details will be sent out by e-mail and posted on the IALS website (<http://www.centrasia.uni-bonn.de/IALShome.html>). If you are planning to attend-even tentatively-please could you send a note either to John Bray or to Gulzar Hussain Munshi so that we will be sure to include you on future mailings.

### **Papers**

As in previous colloquia we welcome papers on a wide range of topics related to Ladakh. All papers should be based on original research and are subject to review by the conference committee. Presenters are expected to be members of the IALS, but you are welcome to join at the colloquium itself. If you give a paper, please send an abstract of not more than 250 words to John Bray or to Gulzar by 15 April.

### **Transport**

We hope to arrange a special bus from Leh for conference participants.

### **Visa requirements**

International participants should make sure that they have the appropriate visa. A letter of invitation will be provided if required.

### **Insurance**

Some international insurance companies may have an exclusion clause stating that their policies do not cover travel close to the Line of Control between India and Pakistan. Delegates are responsible for making their own insurance arrangements but, if enough people are interested, we may be able to arrange a special insurance package with a UK-based company. Please let John Bray know.

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## **NEWS FROM LADAKH**

### **HELPING LEH BATTLE THE SCOURGE OF SILICOSIS**

SOURAV SANYAL

Chandigarh: While people of Leh have learnt to live with sub-zero temperatures, the summer months drive them to physicians in droves with symptoms similar to tuberculosis. Six years ago, the Union health ministry sought the help of Ahmedabad-based National Institute of Occupational Health to investigate the matter. It came to light that people of Leh suffer from a lung disease known as silicosis. Leh is the only place in the world to have cases of non-occupational silicosis. Subsequently, a detailed report was prepared and forwarded to the Union health ministry. Six years down the line the problem still persists. Having failed to initiate any follow-up action on the subject till date, NIOH is now toying with the idea of starting an intervention programme for the people of Leh.

Talking to TNN at the 91st session of the Indian Science Congress which was inaugurated at Panjab University on Saturday, NIOH assistant director B C Lakkad said, “Leh is the only place in the world to have cases of non-occupational silicosis. This came to light when we carried out studies in three villages of Leh district about six years back. Unfortunately, since then we have not been able to initiate follow-up action as we have done in Gujarat and UP from where cases of occupational silicosis have been reported.”

He said the institute is thinking of planning out intervention programmes for people of Leh affected by silicosis and initiate some steps to reduce its occurrence. “During summers when snow melts on the western side of the Himalayas, storms start eroding stones. This generates fine silica dust which when inhaled leads to silicosis,” Lakkad said. A lung disease similar to tuberculosis, silicosis is caused by exposure to stone dust. “It is a very fast progressing lung disease. Once the disease sets in, which takes about two to three years to surface, a person can die within three to five years. The X-ray picture is exactly similar to tuberculosis,” he added.

### **VERSATILE LADAKHI ARTIST GETS PADMASHREE**

By Tashi Morup

LEH, Feb 1: A popular artist from Ladakh is among the recent list of Padmashree award winners. With his singing, dancing, composing, narration, story telling and dozen other skills 56-year-old Morup Namgyal has proved himself as a versatile artist, who dominated as an icon of Ladakhi traditional music and folklore in the recent decades.

Born in a traditional Buddhist family in Wanla village, Namgyal grew up in an ambience of traditional music and folklore his family and village was rich in. Later, after his schooling at Tigmosgang village he left for Leh where he got the chance to work with the admired literary figures Khampo Geshes Ishey Tundup and Tashi Rabgais. Namgyal then gave several stage performances and as his talents flourished, he decided to devote himself in reviving and keeping alive the fading symbols of Ladakhi culture. Namgyal and his group toured widely into Ladakh to eradicate social evils such as child marriage, polyandry, illiteracy, smoking and drinking through creative songs and dances.

The money thus raised was used for local charity purposes and even aids to famine struck people of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh through PM-relief fund. Later, with the help of his friends and scholars he founded the pioneering Non Governmental Organisation in Ladakh called Lamdon Social Welfare

Society. The society opened the Lamdon Model School aimed at providing modern education to the children from poor and remote families. Later, the school branches spread into remote areas including Nubra, Zanskar, Chushul, Thuksey and Shey in Ladakh. In recognition of excellent work in this field the society got the prestigious National Award for Child Welfare. Being the founding member of the society, he himself received award from the President of India in 1998.

In 1977 Morup Namgyal joined All India Radio, Leh as an instrumentalist and soon he became the Music Composer. As an employed music composer Namgyal got the opportunity to compose numerous songs and music. He performed several music concerts at state, national and international level. He also laboured a great deal in finding, collecting, reviving the dying folk songs and dances of Ladakh. The Leh Radio Station is almost identifiable with his name for his sheer number of participation. As a social worker Namgyal put every effort to revive, what he thought, the dying culture of Ladakh. He has founded societies for the promotion culture in every village. He has rendered other social services in the form of working towards better health and hygiene of the poor masses and setting up old-age homes.

Namgyal another sphere of contribution comprises promoting communal harmony and brotherhood among the different communities of Ladakh. Above all his songs, dances, story telling, narration have made him a popular artist known even in the parts of Himachal Pradesh, Tibet, Baltistan etc. In recognition of his contribution in the field of art and culture, the J&K Govt. awarded him a Gold Medal and one lac rupees in 1997. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has once praised him for his talent during a mass function.

Morup Namgyal is the sixth Ladakhi to win Padmashree after late Sonam Norboo an engineer turned politician, Sonam Wangyal, Politician, C Phuntsog, IAS, Sonam Wangdu, Thanka painter and Nawang Tsering, sculptor. Late Kushok Bakula was the only one from Ladakh to win Padmavibhushan.

## **UNDP AIDED PASHMINA 'DEHAIRING' PROJECT FOR LEH SOON**

LEH, Mar 27 : A Pashmina Dehairing Project for value addition of Pashmina wool sanctioned by the Government of India for Ladakh under United Nation Development Project (UNDP) assistance at a cost of Rs.8.25 crores is coming up shortly in Leh district.

The project approved by the Centre, recommended by the State Government and the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), has projected the state share of the project under Border Area Development Programme (BADP).

This was stated by the (CEC) Chief Executive Councilor, LAHDC, Leh, Thupstan Chhewang at a meeting held here today under his Chairmanship to finalize the arrangements for the Chinese and Indian installation team of the Pashmina plant being installed at the Industrial Estate Leh shortly.

Dr T. Phuntsog, the project incharge, appraised that Rs.1.80 crores imported indigenous machinery from China would be installed at the proposed site. He said that the Pashmina Dehairing Project would be a Community Facility Centre (CFC) for the Pashmina Growers of Changthang Sub-Division and is being setup under All Changthang Pashmina Growers Cooperative Society Ltd. for the benefit of the Pashmina growers.

The CEC said that out of the total project cost of Rs.8.25 crores the UNDP share of Rs.3.23 crore has already been released which include Rs.78.75 lakh for machinery cost and Rs. one crores each as revolving and training and consultancy expenses for the project. The Government of India, Ministry of Textile share of Rs.1.48 crores as machinery and other cost has already been released under the project. Out of the state/LAHDC share of Rs.3.25 crores an amount of Rs.1.57 crores has been released as cost of machinery, land and building, water, electricity and local hospitality expenses under the project.

During the meeting a number of decisions were taken to make the Common Facility Centre operational which include constitution of a committee for decision making on expenses and running of the Community Facility Centre (CEC), assignment of duties of concerned officials, the complete construction, water and electricity supply within next 10 days, arrangement for local hospitality for Chinese and India installation team who will reach Leh within the next 10 days. The meeting also decided to release the LAHDC share of revolving fund to Changthang Pashmina Growers Cooperative Society Ltd out of the saving at the earliest.

The Executive Councilors, (Animal & Sheep Husbandry) Tsultim Phuntsog, Councilors of Changthang and district officers attended the meeting.

## **FIELD RESEARCH LABORATORY, LEH**

Om Prakash

Imagine a green, leafy vegetable or a glass of fresh milk even during frozen winter. Imagine an oasis with singing willows and chattering birds. Imagine fresh meat and eggs produced locally in a land where the cold freezes one and nothing is visible beyond the icy desert and lofty mountains. This is Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir.

The breakthrough has been made possible by the Field Research Laboratory (FRL), one of the laboratories of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Ministry of Defence, in Leh. It is engaged in developing appropriate agro-technologies for the region where the climate is not suitable for agriculture due to the geo-climatic conditions. A brainchild of the country's first Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru, it was established in 1960 under the administrative control of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). But due to logistic difficulties it was transferred to the DRDO in 1962. Its aim was to make the hostile terrain of Ladakh reasonably green and productive not only to sustain its meagre and sparse population but also the military and para-military forces deployed in this sector. It is perhaps the world's highest research laboratory located at an altitude of 11,500 feet from sea level with its field stations at Ranbirpura (11,900 ft) and Partapur (Nubra-Siachen Brigade) (10,000ft).

"Man is not made for defeat" said Ernest Hemingway, the noted American novelist. Symbolising the spirit, the scientists and other supporting staff of the FRL have proved this. They have successfully developed and demonstrated suitable techniques for vegetable cultivation round the year. It has demonstrated solar green house technique for vegetable cultivation at sub-zero temperatures in Ladakh. It is supplying vegetable plants and seeds of fruits, flowers and forest trees to the farmers of the region. Upgradation of the local breed of cows is on the agenda of the laboratory for milk production in the region. It is meeting the local demand for fresh vegetables to troops upto 45 per cent of their total requirement. It has helped in supplying fresh milk, meat and eggs to the troops by developing and demonstrating suitable techniques to the local farmers.

The FRL has developed a multi-vitamin herbal beverage. It has now been included in the special ration for the contingents of the Indian Army deployed in the region.

The FRL's mandate is to carry out applied research and extension on agro-animal activities in Ladakh with a view to enhancing the availability of fresh foods like vegetable, fruits, milk, meat and eggs for our troops throughout the year through local farmers. Its mission is to evolve novel inputs, to enhance the agro-animal productivity.

Scientists at the FRL are not only developing cold and agro-animal technologies but are also evolving novel ways to enhance cent per cent self-sufficiency in agro-animal food for our troops in Ladakh by sustaining the local economy. They are also identifying the wild medicinal and aromatic plants in the region for therapeutic use.

## **LUTF HAS AN EDGE WITH RIFT IN KARGIL**

By Tashi Morup

LEH, May 3: Majority of people in Kargil are caught in a political tug-of-war between their two leading groups making the Lok Sabha polls in Ladakh, which is often termed as 'Leh versus Kargil game,' inclined towards the Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF) candidate, Thupstan Chhewang, who is the clear favourite in Leh.

The two Shia Muslim religious groups in Kargil the progressive Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust (IKMT) and the more orthodox Islamia School have separate choices of support this time unlike the previous polls, when the two got together to back the NC candidate Hassan Khan against Thupstan Chhewang - then the Congress candidate from Leh.

However, this time the two groups were divided over fielding Hassan Khan again on NC mandate. Nevertheless, Islamia School decided to support Khan as the NC candidate for the Lok Sabha polls, which led the IKMT-Congress alliance to field an Independent candidate, Wazir Ali, under the Kargil Alliance banner.

This division has disappointed majority of the people in Kargil for it has reduced their chances of securing the lone MP seat from Leh for the fourth consecutive time. Haji Abdul Hassan, a resident of Minji village, said, 'it would be a great loss to lose the seat that we earned after 45 years of struggle.' Similarly, Ghulam Rasool, an elderly man, expressing his anger over the rift among the leaders in Kargil said this is an end of progress. While presuming only 20 percent vote cast here this time, he said, 'you will not see the excitement among the people on the polling day as before.' However, the NC party does not seem to be worried the other candidate (Wazir Ali, Independent) from Kargil cutting down on their vote size. They maintain the same level of optimism despite the LUTF candidate Chhewang making inroads even into many parts of Kargil including Zanskar.

The people in large numbers sat four hours and keenly listened to Chhewang during his election campaigning in Chakar-Chiktan, Bodh-Kharbu and Wakha-Mulbeck areas of Kargil, said Norbu Gyalson, the LAHDC Executive Councillor. He was accompanying the campaign team comprising the Executive Councillor, Mohd. Abbas Abidi, Mohammad Shafi Lassu, a senior lawyer and Ashraf Ali, former Executive Councillor, LAHDC.

However, nothing seemed to faze the NC party and its candidate Hassan Khan for they believe that NC won in the previous polls despite having seven candidates in the fray as against four this time. In a recent election campaign in Suru Valley of the Kargil district both Khan and the NC President Qambar Ali Akhoon were portraying this calculation before the Tambis villagers while asking them to vote for the NC party.

## **CEA CLEARS 44 MW POWER PLANT IN KARGIL**

NEW DELHI: The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) today gave its nod to 44 MW Chutak Hydroelectric project in Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir at an estimated cost of Rs 675 crore. CEA has also cleared 45 MW hydro power project in Nimoo Bazgo in Leh district at a cost of Rs 631 crore. Both the projects would be executed by the State-owned National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) at a total investment of Rs 1,300 crore.

"The Ladakh region is a high altitude plateau devoid of vegetation and having severe winters. The area remains cut off from the rest of the country for vehicular traffic for most part of the year. Setting up of these two plants will give an impetus to the economic development of the region", CEA said.

When contacted, Mr Yogendra Prasad, CMD of NHPC, said 'we will complete both the projects within four years from the date of government approval'. CEA said that besides Rs 1,300 crore investment in setting up these two plants, another Rs 480 crore would be invested in transmission lines. "The proposed 220 kV single circuit line from Srinagar to Leh along with 220/33 kV sub-stations at Kargil, Drass, Khalsi and Leh would enhance the reliability of power supply in the

region and enable full absorption of energy from these projects", CEA said in a release. - PTI , 4/5/04

## **LADAKH GETS IIT EXPERTS TO TAP GEO-THERMAL POTENTIAL**

Aditi Tandon

**PUGAS VALLEY:** The Pugas valley in the Changthang area of Leh may soon offer the best solution to the ever-looming power crisis in Ladakh. A bed of innumerable hot springs, this area has been identified as a belt with a very high potential for generation of geo-thermal energy.

Panamik in Nubra valley and Demchok in Changthang are other geothermal belts in Ladakh, which lies on the zone of collision between the Indian and the Eurasian plate. Ladakh is so rich in renewable energy sources that it has the potential to become the laboratory and demonstration site for non- conventional energy projects in entire India.

Rated at the top among the other highly probable geothermal energy sources in the region, Pugas has invited the attention of reputed energy technology consultants from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mumbai, which has taken up this first project of geothermal electricity generation in Leh.

With the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources (MNES) recently clubbing Ladakh with the North East as a high focus area for the development of non- conventional projects, the flow of funds for the project will also be ensured. Any high focus area is entitled to a grant of 90 per cent for all renewable energy initiatives.

Pugas, which has a capacity to generate 30 to 40 MW of electricity, was earlier tested for its potential by the Geological Survey of India. In fact, it was when the Ladakh Renewable Energy Development Agency (LREDA) and the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council forwarded the case of geo thermal power generation in Ladakh to the Ministry of Non-Conventional Sources (MNES) that MNES asked the National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad, to survey Pugas valley and prepare a pre-feasibility report. For some reason the project was not taken up then.

It has now been revived with LREDA approaching the IIT, Mumbai, which sent two experts to conduct preliminary surveys on the geo-thermal energy potential of Pugas. The two experts, Dr Milind V. Rane, Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT, and Dr Chandrasekharam, Professor and Head, Department of Earth Sciences, IIT, Mumbai, have already completed the first field. In the second round which will begin anytime now, LREDA will start generation of electricity from geo-thermal energy source in Pugas.

Significantly, Ladakh despite being remote and inaccessible, is lucky to have abundant renewable energy sources. After maximizing solar energy for power generation in villages, the region is now focusing on the untapped area of geo-thermal energy.

Mr Jigmet Takpa, Project Director, LREDA, informed The Tribune that geo-thermal energy generation was a significant means to end the power crisis in Ladakh, where per capita energy consumption is 9800 Kcal per day. This is double of that in the plains. "Such amount of energy is required just for sustenance and the cost incurred on generating it is exorbitant. In that sense, geo-thermal energy will go a long way in helping Ladakhis, because this source of energy is inexhaustible."

