

Buddhist Traditional Ethics: A Source of Sustainable Biodiversity

Examining cases amongst Buddhist communities of Nepal, Leh-Ladakh and North-East Region of India

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The opportunity to get this project is one of the important turning points in my academic pursuits. It increased my hunger to learn Buddhism and engage its tradition in social spectrum. Though the project is a symbolical presentation of Buddhist cultural and ethical values existing in Ladakh, Lumbini and Tawang. But it gives wide scope, specially me to learn, identify and explore more about these societies. My several visits in Ladakh has provided me plethora of knowledge and material to continue my research to produce a well explored monograph on Ladakh. I wish that I would be able to complete it in near future. I do acknowledge that report gives only peripheral knowledge about the theme of the project. It is dominantly oriented to Himalayan ranges of Ladakh. But in such short time, it was not possible to go for deep researches on these perspectives. However I have tried to keep my ideas original and tried for new orientation to early researches on topic. In future these ideas will be further elaborated and published.

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Buddhist Traditional Ethics: A Source of Sustainable Biodiversity (Examining Cases amongst Buddhist Communities of Nepal, Leh- Ladakh and North-East Region of India

The focus of study comprises three different regions-Ladakh, Tawang (Northeast) and Lumbini (Nepal). The geographical structure and social characteristics of these regions are different. However Buddhism is an integral force in these regions influencing all dimensions of life. The study starts with discussion on various aspects of Ladakh in respect of Buddhist traditional ethics and its application. After that Tawang and Lumbini have been taken for examination.

Physiography & Ecology of Ladakh:

Ladakh is situated between the Indus and the Shyok rivers in the Trans-Himalayan region bordering Pakistan and China. It derives its name from numerous *darras* (passes) comprising two words *la* i.e. pass and *dakh* meaning series of mountains. It is a vast horizon of snow and rock and stretches from the Shyok-Indus confluence up to the western border of Tibet where the Indus separates it from the Zangskar range in Pupshu. Ladakh with the enormity of its size and paucity of human resource in the rugged landscape of the Himalayas invites challenging problems-geo-political, socio-religious and economic in nature.¹ It is known as *La-tags*, *dMar-yul*, *dMar-po-yul* (red land), *Kha-pa-chan* (snow land). Cunningham derives its name from Botpa or Bhotis which is influenced by Buddhism. Its might have been parochialised from Baudhastan or Bouddhathan or Bod-tan or Bot.² Pliny says it '*hos includit Indus montium corona circumdatos et solitudinibus*'. The natives of Kha-pa- chan resides along the Indus and its tributaries and region is totally surrounded by desert and mountains.³ Ptolmy calls it *A-Khassa* which lies between *Chatae Seythae* on the north and *Chauranaei Seythae* on the southeast. It is in east of *Byltae*. Alexander Cunningham identifies *Chatae Seythae* as people of Chang-Thang and *Chauranaei Seythae* as the natives of Khor who resided in southeast of Ladakh and *Baltae* represents people of Balti.⁴ Fahien identifies it with *Kie-chha* which is also known as *Kha-pa-chan* or *Kha-chan* (land full of snow).⁵ Hiuen-tsang says it *Kie-pan-to*.⁶

Ladakh is the most elevated place on the earth and its valleys are extended over the sources of the Indus, the Sutlej and the Chenab in the snowy mountains. It cultivates scorching heat in

¹ R. L. Singh. *India: A Regional Geography*, pp. 354-55

² Alexander Cunningham. *Ladak: Physical, Statistical and Historical*. p. 19

³ *Natural History* (Pliny). VI, C.20

⁴ Alexander Cunningham, *op. cit.* pp.4

⁵ Samuel, Beal. *Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-yun from China To India (400A.D. to 518 A.D.)*, p.15

⁶ Samuel, Beal. *Si-Yu- Ki, Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p. 298

daytime and thundering cold at night with phenomenal dryness of the air.⁷ From northern side Ladakh is separated by the Karakoram ranges from Khotan and in the east and south-east Rudok, Chang-than and Chumurti are situated. The southern parts touched Lahul and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh and western border are mingled with Kashmir, Kartashe and Balti. It is extended from north-west to south-east from the head of the Drass river in longitude 75°30' to Chibra on the Indus at longitude 79°10' at a distance of 240 miles. It is 290 miles wide from the Karakoram in north latitude 32°10' to the Rohtang la in north latitude 32°25'. Its mean length measured by Cunningham is 200 miles with its mean breadth 150 miles with area roughly covered 30,000 miles.⁸ The north-western region dominantly covers the Nubra valley mostly drained by the Nubra and Shyok rivers. The area is stretched on the north up to the Karakoram mountains and on the south by the Kailash ranges which separates the Indus from the Shyok ranges. The valley is extended from the frontier of Balti region in east longitude 77° to the Pong Kong lake on the borders of Rudok.⁹ From north of the Nubra valley follows the Central Asian route which scrolls through lofty snowy passes. In front this the ranges of Aghil mountains are situated. From there the caravans used to descend to Kashgara, Baltistan, Chitral, and Hunza Nagar.¹⁰ The valley contains long ranges of snow hills. About twelve miles upstream from Panamik, the trade routes turn out of the valley up the narrow Thalambuti gorge to move to Sacer glaciers and then down again the upper waters of the Shyok river.¹¹ Panamik is a very small urban village with scattered houses among the terraced fields all carefully thorn fenced. It is a rare feature in Ladakh where the field is so meticulously protected. This mechanism was evolved to save the agricultural fields from hungry ponies coming down to valley from caravan routes.¹² The actual entrance of Thalambuti gorge is very difficult which is snow covered even in summer. The Mamosthong glacier is known as 'thousand sheep' because once the advanced guards of Mongol army was perished here like sheep. The Saser pass is supposed to be one of the most difficult roads of the world made up of two large glaciers. One drains the Nubra and other the Shyok.¹³ Zangskar is drained by the two branches of the Zangskar river and bounded northward by Ladakh district and Rukehu in the east. It is extended up to Lahul in the east and Wanla in the west. The southern boundary is traversed by the Himalayan ranges. Singge la is also situated at the west. Rukchu is the highest inhabited region of the world with a mean elevation of 15,634 feet. Purik, Suru and Drast are small habitations to the west of Zangskar covering area between Kashmir and Leh. Drass is most snowy district of Ladakh mainly because of great depression in the Himalayas at the mouth of the Drass river which accelerates evaporation of humid vapours of Kashmir to the north of mountains where these were condensed by the extreme cold and

⁷ Alexander, Cunningham. *op. cit.* p.17

⁸ William, Moorcraft & George Trebeck. *Travels in Himalayan Province of Hindustan and the Punjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir, in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduj*, vol. I, p.258

