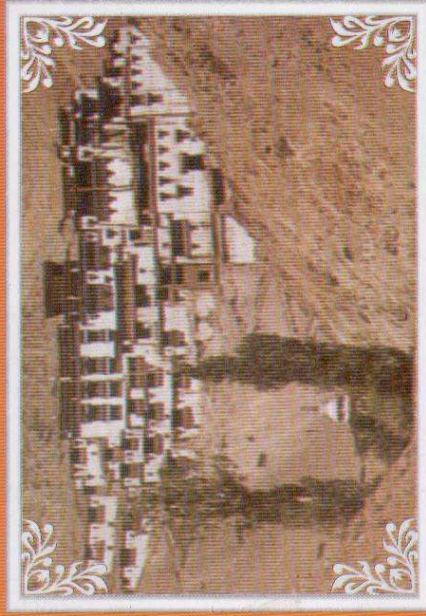




**THE GUIDE TO THE BUDDHIST
MONASTERIES AND ROYAL CASTLES
OF
LADAKH**



Rizong Monastery

THUPSTAN PALDAN
2006

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Printed by:-

Dorjee Tsering at Jayyed Press, Balimaran, Delhi.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This brief account of the Buddhist monasteries and royal castles in Ladakh, together with a description of the body, speech and mind-supports which they contain has been written in accordance with the information provided in the royal and religious histories. It concerns those buildings founded by successive kings here in Maryul-Ladakh surrounded as it is by high snow peaks resembling pillars of the sky and the mountain ranges of multi-coloured hues, starting from the time when Ladakh was ruled by Lha Chen Palgyigon, the eldest son of Skitde Nimagon, the king of Naris-skor-sum, who was himself descended from Nyakhri Tsanpo, the first king of Tibet, the land of Snow Mountains. It is a matter of great sadness that although in ancient time during the period of Ladakh's independence thanks to all the holy personages (such as Lama Rinchen Zangpo the Translator) and the ancestral kings there were built as many bodies, speech and mind-supports as there are constellations in the heavens, later these suffered great damage during the invasions of the forces from Skardo, in Baltistan and of Zorawar. This guide to the founding of those monasteries and castles that still survive today has been written in the hope that it will be of benefit to the foreign tourists and to those persons who like myself do not always have ready access to the extended accounts of the founding of monasteries and other such documents. If there are any mistakes in this work they will be judged before the eyes of the wise. May whatever virtues that exist in it become the cause of benefit to all.

I should like to thank my friends Sonam Wangdu, Basgo Tongspoon for his undertaking and enthusiastic help with the proof reading and printing.

Thupstan Paldan

INTRODUCTION

The Land and the People

Ladakh is a mountainous area situated to the north of India and lying at altitudes of between about 10,000 and 20,000 feet above sea level. The country is surrounded by high peaks and snow mountains that resemble the pillars of the sky and by ranges of multi-coloured hues. These fine mountains are ornamented with monasteries, temples, caves, castles and stupas built by holy persons and ancestral dharma-rajās of previous ages.

Most of the population of Ladakh are farmers. In winter it snows a good deal and is cold, but in summer it is very hot and so various crops which include fruits and vegetables can ripen. Through the centre of Ladakh flows the great river of the Sengge Khabab (the Indus). To the east is the region of Stod, to the south Zaskar, to west Sham, to the north Nubra and in the middle lies Leh, the capital of Ladakh. Within all these districts there are many ancient monasteries, castles, temples, stupas and mani walls.

As for the costumes of Ladakh, the men generally wear a hat called **kan-tob** and a long robe (**phyu-ba**) tied together with a belt (**skye-rags**) wound over with a large silken sash (**ar-ti-tsadar**). Undertrousers (**kang-nam**) and boots (**lham**) are also worn. In previous times people used to wear a hat called a **pho-tib** and also earrings, necklaces and bracelets but later they were no longer worn. Women continue to wear a turquoise head-ornament called **Perag** or else the **kantob** hat. They wear the long women's robe called the **gos-sul-ma** and

on their backs a cloak (**bok**) made either of goatskin (**lok-pa**) or of silk brocade (**gos-chen**). Around their throats they wear necklaces of coral and pearls in the centre of which they hang a golden amulet box, if they have one. Pearl and gold earrings, conch shell bracelets and gold and silver rings are also worn. Undertrousers and a special kind of boot **lham thig-ma-can** or these with a high collar **rgya-zo**.

The staple diet of **Ladakh** consists of meat, butter, milk curds, roasted barley flour, wheat flour, tea and beer. In recent times rice has been brought up from India and much enjoyed.

The domestic animals reared by the people of **Ladakh** are cows, bulls, goats, sheep, horses, donkeys, yaks and hybrid yaks, dogs, cats, cocks and hens, all of which are of great use to the farmers.

The first inhabitants of **Ladakh** were descended from the **Mongolians**. Buddhism was introduced from Tibet and all the Buddhist schools of the Mahayana that flourished in Tibet, including the **Nyingma**, the **Kargyud**, the **Saskya** and the **Gelugs**, are to be found in **Ladakh**.

The people are by nature honest, humble, loving and compassionate. Although people follow various religious systems, good relations exist between all of them. The name of **Ladakh** is derived from there being many mountain passes (la) in the county. Although minor differences exist between the dialects of each district, they are ultimately the same and so are mutually and easily understood. The people are all given to enjoying themselves in song and dance. They are of religious disposition and of a nature that seeks to be of service to others.



A Ladakhi woman in traditional dress

A Brief History of Ladakh

In ancient times before the age of recorded history the area of **Tibet and Ladakh** formed a great island in a lake surrounded by snow mountains and limitless forest, an area over which no people had taken control. Once human beings had gradually come there, they built habitations, planted the land, produced crops and rear cattle. Villages and communities were established by states in places where the land and the water were good. Guided and led by those who had the greatest power, the people lived in a state of dispersal.

In the year 127 B.C. there arose **Nakhri Tsanpo**, the first king to gain control over the whole of **Tibet**. Then at the time of the famous "Three Ancestral Dharmarajas" of Tibet the religion of the Lord Buddha came to flourish greatly in **Ladakh** as well. After king **Langdarma** there was no longer any great king who rules over the whole of Tibet. The Tibetan realm became fragmented and so an increasing decline set in. At that time **Ladakh**, too, existed in a fragmented state with a few powerful so-called **Gyalpos** acting as chiefs.

In the year 900 A.D. The descendant of the Tibetan kings by the name of **Skitde Nimagon** came to **Purang** in the province of **Stod Naris**, it not being desirable for him to continue residing in Central **Tibet**. He was installed as the king of **Naris-skor-sum**. He had three sons whom he disposed in different parts of **Naris**. The eldest, **Paigyigon**, gained **Ladakh** and so in 930 he won authority over **Maryul - Ladakh**. He was the first of the kings of **Ladakh** and the area which he controlled stretched from **Rudog** in the east, to **Lartsa** in Kashmir in the west and to **Ser-kha-gog-po** in the north. His dominion prospered and increased. His two sons

were: **Grogon** and **Chosgon**. **Chosgon's** son was **Lhachen Gyalpo** who ruled from 1050 to 1080 and who built the monastery of Likir. His son, **Lachen Utpala**, subjugated **Nyungti** and **Mon**. His son, **Lhachen Naglug**, ruled from 1110 to 1140 and built castles at Wanla and **Khalatsi** in the district of **Sham**. His son was **Lhachen Joldor**. His son, **Lhachen Lhargyal**, reigned from 1230 to 1260 and had the tantras, the **Prajnaparamita** and numerous other sacred texts written out in gold and also performed many religious works. His son was **Lhachen Jobopal**. His son was **Lhachen Ngodup**. This dharmaraja instituted the custom whereby Ladakhi monks went for their studies to the various monastic colleges in the province of **Vas** and **Tsang** in Tibet. There is a tradition that his son Prince **Rinchen Gyalpo**, sent to Kashmir, embraced the Muslim religion. His son, **Lhachen Shesrab**, ruled from 1350 to 1380. He built the town of **Singgegang** at the place called **Hang-rtse-ma** in Sabu. His son was **Khritsugde**. His sons were **Gragspa Bum-Ide** and **Gragspa Bum**. **Gragspa Bum-Ide** ruled over the area of **Stod** which included **Ladakh**, (its capital) **Leh** and so on. At **Leh** he built the image of Maitreya (**Gyalwa Chamba Gonbo**) to the height of three storeys inside the Red Temple. He also built the stupa of **Ti'u-Tashi-Od-phro**. The Spitik Monastery, too, he caused to flourish. His younger brother **Gragspa Bum** ruled over the **Sham** province and built there the castle of **Tingmogang** and the Maitreya image. The blessed image of **Avalokitesvara** from Kamrup (i.e. Assam) was brought during his time. His son was **Lhachen Bhara**. His son **Lhachen Bhagan**, who is said to be the king who founded the **Namgyal** Dynasty. His two sons received the name of **Namgyal**, the elder one being called **Lhawang Namgyal** and the younger **Tashi Namgyal**. The younger, **Tashi Namgyal**, deceived his elder brother and after blinding