At present, Ladakh requires 7000 litres of diesel daily to meet its electricity requirements that include space heating and energy use for lighting. The annual electricity consumption is 175 kwh. In remote villages people still use kerosene-based lighting sources among which wick lamp and petromax are the most common. Electricity generation in the region is either diesel-based or hydro-based. But both forms of energy generation have their limitations. While the hydel power

plant is closed down for five months during winter due to freezing of canals, diesel transportation is very costly. This makes a solid case for tapping geo-thermal energy belts in Ladakh.

## **POLICE ACTION PLAN SAVIOUR OF LADAKH'S ENDANGERED ROCK ART**

By Lalit Gupta

JAMMU, May 9: A small beginning made in the year 2003 under Civic Action Plan of Police Department has emerged as a first concrete step towards the preservation and conservation of the ancient rock art of Ladakh that stands endangered due to lack of awareness and local population and use of these rocks as building material. Subject of the photo-exhibition titled 'Whispering Rocks', that was inaugurated by Chief Secretary J&K, Dr. S.S. Bloeria, at the Abhinav Art Gallery, here today, the rock art photographs on display have been clicked by S.D. Jamwal, SSP Traffic Jammu.

Today's function was conducted by veteran journalist Sati Sahni who threw light on the possible origin of drawings and symbols on rocks in Ladakh. Dr. Bloeria, speaking on the occasion appreciated the thought, effort and spirit behind the project and exhibition. He said that title of the exhibition was apt as instead of talking rocks these are infact whispering rocks and it takes the sensitivity like that of Jamwal to record and document these for proper identification and interpretation.

Gopal Sharma, DG Police, who presided the function, while showing happiness at the efforts to preserve the rock art, suggested that three-dimensional video presentation be prepared and shown at centers like Delhi so that sponsors can be found for the conservation project.

"What started as a chance discovery when my jeep broke down near Khalsi when I first encountered drawings carved on big rocks, has now become a passion for me", says Jamwal, who along with friend Tashi Ldawa, has since then traivailed extensively in Alchi, Nobra and Leh areas to locate and document rock art examples.

"The initiative got support from present DG Gopal Sharma who encouraged us to pursue the project and today we have clicked more than 1000 photographs of different kinds of rock art examples", says Jamwal.

Rock Art of Ladakh, comprises of images, symbols and designs which are found carved on rocks and boulders all over the region. Made by ancient people- especially grazers and nomads, all along old foot and trade routes-these rock carvings are invaluable documents providing a glimpse into the economic, religious, beliefs and customs of those ancient people inhabiting Ladakh right from 5000 years B.C. onwards. But unfortunately human vandalism and rapid development have emerged as two major threats to this unique cultural heritage of Ladakh. Especially threatened are the rocks situated along the roads which are indiscriminately being used a building material.

It was left to personal initiative of S.D. Jamwal and Tashi Ldawa, to make an extensive inventory of rock carvings and work towards the preservation of this non-monumental yet historically significant heritage.

S.D. Jamwal is the Hon. Convenor of a NGO, Upper Indus Rock Art Society (URIS), with its headquarters at Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS) Leh, solely devoted to the preservation of Rock Art of Ladakh. "Apart from spreading awareness among locals about the archaeological importance, many such rock pieces have been collected and relocated, after recording their GPS locations, to a new place at village Taru about 20 kilometers from Leh and a heritage garden has been established spreading in about 1100 kanals of land", says Jamwal.

## **THUPSTAN'S CRUSHING DEFEAT TO NC**

From Tashi Morup

Leh, May 13: The Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF) candidate, Thupstan Chhewang gave a crushing defeat to his nearest rival Hassan Khan (NC) by a margin of 25,589 votes in the in the Lok Sabha election of the Ladakh Parliamentary Constituency today.

Out of the total 1,29,093 votes cast Chhewang bagged 66709 against the total of 41120 votes the NC candidate managed to get followed by the Independent candidate from Kargil, Wazir Ali, who got 18117. While as the BJP candidate Sonam Paljore got only 2848 votes.

However, the official announcement of the final result was withheld for the ballot boxes from the three polling stations in remote Zanskar area were yet to arrive in Kargil. According to the Returning Officer, Satish Nehru, due to some technical problems the helicopter sent to collect the ballot boxes from remote areas in Zanskar failed to get to the Shun, Shade and Stog polling stations. The three areas comprise 147 votes. Thus, the Election Commission direction was sought in this regard before the official declaration of the result.

Meanwhile, the entire Leh town were jubilant soon after the people came to know about the LUTF victory over the NC candidate Hassan Khan. The LUTF President Tsering Dorjay Lakrook, said, the result shows that the Union Territory demand of the people of the Leh district has support even among the Kargilis.

The LUTF roped in 9844 votes from the Kargil district that includes Zanskar. However, Shabir Shah, the Kargil Alliance agent considers the NC's defeat as a victory of democracy over 'Shakhsi Raj' in Kargil. It was more for a personality like Thupstan Chhewang than any other reason that the people voted in his favor, he said while hoping that the newly elected MP of Ladakh works towards the development of the whole region without any Leh-Kargil biases.

Wazir Ali, the Independent candidate from Kargil, expressed satisfaction over his performance while recalling the situation under which he had to contest the election. 'We did not want NC to win,' he said as it is PDP-Congress government in the State, who has greatly supported Hill Council and helped bringing about tremendous developmental changes unlike NC government.

These differences within Kargil among the Islamia School backed NC party and the IKMT and Congress supported Kargil Alliance truly benefited the LUTF candidate. It led Chhewang to win the contest with a huge margin of 25, 589 votes. The 18117 votes bagged by the Independent candidate Wazir Ali considerably cut down the vote size of the Hassan Khan in Kargil. [ . . . ]

## **NC WORKERS GO ON RAMPAGE IN KARGIL**

From Mohammad Ali Tak

KARGIL, May 14 : Normal life was thrown out of gear in this border town today after National Conference (NC) supporters went on a rampage following yesterday's defeat in Lok Sabha elections. The authorities imposed Section 144 CrPC to control the situation.

The NC men resorted to heavy stone pelting resulting in injuries to three police men including an officer and damage to a number of buildings. Police burst over two dozen smoke shells and arrested 20 persons. All the shops and other business establishments were closed after the violence.

The trouble began as the angry NC supporters took out a procession. They pelted stones on the office of Kargil Alliance, which had fielded the independent candidate Wazir Mohammad Ali into the Lok Sabha polls. They also resorted to heavy stone pelting on the office of Imam Khomeni Trust. Both the buildings suffered extensive damages.

Police swung into action and resorted to lathicharge and lobbed teargas shells. The NC supporters retaliated by pelting stones on police men. The ding dong battle between the two sides continued for some time. Three police men sustained injuries. Identified as SHO, Yousuf Mohammad, constable Mohammad Ibrahim and constable Nawang Tsering, they were removed to hospital for the treatment.

Panic gripped the town as the NC supporters resorted to violence and police fired smoke shells. The shopkeepers pulled down their shutters. The government and semi-government offices were

also closed. Reinforcement of police was summoned which took up position into the sensitive areas. Police arrested 20 persons for indulging in violence.

Amid the tension, Ghulam Hassan Khan, the NC candidate made a brief speech at Public Park and alleged that he was not defeated by outsiders but insiders. The authorities immediately announced the imposition of section 144. National Conference is very upset with Kargil Alliance for fielding Wazir Mohammad Ali in the polls. They believe that the division of votes in Kargil led to the victory of Ladakh Union territory Front (LUTF) candidate Thupstan Chewang. Kargil Alliance comprise of Imam Khomeni Memorial Trust, Anjuman Shargol Chickten block and some other organisations.

## **LEH CELEBRATES CHHEWANG'S VICTORY**

LEH, May 15 : Thousands thronged the Leh Polo Ground to celebrate the grand victory of the Ladakh Union Territory Front (LUTF) candidate, Thupstan Chhewang, over his nearest rival Hassan Khan, the NC candidate from Kargil.

Chhewang thanked people for their contribution that gave him a 'historical' victory for he won with a record margin. He promised the crowd to live up to the every promise he made. As the MP Ladakh, Chhewang added, would strive towards the development of both Leh and Kargil regions.

Earlier, he got an impressive reception all the way to Leh from Khaltse, where he halted for the night on his arriving from Kargil yesterday. By the time the reception party reached Leh it grew into a cavalcade of nearly a thousand vehicles including trucks, buses, cars packed with the frenzied people celebrating the victory.

Before the Polo Ground, there was a traditional reception organised by the Chubi-Yangtse communities at Chhewang's newly built residential house. It was an emotional moment for him, his family and his relatives to see the love shown by the people of the new place, he has shifted to. "I cast my vote as a Chubi-Yangtse community member," Chhewang said while expressing his happiness over becoming a part of that community now.

## **RIGZIN SPALBAR ELECTED AS CHAIRMAN LAHDC**

LEH, June 24: Rigzin Spalbar, Executive Councillor( Education) has been unanimously elected as new Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh in place of Thupstan Chhewang who was elected as Member Parliament from Ladakh in the recent parliamentary elections.

The election for the new Chairman/CEC was held in the General Council meeting of LAHDC, Leh here this morning. [...]

Addressing the General Council of LAHDC, Mr Rigzin Spalbar thanked the members of the house for electing him as the new Chairman unanimously. He said that the responsibility of the chairman is challenging one and he will try his best to meet the aspirations of the General Council as well as the people of Ladakh.

It would be a challenging job for him to take the responsibility of Mr Chhewang after his election as Member of Parliament, he said. He, however, expressed hope that guidance and co-operation of our noble leaders like Mr Thupstan Chhewang, MP; Rigzin Zora, Minister of State for Science and Technology, Mr P Namgyal and Mr Pintoo Norboo, MLA will always remained with the General Council for development and welfare of the Ladakh region. The newly elected Chairman /CEC also sought active co-operation of the employees of the LAHDC to speed up



execution of developmental works in the district. In this connection Mr Rigzin Spalbar asked the Deputy Commissioner/CEO of LAHDC to cancel the leave cases of all those district officers who are availing leave, if any, in view of the limited working season.

Addressing the General Council, Mr Thupstan Chhewang congratulated Mr Rigzin Spalbar for having been elected as Chairman/CEC unopposed. He also thanked the members of the General Council for the support and co-operation he received during his nine years tenure as Chairman/CEC of LAHDC, Leh. Mr Chhewang expressed hope that similar co-operation will be extended by them to Rigzin Spalbar, new Chairman/CEC of LAHDC

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Rigzin Zora, Minister of State for Science and Technology congratulated the newly elected Chairman on his own and on behalf of the Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. He also said the Leh district has made tremendous progress under the leadership of Mr Thupstan and expressed hope that he would now continue to make contribution as Member of Parliament. Other members of the General Council also spoke.

## **MONKS UNHAPPY OVER ASI'S DECISION TO TAKE OVER SHRINES**

By Tashi Morup

Leh, June 27: The Archaeological Survey of India's latest decision to take over more of old Buddhist shrines in Ladakh as monuments of national importance has not been welcomed by the monks here.

In Ladakh, ASI already has several Buddhist monasteries and historical remains including Hemis, Alchi, Shey Palace, Leh Palace etc. declared as centrally protected monuments to be of National Importance under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains' Act 1958. However, the recent decision to take over shrines and other historical remains below the Leh Palace by ASI made the monks apprehensive for they take this decision as discouraging to the monastic system, which is still a thriving culture. Monks understand this as suggestive of the decline of their lineage. 'Gyudzin' (lineage) was the term used by Geylong Lobzang Angchuk, the President, Ladakh Gonpa Society, while expressing the fear and insecurity created by such government's decision among the monk communities. Geylong Angchuk said, in a meeting of the representatives of the 15 principal monasteries held recently the monks objected to the ASI's decision to take over the shrines below the Leh Palace. He said, Gonpas will continue to hold the ownership, however, we will welcome any kind of aid to help restore the old shrines.

The proposed shrines and other remains below the palace included a Chorten, Guru La-khang (Padmasambhava shrine), monks' residences, Gonpa Soma, the mask dance courtyard, Chenrezig Gonpa (Avalokitesvara shrine), Chamba Gonpa (Maitreya shrine) and other adjoining stupas and ruins. Presently, Hemis, Chemre, Spituk and Matho monasteries mainly hold the ownership of these structures that houses statues, murals, scriptures and other valuable ritualistic objects. The shrines form the part of important rituals performed regularly by the monks. For example, the all-important annual Dosmoche ceremony that attracts thousands of devotees from all over Ladakh takes place in the courtyard adjacent to Gonpa Soma. Monks of Matho Gonpa perform rituals for days together while other monasteries take turns to perform the annual mask dance during the famous Dosmoche festival.

Geylong Angchuk said, stupas that belong to family houses may be taken over by the ASI but only after taking those family owners under confidence. While, expressing his serious dissatisfaction over the works of ASI in Ladakh, he said, we can show much better result in restoration and preservation of our shrines keeping in view the value of traditional artefact if we get the funds directly. ASI can guide us, he said. The meagre fund of rupees 50,000 for each monastery from the Cultural Ministry hardly help in restoring the huge structures of the Gonpas. He also mentioned about the State government's apathy towards these monuments that form a major tourist attraction. Geylong Angchuk said, the Government of India has announced some 200 crore rupees for the Buddha Jayanti celebration in India in the year 2006. The Gonpa Society, Leh, has proposed

to restore the old stupas and monasteries. Geylong Angchuk is also the member of the Expert Committee set up in this regard by the Cultural Ministry.

## **ZANGSKAR AGAIN LACKS WATER**

by Seb Mankelow

Once again many of Zangskar's villages have endured a water-short summer. Anticipating problems many communities left a large percentage of fields uncultivated. The old Kumi settlement was particularly hard hit with over 90% of fields left fallow (visually, the snowfields above Kumi have declined beyond all recognition in the last 5 years). Several villages were also forced to harvest early as water sources had completely dried-up by the end of July; in Karsha the harvest was finished by the second week of August.

Farmers in Padum were also inconvenienced in an unusual turn of events. With the absence of any significant winter snow, fields were fertilised, ploughed and sown around two weeks earlier than usual. This eagerness however backfired when insufficient sunshine failed to provide enough glacial water to irrigate at leisure. Thus, Padum's first watering was conducted under a much disputed water rotation, the first ever water rationing in living memory for many of Padum's inhabitants.

Further afield in Shun the lack of winter snow and the associated shortage of grazing was the cause of further dispute. In an attempt to regain water security the people of Marshun, Yarshun and Satuk have over the last four years developed a more permanent summer settlement at Chumik Gyartsa (near Sarchu on the Leh-Manali road). Using the grazing at Sarchu the Shun-pa came into conflict with Kharnak's Chang-Pa who (according to an inhabitant of Yarshun – I haven't heard the Chang-pa side), in a desperate search for grass, drove their sheep and goats over the Morang La towards Chumik Gyartsa. A confrontation followed between both parties with repercussions which later resulted in a Shun-pa needing medical care. One of Shun's doksa buildings below the Morang La was then mysteriously destroyed by fire and as a precaution against further attack the inhabitants of Marshun and Yarshun have now dismantled the bridge over the Tsarap (at the natural narrows between Yarshun and Munele). The case has apparently now been taken up by the authorities in Keylong (which is unusual for what appears to be a J&K matter?).

## **LAHDC FRAMES ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR DRAFTING OF VISION DOCUMENT**

LEH, July 20: The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) through an order has constituted a 10 member Advisory Committee with Sonam Dawa, Director Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDG) as its chairman for drafting of Vision Document/Concept Paper for sustainable development of Ladakh region.

Other members of the committee are Jigmat Takpa, Regional Wild Life Warden, L Tsultim CPO, DDA, S Gyalson, Assistant Commissioner Development, Dr T Phuntsog, Sheep Husbandry Department, Dr T Noroo Physician Specialist, A Azis Mir (Retd) Scientist SKUAST, S Wangchok, Director SECMOL and G M Shiek and Tashi Rabgais, Scholar.

As per the order Ladakh comprises a region with unique Trans-Himalayan geo-climatic condition and a distinct cultural identity, posing both challenges and opportunities in the field of development. In fact this uniqueness is the very reason for existence of LAHDC Leh. The committee shall recommend long term strategies and measures for the appropriate development of different areas sectors such as Agriculture, Horticulture, livestock and sustainable utilization of local natural resources, development of human resource through a sound education policy, preservation and promotion of Ladakh's cultural heritage and identity, a policy on health and healthy environment and formulation of a sustainable tourism policy etc.

The LAHDC shall make available to the committee all necessary data base and information from all departments. Further any logistical/ secretariat support and other human and material resources will also be made available in order to enable the committee to accomplish its task on time.