⁹ *Ibid.* p.21

¹⁰ M.L.A. Gompertz, *Mazic Ladakh*, pp. 42-43

¹¹ *Ibid.* pp. 246-47

¹² *Ibid.* p. 248

¹³ *Ibid.* p.253

precipitate in form of rain and snow.¹⁴ Chang-Thang covers area of Chumurti and Garo on the bank of the Indus and Ngari comprises upper valley of the Sutlej from Mansarovar lake to the Porgyal ranges. It covers area of Guge, Gangri and Purang. Guge embraces Tholing and Tsaprang.¹⁵ Ptolmy mentions Balti and Ladakh and called it *Byltae* and *Chatae Scythae*.¹⁶ The Karakoram range covers Balti, Hunja Nagar and Gilgit from the northern side and identified as Karakoram or Black mountain and to north of Balti it comprises Bolor mountains.¹⁷ Hiuen tsang identifies Bolor (*Po-lu-lo*) as a major source of gold in the region.¹⁸ Fahien visited Karakoram (Tsong-Hing) range or onion mountains,¹⁹ The Kailash or Gangri range moves through right bank of the Indus up to junction of the Shyok The Ri-gyal or king of mountains branches off the Gangari ranges to the south of Faro and covers Chumurti, Rukehu and Zangskar..²⁰

The Indus, the Sutlej, the Gogra and the Brahmaputra are four celebrated rivers of Ladakh. Each river has been originated mythically from some divine source. The Indus is originated from lion's mouth (*Singge-kha-bab*), the Sutlej from an elephant's mouth (*Langchen-kha-bab*), the Brahmaputra from the horse's mouth (*Ta-chohog-kha-bab*) and the Gogra from peacock's mouth (*Macha-kha-bab*).²¹ All these origins have been directly associated with Buddhism. These four animals are mount of Dhyani Buddhas and first three directly signify events of the life of the Buddha- elephant is symbol of Mahamaya's dream, horse related to *mahabhiniskramana* and lion represent the Buddhahood. These religious symbolism signifies ecological adaptation and importance of these rivers in life of the people of Ladakh. The lion or dragons is mount of Vairocana. He is represented white in colour and his symbol is *cakra*.²² Ratnasambhava is mounted on lion or horse and he is represented in *varadamudra*.²³ Akshobhaya is mounted on elephant and is represented with *vajra*.²⁴ Amitabha is mounted on pair of peacocks and recognized by lotus symbols.²⁵ Horse is also symbol of the Bodhisattva Hayagriva who is emanation of the Dhyani Buddha Akshobhaya. The eastern branch of the Indus is most prominent river of Ladakh which originates in Kan-re, Kangri or Kantesi mountain traversing the Kailasa ranges and region of Chang-Thang in a direction from southeast to northwest. It enters Ladakh on its eastern side and moved to western frontier from thirty miles east of Leh where it turns to north and traverse through Kharta-kshe to Sagakhoad or Skardu in Balti.²⁶ The Shayok is the major river that meet the Indus on the north. It originates from the Karakoram ranges and

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 22-23

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 40

¹⁶ Ibid. p.43

¹⁷ Ibid. pp.45-46

¹⁸ Samuel Beal. *op. cit.* vol. II, p. 298

¹⁹ Samuel, Beal. *op. cit.* pp. 25-27

²⁰ Alexander Cunningham *op. cit.* pp.47-53

²¹ Ibid.p.81

²² Binoytosh Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, pp.53-54

²³ Ibid. pp. 73-74

²⁴ Ibid.pp.51-52

²⁵ Ibid. pp. 49-50

²⁶ William Moorcraft, & George Trebeck. *op. cit.* p.262

moved to south and then to northeast of village Ahkam where she joins the river Duryukh. From Hundur it moves to a direction of northwest out of Ladakh and flows in vicinity of Khafalun and Sagarkhoad where it merged with the Sinh-kha-bab to form Aba Sind or the Indus. Near Hundur the Shyok get water of the Churasa which also flows from the southern foot of the Karakoram.²⁷ The Changchemo valley represents the westernmost boundry of the Shyok drainage toward the Tibetan plateau. It is at high altitude and lies in aregion characterized by scant rainfall and long severe winters.²⁸ The Zangskar is also tributary of the Indus rising from south and merged with it opposite to Niemo. The Drass river separates Ladakh from Kashmir and meet the Sinh-kha-bab at Leh. In the west she is joined by the Shingo rising from Deosoe in Balti. These rivers bring water to the Indus from the western highlands and the Shyok pours from the north side. The Zangskar, the Pushkyum and Kartse from southern elevation forming the great Indus.²⁹ The river valleys of the Indus, the Shyok and the Nubra are the most habituated part of Ladakh. Tyar is the first village on the west of Nobok *la* which traverse from the Nubra and Shyok regions to the country of nomads-Chang Thong. After Nobak *la* one could reach on flat plain of Larsa which gives a certain amount of grazing to herd of the Changpas. From here one can move down to Drugub which is a junction of the Chang *la* route from the Shyok to the Indus valley. Tankse is the beginning of the nomad region which follows the two routes – the northern route which moves along the Pong Kong lake and the southern which is known as nomad road.. Both roads meet at Shushal the southern route to the lake is a green valley sloping gently upward from Tankse with excellent grazing ground for ponies and yaks. Climbing further at Chakar lake fed by two large glaciers. Further upward movement gives glimpse of beginning of peacock blue water of Pong Kong lake.³⁰ Pong Kong or Pong Khung (extensive pit) is largest lake of Ladakh measuring eighty five miles long with an average breadth of about three miles. Its water is clear but salty.³¹ Tsho-hul (bitter lake) is five miles north of Pong Kong. It covers sixteen miles in length and less than two miles wide. It water is bitter but fossilized shell found from its bed indicates some remains of life.³² Tshomoriri or mountain lake measures sixteen miles in length from north to south and two to three mile wide. It is situated in Rukehu district at a height of fifteen thousand feet above the sea level. Yunam tsho is a fresh water lake at the bed of Yunam river. Hanle Tsho has good water source supplied by rivulet Kangra-chu. Thogji-Chanmo is salt covered plain in the midst of Tsho-kar or white lake.³³ Ladakh is also a good source of hot springs . The regions of Nubra valley, Puga and Chushul are best known for it.³⁴ While moving to the Nubra valley the the Digar pass hot springs are situated near Panamik. The evidence of vulcanization is not known in the region but water comes out is very hot. The ground

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 262-63

²⁸ H. De. Terra & T.T. Patterson. *The Ice Age in the Indian Subcontinent*, p.220