him he himself acted as king. Reigning from 1500 to 1532 he built at **Leh** the **Namgyal Tsemo**, the temple devoted to the guardian deities, the maitreya image and the village of **Chubi**. His elder brother **Lhawang Namgyal** had three sons: **Tsewang Namgyal**, **Gonbo** and **Jamyang Namgyal**. **Tsewang Namgyal** succeeded but died before long. His younger brother **Jamyang Namgyal** ruled from 1560 to 1590; **Chosje Danma** from **Digung** was invited and **Gang-sngon** Monastery was founded, the teachings of the **Digung** being thus introduced. His son was **Sengge Namgyal**, a king who was physically very strong and most skilled in all the martial arts including archery and fighting with the sword and spear. He ruled from 1590 to 1620, and subjugated many of the petty rulers around his kingdom. Attending on the Mahasiddha **Stagsang Raschen** as his foremost guru, he built the monasteries of **Hemis**, **Chimde**, **Wanla**, **Tashigang** and others. Furthermore, this dharmaraj built the castle of **Palkhar** in **Leh** and constructed innumerable shrines out of gold and silver. As a funerary memorial to his father he built the copper-gilt Martial image of **Basgo**. His son, **Deldan Namgyal**, ruled the state according to the tenets of religion from 1720 to 1645. He subjugated the various Tibetan communities (within **Ladakh**) For his father's funerary memorial he built the great Buddha image at **Shey** and for his mother's memorial he built a long mani wall at **Tya-rerongo**, five hundred paces in length, with a Stupa of Victory at its head and a Stupa of Enlightenment at its end. His son, **Deleks Namgyal**, ruled from 1645 to 1680. In 1670 the army of the Mongolian **Galdan Tsewang** invaded **Ladakh**. Later **Mipham Wangpo** of the Dukpa School came to mediate a settlement. He drew up a treaty which provided for government trade entering **Ladakh** from Tibet and for an annual **Ladakhi** embassy to go to **Tibet**.

Deleks Namgyal's sons was **Nima Namgyal** who ruled from 1680 to 1720 and who built the long mani wall at **Dzanang** and many shrines. He administered other royal law not simply on the basis of whatever came to his mind but rather in compliance with the advice of elders of good counsel. His son was **Deskyong Namgyal**. His son was **Tsewang Namgyal**. His son, **Tsetan Namgyal**, ruled for a short period from 1780 to 1790. For his father's funerary memorial he built a long mani wall at the bottom of the cliff at **Kyigu**. Although this king was skilled in state craft, brave against his enemies and most loving to his subjects, on account of the low fortunes of his people he died of smallpox at the age of 28. His younger brother **Tsespal Tondup Namgyal**, foresook his monastic vows and succeeded to the throne. It was during his time that **Moocraft** and **Trebeck** arrived in **Leh** by way of **Nyungti** and **Garzhwa**. It was a year 1800 this king built a new palace at **Stok**. He also built the "New Castle" (**Skukhar Soma**) and many shrines above the Temple of **Avalokitesvara** in **Leh**. His son, **Tsewang Rabtan** was the reincarnation of **Bhil-ba Dorje the Tulku of Hemis**. He was installed king in 1830. Before long, in 1834, the forces of **Zorawar Singh** invaded and the state was lost to an external power. The king was dethroned and forced to reside in the palace at **Stok**. Thereafter, **Zorawar** installed the minister of **Leh**, **Ngodup Stanzin** as regent. After six years king **Tsespal Tondup Namgyal**, father of the dethroned king, was once again appointed to the throne. His son, **Tsewang Rabtan**, died in 1835 in **Spiti**. The father died later of smallpox in **Balti**, where he had gone to wage war. Once the whole of **Ladakh** and **Balti** had been subjugated, **Jigmed Choskyong Singge Migyur Namgyal**, son of **Tsewang Rabtan**, was installed as king. An annual tax of

18,000 rupees was instituted. If this was not forthcoming, the king of **Ladakh** himself had to make up the deficit. This king ruled from 1856 to 1873.

Zorawar Singh invaded **Tibet** and died while fighting the Tibetan troops near **To-yo** in **Purang** on the 12th day of the 11th month in 1841, **Ladakh**, however, lost its independence under the **Sing (=the Dogras)**. In 1860 prince **Sonam Namgyal** had been born and in 1875 he was enthroned. Since **Ladakh** was not an independent country it did not possess the power of such a country. His son, **Dadul Namgyal**, was born in 1896. At that time India had come under the authority of the British and so **Ladakh** too remained under the British. In 1926 prince **Kunzang Namgyal** was born. Thereafter in 1947 India gained independence and from that time onwards **Ladakh** was made part of the State of **Jammu and Kashmir** and has remained as such till the present. In 1974 king **Kunzang Namgyal** died. At present Queen **Diskit Wangmo**, the Princess, **Jigmed Wangmo** and **Rinchen Wangmo** and the Princes **Jigmed Wangchuk Namgyal** and **Skarma Konchok Namgyal** are all living happily and residing at the palace of **Stok**.

MONASTERIES & CASTLES

Alchi Choskor

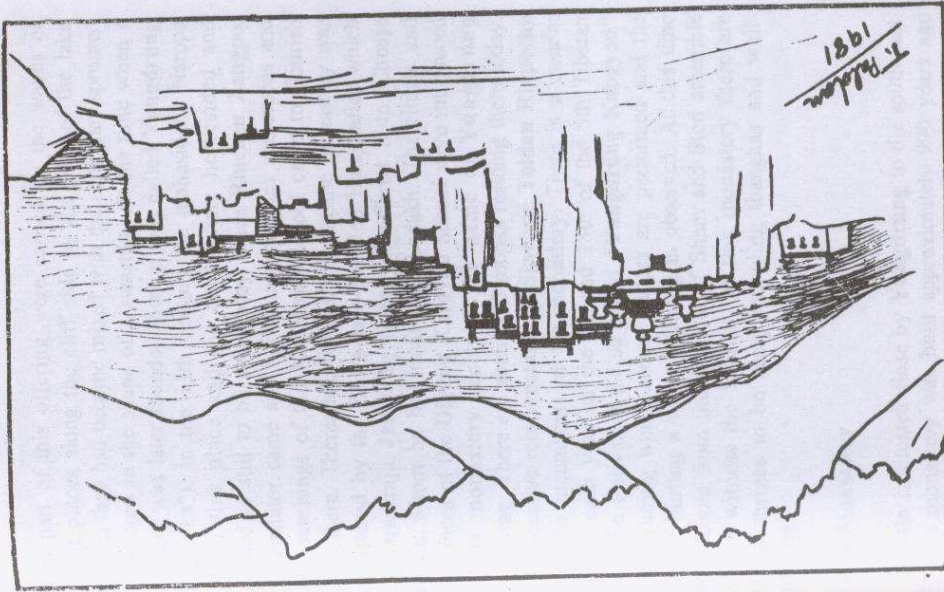
Although there are a great many temples, caves and stupas built in **Ladakh** by **Rinchen Zangpo**, Translator, **Alchi Choskor** is the largest and most famous of all of them. **Alchi** is situated at a distance of 69 kilometres west of **Leh**, south of the village of **Saspola** on the opposite side of the **Senge** of **Tsangpo** (Indus). **Alchi Choskor** was constructed by **Rinchen**

Zangpo, the Translator, approximately 990 years ago. The sacred temples to be seen there include the principal one of **Rinchen Lhakhang**, the **Losta Lhakhang** (Translator's Temple), the **Jamyang Lhakhang** (Manjusri Temple) and the so-called **Sumtsag Lhakhang** (Three-tiered Temple). The main image is that of Vairocana but there can also be seen the Five Buddha Families together with their attendant deities, the beautiful and various forms of the buddhas and bodhisattvas moulded in clay, carved in wood and painted on the walls. The paintings are not like the Tibetan style but rather they are executed according to the Indian tradition. In order to build these temples **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator is said in the various biographies to have brought with him from Kashmir thirty-two sculptors and woodcarvers. There are, furthermore, many temples and stupas there which have gone to ruin. The translator's own staff which he himself planted there is now a huge willow tree. It is reckoned to be the oldest willow in Ladakh. Other temples built by **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator, are to be found at Mangyu, Sumda, each containing a sacred image of Vairocana, various most beautiful images of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and many kinds of lovely paintings. They are also included among the 108 temples built by **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator, within the province of **Naris-skor-sum**.

Yungdrung Monastery - Lamejuvu

Yungdrung Monastery is situated 126 kilometres west of Leh. In ancient times there was a great lake in this place. The Arhat **Nyimagung** made a prophesy saying: "May a monastery be founded in this place" and he then offered a votive water offering (**chu-gtor**) to all the naga serpent spirits who were the guardians of that place. The grains of corn that

Lama Yuru Monastery



formed part of this offering were carried by the waves of different places along the cliff side by the edge of the lake and when they had become mixed with the earth they sprouted forth as corn in the shape of a swastika. At the time when a monastery was later founded there it was called **Yungdrung** (= "swastika"). In the 11th century the mahasiddha Naropa came to this place and the cave where he resided and meditated is still to be seen today. Then **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator came and built many temples and stupas and so the teachings of the **Kadampa** School came to flourish greatly there. Thereafter, for many years the monastery was administered by the **Zhwa-mar-pa** (Red Hats), after which the dharmaraja **Jamyang Namgyal** offered it to **Chosje Danma**, whom he had invited to Ladakh. The rituals and observances of the **Digung Kargyud** School were introduced and the monastery received the name of **Yungdrung Tharpaling**. There are about 200 monks residing there today. The successive reincarnations of **Skyabsje Toldan Rinpoche** act as the incumbents of the monastery. There is a custom whereby each year on the 17 and 18th of the 5th Tibetan month the festival of the so called "**Yungdrung Kabgyad**" is held during which sacred dances are performed and the ritual of hurling a votive offering is observed. At this time many people from the districts of Sham and Stod assemble there to witness the festival. In this monastery there are various shrines to be seen, including thangkas and wall-paintings.