The committee is expected to submit a comprehensive Vision Document for the approval of LAHDC, Leh, latest by September 30, 2004. The committee may invite any official or outside experts as member, if they deem important for making critical inputs and guidance towards formulating the vision documents.

## **LADAKH HAS BEST QUALITY OF DISEASE-FREE PLANT SEEDS**

By Tashi Morup

Leh, Aug 7: "Ladakh has the best quality of plant seeds for being disease-free," said Dr. Mangala Rai, Director General of ICAR during a brainstorming discussion at the Field Research Laboratory (FRL), Leh, after the inaugural function of the annual Ladakhi Kisan, Jawan, Vigyan Mela held today. Emphasising the need to have large-scale seed production in Ladakh for its appropriate geo-climatic condition Dr. Mangalam said, the high value seeds produced here can be supplied to the entire country. He said, he is ready to give any technological support needed in this regard. Professor Anwar Alam, Vice Chancellor of Sher-e Kashmir University of Agricultural Science and Technology (SQUAST), Member of Parliament, Thupstan Chhewang, Executive Councillor of Agriculture, Tsultim Phuntsog were among the hordes of dignitaries, who participated in the discussion.

Dr. Mangalam also gave a green signal to the strong demand of setting up Agricultural Research Institute in Leh with a status of a deemed university. However, he said, such demand can be met only after meeting the operational feasibility including the sizeable land with enough water availability. This demand to set up a research institute was raised by Thupstan Chhewang, MP, Ladakh, in view of different geo-climatic condition of Ladakh. Describing the SKUAST unit in Leh as completely ineffective for severe fund-crunch Chhewang said, we've been stressing for a deemed university as per North-East pattern. We even took up this matter with the ICAR, he added.

P Namgyal, MLC, pointed out that the Union Government had agreed to set up such institute in Leh long back in 60s, however, the State Government led by Sheikh Abdullah did not accept it. The other issues raised during the discussion included the procurement of the food supplies from the local farmers at a rate suited to them; curtailment of central funds to Ladakh for development of horticulture at the state level etc among other problems farmers are undergoing. Similar concerns were raised by the Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC, Rigzin Spalbar addressing the dignitaries and hundreds of farmers present earlier at the function. While describing the crisis farmers in Ladakh are undergoing, Spalbar alerted in a remote and strategically important area like Ladakh bordering two hostile nations unless people are strengthened economically the hi-tech arms cannot completely ensure the national security.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Mangalam quoted Nehru: 'everything can wait, but not agriculture' while emphasising the need for protected cultivation, varietal improvement, poultry production and transgenics. Earlier, Colonel B Raut, Director FRL, apprised the audience of the achievements of FRL. Later in the discussion he told about the importance of improving milk production and also asked for a joint research between FRL, ICAR and SQUAST to which Dr. Mangalam promised a team of experts visiting Ladakh soon.

## **LEH DEGREE COLLEGE NAMED AFTER ELIEZER JOLDAN**

LEH, Aug 7: In recognition to the outstanding contribution for promotion of education in Ladakh region, the Degree College Leh has been renamed to memorize Late Eliezer Joldan who had been the first Ladakhi renowned teacher and educationist. The declaration to this effect has been made by the Minister for Science and Technology, Labour and Employment, Rigzin Jora at the renaming ceremony at an Annual Day function of the college held here yesterday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the people of Ladakh in general and the younger generation in particulate will always remember the rich contribution rendered by Late Eliezar Joldan for promotion of education in the region. He appealed to the teaching staff and students of the college to cherish the dream of late Joldan. On the occasion, the Minister announced that science stream would be introduced in the college during the next academic session for which necessary teaching staff has already been sanctioned by the cabinet.

The Minister awarded prizes among the students who participated in various activities during last academic session. The Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC, Rigzen Spallbar who also spoke on the occasion highlighted the contribution of late Joldan. Professor Tatzin Joldan, daughter of Late Eliezer Joldan who had been the first Principal of the college also addressed on the occasion and expressed gratitude for naming the college after his father in recognition of his contribution towards education.

## **CUSTOM STATION PLANNED TO TACKLE SMUGGLING ON INDO-TIBET BORDER**

Talks held by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the government of India in the Indian capital New Delhi in July 2004 have failed to bring about a general normalisation on the Indo-Tibetan border. Meanwhile, despite some setbacks, unofficial border trade continues, leading the revenue department of the Indian finance ministry to plan the opening of a Land Custom Station (LCS) in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, a region with close cultural affinities to Tibet, and situated beyond the western border of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). The Commissioner of Customs has proposed to open the station in the Loma area of Nyoma block of Leh district and land for the project has already been identified.

The establishment of a custom station in Ladakh was first proposed in 1962 at Kuyul in accordance with the Customs Act of 1962, however, it never came into being due to the outbreak of the Sino-Indian border conflict in the same year. The opening of the new LCS in Ladakh would be the fourth along the Indo-Tibetan border, with one at Shipkila in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, and another at Gunji, Uttaranchal. A third one is due to open in the Nathu La area of Sikkim that was proposed following the Sino-Indian agreement to re-open this sector of the border during the visit of the then Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's to Beijing in June 2003. However, the actual terms of the agreement, and the opening of the border, remains to be implemented. The most recent talks between the Indian and the Chinese governments do not appear to have brought a breakthrough regarding the details of any future cross-border contacts.

Meanwhile, smuggling of goods across the border region continued when traditional trade routes were closed for free trading and check posts were set up. Dumtsele, a border point in the TAR next to the Skakjung pasture, a winter pasture for nomads, is the main point where the exchange of goods takes place. Large-scale traders coming from Lhasa or Chinese cities put up temporary stalls at Dumstele, and some influential local nomad families also engage freely in trading.

According to a Ladakh resident who was once involved in smuggling, the trade on the PRC side is free unlike on the Indian side. He was once caught by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, who confiscated goods worth IRS40,000 (UK£485.00; US\$865.00; EUR 714.00). He also suffered losses when Chinese pillows worth IRS150,000 (UK£1,818.00; US\$3,243.00 EUR 2,676.00) that were being transported in an open truck were spoilt due to rain on the way to lower regions of India. This led him to stop his risky business. However, smuggling still continues, although it has decreased

considerably. This is apparently due to the establishment of a Customs Preventive Station (CPS) office in Nyoma block in 2002 and the outbreak of SARS in 2003. The medical department in Leh, the capital of Ladakh, ran a campaign at that time warning people on the border of the spread of the disease in the PRC and implicitly suggesting that travel across the border placed them at risk.

In Leh city, at the Moti market, goods smuggled from China are openly sold, some goods such as Thermos flasks, blankets, shoes, crockery, electronic devices, velvet, carpets, cigarettes etc. but because of restrictions, there is a relative shortage of these products compared to what there was in the past. Other items brought in from across the border to Leh are pashmina wool, silk and shahtoosh, shawls made from the fleece of the endangered Tibetan antelope (chiru). The trade in this internationally prohibited product is said to be the most profitable of all smuggling activities. Sources said smuggling takes place more often in winter, and goods are carried both by motor vehicles and on horseback. Smugglers travel at night to avoid police and army patrols. Sources also confirmed that some 5,000 sheep and goats are smuggled annually from Tibet to meet the demand for meat in the Leh area.

Apart from the local commerce, smuggled items from the PRC also make their way to Srinagar, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir, or the states of Himachal Pradesh and even the Punjab.

Recently, a conflict occurred in the Skakjung area. Some Indo-Tibetan Border Police officers raided the nomads' camps and harassed the families there. Angry nomads retaliated by throwing stones at them and later held several protest rallies, resulting in the regional authorities visiting the area. A meeting was held at the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council's (LAHDC) premises in Leh. (The LAHDC is the organ of local self-administration.) During the discussions to resolve the matter, the nomads admitted that many of them are involved in smuggling goods across the border, but protested against the frequent harassment of innocent people by the border police. They demanded either a complete ban on smuggling or the opening of the route for regulated trading. They alleged that the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and intelligence agencies tolerate smuggling in order to gather information from the locals.

With the opening of the custom station, many of the smuggled items could be legally exchanged on the border for the benefit of the populations on both sides. Additional items in demand on the Indian side include: wool, goat and sheep skins, yak tails, goats and sheep, yak hair, horses, salt, borax, szaibelyite, China clay, buttons and silk. Pashmina is also considered to be a potential import item. The list of goods to make their way from India into the PRC is even longer: agricultural implements, blankets, clothes, textiles, cycles, copper products, coffee, tea, barley, rice, flour, dry fruits, dry and fresh vegetables, vegetable oil, gur and misri, (sugar products,) tobacco, snuff, cigarettes, canned food, agricultural chemicals, local herbs, dyes, spices, watches, shoes, kerosene, stationery, utensils and wheat.

However, the way towards an opening of the border appears long and stony. Whereas many in India increasingly demand it, particularly tourism agencies operating in Ladakh, with the prospect of easy and profitable access to Mount Kailash, one of the Hindu's favourite pilgrimage, the PRC tourism industry, which has not yet established a viable infrastructure in West Tibet, fears to lose potential customers to Indian competitors. Both the Indian and the Chinese military have also both expressed strong reservations about making what they regard as strategic routes accessible to civilians, traders or tourists. In India, tourist operators serving the border crossing points of Shipkila and Gunji are afraid of losing their monopoly over the passes to Kailash to the longer but much easier route via Ladakh. Finally, according to a highly placed source in India, reservations within the central administration exist, that the opening of the border would benefit more Tibetans living in India rather than locals, since Tibetans involved in the trans-border trade are perceived as having the advantage of knowing the locality and people across the border.

**CENTRE ANNOUNCES Rs 46 CR PACKAGE FOR J&K**

LEH, Sept 25: The Central Government has released Rs 46-crore economic package for opening up of Community Information Centres (CIC) in J&K State, to be set up in a stipulated time frame of two years. This was revealed by State Minister for Science and Information Technology, Labour and Employment, Nawang Rigzin Jora during inaugural function of one such CIC at Deskit in Nubra valley, which is first of its kind in Leh.

He said 60 such centres, including three at Leh district would be established by this year end. Jora talked about importance of computers in today's Global Village, where term such as 'e-governance' technology is proving effective in much better execution, accountability and transparency in carrying out developmental works.

Rigzin Jora told about a Rs 5-crore worth bridge to be built over the river Shayok between Deskit and Burma villages with the financial assistance from Asian development Bank. He also mentioned about the efforts made by the sitting MP Thupstang Chhewang from Ladakh and his Ministry in realising such assistance towards great cause to benefit a large number of people.

At both the occasions MLC P Namgyal and executive councillor Agriculture, Tshing Phuntso also spoke in detail about the benefits to be reaped by the people through such developmental efforts. SSP Leh T Phuntsog, SDM Nubra, district officers, Numberdars, Sarpanches, Panches, VDC members among others were present on the occasion.

## **SURVEY: MORE THAN 400 CHILDREN DISABLED IN KARGIL DISTRICT**

Srinagar, Oct 7 : As many as 414 children, including 181 girls, are disabled in Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir, according to a survey report released here today.

Among the 414 disabled children - 61 are visually impaired, 120 orthopaedically impaired, 141 hearing impaired and 92 mentally impaired, the survey conducted last week jointly by the Composite Regional Centre, Srinagar, and District Coordinator, Kargil said. The disabled children comprise 233 boys, 181 girls in the age group of 6-14.

The highest number of disabled children were found in Sankoo with 151 cases, 97 in Kargil, 73 in Drass, 45 in Tai-Suri, 27 in Shargole, 11 in Shakar Chiktan and five in Zanskar, it said. The survey was conducted under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme to bring the disabled children under the ambit of education.

Free aids and appliances were being provided to them under SSA, State Coordinator of SSA Khurshid Ahmad said. (PTI, 7/10/04)

## **MILITARY TALKS ON KASHMIR GLACIER**

By Sanjoy Majumder

The Indian and Pakistani military are to hold talks on pulling back troops from the Siachen glacier, the world's highest battleground, India says. Military counterparts from both sides will meet but the details have yet to be decided, an Indian defence ministry spokesman told the BBC. The decision follows a meeting between the leaders of India and Pakistan at the UN last Friday.

The 6,100 metre (20,000 feet) high glacier is located in Kashmir. Since 1984 it has become a bone of contention between the two countries - both of which claim it - and is at present occupied by India. The glacier is located north of the Line of Control which divides Indian and Pakistani Kashmir and is therefore not clearly delineated as being under the possession of either country. Both countries have stationed a considerable number of troops on the glacier and spend large budgets to maintain them. The Indian spokesman quoted Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee as saying that the decision to hold talks on a possible demilitarisation of Siachen came up in a recent meeting of Indian and Pakistani defence secretaries.

Relations between the two nuclear neighbours have been steadily improving since January, when both governments decided to embark on a peace process. The process received fresh impetus

last week when the new Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, met Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in New York. It was the first direct contact between the two men and they said later that it had gone very well, with Mr Singh describing it as "historic". Both sides have held a number of round of talks in recent months on a range of issues including the contentious one of Kashmir, the disputed territory that has divided the neighbours for more than half a century. Both countries have fought two wars over Kashmir but have been observing a ceasefire since November of last year.

## **LAHDC DRIVE TO ROOT OUT CORRUPTION**

Leh, Oct 13: Resolving to stop corruption, the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) along with political, social and religious leaders have launched a campaign against corrupt practices in Ladakh. This was decided after an intense deliberation over corruption, which has become a serious issue in the Ladakhi society today. The meeting was held at the Leh Conference Hall today.

The Chairman, LAHDC, Rigzin Spalbar reading out the resolution said, "corruption in any form will not be tolerated and punitive action will be taken against those involved in such practice." He said, Hill Council will even consider funding and rewarding those NGOs active in this movement against corruption.

During the deliberation, members pointed out that the corrupt practices prevailing in the Food and Supplies department, the Public Works Department, the Rural Development department and the District Treasury are among the worst cases.

While clearing some doubts raised against the imprisonment of Ansar Ali, during the recent action against storekeepers with the Food and Supply department involved in rupees 75-lac remittance embezzlement, the Chief Executive Officer, LAHDC, Satish Nehru, said, Ansar failed to remit his predecessor's balance he took responsibility of while taking over the post. Rupees 30 lac have been recovered from the storekeepers so far and the rest of the money will be recovered soon, he said adding that no one will be spared if found involved in corruption in other departments too including PWD.

Reiterating his stand to be stringent against government employees violating service conducts and rules, Nehru even mentioned about the pressures from a state ministry in performing such duties. He, however, praised Nawang Rigzin Jora, the J&K Minister for Science and Information Technology for strongly defending against such pressures. Nehru said this reacting to a fear raised by a participant against possible pressures to fail administrative efforts.

M Siddiq, Councillor, pointed out that circumstances force a contractor to bribe the engineers to ensure his tender application passed, so unless the authority does not regulate it such practice will continue to happen. On this Spalbar said, contractors union can approach the LAHDC in such cases.

Dr. Tundup, Scientist SKUAST, said, departmental heads allowing the subordinates to practice corruption should be held equally responsible. Geylong Lobzang Nyantak, a social worker raised the issue of political parties getting funds from corrupt groups during election. Buddhist and Muslim Youth representatives described the complaints against corruption they receive through the Complaint Boxes put up at various places in Leh. Bakair said, a complaint read that only 30 and 50 percents of the total educational materials and medical supplies get to the ground. He also mentioned about a complaint that talked about a school principal drawing rupees 60,000 commission from the school canteen.

Sonam Angchuk, a social worker, said, the movement against corruption should be made a mass movement instead of only leaders and bureaucrats take the responsibility and thereby taking the credit of it. He said, the fight against corruption should be thought in terms of short term and long-term strategies.

Principal, Moravian Mission School, suggested having hotline system for public to report corruption, fixation of standard and price of market goods, fixation of timing for the public visit in

government departments, monitoring of properties owned by individuals or groups and moral education and social accountability towards promoting an honest Ladakhi image.

## **LADAKH WOMEN, UPWARDLY MOBILE**

By Tashi Morup

LEH, Oct 23 : Even as a stage is being set for increased role of women in socio-political setting in Ladakh, the future, seemingly, holds good prospect for them as evident from the serious remarks made during a three-day workshop for women Panchayat leadership of Leh held at Changs-pa Community Hall recently. The workshop was jointly organised by the Ladakh Development Organisation (LDO), Rural Development Department, District Panchayat Officer and the Hunger Project based in New Delhi. The workshop attended by some 118 women from different parts of Ladakh including Zanskar was meant to enhance understanding of their roles as village Panchayat leaders, discuss issues concerning women development and strengthen their leadership skills.