²⁹ Ibid. pp. 263-64

³⁰ M.L. A. Gompertz. *op. cit.* pp.271-275

³¹ William Moorcroft and George Trebeck. *op. cit.* vol. I, p.431

³² Alexander Cunningham. *op. cit.* pp.137-38

³³ Ibid. pp. 138-44

³⁴ Ibid. p.144

is also covered with soda deposits that is collected for sale. The hot water springs are also used for medicinal purpose especially in case of rheumatism.³⁵

The connectivity of Ladakh from rest of India was mainly through Kashmir however routes from Himachal Pradesh and Nepal were also frequented. The route from Sri Nagar traversed through Gandarbal, Sonamarg with dense green forests and snow covered hills. The route further from Baltal to Zoji La to finally Kargil. From Kargil the lama land begins with flooded with *chor-tens, manes and gompas*.³⁶ The land of the Buddha is visible by presence of large carved image of Maitrya at Mulbek.³⁷ From here one can feel seasonal attributes of Ladakh which has scanty rainfall and high altitude. In the day one feel intense heat of scorching sun and at night shivering cold waits. From Kaipathri to Drass and Shingo Valleys only arid lands and naked high peaks can be visible. Only in the Suru valley near Kargil life again smile. The mountains ranges of the region include the Karakoram which starts from K-2 the second highest peak of the world, 28250 feet, moves through broad peak 27000 feet, the Gasherbrums at 26000 feet, the Terram Kangri at 24000 feet and then the Shyok- Nubra ranges of 24000 and 25000 feet respectively.³⁸ The region from Kargil to Khalatse has lower ranges and hills. At this intersection Lamayuru *gompa* has been founded. The monastic region is full of temples, caves, *chor-tens* and *manes*.³⁹

In Ladakh full interdependence between environment and human could be seen in which Buddhism plays a vital role. The human life is totally depend upon maintaining good relationship with various elements of nature usually classified as spirits. Buddhism developed various mechanism to handle relationship with the environment, its fragility and goodness. The lamas evolved techniques to counter the harmful actions of these spirits by inculcating the positive action. The spirits can swarm over all human space in form of avalanches or as a stone slides which due to action of frost. These spirits can throw down rocks on somebody. Buddhism counter these actions by making *mane* walls which is indication of restriction not to go beyond that wall. If any person breaks the norm, he will invite evil spirits not only for himself but also for his whole community. To avoid cold depressive winds and hardship in travels, little stone cairns are made by travellers. It indicates that the Buddha or the Bodhisattva will remove any bad action of the spirits which are coming with the wind. Theses cairns are adorned with few strip of clothes, and a branch of Shukpa (juniper) tree. Red colour is also effective to counter bad spirits. Not only *manes* and cairns are built but people of Ladakh are advised by the lamas that they should respect the water spirits and others. If there is pollution of water then the melting snow could be poured down by these spirits which will destroy the field, cattle and human population.⁴⁰ It is necessary to be in good terms with the gods of the environment. In Vajrayana Buddhism These gods are represented as warrior gods mounted on horse or yak and often

³⁵ M.L.A. Gompertz, *op. cit.* pp.245-46

³⁶ M.L.A. Gompertz. *op. cit.* p.37

³⁷ Giotto, Dainelli. *Buddhists and Glaciers of Western Tibet*, p.43

³⁸ M. L. A. Gompertz, *op. cit.* pp.38-40

³⁹ L. Austine Waddell. *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, p.52

⁴⁰ M.L. A. Gompertz. *op. cit.* pp.92-94

married to the goddesses associated with lakes. These gods and goddesses maintain close relationship with human population either directly or through spirits. The lamas placate them with the offerings with an intention not to annoy them. Because their anger will lead to avalanches, snow frost etc.⁴¹ Vajrayana facilitated number of mechanism for dealing environmental hazards in daily life. It was not a prompt development of set of practices but a slow evolution over thousand of years. The Vajrayana teachers like Padamasambhava, Atisa and Naropa played vital role in formation of such environmental ethics which are still practiced in form of rituals and prayers. Padamasambhava (Pema Jungne or Rinpoche) is most prominent among them. He visited Tibet in eight century CE and told to be suppressed and tamed the mighty gods and spirits of Tibetan landscape to save to future generation. Actually he established a relationship with nature help of rituals and commitments to cope with difficulties. It was an understanding of their relationship to their environment in terms of interaction with a world of spirits. Ladakh as well as Tibet have been fragile and risky environment since beginning. They have to grapple with daily possibility of natural disasters, snowstorms, avalanches, crop failures and epidemics. The most earnest model they evolve to co-exist with nature was to develop good term with the gods of environment.⁴² The spirits are very important and unforgettable factor in the life of Ladakh. Their main aim is to placate the good spirits and to subjugate the evil one. Vajrayana is a way of compromise between environment and human beings in Ladakh. The countless natural spirits were absorbed into Buddhist fold and Buddhist pantheon were not only augmented by new gods and goddesses but also number of spirits related to water, field mountain and lakes who could be invoked for survival and sustain the peaceful life.

In Himalayan Buddhism the environmental spirits could be discussed into three spheres. The highest abode belongs to the *lha* who protects the whole community. It controls the cycle of weather, brings snow in winter and sun to melt snow in the spring. She gives life and fertility. Below that at intermediate level the place of *srumgma* (mountain gods) are defined who protect the people of his realm and the terrestrial sphere belongs to *choskyongs* who assist Rimpoche/ lamas in temporal affairs for performance of rituals and announcing prophecies.⁴³ The people of Ladakh treats sources of water as a boon for life as well as source of destruction if polluted. These are considered as abodes of gods and spirits. The lamas locates the traditional and contextualized explanation for natural well being and disaster. The environmental concerns are directly linked to retributive actions mentioned in Buddhism. Harmful mindset and action towards environment will produce the accumulation of negative karma. Such mental defilement may leads to retribution to individuals as well as community.⁴⁴ The *lu* is associated with the under world. These spirits inhabit in ponds, in agricultural fields as a fish, reptiles like snake, lizard. These are guardians of natural and productive wealth and associated with fertility. If

⁴¹ Geoffrey, Samuel. *Introducing Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 11-12

⁴² Ibid. pp.1 0-11

⁴³ Martin, Mills. *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism: The Foundation of Authority in Gelukpa Monasticism*, pp.241-42