Wanla Monastery

Wanla is situated close by **Yungdrung** to the south-east. This old monastery was built approximately 990 years ago during the time of Lama **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator.

The famous image of the 11-headed Mahakaruna (Avalokitesvara), built to a height of more than two storeys, is to be seen there. On the wall-paintings there are depicted the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, the mandalas and so forth. Furthermore, there is also a sacred image of **Joboje Paldan Atisha**. Since it is most blessed monastery a tradition exists whereby many people from the districts of Sham, Stod and other parts of **Ladakh** go there on pilgrimage in order to perform prostrations, make offerings, supplications and aspirations.

Likir Monastery

Likir lies at a distance of 52 kilometers west of Leh. During the life time of **Lhachen Gyalpo**, the fifth king of **Ladakh**, a religious estate and the land on which to build the monastery was offered to **Lama Duwang Chosje**, a great champion of meditation. The Lama blessed the site and in 1065 the monastery was built and community introduced. Material necessities were provided without fail for the support of at the most five hundred monks and at the least one hundred monks while they meditated at the three lakes of **Kangri** (=Kailash). The site of the monastery was encircled by the bodies of the two great serpent spirits, the naga-rajah **Nanda** and **Taksako** and so its name became widely renowned as **Likir** ('The Naga-Encircled') **Galdan Targyasling**.

In the 15th century the disciple of **Khasdubje** known as **Lhawang Lodos Sangphu** caused the monastery to flourish. The monastery was brought into the order of the great **Lama Tsongkhapa** and up till present times the rituals and observances of the three basic Pratimoksa disciplines, which

form the basis of the Buddhist teachings, are preserved. There are many blessed shrines in this monastery and there resides a protective deity wearing golden armour and of stern command. Every year from the 27th to the 29th of the 12th month the votive offerings known as **Custor** are assembled and sacred dances which are both profound and extensive are performed. Approximately one hundred monks are in residence in the monastery. The successive reincarnations of **Naris Rinpoche** act as the incumbents of the monastery.

The Castle of Tingmogang

Tingmogan lies at a distance of about 92 kilometres west of the capital at Leh. This castle was built at the time when **Gragspa Bum**, younger brother of **Gragspa Bum-Ide**, the 17th king of the Ladakhi dynasty, was ruling over Sham in accordance with religious tenets. About 530 years have elapsed since its construction. Contemporary to this was the **Red Chapel Tsuglagkhang Marpo** containing an image of the Buddha Maitreya to the height of three storeys. In particular it was at that time that the self-originated image of **Avalokitesvara** from **Kamrup** was brought and installed inside the castle of **Tingmogang**. The image is considered to be a most excellent object of pilgrimage which leads to the accumulation of great merit and to which prostrations and oblations have been offered by the successive dharma-rajahs of **Ladakh** and by the whole populations of **Ladakh**, both lay and monastic, male and female. There is a custom whereby the people of all districts throughout **Ladakh** go to see it, from **Sham**, **Stod**, **Nubra** and **Zaskar**. Moreover, on the 15th day of the **Vishakha** month, which celebrates the three most important events in the life of the Lord Buddha and which also happens to be the occasion on which this exalted image

was brought to the castle of **Tingmogang**, the men and women of the area come on pilgrimage to this image wearing new clothes and jewellery and bearing the requisites for offerings including butter for the butter-lamps, incense and flowers. On seeing the image they make their aspirations. They then dance and sing songs. The custom continues today unimpaired.

The Castle of Basgo

Basgo lies at a distance of 42 kilometres west of **Leh**. The castle known as **Basgo Rabtan Lhartsekhar** is situated there on a hill of clay. It was built by the dharmarajas **Jamyang Namgyal** and **Singge Namgyal**, father and son. The principle image there is that of the so-called "Golden Maitreya", a sacred copper-gilt image of the **Buddha Maitreya**, two storeys in height. It was built by the dharmaraja **Singge Namgyal** as a funerary to his father, King **Jamyang Namgyal**. There is also an image of the **Buddha Maitreya** made of clay, three storeys in height which can be seen at the top of the castle. There are many most beautiful paintings to be seen in great variety on the walls of that temple. Although there are preserved there many canonical scriptures and commentaries written out in gold and silver, they are now incomplete because of their having been dispersed. The name **Basgo** ('Bull-Head') originates from the presence of a large boulder there shaped like a bull's head. It can be seen today in a mani wall by the side of the motor road. The ruins of a temple and a stupa built by **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator can also be seen.

Rizong Monastery

The monastery of **Rizong** known as **Vuma Changchubling** was built about 135 years ago by the great **Lama Tsultim Nima**. The monastery upholds the teachings of the great **Tsongkhapa**. Since the monastic community places particular importance to the observance of the **Vinaya** precepts, the traditions of the coercive rites which include sacred dances and hurling votive offerings are not especially observed. Dress and food provisions are provided for all members of the community by the governing body of the monastery. Nothing other than religious robes and books is permitted for the inmates of each cell. There are forty monks in residence. The incumbents of the monastery are the successive reincarnations of **Lama Tsultim Nima** and of his son, **Sras Rinpoche**. Within the monastery there are shrines, the printing blocks of the biography of **Lama Tsultim Nima**, many objects made and books composed by the first **Sras Rinpoche**. The monastery is sited in a most solitary position. Two kilometres below it there is a nunnery called **Chulichan** where about twenty nuns reside. Their food provisions and clothes are provided by the governing body of **Rizong Monastery**. The work of spinning wool, milking, extracting oil for the temple lamps and so forth has to be performed by all the nuns.

Pheyang Monastery

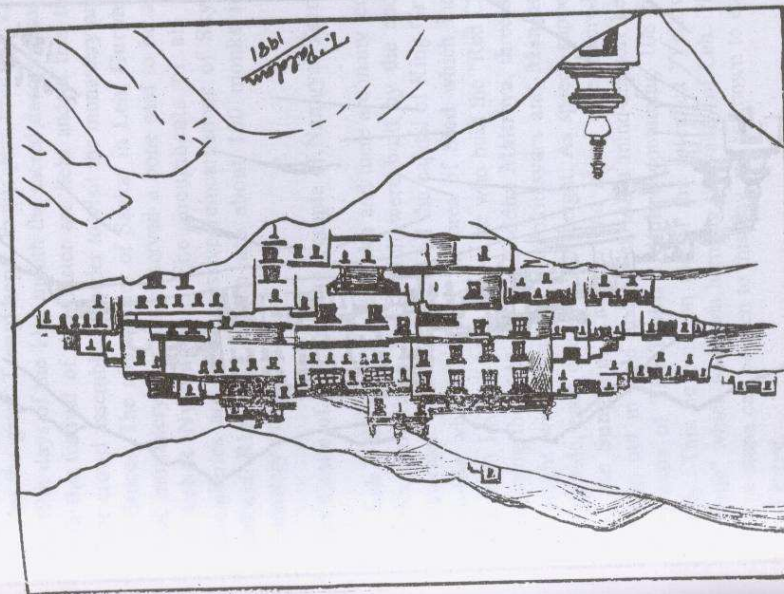
Pheyang is situated 17 kilometres west of **Leh**. The site for the monastery there formed part of one of the many monastic estates offered to **Chosje Danma Kunga** from **Digang** during the time of dharmaraja **Jamyang Namgyal**, who had invited the former to **Ladakh**. A monastery called

Tashi Chozang was founded there on the blue hill of Pheyang and a monastic community introduced. It marked the first establishment of the **Digung** teachings in Ladakh, teachings whose traditions began with **Skyoba Jigten Gonbo**. At present there are seventy monks in residence. Within the monastery there are sacred shrines and various wall-paintings are to be seen which date from the royal period. The protective deity of the monastery is **Apchi Choski Dolma**. Every year from the 2nd to the 3rd of the 6th month the sacred dances and the hurling of votive offering associated with the festival of "Gang-sngon Tsedub" are held. Many people from all over Ladakh observe the custom of participating in this festival. The monastery was founded 446 years ago (reckoning from 1977). The successive reincarnations of **Skyabje Toldan Rinpoche** act as the incumbents of the monastery.