Apart from training activities, various speakers were invited to talk on issues concerning women in Ladakh. Interestingly, the Chief Executive Councillor, LAHDC, Rigzin Spalbar during the workshop pointed out that girls stands much higher in school rolls than boys. Boys, in large number drop out of school to join Ladakh Scouts leaving only the girls pursuing the academic degrees. 'So, in future educated women will be the leaders, not the retired soldiers,' Spalbar remarked.

The present state of affairs in Ladakh, however, does not favour women. The seat of power is completely occupied by men with women showing least interest in politics or just subservient. It is evident from the fact that the Hill Council has no elected women councillor and out of 419 elected panches the number of women panches is 39, which is mere eight percent of the total strength. Later, though the State Government nominated 111 more women panches to meet the 33 percent reservation for them in Panchayat system. The Leh district, however, has no woman Sarpanch.

On the other hand, it is often debated that the status of women in Ladakh is much better than most of the rest of India. Mohini Prakash, Programme Officer, The Hunger Project, said, "like in UP, Bihar and many other parts poverty, starvation is not the case here, but this does not mean Ladakhi women are any better for they do not have ample opportunity in terms of political representation, which is an untapped potential." She, however, added that the Ladakhi women are relatively more articulate and freely state their cases indicating a good status they enjoy in the present culture, which needs to be retained.

G M Sheikh, President, LDO, in his view confined the present state of women in Ladakh active only within the family. "They are rather submissive outside the house keeping them away from the responsibilities of political and social citizenship," he said adding that within families in Ladakh women have a good position.

But the story does not end at maintaining the status quo or accommodating women in political arena. The problem could be deeper in a small un-educated Ladakhi society, where social stigmas are still dreaded more inherently among the women folk. In her speech during the workshop, Dr. Tsering Ladol, renowned Gynaecologist was exactly addressing to this problem when she told about how a girl's life end up in a complete mess after giving birth to an illegitimate child. Such grave matters call out for more attention and care while dealing with the issues concerning women in Ladakh. Going just by the verbatim "good status and political representation" for Ladakhi women would be a fallacy that could actually lead to missing out on addressing some of the real issues.

## **COMPOSITE DEVELOPMENT PLANNED FOR KARGIL, DRAS, BATALIK**

Srinagar, Oct. 31. (UNI): The Army has planned to undertake various development programmes in the year 2005-06 under Operation Sadbhavana to further facilitate the ongoing process of



upliftment of the 'have nots' in the Kargil region. The Army has been successful in reaching the poorest of people while executing various Sadbhavana projects in the past. However, a need for sustained efforts was felt specially in the field of education and infrastructure development.

An intensive effort is on for the dream of a Green 'Ladakh'. It has been planned to construct 23 FRP Green Houses and about 700 Ladakhi Green Houses in Kargil region, to achieve this dream, which will be in addition to 3000 Ladakhi Green Houses which are being constructed this year. Infrastructure in the existing Army Goodwill Schools will be further improved to ensure quality education to the local students, which will be at par with any good school in the hinterland. The Army, under Op Sadbhavana, has planned to acquire quality teachers, better library and laboratory facilities as also hostel facilities (for teachers as well as students) in AGS Dras and AGS Harkabahadur.

In addition, the Army has also planned excursions for the students of Army Goodwill Schools and Women Empowerment Centres to various historical and culturally rich centres in the country. These excursions will strengthen the bond between the Army and the local populace and also serve the overall cause of national integration.

Empowerment of the women folk of the region, with greater emphasis on self employment, quality vocational training (carpet-weaving, food-processing, Agarbatti-making etc.,) and social education will be given higher priority in the year 2005 under Op Sadbhavana.

To meet the electric power requirement, the Army under Op Sadbhavana intends to undertake the installation of water Mills and Micro power projects in the select villages of Kargil region to improve the quality of life. It is also planning to provide Cable Television connection to select villages of the region.

Due importance will be laid on improvement in the quality of life of the youth by providing gymnasim facilities and sports equipment. To obviate the lack of medical facilities, the Army is presently providing medical facility to limited villages under Op Sadbhavana.

The reach of the medical facility is intended to be increased to cover larger number of remote villages. In addition, physically challenged children and orphans of the area will also be paid due attention and their educational as well as medical requirements met with.

The existing computer centres will be improved by equipping them with additional computers and power generators to enable greater usage thereby enhancing the reach of information Technology to a varied cross-section of the population. (*The Hindu*, 1/11/04)

## **GRATEFUL LADAKH PAYS HOMAGE TO KUSHOK BAKULA**

From Pushp Saraf

LEH, Nov 4. A grateful Ladakh today paid a moving homage to its best-known political and religious leader Kushok Bakula on the occasion of his first death anniversary at the Spithuk monastery here today.

Tearful scenes were witnessed at a multi-country large gathering as first Mr Sonam Wangchuk, private secretary and constant companion of the departed leader for quarter of a century, broke down while starting the proceedings and then Mr Thupstan Chhawang, Ladakh MP and nephew of the late Kushok Bakula, burst into tears when his turn came to pay homage.

While Mr Wangchuk, the key organiser of today's function, controlled himself, Mr Chhawang was inconsolable. The latter spoke with tears rolling down his cheeks as he recalled how his uncle had brought him up. He said that all that he was today was because of Kushok Bakula. As he wept many in the crowd began sobbing. Some took out handkerchiefs to hold back their tears. Mr Chhawang was the first chairman of the powerful Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC).

Hardly anybody moved during the nearly four-hour long function. While the high and mighty of the district were present a large number of ordinary citizens turned up from the adjoining villages at

the venue at the outskirts of this city. A grand three-and-a-half metre Stupa containing the holy relics of Kushok Bakula and made of silver in Karnataka was formally installed at the monastery. There were large queues of people having a darshan of the Stupa.

There were representatives from six countries. A highlight was the presence of a high-level delegation from Mongolia led by Mr Badamjunai, a member of his country's Parliament. The Mongolian delegation included Ms O.Tsolmon, wife of the Mongolian Speaker and former Prime Minister N. Enkhbayar, Mr Sansar, member of the city council of Mongolian Capital Ulaan Baatar, Mrs Munkhjargal and a highly-revered monk Puruvbat. The late Kushok Bakula, who was India's ambassador in Mongolia for a decade, is credited with hastening the demise of the Communism and the revival of the Buddhism in Mongolia. The Mongolian speakers recalled their association with the Ladakh leader and described him as their spiritual master.

The other foreign representatives were: a two-member Japanese team comprising Mr Sada and Mr Miura of the MAO International (an organisation devoted to environment); Mr Ueli Minder (Switzerland), Ms Sue Byrne (Great Britain) and Mrs Kim Sung Jung (Korea) and Mr P. Wangyal, Director of the Tibet Foundation in the United Kingdom. A representative of the Dalai Lama was also present on the occasion.

One speaker after the other recalled Kushok Bakula's multi-faceted personality. Not only he was the architect of modern Ladakh and given it a distinct identity he had also contributed immensely in his varied roles as a minister in the State Government, Member of Parliament and member of the Minorities Commission. He had sent India's flag flying high in Mongolia during his highly commendable stint that had pleasantly surprised professional diplomats as well. There was hardly any speaker who failed to mention these milestones all of which added to the status of the Ladakh region in particular. Of course, his contribution in promoting Buddhism while propagating inter-faith harmony found laudatory mentions.

Speakers stated that the late Kushok Bakula was cast more in the mould of Mahatma Gandhi and that he was like a lotus in the murky world of politics. There was unanimous demand that the late leader's last wish that a convention centre be opened in this city should be immediately met by the concerned authorities. Speakers asserted that the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS) and the Leh Airport should be named after him.

On his part, Mr Rigzin Jora, State Minister for Information Technology and Employment, said that he was already seized of certain suggestions given in this behalf by the Bakula Foundation. He said he would strive to ensure that a road be named after him in Jammu. He would also persuade the Jammu University to institute awards or fellowships in the name of Kushok Bakula and that the CIBS might soon get the status of a deemed university.

Apart from Mr Jora, Mr Chhawang, Mr Rigzin Spalbar, chairman of the LAHDC, and foreign representatives those who spoke on the occasion were: Rizong Rinpoche, Togdan Rinpoche, Lama Thupstan Paldan, Mr Tondup Sonam, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, Mr Mohammad Shafi Lassu, president, Ladakh Muslim Association, Lama L. Wangchuk, head of the Ladakh Gonpa Association, Mr Daljit Sen Adel and this reporter. The local leaders lauded the efforts of Lama Thupstan Targias, a long-time assistant to the late leader, in the making of the Stupa and organisation of other religious services.

## **JOLT TO NC: LADAKH COUNCIL MEMBERS REVOLT AGAINST CHIEF**

Srinagar, Nov 19 : In a jolt to opposition National Conference, 16 of the 33 members of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council for Kargil, belonging to the party, revolted against the Chief Executive Councillor Qammer Ali Akhoon moving a no-confidence motion against him.

The 16 councillors led by Asgar Karbali met the Deputy Commissioner K Mahender who is also the Executive Officer of the Kargil body and apprised him about the decision.

Mahender has convened a meeting of all councillors on November 22 to know the status of the no-confidence motion. PTI

## **AKHOON'S REMOVAL TRIGGERS PROTEST IN KARGIL**

SRINAGAR, Nov 23: The removal of Kargil Hill Development Council chairman Qamar Ali Akhooon from office today triggered a protest demonstration in Kargil which was led by National Conference.

NC yesterday received a major jolt in Kargil after its senior leader and council chairman Qamar Ali Akhooon was defeated in a no-confidence motion passed by a "majority vote against him".

The party has raised strong objections against the decision and have termed the move as "as un-constitutional and illegal". The party leaders met Governor S K Sinha to register their protest against government. NC leaders also staged protests against the decision outside deputy commissioner's office in Kargil and they rented the air with strong anti-government slogans.

K Mahender Singh, deputy commissioner Kargil, when contacted, said 16 of the total 30 members in the council voted against Akhooon. "The motion against him succeeded after 16 members voted against him. The NC members started crying hoarse and began shouting immediately after they lost", he told KTNS.

The council, it is pertinent to mention, has 26 elected members. Besides, the constitution provides for nomination of four members. "The government may nominate not more than four persons amongst the principal religious minorities and women in the district to be member of the council", reads sub-section 2 of section 4 of Chapter II of constitution of Autonomous Hill Development Council.

Persuant to it, the government nominated four members comprising two each from Budhists and women. This was challenged by Anjuman-i-Ahli Sunat in the High Court here. "Four members were to be nominated from two principal minorities including Budhists and Sunni Muslims. But in violation of the rules, the government nominated two members each from Budhists and Shia Muslims. The decision was challenged in the High Court", said Abdul Rahim Rather, leader of opposition in the state assembly here.

Besides, Rather said these members have no voting rights. "They cannot participate in the election of chairman and have no right to remove him. This is unconstitutional", he said. Anjuman-i-Ahli Sunat, a representative body of Sunni Muslims, it is pertinent to mention, moved to the court which directed "the impugned nomination ie SRO 371 shall not be acted upon subject to objections of the other side. Be listed in third week hereafter. Nothing prevents the respondents to lay a motion for early listing of the matter". The order was passed on November 19.

Deputy commissioner, Kargil, however, said he has not received any notice from the court. "By the time the voting was held or till date I have not received any such order", he said. He also said that members have to be nominated from principal religious minorities. "Neither Shias nor Sunnis fall in this category as belonging to majority community", he added.

NC delegation led by Abdul Rahim Rather, meanwhile, met the governor late yesterday night at Jammu and apprised him about the developments. "We told him that governor has thrown all norms to winds and that no regard was paid to High Court order. The governor was requested to intervene", he said.

The party also held an emergency meeting and have expressed serious concern over the "un-democratic move". The meeting has warned that situation will go out of control and the "responsibility lies on the government".

## **ASGAR ALI UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED CEC OF LAHDC KARGIL**

KARGIL, Dec 21: Asgar Ali Karbalaie was today unanimously elected as Chairman-cum-Chief Executive Councillor of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil. Out of 30 Councillors of the LAHDC Kargil 16 Councillors attended the scheduled meeting which was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Kargil Mohinder Singh. The name of Asgar Ali Karbalaie, who is the Councillor from Poyen Constituency, was proposed by Councillor Nasir Hussain Munshi and seconded by Councillor Aga Sayeed Mukhtar. Since no proposal was made, Mr Asgar Ali was declared elected chairman/CEC unopposed.

Later, addressing a gathering the CEC of LAHDC expressed his resolve to transform Kargil into a new era of development. He said that Kargil Hill Council which came into existence in 2003 for broader development of the district is needed to be put in letter and spirit and assured that he would try his level best to put it on right direction.

He urged the Government employees to maintain a work culture in respective offices so that the grievances of the public are meted out spontaneously and the execution of developed is accelerated. "I will try my level best to meet the maximum demands of the people", he said and urged the Councillors to work hard for the welfare of the people and project the genuine demands for early redressal.

Haji Ishaq of Drass, Aga Sayeed Mukhtar of Shakar Chiktan, Sonam Namgial of Zanskar, Marzia Banoo of women community and Regional Congress Committee president Mohd Hassan Commander. Mr Sonam Namgial, Member of Principal Minority said that the present Council headed by Asgar Ali represents all sections of the society.

## **KARBALAIE CONSTITUTES EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

JAMMU, Dec 23: Asgar Ali Karbalaie, Chief Executive Councillor of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil, today constituted his Executive Council by assigning the power of Executive Councillor to 4 Councillors.

The name of Executive Councillors are Nasir Hussain Munshi, Haji Mohd Ishaq, Sonam Namgial and Kachoo Gulzar Hussain Khan.

Nasir Hussain Munshi, Councillor of Gund Mangalpole constituency of Sura Valley, was allotted PWD, Power and Electricity, General Survey and Mining departments. Haji Mohd Ishaq was assigned departments of Rural Development, NES, DRDA, Information, IT, Weights and Measures, Archives and Monuments while Sonam Namgial was allotted Tourism, Industries, Handicrafts, Handloom, Small Scale Industries, Khadi and Village Industry and Fisheries. Agriculture, Horticulture, Sheep/Animal Husbandry and cooperatives were allotted to Kachoo Gulzar Hussain Khan.

The Chief Executive Councillor has kept other departments with him. These departments include, General Administration, Plan and non-Plan Budget, Education, Health, BADP and Tribal Sub Plan, Desert Development Agency/Watershed Development Plan etc.

In a brief meeting with the Executive Councillors, Mr Karbalaie said that his Council would try its best to bring transparency and accountability in administration so that development works are accelerated and maximum benefit trickles to the population.

## **'LADAKH VISION-2020' DOCUMENT UNVEILED**

LEH, Jan 30 : After six months of brainstorming on developing a 'Vision Document' for future Ladakh, the committee set up in this regard has finally come up with the ideas for a 'prosperous, healthy and harmonious Ladakh by 2020.'

Half of this documented future strategy was placed before the public representatives today, at the Leh Auditorium Hall. In today's session vision-drafts on Agriculture, Health, Horticulture, Animal and Sheep, Forest and Bio-diversity, Culture and Tourism were deliberated upon.

The discussion on other themes would be held in the next meeting of this two-day seminar on 'Vision Document' being presided over by the Chairman, LAHDC, Rigzin Spalbar. In his address, Spalbar said, in view of modern changes a need was felt to develop a Vision Document as a roadmap for future Ladakh and a committee led by veteran engineer Sonam Dawa, the Director, Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDG) was set up six months back.

The committee comprises experts from within Ladakh, who have the first hand knowledge about this region. Spalbar said this in reaction to the Committee Chairman, Sonam Dawa's opening remark on Vision Document, in which he told about his initial suggestion to have experts from outside to prepare the vision-draft. He also pointed out some of the shortcomings including necessary data.

On the other hand, the convenor of the meeting, Jigmet Takpa cited Uttaranchal among a few parts in India to have successfully prepared a vision document and within months it proved very successful. A two-minute silence was observed to commemorate the Gandhi's death anniversary today, before the session began.

The first draft on agriculture, presented by an agriculture scientist Aziz Mir, touched the issues of decreasing land resource in the wake of modern developments such as buildings, roads and fields left uncultivated due to government subsidised food rations etc. 100 percent oil and 50 percent pulses need to be met by 2020 was among the list of visions in agriculture sector.

Interestingly, the idea of population control, he told, and later the family planning programme described by Dr. Tsering Lhadol, while presenting on Health, received a strong reactions from the audience. They raised objection against birth control for 'Ladakh already lacked in manpower leading to hiring outside labours for even petty household works.'