⁴⁴ Julie, Cruikshank. *Do glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination*, pp.11-12

these are propitiated the natural resources will be plentiful. If these are annoyed then angry response is awaited in form of flood, avalanches etc. One has to be cautious that not to pollute streams, cut trees and show selfishness. Such social and prohibitory sanctions are mechanism to protect the environment in Ladakh.⁴⁵ The spirits at household and shrines are worshipped at *lha-tho* (gods shrine) In common household and monasteries a small four cornered structure resembling a house has been erected on the roof of the house/ monasteries or adjacent to it. The house *lha-tho* could be propitiated by several families living in neighbourhood. While monastic *lha-tho* is worshipped by all respective followers. The *lha* is worshipped with all festivities at least three times in a year i.e. at new year (Losar), at the time of beginning of agriculture and at harvest time. Sometimes animals are sacrificed at the *lha-tho*. Some other gods like *yul-lha* (god of village), *thab-lha* (god of livestock), *klim-lha* (god of household) and several *lha* of passes, crags are worshipped. At several passes, crags and monasteries skulls, hides of sacrificed animals are demonstrated. *Lu* as water spirits may be semi human form as his half body is of snake. They are custodian of underworld and sleep in their abodes in winter and awaking in spring. He is symbol of fertility and may be harmful. They are propitiated in June and July by offering milk and wool. The snake spirits reside in the earth, in the rock and in water. They can take many forms and usually guard the mineral of earth. *Lu* accepts mother earth as a living space with co-existence with other minor gods and spirits and the people of Ladakh maintains ecological solidarity with nature to sustain their life and local flora-fauna.

Socio-Economic Context:

Ladakh is inhabited by number of tribes of which majority are Buddhists. The Ladakhi Bodh or Bhot, the Gara, the Mon, the Beda, the Changpa and the Broq-pa are settled in the different parts of Ladakh.⁴⁶ These people are living here since hoary past and their settlement pattern, economy and society shows a harmonious co-existence with nature. The cultural ecology of them shows integrating changes and adjustment in their cultural pattern and economic settlement with nature. In the Ladakh every Buddhist village has a sizeable population of the Ladakhi Bhots, supported by one or the two families of the Garas, Mons and Bedas. The Changpas are the semi-pastoral tribes scattered in upper portion of the Ladakh.

The Bhots, the Ladakhi Bodh, Ladakshpa or Bodriksha are the dominant communities of Ladakh and socially stratified into *gyalpo* (rulers), *kahlen* (bureaucrates), *mangrikas* (peasants), *rengon* (artisans), *serger* (goldsmith) etc. They reside in the Indus, the Zangskar and Nubra regions of Ladakh on high mountains with scanty rainfall, copious snow and semi-arid plateau. They can be identified by their flags, caps, charms, armlets and long plaits. Their staple diet is *ngamphu* (roasted flour) of barley. They also grow wheat, peas, *rai* (mustard seed), turnips and have orchards of apricots and walnuts. They also partake non vegetarian foods including the flesh of

⁴⁵ Geoffery, Samuel. *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*, pp.162-63

⁴⁶ Veena, Bhasin. 'Ecology and Health: A Study Among Tribals of Ladakh' p.3

yak, goat and sheep but fish is a taboo. The *gur-gur* (salty tea) and *lipton* (sweet tea) are daily drinks. On festive occasions *chang* and *arrakh* (barley beer) are privileges. The Bhots maintain *phasphun* a brotherhood exogamy but now they permit intra-phasphun marriages. Phasphun is defined as several neighbouring groups or inhabitations of villages that have common *lha*. They used to practice the fraternal polyandry but now are in favour of monogamy. The agriculture is their primary economy supported by the fruit orchards, domestication and handicrafts.⁴⁷

The Broq-pas or Shin, the survivors of the pure Indo-Aryan group settled in the lower Indus valley from Leh to Kargil. They are divided in *gatti* (patri-lineage) and socially stratified in the priest, *ram* or *raj ram* (nobles), *shin* (peasants). Levirate is allowed among them. Barley is their staple food and barley, wheat are parched and used as *tsampa* (roasted). The potatoes, radishes, turnips supplement the regular diet. They also eat non-vegetarian foods but fish and eggs are a rarity. The *chang* is consumed. The *gur-gur* tea mixed with saffron and almond are their regular drink.⁴⁸ A special piece of land *newne* is assigned for producing barley for preparation of the *chang*.⁴⁹ The Garas or the Garabas live in the Leh and Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir of India. They are divided into *gayuts* or *rigs* (lineage) which are recognized into four *phuds* or generations. They are known as *regnum* i.e. the lower strata of society. A married women wear a special dress *goncha*. *Relchang* (tonsure) is performed to male child. The Garas are the blacksmiths who make iron implements for the fellow villagers and in reciprocation get the fixed amount of grains from each family. The Gara does not hold any position in the village community or the monastery.⁵⁰ The Mons are the professional musicians and flute players of the Ladakh region who roam in the company of the Bedas. They belong to the Indo-Aryan groups with the admixture of the Mongoloids. They inhabit along the course of the river Indus. High altitude, absence of natural vegetation and heavy snowfall are the characteristics of their natural environment. Their *gayuts* or *rigs* are exogamous and their married women wear *goncha* and *firoja*. They live in the nuclear and extended families and are patrilineal. On the festive occasions the Mons provide music to their fellow villagers and in reciprocity receive cereals from them. On the day of Losar a man gifts arrow to a Ladakhi male and a spanner to the female he serves. The return gift is given in form of food and other necessities. They are supposed to be the real contributors of the innovative irrigation system of Ladakh.⁵¹

The Bedas are the semi-settled and semi-nomadic community of Ladakh who reside in the old desert region at the high altitude with heavy snowfall. They speak the Ladakhi language of the Bhotia group of the Tibeto-Burman family and like the other communities of Ladakh they also wear *goncha*, *shakten*, *sherak* and long boots. Though wheat and barley are their staple food, they are also growing paddy. Tea *gur-gur* is their daily drink and *chang* are taken on the festive

⁴⁷ K. S. Singh. *The Schedule Tribes, People of India*, Vol. III, pp.193-194

⁴⁸ E. Von Eichstedt. 'The Race and Types of the Western and Central Himalayas' pp.200-202

⁴⁹ Veena, Bhasin. 'Social Change, Religion and Medicine among Brokpas of Ladakh' p.86