Spituk Monastery

The monastery of **Spituk** lies on the side of a mountain seven kilometres from Leh. The site of **Spituk** was blessed by the Arhat **Nyimagung**. A temple was built there in the 11th century by 'Od-de' the elder brother of Lha Lama **Changchub Od**, when he came to **Maryul**. He introduced a monastic community. When **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator came to that place he said that an exemplary religious community would arise there and so the monastery was called **Spituk** ('Exemplary'). That time it belonged to the **Kadampa** School. Then during the lifetime of Dharmaraja Gragspa Bum-Idé the monastery was restored by Lama **Lhawang Lodos** and the stainless order of **Tsongkhapa** was introduced and it has remained intact as such up till the present. There are many most excellent sacred shrines to be seen inside the

Rigzong Monastery

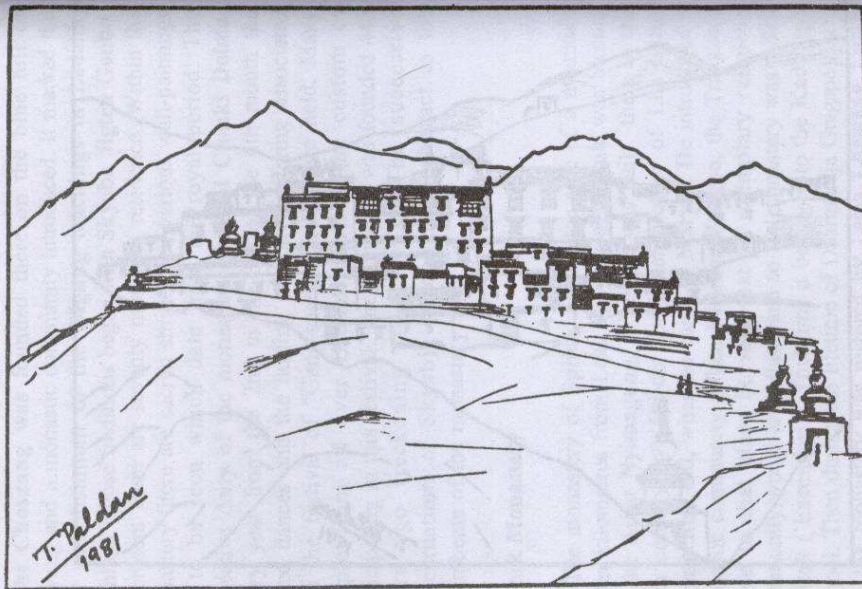


monastery. The principal statue is that of the Lord Buddha. Within this statue there is a sacred image of Amitayus, about the fingerlength in height, presented to King **Gragspa Bum-ide** by the great **Tsongkhapa**. Every year from the 17th to the 19th days of the 11th month the sacred dances associated with the festival of the Gustor are held and at this time a large crowd assembles in order to visit the monastery and see the dances. The monasteries of Sankar in **Leh**, **Gurphug** in **Stok** monastery there is preserved a bone said to be a relic of **Arhat Nyimagung**. The incumbents of all these monasteries are the successive reincarnations of **Skyabsje Bakula Rinpoche**. There are about 100 monks in the monastery of **Spituk**.

The Castle of Leh and the Temple of Namgyal Tsemo

Leh is the capital of **Ladakh** and there are many temples, castles and stupas here which were built by the ancestral dharma-rajas. **Leh** was first of all the capital of King **Gragspa Bum-ide** who ruled over the area of **Stod** which included **Leh** from 1400 to 1430. It was he who built the "Red Chapel" containing the statue of the **Buddha Maitreya**, three storeys in height with statue of **Avalokitesvara** and **Manjusri** on either side, each one storey in height. As speech-supports he had the **Sungbum Chenmo** and many other sacred texts written out in gold and silver. As a mind-support he built the stupa of **Ti'u-Tashis Od-phro** containing 108 temples inside. This he built on top of the so-called "Yellow-Te'u Demon" which had been harming the valley of **Leh**. The ruin of the stupa can be seen to this day and is known to everyone as **Tisuru**.

Thereafter, the temple of **Namgyal Tsemo** was built during the lifetime of king **Tashi Namgyal** who ruled from

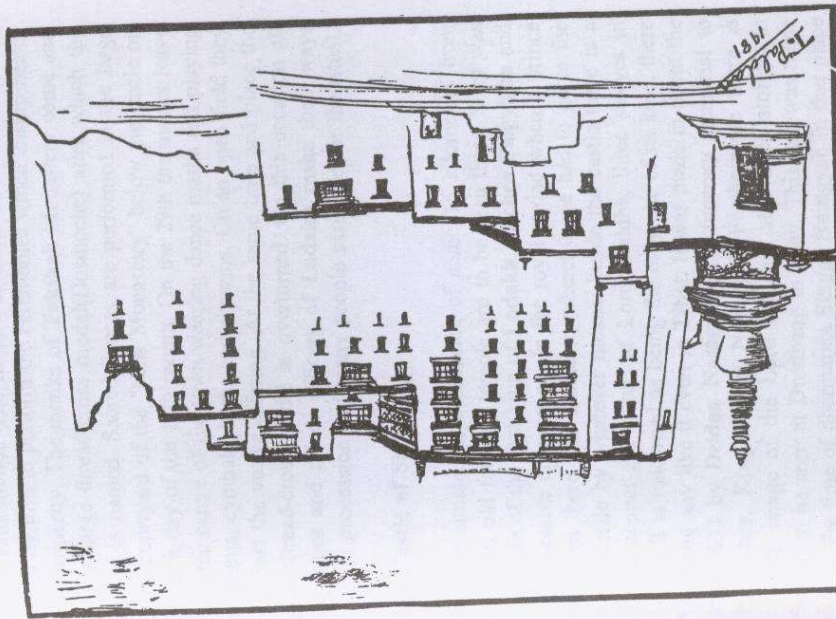


Pheyang Monastery

1500 to 1532. The village of **Chubi** was founded by him. During the invasion of the Hor army many of the **Hor** died in battle and all their bodies were placed under an image of Mahakala over which a temple devoted to the guardian deities was built. Their evil spirits were crushed in order to repulse further attack from the border.

The castle known as **Lehchen Palkhar** was built in 1600 by the dharmaraja **Singge Namgyal**. It has nine stories. The histories say that its completion took three years. In the Leh valley there is also to be seen the monastery of **Sankar** which was founded by the first **Skyabsje Bakula**. It is a branch monastery of **Spituk Monastery**. In the town of Leh there is a yellow stupa called the "**Mani Sermo**" which was built by **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator. The temple of the **Neser King** is also to be seen. In the centre of **Leh** there is the "**New Monastery**" (**Gonpa Soma**), Otherwise called the **Jokhang**. It was built by the Buddhist Association of **Ladakh** in 1957. Inside, there is a sacred image of the Buddha **Shakya Muni** that was brought from Tibet. The proceedings of the Buddhist Association are held in this monastery. Close by the Radio Station in Leh there are two large mani walls. The one built in the centre of the open plain known as **Rongo Thang** was built as a memorial to **Queen Skalzang Dolma** by her son **Deldan Namgyal** in about the year 1635, it is five hundred paces in length and has many hundreds of thousands of mani inscriptions carved in stone in **Lantisa** and **Tibetan** characters. At its head and end there are the Stupas of Enlightenment and of Victory which contain relics. The long mani wall further down from this one was built by **Tsetan Namgyal** in 1785 and intended as a memorial to his father, **King Tsewang Namgyal**. It is 350 paces in length.

Leh Palace



The festival of **Dosmoche** in **Leh** takes place every year in the 12th month. The monks of different monasteries are invited by turn to perform the ceremonies which ensure health and prosperity. The monks of **Takthak** Monastery come and erect a large thread-cross model (**Dosmoche**) after which the festival is named. Sacred dances are performed in the large dance courtyard of the "New Monastery" below the castle on the 28th day of the 12th month. On the 29th the monks leave from the centre of the town wearing dance masks and playing on drums, cymbals, horns and shawms. On an open field they then cast the votive offering. At the same time and place the great thread-cross model is overturned. On this occasion all the major and minor officers of **Ladakh** make their ways there in procession and many people assemble for the ritual.