While justifying the reason to ban population control, Dr. Namgyal, a vet, cited the excerpt forecasting 'Dragon and Peacock as coming up Superpowers' referring to the two most populated nations India and China. To this, Dr. Lhadol gave the examples like Japan, United States with less population as the most developed and powerful nations of today.

Dr. T Phuntsog in his presentation on livestock development, gave an interesting data about the pasture consumption by the total livestock including sheep, goats, yaks, horses, donkeys etc. He said, presently there are nearly five lac domestic animals and as per one kilo fodder per sheep unit in a day the total fodder consumption in a year is 25 lac quintal, which is worth 198 crore rupees.

Similarly, Jagjit Singh, District Forest Officer, told about only 0.02 percent forest cover spread in some 36 square kilometres. He also mentioned about the fear of extinction of Juniper trees in Ladakh and he called for declaring tree as protected tree of Ladakh.

## **LADAKH COUNCIL TO CHARGE ENTRY FEE FROM TOURISTS**

Hill council to provide literature, pamphlets and detailed maps of the region against the fee

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 8: To generate economy to conserve eco-fragile environment of the cold desert, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) has adopted a new mantra: charge entry fee from foreign tourists. But to prevent the tourists from getting the pinch of paying "tax", the LAHDC will avoid using the words 'entry fee'. Instead they will provide some basic literature, pamphlets and detailed maps of the region against the fee.

Sources said the LAHDC during the recently held meeting under Chief Executive Councillor, has decided to charge an entry fee of \$10 (approx. Rs 450) from the next summer.

The Council has planned to spend the amount raised in the conservation of Leh's highly fragile economy, cleanliness of lakes, improve tourist resorts, trekking routes among other things. "The decision of charging entry fee will go a long way in helping in the upkeep of the ecology and maintenance of the areas of tourist interests in the region," said T. Namgayal, Leh tourist officer.

A committee will be formed for the purpose next month by Leh deputy commissioner.

In the past few years, Leh has emerged as a famous tourist destination among the middle-class tourists – especially foreigners from France, Germany, Canada, Britain, Japan and some Central Asian countries. The number has increased after violence started in early 90s in Kashmir. As per the statistics available with the State Tourism Department, Leh has seen a five-fold increase in foreign tourists since 2002 and the number is expected to grow this year. Also, to target the domestic tourists and foreigners, the Tourism Department has begun organising Ladakh festival at the traditional Silk Route. In fact, the LAHDC had proposed the entry fee from last summer itself, but the state government had reservations.

Besides entry fee, another suggestion doing the rounds is fee for visiting monasteries. There are 34 monasteries, besides 15 listed rock and boulder carvings and 40 stone figures and sculptures in Leh. "We are already charging nominal entry fee of Rs 20 for tourists visiting the monasteries. The idea can be reconsidered only if we see any resentment among tourists," Namgayal added.

## **NEWS FROM MEMBERS**

- In May 2004, Kim Gutschow and Ashok Rai became the proud parents of twin sons: Tashi and Krishan.

## ARTICLE

### **The Ambassador-Teacher: Reflections on Kushok Bakula Rinpoche's importance in the revival of Buddhism in Mongolia**

Sue Byrne<sup>1</sup>

"It is said to have been predicted in a scripture, that Bakula Arhat came to Mongolia at a time of extreme degeneration of the teachings and began their revival by re-establishing the practice of pure morality for monks." Ven Gyatso

"In the past Mongolians created a specific religious puja focusing on Bakula Arhat out of the Sixteen Arhats and drew his image, in a thankha, right in the center with the others around. So it says they were pre-told of his visit and waiting for the time with a great expectation." Ven Purevbat Lam

In the late 1930s Bakula Rinpoche, then a young monk at Drepung Loseling monastery in Lhasa, heard from Mongolian monks studying with him about the Soviet-inspired brutal destruction and suppression of Buddhism in their country. He was very moved by the stories he heard and was struck with a strong desire to go to Mongolia to do whatever he could to help. Little did he know then that his arrival had been foretold or of what an important role he would play in the revival of Buddhism in that country more than six decades later.

He left Tibet in 1940 and returned to his homeland, Ladakh, where, he became the Head Lama of Spitok Monastery and, later, Head Lama of Ladakh. This latter honour was in recognition of his skillful negotiations to change the State legislation relating to monastic landholdings. It was during these that he met Pandit Nehru who suggested he entered politics. He became a Minister in Jammu and Kashmir in 1953 and eventually a Congress MP in 1966.

Very few monks can do what they want to do in their lives but Bakula Rinpoche was one who did. He was a rare example of someone with the ability to 'live in the moment'. He was always active and busy: meeting people; planning the next move; taking on a new challenge or responsibility. To the end he reacted to the conditions he faced and wanted to contribute in any way he could. In reading about the way things happened in his life it is as though he planned everything. But this was not so. He always had clear motivations and rose to challenges as they presented themselves to him. He did not concern himself with the future - just with the 'here and now'.

#### **Initial contacts**

As an Indian citizen holding a diplomatic passport, once he became an MP, he was able to travel around the world freely, unlike the Tibetans. He was driven to travel to countries where Buddhism had been destroyed and where practicing Buddhism in public was dangerous, yet never made a

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<sup>1</sup> With contributions from: Sonam Wangchuk, Secretary to Kushok Bakula Rinpoche; Khamba Lama D Chojjams, Head of Mongolian Buddhism and Abbot of Gandantekchenling Monastery; and Ven Gyatso, formerly of the FPMT Mahayana Buddhist Centre in Ulaanbaatar.

secret of his role as a monk. He could have been arrested or expelled if he had been caught teaching openly, but he said that, as a monk, he could never refuse to teach if people asked him. Over the years he faced many big obstacles but did so always with courage and quiet determination. The routes he chose were to the East rather than to the West - to the Buddhist Russian autonomous areas in Siberia, to China and to Mongolia. There he saw the real need for restoring the Buddhadharma and for giving people hope at a time when all seemed bleak and unyielding. Despite all the contrary evidence he was always convinced that Buddhist traditions would once again prevail in these countries.

In 1968, shortly after he became an MP, he traveled to Buriat, an autonomous region in Eastern Russia, largely populated by Mongols and where Tibetan Buddhism had been established in the 18th century. The following year he visited Mongolia for the first time. This had been a deeply Buddhist country with the Buddhism being established there three times from the first coming, it is said, directly from India in the 6th Century AD.

After this initial visit he went to Mongolia almost every year. He was invited as a Buddhist leader but his diplomatic status and later his membership of the prestigious National Committee of Minorities ensured he was always well received by the Mongolian authorities. He gave teachings in GandantheGchenling Monastery - the only Monastery to remain open during the period 1944 to 1990 - and in his private rooms to small gatherings. As Khamba Lama Chojjams, then a young student monk and the present Abbot of Gandan, reflects,

Kushok Bakula Rinpoche benefited the revival of Buddhism in our land immensely even during the Communist times when it was very difficult to disseminate and teach Buddhism in Socialist Mongolia, when religious practice was strictly prohibited. Despite this, whenever he visited us, we secretly organized as many opportunities as possible for devotees and pious people to receive initiations, empowerments and teachings from our Precious Holy Teacher. These occasions built a solid and indestructible relationship between our guru and his Mongolian disciples.

In 1970, shortly after his first visit to Mongolia, and as a result of the changes negotiated with the Soviet Union and their satellites in the Helsinki Accord, the Mongolian authorities in an attempt to demonstrate their tolerance of Buddhism allowed Gandan Monastery to open a Buddhist Institute to train young men from Mongolia and the Russian autonomous regions of Tuva, Kalmyk and Buriat. The reality was that everything that happened in the Institute was strictly under state control and Gandan was reported to be "full of spies."

Khamba Lama Chojjams, then a young student at the Institute, remembers how despite this, the teachers in the Institute were some of the surviving lamas and they were well qualified in following the traditional religious rules and precepts in my monastery. They were highly qualified adepts and masters of basic and esoteric aspects of Buddhist theory and practice. All these masters, who were working in the extreme conditions of the times, taught their students to pay respect and reverence towards Kushok Bakula Rinpoche.

Also in 1970, the Communist Authorities gave permission for the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP) to be established with its headquarters in Ulaanbaatar. Its co-founders were Bakula Rinpoche, the newly appointed Khamba Lama of Mongolia, Ven. Gombojav and the Head Abbot of Russia, Ven Gomboev. It was established to encourage dialogue and exchanges between Buddhists throughout Asia at a time when contact was very difficult. It was through the work of the ABCP and Rinpoche's skillful guidance that the Mongolian authorities eventually agreed to allow His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit Mongolia in 1979, which became a real milestone in the revival of Buddhism. It was following this that monks from Mongolia began to go to India to study in Tibetan monasteries and institutions.



In the early 1970s, Bakula had been very involved in facilitating the first meetings in Delhi between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Buddhist leaders from Russia and Mongolia. It was his political leader, Indira Gandhi, who arranged for Bakula to meet the Mongolian president, Tsetenbal, on his State visit to India. Mrs Gandhi knew of Mongolia's Buddhist heritage and so arranged for Bakula to attend some government receptions during the visit. The President proudly told Rinpoche about the reforms taking place in Mongolia and how Buddhism was reviving. The most important aspect of the contact for Mongolians was that the meeting was reported in their press.

As the 1980s drew to a close, the changes brought about Glasnost and Perestroika were being felt throughout the Soviet sphere and there was simmering discontent and revolt in the air in Mongolia. In 1989 the post of Indian Ambassador to Mongolia became vacant. Up to this time this posting had not been considered a very onerous or busy one and the Foreign Ministry's choice of Bakula Rinpoche was based more on recognition of his dedicated political work in the previous decades than on any thoughts about his value as a spiritual leader. The appointment was for two years with a possibility of a one-year extension. In the event he stayed for ten years. Sonam Wangchuk remembers that at the end of the first three years he packed all his household belongings along with 16 Arhat statues he had collected in China, thinking he was going to return to India, but they remained packed for 7 more years!



## Reforms in Mongolia

Bakula arrived from New Delhi in late December 1989 just as Ceaucescu was being toppled in Romania. Little did he know then that similar momentous changes were about to happen in Mongolia. By February 1990 demonstrators calling for democratic change had started a hunger strike in Sukhbaatar Square, so named after the revolutionary young hero who had sought assistance from the Bolsheviks to rid his country of the White Russian Mad Baron Ungern-Sternberg. Again revolution was in the air.

Some of the young leaders asked to meet Rinpoche on what was to be the last day of the strike. He said he would meet them in his role as a lama and made it clear he would not discuss politics. The leaders came to the Indian Embassy and poured out their plans, desires and hopes. Bakula listened but said he could not comment. However, after some time he became very animated and spoke to them very forcefully. He urged them “whatever you do must be done peacefully.” And he warned them not to give the army or the police any excuse to react violently. He talked to them about Gandhi’s freedom struggle and reminded them of June 4th in Tiananmen Square, events that were all too fresh in the minds of these young people living so close to China. He gave them blessing threads and they went back to the square passing the threads to the protesters in the square. The next morning the government gave way and free elections were announced. Bakula’s support for the freedom strikers became well known and the threads were seen as symbols of the peaceful change.

However, it is likely that Bakula’s real role on the peaceful change was his influence on the then President, Batmonkh, whom he had met repeatedly. At each meeting he had talked to him about the importance of non-violence and of a peaceful end to the strike. He always referred to Mongolia’s Buddhist past and how it was a source of pride for all Mongolians. Indeed, when he first

presented his credentials to the President only weeks before he said, "I present my credentials to you but I believe that the first Indian Ambassador to Mongolia was the Lord Buddha himself." In the event the President resisted calls to break up the hunger strike violently and the changes were made peacefully.

Change was rapid in the days following the 'peaceful revolution' particularly in the opening up of monasteries and the reappearance of monks, now old men. Many had never told their family that they were monks and had hidden their books and lama robes in locked cupboards. Monasteries started to spring up all over the country. Where no buildings remained after the purges, a ger was erected and statues, thankas and other ritual objects were brought out of hiding. For the old monks the 'revival' started the day the remains of their shattered sangha started chanting together in the midst of their community. Soon young boys began to come to the monastery to be monks.

People all over the country were desperate for Buddhist knowledge and many sought out Bakula Rinpoche to ask him for teachings. Delegations came from the Aimag (Province) centres and permission had to be gained from the Foreign Ministry as it was forbidden for foreigners to go out of the capital at that time. In these early years, Rinpoche traveled throughout the country giving teachings and encouraging the Mongolians in their quest to revive their traditional religion.

### **Revitalizing Buddhism**

He began to attend daily prayers at the main Gandan temple. Rinpoche soon found himself facing the prospect of building his own monastery, something he had never planned to do when he came to Mongolia. As Gyatso, a western monk who lived in Mongolia from 2000 to 2003 reported,

Rinpoche told me that when he first lived in Mongolia he attended the twice-monthly ceremony at Gandan Monastery for monks to purify their vows. This tradition was established by Buddha himself. Rinpoche saw that married 'Lams' would attend this ceremony and then return to their wives. He requested them not to attend, as the ceremony can only be attended by monks who, at least, have not broken their four root vows.

In order to prepare a community of 'pure, disciplined' young monks for the Monastery, he started a school in 1992 and held the classes in a room in the Ulaanbaatar city library. Here he attempted to tame a motley collection of lively little boys. He also felt it important to establish a monastery, so he could demonstrate to Mongolians in real terms how a monastery is run. He had been struck on his travels by the many strange questions he was asked about Buddhism and monastic life, which showed him that the collective memory was largely ignorant of such things. He set out to create a body of trained monks, who were living and practicing the *vinaya* in a building where all the prayers, the rituals, the architecture and the internal decorations were in accordance with the texts. He was also sensitive to Mongolian ways and practices and re-instated the distinctive chanting from the pre-communist time.

Building the monastery took far longer than anticipated. Two periods of hyperinflation in the 1990s meant the cost rocketed and the army construction unit who laid the foundations proved to be earnest and sincere workers but lacked the refined building techniques to create a beautiful temple. The temple was finally finished in 1999, just one year before Rinpoche retired.

The unfinished temple did not prevent him from running the monastic school and expanding the community of monks living in the basement floor, which had been built by the army. Some of the brightest monks were sent to India. Four of the original 1992 intake are now in the final stages of their higher studies. For those that remained, Tibetan Geshe established and ran an academic programme, and religious rites were performed daily.

Sonam Wangchuk explained what he saw as Bakula's great achievements in the revival of Buddhism in Mongolia: he re-kindled the spirit of Buddhism among the people. As a Rinpoche and a very learned monk, he had the authority to reach out to the sangha and lay people and to be listened

to by them. He would go out of his way to visit people in their gers and find out what they were thinking. As Gyatso remarked, “his perfect example of compassion and wisdom was also a vital ingredient for the revival of Buddhism in Mongolia. His travels throughout the country revived faith in the hearts of the oppressed. He was a shining, perfect source of inspiration for the people, a light in the darkness.”

He led by example – he was a living demonstration to Mongolians of how a pure monk lives. He was a simple monk. He never wore a watch, never went shopping, never bought clothes for himself, and always gave his clothes away to his monks. He eschewed pomp and display and never went in for large entourages or allowed any government, or any other authority, to give him bodyguards despite this being common practice in India for someone of his position, or to have a policeman outside his house.

In Mongolia he dealt with the vexed issue of older married 'monks' in a straightforward and un-judgmental way. “A delegation of these married Lams came to Rinpoche and asked him to give special dispensation for Mongolian 'monks' to be able to marry. Rinpoche informed them that such a radical change in Buddha's Vinaya was out of the question and he dismissed them.” He also asked them to look to the people of Mongolia and to see how they wanted the monks to behave. At the same time he recognized the role of these married monks in the retention of the Buddhist roots in Mongolian during the communist era and the difficult conditions they had had to live their spiritual lives.

He also gave wise counsel to the monks and gave them gentle guidance in how to reach out to the Mongolian people. He brought a peaceful and stable atmosphere in a time of turmoil and was always calm never agitated or overly critical. Khamba Lama Chojjams comments:

In the early years of religious freedom we were not very skilful at teaching and disseminating our precious Buddhist knowledge to devotees and faithful people in an accessible way. Kushok Bakula helped us by traveling tirelessly throughout the country giving Buddhist teachings and explaining our culture and custom to Mongolian followers in a simple and direct way. He also conferred vows to monks and nuns and gave instruction to lay people. To all of them he taught that it was crucial not to transgress the rules of pratimoksha and boddhichita and, to the monastics, to break their tantric vows. He urged them all to be harmonious with each other in order to build a happy society.