⁵⁰ K.S. Singh. *op. cit.* pp.280-281

⁵¹ *Ibid.* pp. 816-818

gatherings. They are divided into exogamous *gayuts* or *rigs* which is recognized into four *phuds*. They are strictly Buddhists and never marry outside their religious community. They practiced fraternal polyandry at early stage but are now preferring monogamy. They perform the music for the Bhots, Mons, Baltis and even some of the Islamic tribes. Some of their performances are only restricted to the Lamas and the *gompas*.⁵² The Changpas, Champa, Fangpa or Phalpa derive their name from *chang* i.e. north and *thang* i.e. plains. They are inhabitants of the northern plain of Ladakh and are divided into two groups –the sedentary *Fangpa* and the nomadic *Phalpa*. The leadership among them belongs to *nono*. The polyandry is now replaced by the monogamy. During the child birth the elderly women of the community helps in the delivery of child and the village lama performs ritual for the safety of the child and makes his *zataq* (horoscope). The *radaq* (tonsure) is performed after three years. The Changpas lived in the *reboo* (tent made by the yak skin) and majority of them are nomadic who roam in the different part of Rukshu, Kharnak and Kharzok. In first two areas they spend transhumant lifestyle while in the last one majority of them are transhumant but some follow a settled life. Their staple diet is *tsampa* (barley), meat of yak and wild ass (Skiang). The *chura* (dried cheese) and meat boiled with barley flour are their favorite dishes and *chaa* (tea) is regular drink. The traditional tea making requires water, soda and tea leaves boiled together and then taken out and poured into a churn (*cha-dong*). The butter and salt are added and whole thing is churned until it is well mixed.⁵³ *Chang* is taken to celebrate festivals. Their major economic resources are yaks and goats. The goats are the source of world famous *pasham* or *pashmina* wool. They usually live on the land owned by Hemis *gompa* and follow the Drokpa sect. Each *reboo* has the portraits of *kula* deity Donaq and the Dalai Lama. Chakman Paldon Lhamo is worshipped for protection against the epidemic. Losar and Kunch Yut are their major festivals.⁵⁴

The social structure of the people of Ladakh is based on the multilayered beliefs and cultural traits which has been evolved over the centuries through the process of experimentation and refinement as a response to the peaceful co-existence with the climatic and environmental conditions.⁵⁵ Because of high peaks of mountains all around and heavy snowfall in the winter season Ladakh remains inaccessible to the outside world for nearly six months in a year. A traditional family and social structure have been evolved to suit these ecological conditions. The nuclear as well as joint family norms exist and well guarded both by the social taboos and their indigenous legal regulations. They take precautions to safeguard their organization from all possible breakdowns. The Ladakhis adopted fraternal polyandry which played a vital role to check their population. Their family structure, marital system and mode of inheritance were based on the polyandrous marriage. In the traditional family structure the eldest son would marry and rest of the sons would be the co-husbands of his wife. The youngest of them goes to the

⁵² Ibid. pp.102-104

⁵³ Charles, Bell. *The People of Tibet*, p. 237

⁵⁴ K. S. Singh. *op. cit.* pp. 208-220

⁵⁵ Janet, Rizvi, *Crossroads of High Asia*, p.173, J. Crook & T. Sakya. *Six Families in Leh*, p. 213

gompa. The inheritance of the family property will go from father to the eldest son. This primogeniture not only regulated the growth rate of the population but also stopped the disintegration of the property. It was a necessary measure to restrict population in difficult terrain of Ladakh. The prevalence of polyandry among the people of Ladakh is not without debate. Gompertz says-

*'The question of polyandry is thorny one, and all sorts of people write all manners of things about it, from theories proving that it is a natural law to keep down the increase of population in a barren country, to more invective. The Mussulman, in particular, favours the last line of action. To him polyandry is most unutterably foul, where as the reverse custom, polygamy is the divine plan for human race. To me personally this seems somewhat a case of the pot and the kettle.'*⁵⁶

His comment may be partially true but it seems sure that polyandry adopted by the people of Ladakh was to sustain themselves in difficult terrain where food and land both are scarce. It was not a borrowed mechanism but evolved through thousand years of experiments. Regarding the population of Muslims in Kargil and Leh, it seems that they migrated when invasions started in early medieval age, they are not original settlers of the region but migrated from either central Asian regions. When one sees the microscopic minority of converted Muslims from local areas their customs are more or less same as local Ladakhi adopts. Even marriages are also known among the Buddhist and Muslim families. The position women in society of Ladakh is high and girls enjoy more freedom in matter of selection of their mates, inheritance of property and religion. She marries a suitable groom of her own choice. It is said that if girl child is the only issue of the parents then she not only can marry of her own choice but the position of groom is subordinate to her and he can be thrown out at will. Such grooms are known as *magpas*.⁵⁷ But such occurrence has not been found. A *magpa* is a legally married groom of only girl child of the family. In such cases the groom migrates to brides house. He treats parents of her wife like own parents and fulfill all social responsibilities of the family. The subordinate status or separation at will have not been a regular feature in the society of Ladakh.

They have evolved a self supporting social structure conditioned with their environmental necessities. After independence especially in decades after the Chinese war rapid development in Ladakh accompanied by the wanton destruction of indigenous socio-economic fabric and an array of ecological problems occurred. These new amenities such as communication and transport facilities opened new opportunities for Ladakh.⁵⁸ The increased contact with the outsiders have caused widespread disruptions in their lifestyle and culture. Before such opening of communication it took more than a week to reach Leh from Kashmir and in winter because of

⁵⁶ M.L.A. Gompertz, *op. cit.* p.62

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p.63

⁵⁸ John, Crook. & Henry Osmaston, 'Himalayan Buddhist Villages: Environment, Resource, Society & Religious life in Zangskar, Ladakh'. p.814

heavy snow all snow-fed passes are inaccessible to travel. But rapid development in transportation has changed the eco-system. This area is grappling with its own type of air pollution where the combustion of motor fuel leads to emission of more carbon particles due to high altitude. The growing urban structures, administrative buildings, hotels, restaurants are adversely bleeding the traditional structure of the society. It is now facing stringent task to cope up with the modern challenges due to contact with the outside world. Their social structure is fast changing due to spread of industries, communication technologies and globalization of economy. The rank outsiders saw the practice of polyandry and law of primogeniture of inheritance as a primitive institutions and root cause of their social backwardness. The consumption of *chang* is seen as a response to the depressing nature of the society and was understood that production of the *chang* is taking a large toll on limited barley stock apart from having ill effects in case of excessive drinking. Consequently the polyandrous marriages were declared illegal by the Buddhist Polyandrous Marriage Prohibition Act, 1988 (Laws of J.& K, III:878-881). But in the social panorama of Ladakh the fraternal polyandry is seen as a practice for keeping their population in control in the hostile climate. It was a nature's call to limit the population and is accepted as a logical ecological response by the Buddhist communities. The right of primogeniture to the eldest son of the family is seen to be a cause to a limited growth of the Buddhist population. Since there is no hereditary right to younger brothers in a family so all of them are unable to establish their separate households.⁵⁹ Now the polyandry is thought to be a primitive institution and abolition of it led to the disintegration of the joint families and increase in nuclear families without sufficient infrastructure for them.⁶⁰