The Castle of Shey

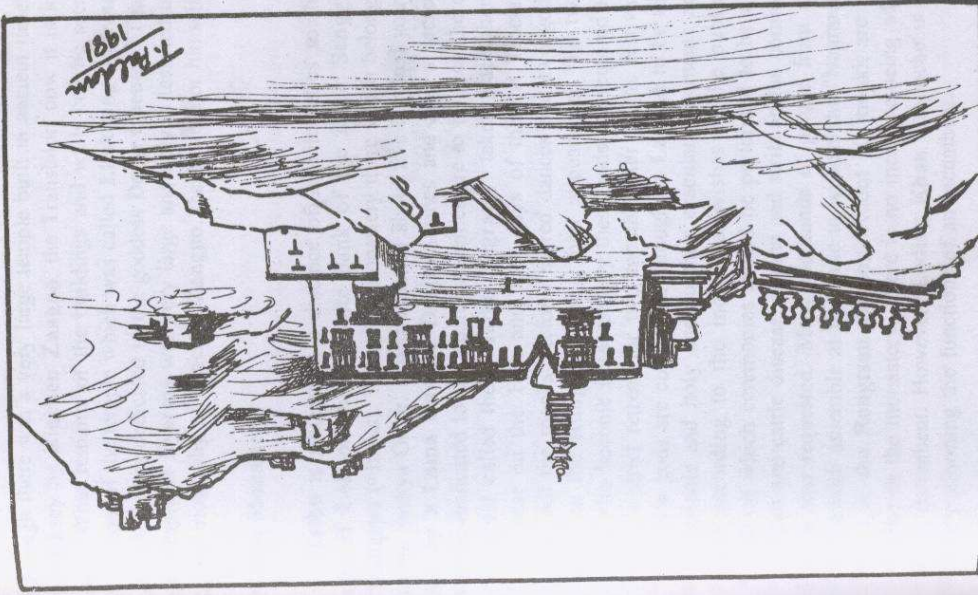
Shey is situated at a distance of some 16 kilometres from **Leh**. An old fort and temple are to be seen there. Shey was the castle of the first king of **Ladakh**, **Lachen Palgyigon** and of successive dhamarajas. In the royal period when a prince was born there was a custom whereby one had to go to the **Shey** Castle by whatever means. Inside the castle there is a sacred copper-gilt statue of Lord Buddha, three storeys in height. It is renowned as being the only one of its kind, there not being any like it even in **Tibet**. It was made in about the year 1633 by **Deldan Namgyal** as a funerary memorial to his father, King **Singge Namgyal**. Furthermore there is another image of the Lord Buddha, also three storeys in height, to be seen at **Dresthang** in **Shey**. This one was made during the time of dhamaraja **Singge Namgyal**. In that place there can also be seen stone carvings of various images and some sacred stupas. On the 30th day of the 1st Tibetan month

many of the faithful from different districts come for the festival of the "**Shey Srubla**". Bearing their offerings they pay their respects to the great image of Lord Buddha, prostrating before it and circumambulating it. On the 10th day of 7th Tibetan month the festival of "**Shey Srubla**" is held during which there is a tradition according to which all the farmers offer the first fruits of their corn harvest to the Triple Gem as an auspicious token. Celebrations and dances are held. At this time a god called Dorje Chenmo also comes forth. Furthermore, there is a custom of making a royal horse, a snow lion, chariot & other props which are used in the song and dance. At this time many spectators assemble in order to pay their respects to the god.

Thiksey Monastery

Thiksey (or **Khrig-se**) is 19 kilometres from Leh and a holy monastery is situated on the top of a hill there. **Jamgon Tsongkhapa** once declared. "On the right bank of the River Sindh my teachings will come to flourish". According to this prophesy the Lord's own disciple, **Shesrab Zangpo** of Stod first built the temple of **Stagmo Lhakhang** at the top of the Thiksey valley but a monastic community was not established there. Then **Sherab Zangpo's** nephew called **Paldan Sherab** founded the great monastery of Thiksey together with the residence for Lama and it came to flourish. There are sacred shrines and many precious objects to be seen there. Eighty monks are in residence. The successive reincarnations of the **Skyabsje Khanpo Rinpoche** act as incumbents of the monastery. Sacred dances are held at the time of the **Gustor** ritual which is performed every year from the 17th to the 19th day of the 9th month. At this time a god also appears. More than 530 years have elapsed since this monastery was founded.

Shey Palace



Although there was a very large temple built in ancient times at Thiksey by **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator, now it is in ruins. What remains of the buildings and walls can be seen at the site of the temple which was called **Lhakhang Nyerna** and which was dedicated to the goddess **Dorje Chenmo**. That the temple of **Nyerna** was very large and holy is testified to by the biography of **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator himself.

Matho Monastery

Matho is situated at a distance of 26 kilometres south-east of **Leh** on the opposite bank of the River **Senge Tsangpo** (=Indus). There is a monastery there which belongs to the **Saskya** Order. It was founded about five hundred years ago by a **Lama Dzungpa Dorje**. Shrines and also a sacred temple dedicated to the guardian deities are to be seen there. A festival called the "**Matho Nagrang**" takes place there every year on the 14th and 15th days of the 1st Tibetan month. All the monks perform sacred dances and two gods known as the **Rongtsan** make their appearance. The two monks who become possessed by these gods are required to stay in a strict retreat for two months prior to the festival. These two gods are considered throughout **Ladakh** to be the most reliable and holy and so their oracular statements are sought according to the individual wishes of the public. Advice on which ceremonies should be performed to be rid of human and cattle disease, famine and strife in the coming year is also requested. Many thousands of people from all over **Ladakh** assemble at this time to witness the "Nagrang" festival & the **Rongtsan Gyalpo**. About 60 monks are in residence in the monastery. There is no incarnate-being who acts as incumbent. However, **Loding Khan Rinpoche** is at present performing the functions of an incumbent.

Stakna Monastery

The **Stakna** Monastery lies at a distance of some 25 kilometres from **Leh** on the opposite bank of the **Singge Khababs** River (=Indus). The monastery site formed part of one of the many religious estates offered to the great scholar saint of Bhutan called **Chosje Jamyang Palkhar** in about 1580 by the dharmaraja **Jamyang Namgyal** who had invited him to **Ladakh**. The king attended him as his foremost guru and this monastery was founded on the top of a hill shaped like a tiger jumping up to the sky. The monastery was built on the tiger's nose and so its name was given as **Stakna** (Tiger's Nose). The most important image in the monastery is that of the sacred **Arya Avalokitesvara** from Kamrup (=Assam). There is no tradition of sacred dance in the monastery but there is a festival associated with the hurling of a votive offering. There are about thirty monks in residence. The successive reincarnation of the **Stakna Tulku** act as the incumbents of the monastery and they continue to fulfill the fine responsibility of upholding the teachings of the **Dugpa** Order. The branch monasteries attached to Stakna are those of **Mud** and **Kharu** and those of **Stakrimo**, **Bardan** and **Sani** in **Zanskar**.

Hemis Monastery

Hemis is situated 48 kilometres from the capital at **Leh** on the opposite side of the **Singge Tsangpo** River (=Indus). It is the largest and most famous of all monasteries in **Ladakh** and was founded about 350 years ago by **Stagsang Raschen** who was invited to **Ladakh** by king **Singge Namgyal**. He was a Lama who had travelled to **India**, **Odiyana** and **Kashmir**, and who had received a vision of all eighty mahasiddhas and who later realised the "rainbow body". The

king offered him religious estates throughout his dominions in **Ladakh**, including **Sham** and **Stod** and attended on him as his principal guru. The **Changchubling** Monastery of **Hemis** was founded and a community introduced. During the lifetime of the Bodhisattva **Lama Mipam Tsewang** the imitation known as the "**Thegmchog-dbang**" of **Hemis Gonpa** and the festival of "**Hemis Tsechu**" were introduced. From that time on the offerings associated with the "**Tsechu**" festival have been assembled annually from the 9th to the 11th days of the 5th Tibetan month and the monks have performed the sacred dance devoted to the eight aspects of **Guru Padmasambhava**. During the **Tsechu** held in the year of the Monkey it is possible to see the sacred applique-work tapestry wrought with pearls that depicts the Precious Teacher, **Padmasambhava**. Within the monastery there are to be seen a copper-gilt statue of the Lord Buddha, various stupas made of gold and silver, sacred thankas and many precious objects. Five hundred monks reside in the monastery. The successive reincarnation of **Lama Tagsang Raschen** act as the incumbents of the monastery. Throughout the various provinces of **Ladakh** including **Sham**, **Stod**, **Nubra** and **Zanskar** the festival of **Hemis Tsechu** is renowned and so many thousands assemble there for it. The branch monasteries of **Hemis** are including **Sham** and **Wanla** and there are other throughout **Ladakh**, the monastery there is a sacred hermitate founded by the great **Gyalwa Kotsang** where there can be seen his meditation cave, his foot-print and hand-print on the rock, and sacred shrines. The meditational lineage remains unimpaired and today there are still many meditators there. One or two yogins who have achieved realisation have even come forth. This **Kotsang** is an old hermitage which was founded many years before the **Hemis-Monastery**.

Chimde Monastery

Chimde is situated 40 kilometres east of **Leh**. The monastery is sited there on a mountain side and was founded 355 years ago by **Lama Tagsang Reschen** with the dharmaraja **Singge Namgyal** acting as patron. Its full name is **Chimde Thegchoggon**. There is a sacred image of **Padmasambhava** to be seen there, one storey in height. There are, furthermore, many shrines. A custom exists whereby every year on the 28th and 29th days of the 9th month sacred dances are performed in association with the festival of an initiatory ritual. There are 300 monks in residence. The successive reincarnations of **Lama Tagsang Raschen** act as the incumbents.

Takthak Monastery

The monastery of **Takthak** is situated in the village of **Sakti** some 46 kilometres from **Leh**. Before the monastery was founded there was a meditation cave of a mahasiddha called **Kunga Phuntsog** there. After him, during the lifetime of the dharmaraja **Tsewang Namgyal**, 31st, in the line of the royal dynasty, the vidhyadhara of the Ka-thog order called **Tsewang Norbu** came to **Ladakh** from **Khams**. Causing this monastery to flourish, he introduced the order of the **Sangang Nima**. Since the roof and walls of the monastery are all made of rock, it was given that name **Takthak** (Rock-Roof) **Padmalinggon**. Forty monks reside in the monastery. There is a custom of holding sacred dances and the ceremony of hurling a votive offering during the festival of an initiatory ritual on the 28th and 29th days of the 9th month. In previous times there was no incarnate Lama acting as incumbent of the monastery. At present the **Taklung Tulku** administers

it. All the monks of the monastery become skilled in the "white" astrology (of India) and the "black" astrology (of China). There is also a sacred hermitage called **Khaspang** situated close to the villages of **Sakti** and **Chimde**. It is said to be the meditation place of the great **Gyalwa Kotsang**. There are still today a few people who practice meditation there.