While he was very clear and unequivocal about the vinaya practice, he was never rigid or overly conservative or traditional. He encouraged people to be open in their search for Buddhist knowledge and to receive teachings from Buddhist masters from both the Mahayana and Theravadin traditions. He brought teachers from many Buddhist traditions to Mongolia and encouraged monks to go to Thailand to practice there. He is said to be one of the few monks in the Tibetan tradition who understood and valued the Theravadin tradition. When he was in a country where Theravada is practiced he would wear their robes. He always emphasized the core Buddhist teachings and in the mid 1990s he published a book on 'basic Buddhism' in Mongolian, translated from English by N Enkhbayer, the former Prime Minister.

He opened up opportunities for Mongolian monks and nuns to go to India to study. To enable this to happen, he built bridges between the Mongolian and the Tibetan monasteries in India and, in his diplomatic role, facilitated the formalities to allow them to go there and stay for the required length of time. As Khamba Lama Chojjams remembers:

In the early revival of Buddhism in Democratic Mongolia, Bakula Rinpoche made great efforts to send young Mongolian monks to study Buddhist philosophy in India, thus opening the door for them to study in various Tibetan monasteries and colleges in India such as Gomang Drepung, Sera, Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, Institute of Varanasi and so on. This has been one of the greatest benefits to Mongolians of Bakula Rinpoche's contribution to the revival of Buddhism in

Mongolia. Some of the first monks who went to study in India are now about to complete their study of the five classic Buddhist texts and are expected to carry on to take their Geshe degree.

These monks are now returning to Mongolia and are beginning to have a significant impact in their monasteries either as teachers or as administrators. They are also fulfilling one of Rinpoche's main aims in sending them to India: to return as 'pure' monks to set an example to their peers.

Rinpoche recognized the exceptional talent of a young Buddhist artist monk, Ven Purevbat, and supported him to study in India at a time when State artists were copying pictures from photographs in books, 'creating' Buddhist art in the new Datsans and Monasteries. Purevbat studied in the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala returning in 1994 to set up the Mongolian Institute of Buddhist Art. Under his strong and inspired guidance, and working to precise interpretation of the texts, the Institute has produced many talented graduate artists who are now teaching a new intake of young artists. Today Mongolian Buddhist art is truly flourishing as Rinpoche wished it to do.

He rose to the significant challenge set by the four groups of Buddhist women who established nunneries or Buddhist women's centres in the early 1990s. Bakula was urged to give the brightest girls the Getsul vows and, having investigated their motivations thoroughly, he did this. He knew it would be difficult for the nuns in a culture where there had been no tradition of ordained nuns and nunneries. He tried his best to support them and offered them wise counsel.

### **Diplomatic achievements**

Bakula Rinpoche was also extremely effective and skillful as an Ambassador. During his decade in Mongolia he laid the foundation for Indo-Mongolia relations to develop and grow. Using his contacts from his political days in India he facilitated high-level meetings to and from Mongolia. Many Indian leaders came to Mongolia because Bakula Rinpoche was the Ambassador. A tribute to this is that the Mongolia posting is now considered a worthwhile and busy assignment for an Indian Ambassador.

The strengthening of the ties between Mongolia and India also had a strong Buddhist resonance. One of the first and major steps Bakula took in this direction was in persuading the Government of India, by appealing directly to the Prime Minister, to allow the authenticated Buddha relics held in the National Museum in New Delhi to travel to Mongolia. This was the first time they had ever been allowed to leave the country and they arrived in August 1993 on a plane from Beijing. They were exhibited in the Cultural Palace for one month and on the first day practically the whole government led by the President came to see them. Mongolians recognized the great honour in having the precious relics in their country so soon after they had become 'free', and they took their presence as a symbol of India's respect for their Buddhist past and faith in their Buddhist future.

As Khamba Lama Chojiamts says:

Mongolians believe Buddhism first came to our country from India 2000 years ago and so see Indian culture and custom as our part of traditional past. Mongolians have always explored and studied the works of great Indian scholars such as Nagarjuna, Asanga, and Dignaga and written extensive commentaries on them. Even today there is a close affinity between Mongolian and Indian culture. This closeness was the foundation of the recent co-operation and collaboration between the two countries. In staying in Mongolia for such a long time Kushok Bakula was able to bring about constructive and unprecedented co-operation between Mongolia and India in the fields of culture and custom and as well as civic and governmental issues.

Some of the practical contributions Rinpoche made during his period as Ambassador include:

- An Indian Cultural Centre was established, which has now been merged with the Rajiv Gandhi Vocational Training School

- A Friendship Farm in Darhan was set up where Indian seeds and agricultural expertise is passed on to Mongolians.
- Several Indian companies were encouraged to tender for road building contracts. Some were successful and are still operating in Mongolia on reconstruction projects.
- Bakula Rinpoche always succeeded in getting the Indian Government to send aid for disasters and emergencies. By the end of his time in the country, Mongolia had become the third highest recipient of Indian Aid.
- He negotiated with the Indian government to give a soft loan of \$2 Million to the Mongolian Government for reconstruction and development. This was a remarkable achievement, as it is known to be difficult to get money out of the Indian government.
- He expanded and raised the number of scholarships for lay Mongolians in India. In the early 1990s there were only a few but there are now over a hundred scholarships a year offered covering a wide range of subjects.

The Mongolian people recognized all the work Bakula Rinpoche did both in his role as a Buddhist monk and as an Ambassador. Little wonder he “is now reverently recognized among Mongolian people as the Ambassador Teacher.” The Mongolian State acknowledged his contribution in 2001, when the President of Mongolia awarded Rinpoche one of the highest honours of the country the 'Polar Star'. This was awarded to him in recognition of his contributions to bilateral relations between India and Mongolia and for his role in the revival of Buddhism.

After Bakula retired, he remained in close contact with Mongolia and returned every year, usually in the summertime. He loved Mongolia's vast open spaces and beautiful landscape and he also retained his role at the monastery he had built in the capital, Ulaanbaatar. Despite being frail and ill, he visited in September 2003. When he arrived, he heard about the Hambiin stupa in the western suburbs, which had recently been built near the burial site of 500 monks who had been shot through the head in the 1938 purges. Despite his failing health he insisted that he must go there. On a brilliantly sunny day, he came with his monks and together they prayed for the murdered monks and for the revival of the Buddhadharmā in their land.

Everyone who met and worked with Rinpoche has their own personal story about him and many felt close to him. Khamba Lama Chojamts says,

I had a very close personal relationship with Kushok Bakula Rinpoche. I studied at the Institute of Buddhist dialects from 1983 to 1986, where I learned Tibetan, so I was able to converse with him very well and receive teachings directly from him. We talked at length about the new democratic conditions in Mongolia, the situation facing the religious revival as well as our private matters.

Ven Gyatso remembers:

The importance of Bakula Rinpoche for the revival of Mahayana Buddhism in Mongolia cannot be overstated. He was a second Buddha. In terms of the FPMT centre, Bakula Rinpoche was like a benevolent and wise grandfather. Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, the joint founder of the organization, accepted Bakula Rinpoche as one of his own Lamas, and at every stage in the creation and functioning of our centre we were assisted by his wise counsel.

He always supported all of us who worked for Tibet Foundation in Mongolia while recognising the difficulties we faced. In his last meeting he urged me “Don't give up on Mongolia.”

The last word is left to Sonam Wangchuk who served Rinpoche steadfastly throughout (and after) his years in Mongolia:

The late Ven. Kushok Bakula Rinpoche was held in very esteem by the people of Mongolia. He was present in Mongolia when the country underwent drastic political and social changes



abandoning decades of communist rule and embracing democracy; participated actively in the rebuilding of the nation's religious and cultural identity and instilling feeling of peace and harmony among the people. Mongolia remembers him for his outstanding contribution and his role as a stabilizing force during the transitional period. Rinpoche's demise in November 2003 in New Delhi, therefore, deprived the countrymen of their teacher and a well-wisher.

## ARTICLE

### Watershed Development in Central Zangskar<sup>1</sup>

Seb Mankelow

The Watershed Development Programme (WDP) was introduced to selected Ladakhi communities in 1996. A preliminary survey of Kargil District found the Zangskar Sub-Division to be unfit for the Watershed Programme at this time. However, in due course Zangskar was reassessed, and in 2001 the first concrete steps were taken towards WDP implementation. This article reports on the initial stages of this implementation and highlights the way in which certain social, political and environmental factors are shaping, and in some instances inhibiting, the application of the Watershed ideology in Zangskar.

Aimed at addressing the problem of degraded lands and their resource poor inhabitants, India's Watershed Guidelines have been revised over the last 10 years to promote a more community-based, participatory template for development.<sup>2</sup> Funded by State Government (25%) and Central Government (75%) the Programme - which is implemented over a period of five years - advocates the use of sustainable technologies and the meaningful participation of beneficiaries to promote long-term economic development and socio-economic improvement. The participation of beneficiaries not only refers to project planning and decision making but also their ability to earn a

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<sup>1</sup> Based on fieldwork undertaken in June/July 2003 this article summarises a number of points made in my MA thesis (see Mankelow, 2003). Information gathered in Zangskar was at times given in confidence and this is reflected here in village and informant anonymity. When referring to the 'village-level' and to 'Zangskari(s)' this article largely refers to Zangskar's Buddhist community. As Padum does not have a Watershed project the village's Muslim community - which constitutes the majority of Zangskar's Muslim minority - are not involved in village-level Watershed activity. The Padum-based and predominantly Muslim administered NGO 'Zangskar Development Project Society' is however involved in Watershed Project implementation.

<sup>2</sup> This shift in development emphasis was initiated by a review in 1994 headed by Hanumantha Rao. Several revised editions of the Watershed Guidelines have been published since, the most recent being the 'Hariyali Guidelines', circulated in May 2003. Project implementation in Zangskar is currently based on the 2001 Guidelines (see Department of Land Resources, 2001).



wage during the project construction phase. Participation is not only considered to boost the local economy, it is also designed to encourage the concept of asset ownership and the associated obligation of maintenance (Rajasekaran, 1997: 60; Lobo & Kochendörfer-Lucius, 1994: 6; Lakshmikanthamma, 1997: 302).

Implemented through the District Rural Development Agency's (DRDA) Desert Development Programme, Watershed projects are managed at the village-level by a Watershed Association (WA) and a Watershed Committee (WC). Comprising of the community members directly or indirectly dependent on the respective Watershed Area, the WA oversees the 10-12 elected members of the WC, a committee of community representatives who manage the day to day running of their Watershed project, including project funds. Supervision and guidance of Associations and Committees is provided in Zangskar by three Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs): Zangskar Development Project Society (ZDPS), Social Educational Cultural Preservation & Development (SECPAD) and Lungnak Youth Association (LYA). Selected by the DRDA, these NGOs assume the role of Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs), each individually overseeing Watershed activity in 10 or so of Zangskar's villages. Each PIA employs a Watershed Development Team which consists of an appropriately qualified engineer, vet, agriculturalist and social scientist. The Team assists at the village-level by offering technical assistance and training which includes guidance on project and site selection and the preparation of plans and post completion maintenance activity.

Although the Guidelines do not dictate the specific nature of projects, the majority of Zangskar's current Watershed objectives involve irrigation development. Indeed, water security is perceived at both the village and PIA-level as being a crucial foundation for Zangskar's economic progress. At the village-level however, the availability and reliability of irrigation water is of more fundamental significance than simply being a springboard for development. Zangskar's considered water security as being central to their desire for self-sufficiency and independence: notions which are rooted in Zangskari perceptions of their own geographical and political isolation. The fragility of the seasonal and frequently disrupted road-link with Kargil, and Zangskar's political isolation and general neglect under Kargil District administration, was frequently referenced to justify the role of irrigation water in safeguarding Zangskar's food security.

In the context of Zangskar's existing (pre-Watershed) development activity, this focus on irrigation has resulted in a number of concrete/cement channels and reservoirs. However, despite the combined activities of the Public Works Department (PWD), the Rural Development Department (represented in Zangskar by the Block Development Officer, BDO) and the District Rural Development Agency, attempts at improving and modernising Zangskar's (fine-tuned yet ecologically vulnerable) irrigation networks have to date been largely ineffectual.<sup>3</sup> Attributed to the misappropriation of funds, poor workmanship and disagreement over the responsibility of channel and reservoir maintenance, the blame for failed or failing irrigation development circulates between Government Departments, local contractors and farmers at the village-level.

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<sup>3</sup> Several of these irrigation development shortcomings are discussed by Gutschow and Mankelov (2001). To the credit of the PWD the new Zangla canal appears to be an exception to the rule. This impressively engineered 3km canal has, since its commissioning in the autumn of 2000, been so successful that Zangla's water allocation scheme has been renegotiated to reflect their new found water security.

Whilst poor workmanship and the misappropriation of funds undoubtedly influences the success of projects, discrepancies over the obligation of maintenance has longer term implications for project sustainability. Feedback from a number of informants at Zangskar's village level indicates a growing trend where traditional mechanisms for channel construction and maintenance are evolving towards a dependence on funds, materials and labour offered through Government development departments.<sup>4</sup> Many informants – admittedly from villages which have received development subsidies for over a decade – maintained that without help from the PWD or the BDO, the cost and labour required for irrigation maintenance and construction was beyond the scope of the village. Although this response may simply reflect a fear of losing development aid should a need no longer be expressed, a number of informants were openly critical of their growing dependence. Indeed, considering that much of Zangskar's existing development activity has apparently been planned and implemented with little consultation at the village level, a decline in the ability (and interest) of villages to organise and administer communal irrigation maintenance activity may be an inevitable progression.

The arrival of the Watershed Development Programme in Zangskar – with its potential to re-empower communities and rekindle ideas of ownership and asset maintenance – is perhaps rather timely. At the village level many informants perceived a compatibility between the scope of Watershed projects and the continuation of Zangskari independence through much needed irrigation development. These perceptions were actively encouraged by Zangskar's PIAs, who acting as catalysts to WDP implementation, have promised that village participation and co-operation will secure funding, future water security and greater independence from Kargil District administration. Viewed also in the context of existing development dissatisfaction, Zangskari farmers and PIAs were excited by the transparency of Watershed funding which is released directly into WC joint signatory accounts (thus bypassing the Government departments and local contractors whom Zangskaris accuse of 'eating' development funds).

The ability for Watershed projects to address village specific concerns, such as vulnerability to drought or increased irrigation demand due to population growth, has also been recognised in Zangskar. Although the severe drought experienced in the summer of 2000 is still fresh in people's memories, concerns over population growth appeared in some instances to be more pressing. As the practices of polyandry and primogeniture have declined in Central Zangskar, population growth and the increase in *khang chung* (minor house) construction has placed increasing demands on existing fields and water resources. Whilst the new PWD canal has addressed this problem in Zangla, concern was still very apparent in the villages of Pishu, Reru and Mune. In one of these villages, which now only contains a single polyandrous household, perceptions of the problem were so acute that potentially cultivable land was already being claimed in anticipation of Watershed Project approval and construction. New agricultural plots were however being competed over as existing households were joining new nuclear families in registering land. Although it is possible that land for future *khang chung* development was being claimed by an existing *khang pa* (main house) should the *khang chung* later be disbanded, a growing body of evidence suggested the possible cornering of Watershed benefits by powerful households.

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<sup>4</sup> Dawa (1999: 376) recognises similar trends in Ladakh, noting the ability of subsidies and handouts to erode the characteristic qualities of self-reliance and sustainability.

The Watershed Guidelines stress the involvement of all beneficiaries in the selection, planning and execution of the project (Department of Land Resources, 2001: Section 39), yet, in Zangskar, this inclusion was not reflected by feedback from village-level Watershed Associations. Members of WAs were frequently uncertain of their final action plan, their project budget, the release of funds, project duration and the contributions and general procedures for asset maintenance.<sup>5</sup> Copies of the 2001 Watershed Guidelines were not considered to be readily available (and even then they require a reasonable level of literacy). Several of Zangskar's WA members also claimed that certain WCs had been voted in through less than democratic means and subsequent decision making had been cornered by an educated and entrepreneurial village minority. The potential for the WDP to be assimilated into existing hierarchies of power and status certainly has longer term implications for the cornering of benefits. Indeed, in the wider context of Watershed activity across India, Shah (2001: 12) notes the ability of the Programme to create "a clear hierarchy of benefits and beneficiaries".