Among Ladakhis every life event has been accepted as occasion to celebrate. Major events of life like birth, marriage, death are commonly marked by ceremonial events which legitimize future social structure through symbolic and economic process. These events are necessary not only for development of individual as well as whole household for future continuum of social and cultural structure.⁶¹ Traditional dance, feasting and traditional drinking of *chang* make event blissful and joyous. *Lda-gang* (birth ceremony) of child starts after a week of birth when mother comes from mandatory confinement in her room. All relatives assemble to celebrate child's birth and all the guests give gift to mother.⁶² These rituals closely related to *samskaras* prevalent in the Indian society and have been adopted during acculturation between Ladakh and mainland of India. These practices presumed to be amalgamation of rituals existed in Indian society with ecological adaptation conducive to arid region of Ladakh. The *samskara* like *jatakarama* has same significance as *Lda-gang*. The birth of a child was auspicious occasion but not without dangers for avoidance of which many taboos and rituals were developed. The mother and child both require care and sympathy. To protect the mother and child during such critical situations

⁵⁹ Kristopher Brix Bertelsen. 'Protestant Buddhism and Social Identification in Ladakh', pp.134-135

⁶⁰ K.E. Hay. 'Gender, Modernization and Change in Ladakh' pp.179-182

⁶¹ A. S. Kuhn. 'Ladakh: A Pluristic Medical System Under Acculturation and Domination' pp. 31-32

⁶² Alexander, Cunningham. *op. cit.* p.307

prelude the man to develop cultural devices and aspirations for safeguarding mother and child.⁶³ *Ming-tong* sacrament is like *namkarana samsakara* (naming ceremony), which is localized and customized according to Buddhist tradition of the region. The parents and family members contact lama associated with the family and lama pronounces the name. The ceremony ends with festive get-together and customary gift. The *Bak-ston* is marriage sacrament in which bridegroom's maternal uncle and father proceeds to bride's house with some customary items like *chang*, butter and roasted flour for seeking her hand. The pot of *chang* is generally wrapped with traditional Buddhist *khatak* (Buddhist ceremonial scarf). If this pot is accepted by the bride's family then auspicious day is fixed by both parties for the ceremony. The lama performs customary marriage rituals.⁶⁴ In all types of marriages, maternal uncle plays major role. The marriages by elopement and capture were also prevalent but now these are relatively very few. In such ceremonies customary gift like *chang*, barley, butter are customary to bring by all relatives. It avoids extra burden on families engaged in marriage where resources are very limited. *Shid-ton* is sacrament related to funeral. The ecological constraints faced by the people of Ladakh can be truly visualized here. The funeral ceremony takes place for fifteen to twenty days. Generally the body is burnt in a brick structure and relics are collected properly to raise *chor-ten* over it especially for high status lamas and small form of *chor-ten* i.e. *tsa-tsa* is made for common people. Generally advice of lamas are taken to make such structures. The practice of metempsychosis is well remembered as articles of daily necessities are put into it to carry forward with departed soul. In the area of Rukchu and Chang-Thang due to scarcity of wood dead bodies were left in open to be eaten by vultures and wild animals. The use of brick structure itself indicates minimum use of wood required for funeral. Buddhist rituals play major role in funeral practices. For common people the dead body is generally put into prostration posture while bodies of lamas and *yogins* were generally in meditational or in other tantric postures. The new urban environment previously unknown to the society of Ladakh has led in an increased level of uncertainties. The traditional institutions are treated as the 'cultural survival'. The prohibition on polyandrous form of marriages without any suitable alternative arrangements prelude to population explosion and cultural transition. The breakdown of the mono-marriage system and declining tendency to join the monastery has led to the rapid growth of Buddhist communities in Ladakh. But recent trends regarding modernization and education are perceived to be positive. With the modern education they are also taking up the traditional education and religious learning. The 'indigenous syndrome' has created a positive outlook for the culture of Ladakh. But the attitude of policy makers and implementing agencies towards the people of Ladakh should be of 'distinct cultural ethnicity' rather than 'cultural survival' as they are not primitive, uncivilized or the aboriginals but the people showing the sustainable lifestyle at the difficult high altitude terrain of the Himalayas. It is necessary to encourage and balance the local values and tradition to protect and preserve the cultural heritage so as to ensure the appropriate

⁶³ Rajbali Pandey. *Hindu Samskaras: Socio-Religious Study of Hindu Sacraments*, pp.70-71

⁶⁴ Alexander Cunningham. *op. cit.* pp.307-08

model of development.⁶⁵

The houses in Ladakh are built as adaptation to local ecological situation *vis-vis* Buddhist tradition. Stones are used only to make plinth and foundation. The rest of the structure covers earthen material and wood. The material are used in such a way that keep houses warm in extreme cold and arid situation. The houses may consist of two to four stories with foundation of stone. The sun-dried bricks are made for wall. These bricks are mixture of local earthen material with barley husk. The rooms are comparatively large in size. The roof of the house is always supported by plain wooden pillars of poplar. The roof is made with beams and beaten earthen material. However the upper most story will be covered with beams and thick layer of leaves. The rooms generally have balconies exposing towards sun but with minimum exposure to arid wind.⁶⁶ The village houses are generally of two stories, the lower story is kept for cattle and storage of fodder and cow dung.⁶⁷ The Buddha's teaching of *santutthi* is widely acknowledged among the Ladakhi society. Despite modern amenities like electric heaters, people still prefer use of cow dung to keep themselves warm.

The economy of the people of Ladakh is self-sufficient. In the hilly terrain of high Himalayan plateau it has a sparse population scattered in the small clusters and villages eventually separated by the pasture and waste land. The size of the each village depends upon the availability of the sources of the water often accrued by the manmade channels. The agrarian land is held by the individual farmers as well as the *gompas*. The *gompas* own much of the land which was distributed among the farmers on fixed share. These *gompas* are situated independently from agricultural lands. As per tradition *gompas* should be far enough from a village to provide quiet and secluded place for the lamas, but close enough for the village communities to hear the monastic conchs and trumpets. This distance is known as *gyan-tak*.⁶⁸ The Ladakh has short growing season because of heavy snowfall in the winter. On the high altitude of 8000 mts. wheat, barley, potatoes, turnips, and peas are the major crops where as on the lower terrains the orchards of apricots and walnuts are also grown. Their economic life is well supported by domestication of sheep, goat, cow, yak and dzoes. Their economic structure show exceptional sensitivity towards environment. Even the human waste is mixed with the sand and is used as manure. Their agrarian system is based on the coexistence of the nature-man- spirit complex balancing all aspects of life. The horticulture is well developed and much of the fruits are collected between April and September. The orchards of apple and apricot are substantial source of economy. *Sarsinh* is a special tree which exude fragrance. It is generally grown in eastern and western part of Ladakh It is tall and slender tree rising up to forty feet but nearly one foot in diameter. Its yellow flowers emits a special fragrance used for making perfume.