The Castle of Stok

Stok lies 14 kilometres south of **Leh** on the opposite side of the **Singge Tsangspo** River. The castle was built on a hill at the end of the village in about the year 1825 by king **Tsepal Tondup Namgyal**. Not long after it was built **Ladakh** was lost to the **Dogras**. From then on the successive kings of **Ladakh** resided in this castle. Inside are preserved shrines, the crown, ceremonial dress and jewellery of the kings of **Ladakh**. In **Stok** there is also the sacred monastery of **Gurphug**, a branch of **Spituk Monastery**. On the 9th and 10th days of the first Tibetan month the festival called the "**Guru Tshechu**" is held during which the monks of **Spituk Monastery** come to perform the sacred dances. At that time two gods make their appearance. In previous times the festival used to be held inside the castle but now-a-days it is held in **Gurphug Monastery**. The name **Stok** derives from there having previously existed in that place a stupa whose golden top ornament (tog) had the form of a relic box containing a seed grain the size of a pigeon and a turquoise the size of a sheep's head.

Samstanling Monastery

The monastery of **Samstanling** is situated in a village called **Sumur** in the district of **Nubra**. It was founded by **Lama Tsultim Nima**. There are many sacred shrines. Fifty

monks reside in the monastery. Since all the monks place particular emphasis on the observance of the Vinaya precepts they do not practice to any great extent the coercive rituals such as those of sacred dance and the hurling of votive offerings. Their dress and food provisions are provided by the governing body of the monastery. In accordance with the rules of the Vinaya they are not permitted to have anything more than their habits and books in their cells. The successive reincarnations of **Lama Tsultim Nima** and of **Sras Rinpoche** act as the incumbents of the monastery. About 130 years have elapsed since it was founded.

Diskit Monastery

Diskit Monastery is situated in the district of Nubra. It was founded in about the year 1420 by **Shesrab Zangpo** of **Stod** during the lifetime of the dharmaraja **Gragspa**. It is reckoned as one of the branches of **Thikse Monastery**. About a hundred monks reside there. The successive reincarnation of **Skyabsje Khanpo Rinpoche** act as the incumbents. There is a custom of holding sacred dances during the festival of **Gustor** which takes place every year on the 28th and 29th days of the 12th Tibetan month. There are all kinds of thangkas, wall-paintings and shrines. In the district of **Nubra**, furthermore, there are the monasteries of **Kargya Rangjon**, **Bensa**, **Kharnying** and others. In all these there are the tokens which accord with the information provided in works of history.

Karcha Monastery

Karcha is the largest of all monasteries in the district of **Zanskar**. **Karcha Chamspa Ling**, to give its full name, was first established by **Phagspa Shesrab**, the Translator of

Zanskar. The present monastery was built by the Teacher **Dorje Shesrab** who caused it to flourish. The order of **Tsongkhapa** was introduced there by **Shesrab Zangpo** of **Stod**. More than a hundred monks are in residence. There are shrines and, in particular, the wall-paintings executed by the **Lama Dzadpa Dorje**. The bone relics of **Dorje Rinchen** are also to be seen. Every year on the 28th and 29th days of the 6th Tibetan month the tradition of sacred dances is observed in association with the **Gustor** festival. In that place there are also two temples built by **Rinchen Zangpo**, the Translator known as the **Thugsjechenpoi Lhakhang** and the **Lhakhang Karpo**. Close by the village of **Karcha** there are the monasteries of **Khagsar**, of **Purang** in the village of **Langmi**, of **Phagspa** in the village of **Nangbaphal** and a nunnery called **Dorjezong** at the top of the valley. There are many sacred sites to be visited in all of these. **Karcha** ('Part-of-Whites') is also called **Karsha** and takes its name from two villages there : **Phyikar** (Outer White) and **Nangkar** (Inner White)

Zongkul Monastery

Zongkul (Ravine Foretress) is a sacred place of meditation, founded by the great mahasiddha **Naropa**, who, when he was residing in his meditation cave (where his staff is still preserved) which is situated on the high and splendid rockface above the present monastery, he struck his ritual dagger into the rock as a sign that he would found the monastery. It came out of the rock overhang below, where the lower 'fortress' is situated beneath the cave and it can be seen to this day. The mahasiddha went there and founded the monastery. Both the lower and upper 'fortresses' are most blessed places where he resided for long periods in meditation.

Thereafter it became the sacred place of meditation for all the mahasiddha of **Zanskar**, including **Dubchen Kunga Gyatso**, **Dubchen Nawang Tsering**, **Dzadpa Dorje**, **Karmapa**, **Kunga Choslag** and **Lama Norbu**. Inside the monastery there are to be seen many kinds of sacred shrines including the holy objects made by all those mahasiddhas mentioned above; such as: an ivory image of **Samvara**, a crystal stupa and the texts containing the spiritual songs and biographies composed by the successive mahasiddhas. Inside the meditation cave there is **Panchen Naropa's** foot-print embedded in the rock and his sacred spring. Between twenty and thirty monks reside in the monastery at present. About 990 years have gone by since it was founded. Thousands of people observe the custom of going to visit the meditation cave in this solitary place every year.

Bardan Monastery

Bardan Monastery is situated at eight miles distance from the capital of **Zanskar** at **Padum** on top of a high cliff by the side of the **Lungnak River**. It was founded by the bodhisattva **Deba Gyatso** and about 400 years have elapsed since it was built. The principal image is a **Gandhara** statue of the **Buddha Maitreya**, two feet in height which is said to have spoken. It is explained that it came in ancient time from **Kashmir**. There are about fifty monks in residence at present. The successive reincarnations of the **Stakna Tulku** act as the incumbents. The monastery was previously situated on top of a mountain called **Thar-Lha**. A raven carried off from there a burning butter lamp and took it to the hill shaped like a white conch shell with its coil turning to the right, the place where the present monastery is situated. There the raven left it in an upright position. Thinking that this was an auspice

for the founding of a monastery, the **Lama Barapa** went there, scattered consecrated grain and blessed the site. The present monastery was founded by the bodhisattva **Deba Gyatso**. Since it was the seat (**gdan-sa**) of **Lama Barapa** its name became **Bardan**. The ruins of a monastery and a stupa can still be seen on top of the mountain called **Thar-Lha**.

Stongde Monastery

Stongde Monastery is renowned as having been founded by **Lama Marpa** and its name is also **Marpaling**. Later, **Shakya Zangpo of Stongde** caused it to flourish. **Lama Gyaltsanpa Ludub Palzangpo** introduced there the order of **Tsongkhapa**. There are many kinds of most beautiful shrines and wall-paintings to be seen there. About 60 monks are in residence and every year sacred dances are performed in conjunction with the festival of **Gustor** which takes place on the 28th and 29th days of the 11th Tibetan month. The successive reincarnations of **Nari Tulku** act as the incumbent. It seems about 950 years have gone by since the monastery was founded.

The Castle of Sani

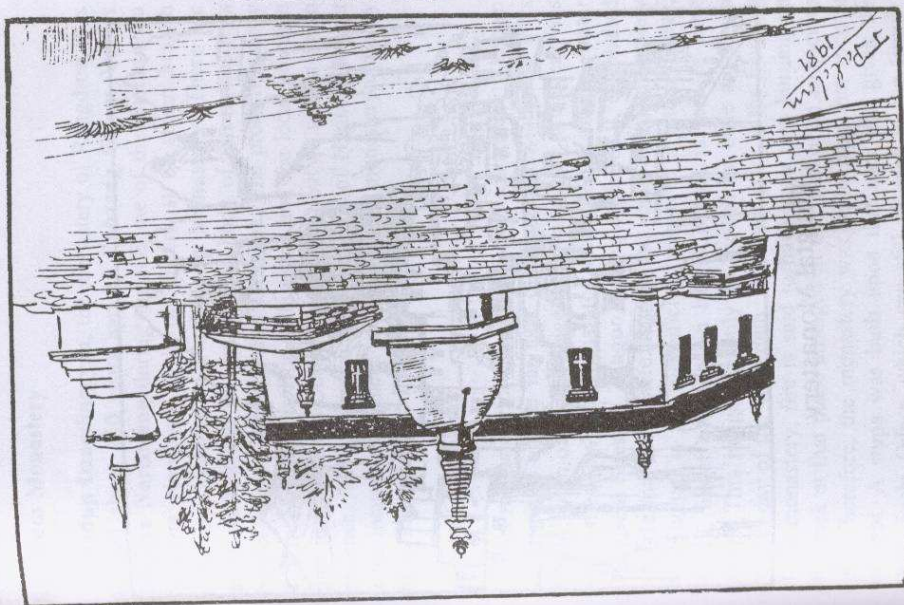
Not only in **Sani** a particularly sacred place due to its having been visited and blessed by **Padmasambhava** of **Oddiyana** but it is also prophesied to be equal in importance to the cemetery of **Dechendal** in **India**. There can be seen there a cemetery ground with cemetery trees and cemetery springs and also a foot-print of **Guru Nima Odzer**. In the centre of the rockface on the opposite side of the river there can be seen a meditation cave and a foot-print. It is said that the **Guru** stayed there practising meditation for many years. In **Sani** is also the great stupa of **Kanishka** and the sacred image

of **Naropa** which can be seen on the day of the pilgrimage to Sani which occurs in the 6th Tibetan month. At that time many of the faithful assemble there bearing offerings and wearing new clothes and jewellery, having come from all parts of **Zanskar** including its upper and lower regions and **Lungnak** and also from **Karja, Paldar** and other places. They pay their respects to the sacred image of **Naropa** and circumbulate it. There is also a custom of dancing and singing at this time. Within the castle there can be seen the various and most beautiful wall-paintings which were executed by **Zadpa Dorje**. It is clear from the **Padma-thangyig** that the stupa of **Kanishka** dates from a thousand years ago.