Inequalities in Zangskar were also reported with reference to the employment of beneficiaries in Watershed project construction. Informants from one village recounted a situation where the majority of villagers had benefited from paid work on one of their watershed objectives. However, for a variety of reasons, a handful of the poorer households missed out on this valuable opportunity as they were not in a position to offer labour. Although in the long term the entire village would benefit from the work that was carried out, the labour short households (which potentially would have benefited the most from employment) were frustrated at being left out. Division and ill-feeling over this matter was compounded by the fact that villagers who were able to participate were paid above-average wages for 5 days of what was described as 'easy work'.

Although the employment of beneficiaries releases Watershed funds directly into the local Zangskari economy, the notion that this practice contributes towards rejuvenating ideas of ownership and asset maintenance appears, in Zangskar, to be questionable. Admittedly, many of Zangskar's projects are still in their infancy, however, the majority of informants had little or no idea that project sustainability requires the village to organise and fund post-completion maintenance activity. Trends initiated by PWD and BDO subsidy look set to continue as the majority of farmers stated that once Watershed irrigation projects were completed they would require government funds and materials for maintenance work. One of Zangskar's PIAs echoed this sentiment by stating that "it is beyond the capability of the village to maintain projects; villagers are poor and now that there are wages people will not work on or maintain projects without getting paid". This PIA observation was developed further by one informant who, despite registering concern over his village's growing dependency, praised the benefits of the Watershed employment opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Clarification of this emerging picture was provided by several farmers in Lungnak who stated that employment on their Watershed project was more important than the project's irrigation-orientated objectives. In this instance a number of farmers - who were also WC members - were already planning to abandon their irrigation project should it go over budget. Similar behaviour in other regions of India has been observed by Kerr et al (1996: 11) who notes the ability of WDP subsidies to promote eager participation in wage labour irrespective of project objectives.

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<sup>5</sup> It is mandatory for all project beneficiaries to make contributions into the Watershed Development Fund during the project construction period. Zangskaris are required to submit 5% of the total cost of the work into the Fund which then covers initial post-completion maintenance of project assets.

<sup>6</sup> Watershed Project work in Zangskar is generally considered to be convenient and well paid. Wages for WDP labour are based upon BDO guidelines which in Zangskar were quoted as being Rs70 for labour and Rs 140 for skilled labour. In the Indus Valley skilled labourers can now earn Rs 250-300 per day including food. In response, it was implied that several Leh-based PIAs have been forced to allocate double the daily BDO rate to encourage participation in Watershed projects.

Enthusiasm for wage labour was not however found to be a universal trend across Central Zangskar. Whilst a number of households were benefiting from Watershed employment, others (regardless of whether wage labour was appealing or not) were struggling to make available the time and labour which their village projects required. Zangskaris continue to use the snow-free months to perform a host of important activities in preparation for the following winter (see Osmaston et al, 1994: 97-107) and more recently this brief window has been congested with factors such as government employment, schooling and tourist related incomes. Thus, many Zangskari households stated that they were only prepared to contribute several days labour in the spring and then a slightly longer period between the harvest and the first winter snow. Households from the drought-prone settlements of Kumi and Pishu were however exceptional having already managed to invest a significant amount of labour and time (several claiming over 25 days so far this year) into their irrigation projects. The reasoning behind this variation in attitude may be explained by a combination of village (or even household) specific factors such as susceptibility of fields to drought (and the associated awareness of risk), available workforce and water abundance of a given year.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For example, in Pishu it is possible that the heavy snowfall in April 2003 and the resulting abundance of water may have freed up time that would otherwise have been spent on maintaining existing irrigation channels. When asked why no channel maintenance had been carried out this year, several informants (from different villages) exhibited a short-term outlook by stating "there is so much water [this year] that no one cares".

To the credit of Zangskar's PIAs, this shortage of time and labour at the village level has been recognised. SECPAD was organising Nepali labourers to help the labour-short households in Shillingskit and together PIAs were apparently lobbying for project duration to be extended to 7 years. In general however, praise for Zangskar's PIAs was somewhat sparse. The majority of informants complained that PIAs were preventing the release of funds, they lacked expertise (many had never seen a complete Watershed Development Team) and generally PIAs had little interest in contact with the village. The fact that Zangskar's PIA administrations appear to attract entrepreneurial individuals only served to aggravate claims that PIAs were treating the Watershed Programme as another business opportunity.<sup>8</sup> Admittedly, Zangskar's PIAs are new to the workings of the Watershed Programme and working at the interface between Buddhist Zangskaris and Kargil District administration is undoubtedly problematic. Indeed, claims that funds are being withheld may, as Sheikh (2002: 33) points out, simply mean that Zangskar's PIAs are taking the blame for the slow release of funds by the Desert Development Agency (DDA). Moreover, one PIA readily acknowledged their own inexperience at implementing Watershed Projects. Two of Zangskar's PIAs stressed the need for the DDA to provide training as the Watershed Guidelines (Department of Land resources, 2001) made little allowance for Zangskar's isolation and climatic constraints.

In conclusion, the arrival of the WDP represents a valuable opportunity for irrigation development in Zangskar. Perceived as being compatible with Zangskari notions of independence and food security, and with its potential to offset the village-specific concerns of population growth and susceptibility to drought, the Programme has been readily embraced in over 30 settlements. For Zangskaris frustrated by the inadequacies of existing development activity, the fact that funds are released directly at the village level is also considered to be a significant improvement. Watershed employment opportunities have obvious benefits for the local economy, yet, the continued release of subsidy appears to be undermining the ability of the Programme to rekindle notions of community ownership and asset maintenance. In some instances, enthusiasm for improving village water and food security has been relegated by the short-term desire for paid employment irrespective of project objectives. However, whilst some households are able to take advantage of ready employment, others struggle to find the labour and time which many of the larger projects require.

Whilst labour and time constraints may be addressed by increasing project duration, the issues surrounding maintenance (and ultimately project sustainability) may simply be rectified by improving the overall awareness and understanding of Watershed Guidelines. It is beyond the scope of this article to recommend major amendments to Zangskar's WDP implementation. However, data from the field suggests the need for a widespread and thorough Watershed education programme. Improving levels of Watershed awareness and understanding would certainly increase the transparency and accountability of Zangskar's PIA, WC and WA activity. Although reported inequalities appear to have fuelled division and mistrust, it would be unfounded to conclusively comment here on claims that PIAs and entrepreneurial minorities at Zangskar's village-level are indeed cornering Watershed benefits. However, in the absence of transparency and accountability between all parties involved, the potential for abusing the Watershed Programme certainly exists.

#### *Postscript*

A visit to Zangskar in July/Aug 2004 revealed that the Department of Agriculture (GO) and a Sani-based NGO (Kanishka Cultural Welfare Society) have been integrated into Zangskar's

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<sup>8</sup> The 'private-sector potential' of PIAs was also illustrated by reports that two of Zangskar's PIAs had competed over a particularly water scarce village with the aim of securing repeat funding.

Watershed development as Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs). There are now five PIAs operating in Zangskar although the activities of the Padum-based NGO Zangskar Development Project Society (ZDPS) have been frozen whilst an official investigation examines the possible misuse of Watershed funds. With the introduction of two new PIAs the number of Watershed projects in Zangskar has increased to around 30 (several Projects pending approval), even Padum has been drawn into the Watershed fold although financial and religious differences appear to be inhibiting the finalisation of their Watershed Action Plan.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Chaurasia, O. P. and P. Gurmet. *A Checklist on Medicinal & Aromatic Plants of Trans-Himalayan Cold Desert (Ladakh & Lahaul-Spiti)*, Leh: Field Research Laboratory & Amchi Medicine Research Unit. 2003. 86 p.**

Despite the growing interest of academic research on the Science of Healing (gso ba rig pa), widely known as Tibetan medicine, in the regions of Ladakh and Lahaul-Spiti, little emphasis has been given so far on the identification of medicinal plants. This book intends to bridge this gap by providing a checklist of 525 medicinal and aromatic plants used by the practitioners of amchi medicine, as this medical system is locally known. The authors, respectively a botanist and a physician of Tibetan medicine, have been conducting field research over the past years in eight different valleys (Indus, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar, Dras, Suru, Lahaul, Spiti), which distinguishes this book from those, representing the vast majority, in which a mere compilation of existing works is to be found. Chaurasia and Gurmet first provide a brief presentation of the mentioned research sites, as well as some general information about the physiography and the vegetation types of the area, before taking the readers to the core of the book. The checklist comprises the family, genus and species of each plant recorded, with descriptions of the type of plant, the habitat and the localities where it can be found, and the medical system(s) in which it is used - the book is therefore not limited to the Tibetan medical system, although it is the medicine most widely represented in the area of research. One would perhaps regret that no mention of the part used in medicine and of the vernacular names is given, which limits the scope for comparative research, for researchers in this field will not have the means to correlate this work with their own findings. The next section of the book provides a useful review of 44 endangered medicinal and aromatic plants in the region according to the criteria set up by the World Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This list includes the parts used and may thus be useful for conservation programmes aiming to secure sustainable collection in from the wild. The book concludes with a list of 71 plants that are traded for commercial purpose (the trade names are given). Here the authors broach a very important issue, for local and national trade are the most significant threats for medicinal plants in the studied area. The book also provides a useful bibliography, although no reference is explicitly referred to in the core of the text.

A work such as this constitutes a necessary step toward the juridical implementation of intellectual property rights (IPR) in the region, while scrupulously following the national guidelines, which recommend publishing lists of plants. Publications like this one thus attest to the use of certain plants in a particular medical system before they would become the object of pharmaceutical/commercial interest. Moreover, this work converges with the contemporary struggle of the amchi, particularly institutional Ladakhi amchi, who make numerous efforts for their medical system to be fully recognised by the central government of India. It does not only show that amchi medicine is alive and well in Ladakh and Lahaul-Spiti, but also that active research is being conducted by practitioners of the medical systems itself and that the corresponding knowledge can be systematised. These points are part of an array of requirements that are imposed by the central government of India prior to recognition. How paradoxical this scenario may seem (an officially illegal medical system must show a certain level of development), this book is a major contemporary contribution to it.

However, anthropologically speaking, such systematization suggests a level of homogeneity which is never found in practice, in which knowledge of medicinal plants is normally highly heterogeneous. This is also true of practitioners of Tibetan medicine, especially in the rural areas, notwithstanding the common assumptions about the homogeneity of their knowledge because of the existence of classical medical texts. The systematized knowledge then 'speaks' for the people, but does not necessarily represent, as a whole, a particular individual. The information condensed as such must not be understood as factual indigenous knowledge. It is the virtual brain of an ideal

individual, a virtuality which is generally not considered. These comments do not, of course, undermine the quality and the validity of the present book. The authors clearly acknowledge that the plants have been identified through various interactions with amchi from the above-mentioned areas and do not suggest that any single individual may know all cited plants. I offer this reminder solely to suggest that such type of work is a tentative systematisation and not the expression of the factual reality and knowledge of any single amchi.

This book is a very useful tool for both students and scholars from social sciences and botany, as well as for anybody concerned by Himalayan medicinal plants. The authors show first hand expertise on the topic of their research, and provide us with the most comprehensive checklist on medicinal and aromatic plants of Ladakh, Lahaul and Spiti to date.

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**H. Louis Fader. *The Issa Tale That Will Not Die. Nicholas Notovitch and his Fraudulent Gospel.* Lanham: University Press of America. 2003. ISBN 0-76182657-2.**

In 1894 Nicholas (or Nikolai) Notovitch, a Russian journalist, published a book in French: *La vie inconnue de Jésus Christ*, later translated into English as *The Unknown Life of Christ*. The book gave a vivid account of the author's travels to Ladakh seven years earlier, and presented a translation of a life of Jesus which he claimed to have found in Hemis monastery. According to Notovitch, this life of Jesus was well-known in Tibet. The original was a Pali document kept in Lhasa, but Hemis had a Tibetan translation. Notovitch himself knew no Tibetan, but a Kashmiri shikari served as his interpreter, and helped him transcribe extracts. These apparently showed that Jesus – or 'Issa' – had lived in India between the ages of 13 and 29.

Notovitch's claims attracted immediate attention. His book was reprinted several times and translated into English and German. However, it was dismissed as a hoax by – among others – the Sanskrit scholar Professor Max Müller of Oxford University. It has never been taken seriously either by mainstream Western scholars or by Ladakhi or Tibetan Buddhist leaders. However, in the course of the course of the 20th century, writers as diverse as Swami Abhedananda (a Ramakrishna monk) and the Russian painter Nicholas Roerich have referred to the Issa legend. Since the late 1970s, it has been taken up again by 'New Age' writers in Germany and the US. In this book, H. Louis Fader examines the evidence, and gives his own assessment. His conclusion is proclaimed in the sub-title: Notovitch was a fraud.

In reviewing the book, I have to start with a declaration of interest: my own first article on Ladakh was a critique of Notovitch, published in the *Tibetan Review* in 1981, which takes the same view as Fader. He is kind enough to refer to that article, together with more recent private correspondence, in his acknowledgements.

It is not hard to come to the conclusion that Notovitch is unreliable. Even a cursory review of his testimony raises questions about his credibility as a witness. For example, after watching the dances of the Hemis festival, he is invited to drink chang with the 'chief lama' of the monastery. Here are some samples of the lama's conversation:

Man has always sought after the tangible; he has never succeeded in long believing that which has escaped his material senses. He has ever done his utmost to find a direct means of communication between himself and his Creator, who has worked so much good and at the same time, as he erroneously believes, so much evil upon him.



For this reason he has adored every feature of nature having a beneficial influence. We have a striking example of this in the ancient Egyptians, who worshipped animals, trees and stones, the winds and the rains...

...The Assyrians, in seeking the way which should lead them to the feet of the Creator, turned their eyes towards the stars, which, although beyond the limits of attainment, they contemplated with adoration...

... Our religion admits of two orders of monks, the red and the yellow. The former - who recognize the authority of the Panchen, who resides at Tashi Lhunpo and who is the chief of the civil administration of Thibet - may marry. But we yellow monks have pronounced vows of celibacy, and our direct governor is the Dalai Lama (Quotations from the edition of Notovitch's work published in: Elizabeth Clare Prophet. *The Lost Years of Jesus*, Summit University Press, n.d, pp. 197-203).

This is not the authentic voice of Ladakhi or Tibetan Buddhism. It does on the other hand reflect a not particularly well-informed late 19th century European view of what lamas ought to say. Notovitch seems genuinely to have visited Ladakh, but his main claims are so obviously imaginary that it is tempting to dismiss them as being unworthy of further study. Do they really require another detailed re-examination?

It seems that they do, for two main reasons. The first is implied in Fader's title. Instead of dying quietly, the Notovitch story appears to have gained new vigour – to judge by the number of publications – in the last 25 years. These publications are typically based on an uncritical re-telling of Notovitch's own account, partially supplemented by Roerich and Abhedananda, rather than providing more recent evidence. However, they appear to have gathered a wide following. Evidently, there is after all a need for a new assessment.

The second is that the legend is in itself an interesting topic for study. It tells us almost nothing about Ladakh, but it tells a great deal about Western myths of Tibet. In that respect it fits in with the varied genres discussed in *Imagining Tibet. Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies* (Edited by Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001). *The Unknown Life of Christ* is a literary precursor to *The Lost Horizon* and *Lobsang Rampa*. Interestingly, the Notovitch story appealed not only to Westerners, but also to Hindus (as represented by Swami Abhedananda among others) and Muslims (including the Ahmadiyya sect). While contributing to Western myths of Tibet, Notovitch also has fed into oriental orientalism.

Fader's book goes to great lengths, both in examining the details of Notovitch's work and in discussing his cultural context. He gives a detailed account of early 'on-site' investigators in Ladakh, and later scholarly enquiry. Among other points, he compares Notovitch's text with more recent scholarship on the Gospels, and finds it wanting. He argues that the text's references to Hinduism are anachronistic and misleading: 'Issa' is supposed to have visited the Jagannath temple in Orissa which was not built until the end of the 12th century AD. Fader also points out the obvious implausibilities in Notovitch's travel account - for example that he took refuge in Hemis after breaking his leg in Pintak (Spituk), rather than travelling the much shorter distance to Leh.

In discussing Notovitch's cultural milieu, Fader draws extensively on the earlier work of the German scholar Norbert Klatt (notably *Jesus in Indien. Nikolaus Alexandrovitch Notovitchs "Unbekanntes Leben Jesu" und seine Indienreise. Orientierungen und Berichte Nr. 13/1986. Stuttgart: EZW-Texte; and Lebte Jesus in Indien? Eine religionsgeschichtliche Klärung. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1988*), thus making it more readily available to an English-reading audience. Klatt, who has written a foreword for this book, has discussed both Notovitch's personal background in Russia, as well as possible Theosophist and other cultural influences on his writing.