⁶⁵ Anand, Singh. 'Ecological and Economical Concerns Amongst the Buddhist Communities of Ladakh: A Case Study' pp. 436-38

⁶⁶ Ibid. pp. 312-314

⁶⁷ Ibid.p.314

⁶⁸ Henry Osmaston, Janet Frazer and Stamati Crook. 'Human Adaptation to Environment in Zangskar', p.52

Similarly a vegetable product *khubarb* which is found in abundance in Ladakh is in much demand.⁶⁹ Willows and Poplars are grown for domestic use and making of the houses. Their wood and leaves both are used. Even part of wood and leaves which have not used in making of houses piled up on the roof for their use in winter. Trees are rare in Ladakh and they are highly protected. The Buddha's message of non-violence is clearly indicated here. If anyone will intentionally harm the trees then the spirits having abode on them are sure to take revenge. The heavy and untimely snow will cause damage to whole fraternity. Such stories are also mentioned in *Jatakas*. The Changpas has a pastoral economy. They take their herds to 16000-17000 ft high hills on summer but returns to less rigorous altitude of about 14000 feet at Shushal, Pong Kong and Chang Tang.⁷⁰ The yaks, dzoes, and sheep are their major economic sources. The yaks are for the beast of burden and their hide for making of *reboo*, and their goats are yielding the world famous pashmina wool. Marmots are very special animal of Ladakh whom Vigne call ants as big as foxes. They live underground and dig up sands like the ants of Greece. These sand particles consist of gold dust.⁷¹

The Buddhist communities of Ladakh developed a highly efficient and ecologically sound irrigation system and their indigenous effort culminated into highly mechanized channelization of water probably in the early medieval age (10th century C.E.). It is said that Atisa introduced this magical irrigation system. The agricultural settlements are chosen when both cultivable land and water source both are available. Cultivable lands are mostly situated in the main river valleys but water from tributaries are also tapped by traditional method. The people of Ladakh built canals with locally available materials, stone pieces and boulders. The accumulated snow started melting as *kang-chhu* (ice water) in the rivulets merging at some focal points and forms a *togpo* (stream). The *togpo* flows in the valley touching the settlement clusters and the villages and are ccted by the *ma-yur* (mother channel). The channels are built along the mountain which works as a retaining wall and at some point the rocks are cut or drilled for free flow of water. From the *ma-yur* number of sub channels are developed-*yu-ra* (intermediate channels), *nang-yur* (field channels), *yi-hu* (side channel), *star* (middle channel for large tracts), *nang*(contour bunds), *tomik*(gaps on the lower side of *nang*), *ha(rka)* i.e. control sluice, *hardo (rKardo)* i.e. boulders for blocking the sluice.⁷² The water from the channels among the large villages like Hunder, Shimo, and Leh are distributed on share basis. Their records are maintained by the village committee on a special silk document known as *bandabas* and the distribution of share in the village is supervised by *chhur-pon* a village authority. He has a divine status in the village and should possess certain attributes like *ska-tsir shes-kan* (how to divert water), *chhu-tsir shes-kha* (to divert water to a particular crop), *yul-dat-chan* (lordship over all the village fields), *chhu-a*

⁶⁹ Wiilliam, Moorcroft & Beorge, Trebeck. *op. cit.* pp.298-300

⁷⁰ M. L. A. Gompertz. *op. cit.* pp.42-43

⁷¹ G.T. Vigne. *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo*, vol.II, p.287

⁷² Angchok, Dorjey & Premlata Singh. 'Traditional Irrigation and Water Distribution System in Ladakh' pp. 397-398

sta-thog gya-la cho shes-khan i.e. knowledge of sustainable use of water in scarcity.⁷³ The agrarian and irrigation system of Ladakh is guided by the zodiac movements as the time cycle for sowing, irrigation, harvesting and winnowing varies from region to region depending upon the altitude and calendar devised by the villagers. The shadow cast by the solar movements or *nyitho* determines their season for the crops like the shadow of the sun in an auspicious condition is supposed to be the sign for the sowing of the crops. The Lama of the village is consulted for the conducive day to begin the agrarian activities.. The lama pacifies the spirits of water, earth, hills, the worms of the soil and the soul of the land and the sowing season starts with recitation of the hymns by the monks to placate the gods for high yield. The meat eating and drinking of the *chang* are prohibited on this pious day. The milk and other offerings are thrown in the streams as a tribute. On the auspicious day the as per instruction of the Lama the whole family assembles in the field at sunrise. The dzoes are yoked with wooden plough and sowing starts with enchanting of festive songs and prayers.

With the beginning of the *sa-ka* (festive gathering) the village *onpo* (astrologer) decides the date for first watering of the field as on that day the peasants also decides the cultivation schedule, repair and maintenance of *ma-yur*, *yu-ra* etc. The village land is divided on basis of fertility where the wet land is known as *ser* or *chhu-ser*. The agrarian field with appropriate moisture ready for crop is known as *ser-phar-fog* (gold is ready). When land became moist because of snowfall it is known as *kha-ser*. The second, third, fourth and last stages of irrigation are known as *dol-chhu*, *sak-chhu*, *non-chhu*, and *do-chhu* respectively.⁷⁴ After ripening of the crops *skangrol* or harvest festival is celebrated at the village and family shrines. The villagers make columns of barley flour and butter decorated with flower petals and offer it to Dharmapala and other spirits. The prayers are offered for abundance of the crop, prosperity and health of the family, village and every sentient being on this earth. The fellow villagers eat festive foods and drink *chang* on this occasion. The crop is threshed with the help of the wooden pole and dzo. The Ladakhis pray for flowing of the wind for winnowing of the crops. The crop pattern shows the vitality of the Buddhist institutions and traditions to adopt sustainable system in an environment with limited resource base on high altitude Himalayan ranges. It guides and ensures the maintenance of the production equilibrium of the region. In the past three decades the economic face of Ladakh has been changed. The establishment of army, opening of the administrative offices, schools, hospitals, influx of tourists in the summer and consequent commercialization of the economy in place of the subsistence economy have deeply affected their traditional economic structure and has resulted in breaking down of their celibate institutions. The establishment of Ladakh as a tourist haven and increasing guesthouses, restaurants and intermingling of the natives with rank outsiders not only lead to contamination of local tradition,