Phugtal Monastery

Phug-ta (also Phugtal) was founded in ancient times by **Phagspa Shesrab**, the Translator of **Zanskar**. It was the Teacher **Dorje Rinchen** who caused it to flourish and the bodhisattva **Shesrab Zangpo** who introduced there the order of the **Ribo Gadenpa**. It is about 530 years old. Since the monastery is built inside a huge cave its name **Phugtal** (Through-Cave) is said to derive from this. There are many sacred relics and shrines to be seen within. About sixty monks are in residence. Every year all the monks observe the custom of performing sacred dances in conjunction with the Gustor festival which takes place on the 18th and 19th days of the 12th Tibetan month. Close by lies the monastery of **Mune** called **Diskitling** which was founded by the bodhisattva **Shesrab Zangpo**. About 15 monks reside there and there are sacred shrines to be seen. Apart from these places, in the district of **Zanskar** there should also be seen the Guru images at **Pipiting** and **Chamsling**, and **Stag Rimo** Monastery and

Kanika Stupa and Sani Monastery



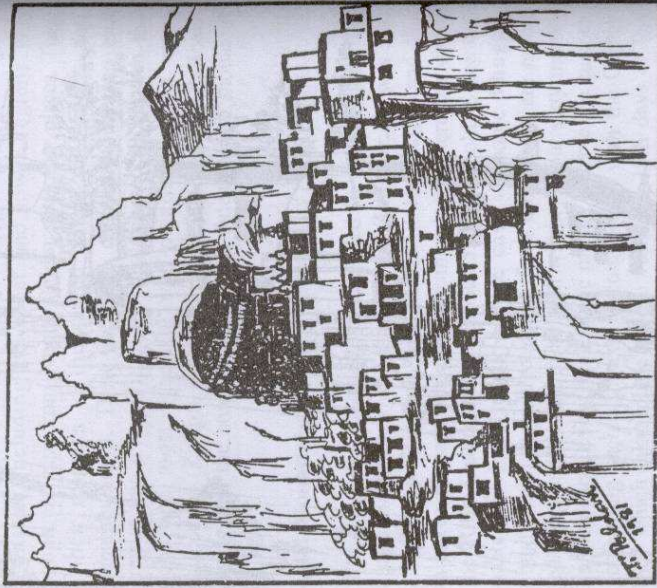
many kinds of mani walls and old castles.

Rangdum Monastery

Shadup Dzamlingyan, the monastery of **Rangdum**, was founded about 250 years ago by **Lobzang Gelegs Yeshe Gragpa Naritsang** during the lifetime of the dharamaraja **Tsewang Namgyal**. It is the foremost of seven branch monasteries attached to **Naritsang Monastery**. There are sacred shrines and the mummified body of the monastery's founder **Lama Gelegs yeshe Gragpa**. The protective deity of stern command is **Dorje Shugsdan** and the local guardian spirit is the **Stamma Dorje Yodonma**. About 40 monks are in residence. The successive reincarnations of **Naris Tulku** act as the incumbents. There is also a sacred monastery close by the in the village of **Lingshed**.

Lingshed Monastery

This monastery is situated atop a hill of a locality known as **Lingshed** on the far side of **Singge** pass, about 3 days journey south of **Yuru** village. Originally, this monastery was established by the Translator, **Rinchen Zangpo**, Later **Changsem Shesrab Zangpo**, having expanded it, established the **Gelukpa** Order there. Among the image in this monastery the principal is the magnificent image of a tutelary deity, **Berava**, about one foot in height, which is said to have spoken. This image can only be viewed on once a year on the 15th day of the 4th month. Moreover, prior to the founding of the monastery, fire is said to have been seen burning up on a rock at that place arranged in the form of an auspicious sign. Therefore, the monastery was built upon that rock at the spot. A stupa was built upon that rock and given the name, **Tashi Odbar**, which can still be seen in the temple.



Phugtal Monastery

Besides this, there are many other shrines to be seen. The successive reincarnation of **Nari Rinpoche** act as the incumbent of the monastery.

Korzot Monastery

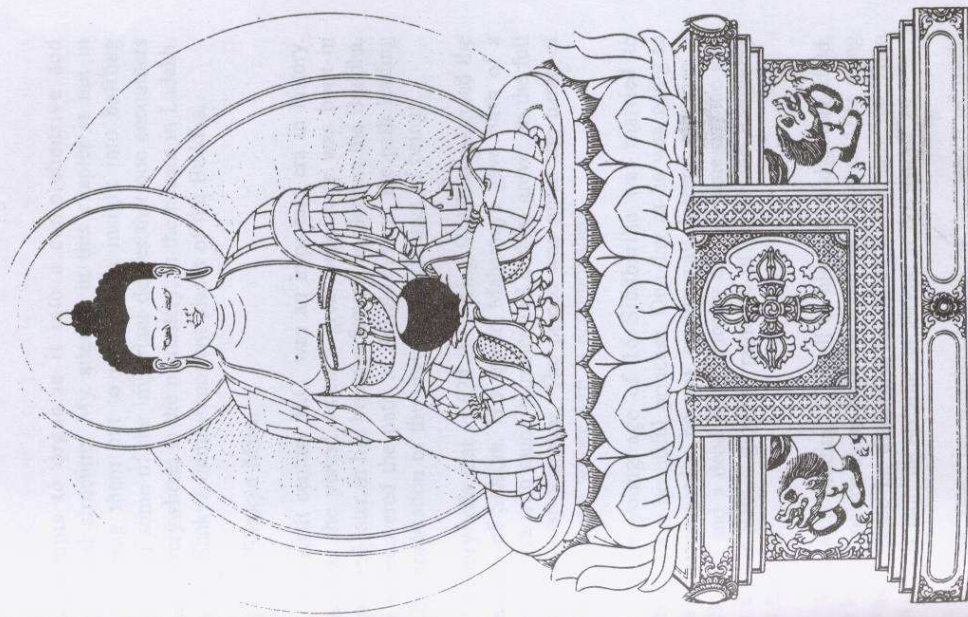
The monastery of **Korzot** is situated near the **TSOMO RIRI** lake and it is about 208 kilometres away from **Leh**. The monastery is situated on a hill and was founded by **Lama Kunga Lodos Snyingbo** about 135 years ago. The monastery was sponsored by the chief of the **Rushot, Tsering Tashi Namgyal**. There are many sacred statues and thangkas to be seen inside the monastery. The main statue is that of the Lord **Shakya Muni Buddha**. In side the statue beside the other things, it kept sacred tooth and (Rinsel) relics of the **Kasho Buddha**.

The successive reincarnations of the monatory is the **Skaba-rje Langsna Tulku** act as incumbents of the monastery. There are fifty monks in the monastery at **Koezok** ritual is the "GOMAN" sacred dance held every year from the 3rd and 4th days of the 6th month. **Thukja Gonpa** of **Samad** village is the only branch monastery of **Korzot Gonpa**.

There are besides many other branch monasteries in **Ladakh** such as those of **Sharkhul** and **Chumur** but since they are not considered to be among the most important I have not written about them here.

THE PANTHEON

The Tibetan pantheon having been derived from various sources is a very complex and amorphous collection. This confusing mass of innumerable deities and images have eluded



Gautama Buddha

and staff. DAMCHAN and PEHAR are manifestation of great king. The oracle of Naschung also a form of the great king, who is called Dorje Tagtsldan.

Nezer

NEZER is a great protector of Buddhism. Once he was guardian of Sri Lanka. With Bodhisattava DADPA RTANPO he promised to be a protector of Buddha's doctrine. Later the famous Indian teacher Atisha appointed him a Buddhism defender and named NEZER JIVO.

He wears royal ornaments and dress. He seated on a white horse and holds a spear with flag in his right hand and a jewel in his left hand. He have the third eye of wisdom.

HISTORICAL FIGURES

Nagarjuna (Lhundub)

Born as the son of Brahmin in South India, Nagarjuna became a great Mahayani Buddhist Scholar of Nalanda University. He was an expounder of Madhyamika School of Buddhist philosophy. Later he preached in South India. He is a very famous Buddhist philosopher. He was invited to Naglok. He brought Sher Chin-Bum, the collection of secret writing of Parjnaparmita.