This is a carefully documented book, but it is unlikely to be the last word on its subject. First, it is always hard to prove a negative. No one can find Notovitch's Tibetan text, and no one ever will find it. However, his supporters will cling to the hope that something like it might once have existed, and that it might yet turn up. Secondly, Fader writes from an avowedly Christian point of view (his final chapter is entitled 'The Genius of the Christian Message'), and his critics will accuse him of bias. Thirdly, the idea of long-lost secret documents has enormous appeal, much like the myth of Shangri-la. Notovitch was neither an honest reporter nor a great writer, but he tapped into something universal.

Students of Ladakh who want to know about Notovitch should start with his original text, either in French or English. His own words should be sufficient to demonstrate his lack of plausibility. Those who wish to go further should turn to Fader.

**Ina Rösing, *Trance, Besessenheit und Amnesie bei den Schamanen der Changpa-Nomaden im Ladakhischen Changthang*. Weishaupt Verlag, Gnas (Autriche), 2003. 270 pages.**

C'est une très longue et pénible enquête que nous propose ici Ina Rösing. Pénible mais passionnante : trouver d'authentiques lhaba et lhamo, entendre par là des personnages qui entrent réellement en transe, qui perdent vraiment la mémoire de ce qui s'est passé et qui ne se contentent pas d'une mise en scène. L'enquête s'est étalée sur plusieurs années et il a fallu beaucoup de persévérance, de ténacité et de patience à l'auteur pour y arriver.

Le livre a l'avantage d'être intéressant pour les spécialistes du Ladakh tout en étant parfaitement lisible par un non-spécialiste : l'auteur s'est donnée beaucoup de peine à vérifier et à revoir toutes les données déjà connues avant de s'attaquer à son véritable sujet.

La première partie (pp. 19 à 83) présente brièvement la géographie, l'écologie et l'ethnographie du Changthang, s'appuyant sur les travaux de P. S. Jina et surtout de M. Ahmed (voir le compte-rendu de J. Rizvi dans *LS* 18, et le mien dans *LS* 19).

La seconde partie (pp. 85 à 153), présente les lhaba (lha-pa) de la vallée de l'Indus. L'auteur rappelle p. 86 qu'il existe deux sortes de chamanes selon qu'ils pratiquent la " Flug-Trance " lors de laquelle leur esprit ou leur âme se déplace dans le monde divin et la " Besessenheits-Trance ", qui nous intéresse ici (anglais possession trance, embodiment trance), lors de laquelle la divinité ou l'esprit vient posséder leur corps. Signalons qu'en français on a aujourd'hui de plus en plus tendance à utiliser le mot chamane dans le premier cas uniquement et de parler de possédé et de possession dans le second.

Dans cette seconde partie l'auteur s'appuie sur ses interviews (dont elle nous donne le texte en ladakhi) et sur les observations d'autres chercheurs. Sont présentés des lhaba qui interviennent aux fêtes monastiques comme celui de Thiksé (moins connu que les deux de Matho) et d'autres qui font profession d'être possédés. On apprend comment la " folie " (" Wahnsinn ", les guillemets sont de l'auteur) est l'élément déclenchant, comment la " folie " est finalement maîtrisée. Mais l'auteur est sceptique. Tout cela n'est-il pas du théâtre et l'assertion du lhaba comme quoi il ne se rappelle de rien après la transe un mensonge, un argument fallacieux bien pratique pour ne pas avoir à répondre aux questions ? C'est là que l'auteur parvient à la même impasse que tous ses prédécesseurs. Mais elle ne se décourage pas pour autant. Et c'est là que du nouveau va apparaître.

Ina Rösing se tourne dans une troisième partie (pp. 156-229) vers les lhaba du Changthang. Elle en rencontre trois, Ngawang, son fils Sonam Lathar, son neveu Thundup (pp. 156-157). On peut se poser (mais l'auteur ne le fait pas) la question de cette parenté surtout lorsqu'on lit (p. 169) que Thundup est aussi fils de lhaba. L'auteur s'en tient au récit des protagonistes le reste dans les grandes lignes le même que celui de leurs collègues de la vallée de l'Indus : " Folie ", intervention d'un rinpoche, formation au contrôle du phénomène (les quelques différences entre les possédés de la vallée de l'Indus et du Changthang sont énumérées pp. 223-225). Ici aucun doute, la transe est

authentique et Ina Rösing décrit plusieurs séances avec beaucoup de minutie. Elle donne à nouveau le texte en ladakhi de certains passages d'interviews, de séances et de prières pendant ces séances en insistant, à juste titre, sur les énormes difficultés de décodage, transcription et traduction des bandes magnétiques. Les textes sont riches et dépassent la simple question de la possession rituelle, en particulier l'hymne à Paldan Lhamo des pages 204-209 qui est un véritable mythe de l'expansion du bouddhisme en pays lamaïque.

Particulièrement impressionnant est la description par Thundup du début de la transe, p. 172. Les dieux se présentent. Il appelle l'un ou l'autre selon la question à lui posée. C'est à ce moment là que le lha pénètre en lui et qu'il ne se rappelle plus. On est donc bien dans la " Besessenheits-Trance ". Mais avec un petit quelque chose de la " Flug-Trance " dont il est bon de se rappeler qu'elle existe aussi dans le monde lamaïste.

Un dernier mot. L'auteur insiste sur sa collaboration avec des Ladakhi, qu'elle nous présente d'ailleurs. Elle ne se contente pas des habituels remerciements. Il s'agit d'un véritable travail en groupe, qui s'est étalé sur plusieurs années, et dont elle décrit la méthode.

## THESIS REVIEWS

**Monisha Ahmed. *We are warp and weft – Nomadic pastoralism and the tradition of weaving in Rupshu (Eastern Ladakh)*. D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1996. 394 pages dont 30 planches de photos, 3 cartes et 6 schémas.**

Les Rupshupa constituent une communauté d'à-peu-près 500 âmes (p.10) vivant entre le lac Tsomoriri et la route Upshi-Manali sur une superficie de 6400 km<sup>2</sup> (p.12). Ils se considèrent comme les seuls véritables cangpa (byang-pa) dans la mesure où ils sont de purs nomades, ne vivant que de leurs troupeaux et sous la tente (p.65), n'ayant ni champs, ni maisons (contrairement à Korzok, un village - le seul de cette région - sur le lac Tsomoriri) ni même d'abris en dur dans lesquels il leur arriverait de dormir à l'occasion comme les Kharnakpa.

C'est à eux que Monisha Ahmed a consacré sa thèse. Le titre en est beaucoup trop modeste. Certes, écrit l'auteur p.340, elle n'a pas inclus une étude détaillée des pratiques religieuses, de la parenté, des rites de passage et de la polyandrie. Elle a même laissé quelques aspects technologiques de côté (feutre, tricot). Il n'en reste pas moins qu'elle nous brosse un portrait très vaste des Rupshupa qui dépasse largement le problème du tissage.

Tout ce qui concerne le tissage est effectivement raconté par le menu. Alors que dans la vallée de l'Indus seuls les hommes tissent, ici, le plus gros du travail est fait par les femmes. Bien plus, les mythes, tout comme la préparation de la jeune fille au mariage, montrent que le tissage est intimement lié à l'identité féminine.

Mais parler du tissage implique de parler du reste, de la tonte, du tri des qualités, du lavage, du cardage, et puis de parler des bêtes, de leur origine mythique, de l'importance de leur couleur, du marquage, de la pâture, de la traite, de la mise à mort et de la consommation de la viande aussi. Bien entendu l'importance que revêtent laine et poils, et pas seulement ceux de la célèbre pashmina, débouche sur une étude économique. Le rôle des autres produits (viande, lait, fromage) et la propriété monastique sont aussi étudiés.

L'importance du lexique (400 mots) en fin de livre (et encore, tous les mots ladakhi qui sont dans le texte ne sont pas dans le lexique) montre bien la richesse de l'analyse de la culture matérielle. Mais le sujet déborde vite. Du tissage on passe aux mythes de l'origine du tissage eux-mêmes liés aux grands mythes d'origine de l'homme et de la civilisation dont le lecteur pourra apprécier l'originalité par rapport à ceux du Zaskar ou de la vallée de l'Indus. Du tissage on passe aussi à la tente, et pas seulement à sa fabrication, mais à toute l'organisation intérieure : la place du

foyer, de la divinité, des hommes, des femmes etc. Enfin sont aussi analysé très en détail le mécanisme de choix par tirage au sort du chef (goba) et de tous ceux à qui sont assignées des fonctions ou des corvées. Bref un modèle d'ethnographie.

La thèse a fait l'objet d'un livre plus court : " Living Fabric - Weaving among the nomads of Ladakh Himalaya " Orchid press.(voir le compte-rendu de J. Rizvi dans le dernier L.S.)

**Fernanda Pirie. *The Fragile web of order : dispute, aboiance and conflit resolution in Ladakh.* D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2002. 250 pages**

Personne n'était mieux placé que Fernanda Pirie pour traiter ce sujet. Juriste de formation, ayant même exercé la profession d'avocat, elle s'est convertie plus tard à l'ethnologie. Le sujet du droit ladakhi s'imposait d'autant plus à elle qu'il n'avait jamais été traité. Dès la page 1 nous savons que nous aurons affaire à " a legal culture rather than a system of laws (...) an immanent, not a transcendent order ".

La thèse commence par un très solide chapitre théorique d'ethnologie juridique. Elle analyse ensuite ce que nous savons du Tibet. A l'exception de l'Amdo, il semble bien qu'il y ait au pays des Neiges le même rejet de la violence, de la vengeance, et la même tendance à chercher la conciliation à tout prix. Une autre tendance est de résoudre les conflits dans le cercle le plus étroit possible : la maison, à défaut la maison et quelques voisins, ou le quartier, ou le village et ce n'est qu'en dernière instance qu'on fera appel aux " autorités ", police ou administration aujourd'hui, lhonpo ou roi jadis.

L'unité la plus importante semble être le village. L'auteur en choisit donc un pour le décrire. Il s'agit de Photoksar entre Lamayuru et le Zanskar. Une grande partie de la thèse est alors ethnographique, et on y apprend une multitude de choses que l'auteur n'exploite pas, soit par modestie, soit parce qu'elle s'en tient à son sujet, qu'elle ne veut pas quitter son fil directeur. On apprend ainsi que les lhu (klu) peuvent loger au rez-de-chaussée, ce qui paraissait exclu dans la vallée de l'Indus (Kaplanian in CULE2 et LC), que le phaspun joue un rôle en dehors des rites de passage, par exemple au sakha, ce qui là aussi n'a jamais été noté dans la vallée de l'Indus (par contre Srinivas en parle à propos du srublha dans la Nubra, cf RRL6, p.272), qu'il y a des règles très strictes d'évitement des lha et des lhu pour les femmes mariées, etc. Toute cette partie ethnographique est très riche et impossible à résumer.

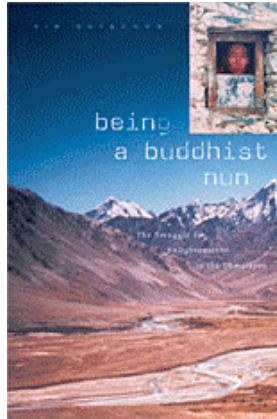
Une chose intrigue l'auteur à juste titre : si les règles de l'ordre du rang (tral ; dral) sont très strictes, il est des réunions où les hommes s'assoient entre eux librement, pour élire le goba par exemple. Elle en déduit que l'égalitarisme l'emporte sur la hiérarchie. De cela je ne suis pas sûr tant le sens de la hiérarchie est très fort chez les Ladakhi (voir Grist in CULE 2, Erdmann in RRL1) et pour le tral Kaplanian in CULE2 et LC). Pour l'auteur cette exception à la règle du tral est liée au fait que l'on rejette l'autorité et que l'on cherche à tout prix la conciliation ; le goba est un primus inter pares, élu par ses pairs qui sont ses égaux, élu non pas pour imposer la loi, mais pour jouer un rôle d'arbitre entre des parties.

Le village est un monde où l'harmonie doit l'emporter, c'est-à-dire que le social prime sur l'individuel. Celui qui est victime d'un vol par exemple, peut demander justice par le biais d'une médiation. Mais il se met en tort s'il se fâche. La colère est chose honteuse même si, sur nos critères en tout cas, elle est justifiée. En cas d'adultère le conjoint trompé se contente de hausser les épaules.

Tout cela est passionnant, mais est-ce si simple ? N'y a-t-il pas moyen de " tricher " avec cette gentillesse quasi-obligatoire, cet interdit de la colère et de la vengeance ? Les gongmo (voir Kaplanian et Loewert in RRL2A) ne sont ils pas un de ces moyens ? Et les mikha ? (Kaplanian 1988 c'est-à-dire IATS 4). On comparera avec intérêt la première version de l'article de Gielen dans RRL2 avec la seconde dans RRL2A. Il s'agit de psychologie, pas de droit. Il n'en reste pas moins que

tout compte fait les Ladakhi sont moins " gentils " qu'ils le font paraître. Une thèse passionnante dont on espère qu'elle sera bientôt publiée.

## NEW BOOKS



### **Being a Buddhist Nun The Struggle for Enlightenment in the Himalayas**

**by Kim Gutschow**

20 halftones, 3 maps, 2 tables, 360 pages. Hardcover edition, July 2004.  
ISBN 0-674-01287-9 \$29.95 / £19.95 / E27.70

“They may shave their heads, don simple robes, and renounce materialism and worldly desires. But the women seeking enlightenment in a Buddhist nunnery high in the folds of Himalayan Kashmir invariably find themselves subject to the tyrannies of subsistence, subordination, and sexuality. Ultimately, Buddhist monasticism reflects the very world it is supposed to renounce. Butter and barley prove to be as critical to monastic life as merit and meditation.

Gutschow depicts a gender hierarchy where nuns serve and monks direct, where monks bless the fields and kitchens while nuns toil in them. Her book offers the first ethnography of Tibetan Buddhist society from the perspective of its nuns. Monasteries may retain historical endowments and significant political and social power, yet global flows of capitalism, tourism, and feminism have begun to erode the balance of power between monks and nuns. Despite the obstacles of being considered impure and inferior, nuns engage in everyday forms of resistance to pursue their ascetic and personal goals.

A richly textured picture of the little known culture of a Buddhist nunnery, the book offers moving narratives of nuns struggling with the Buddhist discipline of detachment. Its analysis of the way in which gender and sexuality construct ritual and social power provides valuable insight into the relationship between women and religion in South Asia today.”

**Beyond Lines of Control**  
**Performance and Politics on the Disputed Borders of Ladakh, India**

**by Ravina Aggarwal**

320 pages, 29 illustrations, 1 map. November 2004 ISBN 0-8223-3428-3 Cloth - \$84.95; ISBN 0-8223-3414-3 Paperback - \$23.95.

“The Kashmir conflict [. . .] has sparked four wars and cost thousands of lives. In this innovative ethnography, Ravina Aggarwal moves beyond conventional understandings of the conflict – which tend to emphasize geopolitical security concerns and religious essentialisms – by considering how it is experienced by those living in the border zones along the Line of Control [. . .] Revealing how the shadow of war affects the lives of Buddhist and Muslim communities in Ladakh, *Beyond Lines of Control* is an impassioned call for the inclusion of the region's cultural history and politics in discussions about the status of Kashmir.

Aggarwal brings the insights of performance studies and the growing field of the anthropology of international borders to bear on her extensive fieldwork in Ladakh. She examines how social and religious boundaries are created on the Ladakhi frontier, how they are influenced by directives of the nation-state, and how they are shaped into political struggles for regional control that are legitimized through discourses of religious purity, patriotism, and development. She demonstrates in lively detail the ways that these struggles are enacted in particular cultural performances such as national holidays, festivals, rites of passage ceremonies, films, and archery games. By placing cultural performances and political movements in Ladakh center stage, Aggarwal rewrites the standard plot of nation and border along the Line of Control.”

## BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LADAKH SUPPLEMENT NO. 15

by John Bray

This supplement lists additions to updates in previous editions of Ladakh Studies and in my Bibliography of Ladakh (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988). Entries marked with an asterisk have not been seen by the compiler. Please send new references and suggested annotations to John Bray (1208, 2-14-1 Furuishiba, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0045, Japan; JNBray1957@yahoo.co.uk).

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