Padmasambhava

Padmasambhava, the great master of Tantra, established the Ningma School of Tibetan Buddhism, which is also known as the school of Translation Period. Among the Tantric



Padma-sambhava

doctrines introduced by him, the highest one is called the Atiyoga or **Dzogchen**. He is shown with his right hand in Karana Mudra holding a Vajra and the left hand in dhyana mudra holding a skull-cup with ambrosia. **Khatavanga**, the emblem of Prajna, invariably found resting on his left shoulder.

Naropa

Naropa, a wood seller of vocation was attracted by the fame of Tillipa. After a difficult search he found his Guru Tillipa. Tillipa, however, refused to teach him. Naropa, nevertheless served him most faithfully for 12 years. Responding to man's unflinching devotion, Tillipa taught him the doctrine propounded by Vajravahni. He realised the state of Siddhi after six months of meditation. Emancipating many men, he entered Nirvana.

Lotsava Rinchen Zangpo

In the history of **Naris-skor-sum** (Western Tibet), the age of **Rinchen Zangpo** would ever be commemorated as a great cultural and religious importance. He was born to a pious father **Janu Chang Chub** and mother **Chograza** in Quwang village of **Kuge** province of Western Tibet. Even in his early age, **Rinchen Zangpo** behaved unusually, kept away from his playmate, withdrew from all worldly interest and always remained thoughtful. In view of such unique disposition of their son, the parents entrusted him to a unique learned teacher **Legspa Zangpo**, who named the boy as **Rinchen Zangpo** and ordained as samnera. In no time, the young novice showed extraordinary skill in learning Buddhist texts which included the famous **Sumgyapa** and its commentary. Later,



Naropa

Vikramashila, Shri Atisa had these word for **Rinchen Zangpo** when he visited Naris in the 11th century: "In the presence of scholar like **Rinchen Zangpo** in Tibet, my visit to this country does not make much difference. **Rinchen Zangpo** died at the age of ninety eight.

Atisa

Acharya Dipangkara's father was king Kalyana Sri and his mother Sri Parbhavati. He was born in 982 A.D. at Sahor in Eastern India.

When he was 12 years old Acharya Bodhibhadra initiated him into the life of sarmana (novice), made him wear saffron coloured clothes and called him Dipangkara Srijana. Dipangkara completed his studies at Vikramasila and became a master of the three pitakas and Tantras. By virtue of his extraordinary learning and ability, he became the chief among the 51 scholars and the leaders of 108 temples in Vihara. Dipangkara travelled to Tibet when he was sixty and carried two baggages: a pagoda containing the relics of Buddha and a basket containing sacred texts. He founded the **Kadampa** Sect of Buddhism. He translated many books and wrote his famous work, **The Bodhipatha-Pradipa**. **Domtonpa** was his most devoted disciple. During the later part of his long stay of thirteen years in Tibet, **Atisa** spent three years in Naris four years in Middle Tibet and six years in **Nethang**. He passed away at **Nethang**, near **Lhasa** at the age of seventy three in the year 1054 A.D.

Milaraspa

Born in the 11th century at **Lo**, Western Tibet, **Milaraspa**



Atisa (Dipangkara)

was one of the famous disciples of **Marpa**, the first Mahamudra Guru of Tibet. He lost his father early in his childhood. As a result he and his mother suffered terribly at the hands of his uncle and his wife. In order to punish them **Milaraspa** mastered the art of black magic. But he repented his cruel deeds when he saw the plight of his victims. Thereafter, he took to an austere life and by following the Mahamudra doctrine at the feet of Guru Marpa, he attained perfect liberation during his life time. He was also a great poet. Milaraspa's composition equals in simplicity and sublimity to the Sufi poetry. His famous poetry book is known as Gurbum.

Tsongkhap

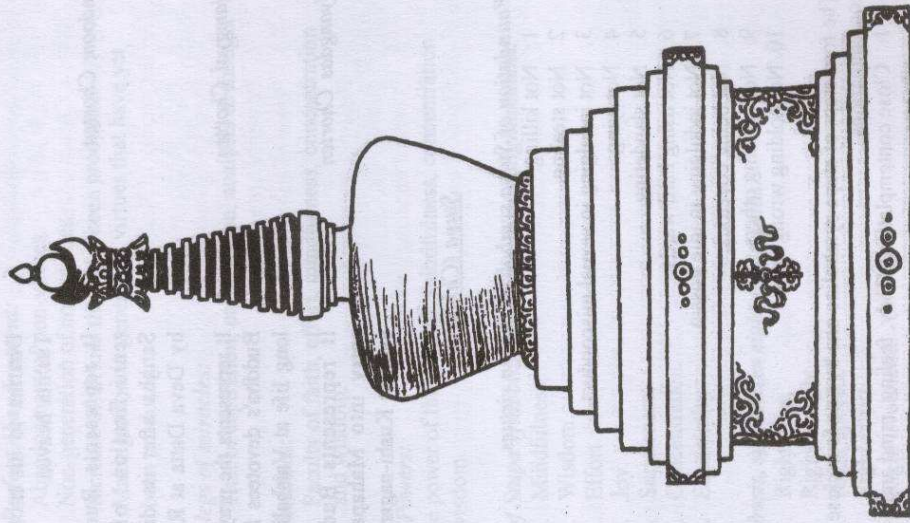
Je **Tsonghapa** was born in 1357 in **Tsongkha** country of Doshad in Eastern Tibet. When he was barely three years old, his father Lubum-ge and mother Shingza Chog put him under the care of teacher **Chosje Tondum Rinchen**. The teacher ordained the boy as a samnera and gave him the name **Lobzang Tagspa**. Receiving his basic education and monastic training in his native land, he travelled to Vus Central Tibet for higher studies. **Lobzang Tagspa** soon came in contact with several noted scholars of different discipline in Central Tibet. He studied the paramita texts from the logician Kungpal, the abhidharma from **Je Rendawa**, the vinaya from **Khanchen Losal** and the madhyamika from **Narthans** and **Kaminpa** and received mahamudra instructions from **Gampopa**. Thus **Lobzang Tagspa** perfected himself in all the branches of Buddhist knowledge. He was given the title, **Gyalwa Nispa**, the Second Buddha.

Among hundreds of **Tsongkhapa's** disciples, **Gyaltsabje**,

Khasdupje and **Gendundup** were the most celebrated ones. He founded the **Gelukpa** or Yellow Hat Sect or the Reformed Sect. He was also the founder of **Gaidan** monastery which remained as a Gelukpa centre of learning until the Chinese seizure of Tibet in 1959. In Central Tibet alone several monastic institutions like **Despung**, **Sera**, **Tashi Lhumpo** etc. came into existence due to his efforts. The **Lhasa's Monlam** (great prayer) was also instituted by Je Tsongkhapa in 1409 A.D. Among his volumes of works on various subjects, the **Lamrim Chenmo** is very popular and widely studied by both scholars and laymen. **Je Tsongkhapa** entered mahaparinirvana at the age of sixty three (in 1419 A.D.).

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EIGHT STUPAS

- Tashi Gamang or Padpung Chorten* : It represents the Buddha's birth in the Lumbini grove.
- Changchub Chorten* : It represents Buddha's enlight-enment a Vaprasna in Bodh Gaya, Magadh.
- Chhoskor or Duidul Chorten* : It represents Buddha's teaching of the Dharma to the five monks at Samath, Varanasi.
- Chhosdul Chorten* : It represents Buddha's exhibition of miracle powers at S'ravasti.
- Lhabab Chorten* : It represents Buddha's descent to the world of



Bodhi Stupa

man, after teaching the Dharma to his mother in Tushita heaven.

Indoom Chorten

: It represents Buddha's re-unification of the Sangha after its dispersal by Deva Datta at Rajgiri.

Namgyal Chorten

: It represents the prayers of Buddha's devotees for his long life at Vaishali

Nyangdas Chorten

: It represents Buddha's entry into Mahaparinirvana at Kushi-nagar.

Stupa (Chorten)

Foundation of Stupa symbolizes the ten virtues.

1. Not killing.
2. Not stealing.
3. Not indulging in sexual misconduct.
4. Not lying.
5. Not slandering.
6. Not using hard words.
7. Not indulging in idle gossip.
8. Not being covetous.
9. Not harming others.
10. Not holding wrong view.

The four steps of stupa symbolize one by one four close contemplations.

1. Close contemplations Body, feeling, mind and dharma.

Four Perfect Abandonment:

1. Abandonment of non-virtues.
2. Non-generation of non-virtues.
3. Increase of virtues that have been produced.
4. Making effort in generating virtues that have yet been produced.

Four legs of miracles:

1. That of aspiration, preservation, analysis & thought

Five faculties:

1. Faculty of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

Five Powers:

1. The power of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

Pot of Stupa symbolizes seven limbs of enlightenment:

1. Mindfulness.
2. Wisdom.
3. Effort.
4. Joy.
5. Suppleness.
6. Concentration.
7. Equanimity.

Tre, basis, symbolizes eight noble paths.

1. Right view.
2. Right thought.
3. Right speech.
4. Right effort.
5. Right livelihood.
6. Right mindfulness.