⁷³ Ibid. pp. 399-400

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 401

food habits and life style but also the pattern of the settlement and land structure.⁷⁵ Now the young generations of the Ladakh perceive their traditional economy as primitive and are staying away to work in the fields for little or no money and have started considering their culture inferior and trying to reject the traditional lifestyle and economy. These new changes are degrading the fragile environment of Ladakh and brewing the religious and ethnic conflicts.⁷⁶ This new trend of urbanization, competition, and deteriorating environment were previously unknown to them. All these factors have brought about changes in their personality as the peace loving, docile and humble Ladakhis are now more aggressive, materialistic and vulnerable. Some of them desire to earn money to adopt western lifestyle and possess modern equipments and consumer items. In the tourist season many of the rural folk migrate to Leh from neighbouring villages to seek employment as a guide, as workforce in hotels when their participation and labour are most needed for agrarian economy.⁷⁷ This new cosmopolitan culture and continuous interference with the fragile ecology of the Ladakh led to the catastrophe. On 6 August 2010 when the paradise of Ladakh was inundated by a monster cataclysmic waterburst killing more than 160 people in Ladakh. This mud tsunami has two centimeter deluge only in two hours in contrast to traditional rain pattern of Ladakh i.e. nine centimeter per year. Within two hours it wiped out the three decades of infrastructural growth unleashing the fatal effect of the pollution and shortsighted ill fated economic development on millennia old sensitive ecological system. The waterburst seems to be nature's furious response to a fragile ecosystem where the ill conceived development projects, private entrepreneurship like tourism have fractured the simple, traditional nomadic lifestyle of Ladakh and its sensitive Indo-Tibetan culture. The little tradition of Ladakh should not be homogenized with the great tradition of the rest of civilization. These little traditions should be protected from further encroachments and interference from the alien culture and should be integrated with the rest of the culture judiciously and cautiously.

Buddhist medicine system prevalent in Ladakh is integral part of their culture. It has been evolved out of centuries of trial and errors and handed down from generation to generation. It is unique, reliable and effective. It not only treats sickness but also solve problems of culture bound syndrome. This medical system is known as Amchi. The art of healing is evolved on the knowledge of medical system existing in the wide region of Asia especially in Buddhist countries. It originated in Tibet-Ladakh region under the patronage of Vajrayana Buddhism and underlines the socio-ecology of Ladakh and passed from one generation to next within the village commonly known as *rGyupta* lineage. The newly appointed *Amchi* has to pass test orally in front of the whole village and a panel of experienced *Amchis* from adjoining areas. The root of this system can be traced in a Tibetan medical work known as *rayud-bsu*. It says that the divine knowledge of medicine is given by *bcom—ldan-das* (Sakya) who transform himself into the shape of the physician in a forest of medical plants. He explained the medical formulas in a

⁷⁵ Jena P. Singh. 'Impact of Tourism on the Ecology of Ladakh Himalayas', p.158

⁷⁶ R.S. Maan. *Ladakh Then and Now: Cultural Ecological and Political*, p.28

⁷⁷ Janet, Rizvi. *op. cit.* p.196

superb palace in front of Gods, sages and other followers.⁷⁸ A traditional *Amchi* act as a oracle, bonesetter, faith healer and also considered as a cultural psycho-therapist. The *Amchis* and the inhabitants of Ladakh intend to combine their traditional health system with the knowledge achieved through their first hand experience. They have the knowledge of the diseases, pattern and treatment which are pertinent to that particular culture. This integrates the prescription and attributes of the physical body with the concept of subjective entities that encouraged and provide strength, vigour, sustenance and rhythm.⁷⁹ The Ladakhi oracles are the integral part of the society. They are known to us as *Iha mo* (female) and *Iha pa* (male). It is believed that the oracles possesses the potential of *Iha* who then use their supernatural power to heal the sick or to predict the future.⁸⁰ According to the beliefs of Ladakhis the diseases are the product of cause and conditions. Ignorance or unawareness is the ultimate causes of all diseases may be the long term or short term. Because of ignorance or delusion people are failed to recognize the reality of the phenomenon and there by clings personal self or ego which in turns give rise to the three mental poisons i.e. desire, hatred and stupidity. The combination of ignorance with three mental poisons constitute the long term cause of disease. The short term cause of disease are *rlung* (energy), *mkhris pa* (bile energy) and *bad kan* (phlegm) all conceived by three mental poisons. The desire provides wind, hatred to bile and stupidity to phlegm. There three humours which develop the elementary energy system of the body and are inter connected to all vital organs, seven constituents and three excretion of human anatomy. The seven constituents of the body are *dangma* (food), *khark* (blood), *shad* (flesh), *tsil* (fat), *rus* (bone), *rkang* (marrow), *khuwa* (semen). The three excretion are sweat, urine and faeces. The healthy body represents the equilibrium in three humours, seven body constituents are three excretions. When these are not in proportionate forms, it leads to sickness. The four factors responsible for the imbalance are inhospitable climate, influence of evil spirits, improper diet and unruly behaviour. These imbalances are diagnosed by the *Amchis*. The diagnosis has various stages of interrogation, visual examination and facial examination. The treatment can be given by the regulation of diet, behavior modification, medicine and physical therapy. The drugs are categorized in ten forms: decoction, pills powder, gruels, medicinal butter, medicinal calyxes, concentrated extraction, medicinal wine, germ medicine and herbal medicine. The therapeutic techniques are classified in gentle and rough techniques, massage, hot and cold compressions, mineral spring bath therapy and medicinal bath are the gentle techniques. Blood letting, cauterization, cupping, golden needle therapy are considered as rough techniques. Some minor surgeries are preferred though *Amchis* avoid surgery. Their medical philosophy evolves around the harmonious operation and balance of all energies that constitute the human psycho-physical arena.

The magico-religious medical system coupled with occult sciences and herbal medicine surely help them to cope with mortality risks and common diseases. The clinical tetanus in neonates and adults are practically absent among the Buddhist communities. They put their infants in *tsa-nu*, a

⁷⁸ Debiprasad, Chattopadhyaya, *Studies in the History of Science in India*, vol. I, pp.258-59

⁷⁹ Veena, Bhasin, *op. cit.* 2008, p.79

⁸⁰ John, Bray. 'Language, Tradition and the Tibetan Bible' pp.28-50

wooden sack made up of sheep/goat skin. The sack is filled with powdered sieved dung and made it warm by placing a hot stone on it. The mothers treat common deceases like diarrhea of children especially related to growing stage such as teething, walking etc with folk medicine. The *Amchis / Iha pa / Iha mo* do not take any fees for that treatment but often helped by the villager in their agriculture especially in spring ploughing and autumn harvest seasons. They are not only physician but also the community leaders holding the position of the *Goba* i.e. the village head. They also predict future and experts in astrology which has strong bond with Ladakhi medicine school. With the old age folk medical system the Buddhist communities of Ladakh have been able to survive and maintain the ecological and socio-economic panorama. But with the advent and penetration of allopathy an alien system has been introduced and the locals react pessimistically to this transplant system. The canopy of this cosmopolitan medicine which is different from traditional system is injuring their valuable social system.⁸¹

The grievances in Ladakh are supposed to be many fold such as socio-economic, religious and ecological. The construction of roads, development of transportation and opening of Ladakh to outsiders have eroded their traditional social and environmental balance. The government and non government organizations dealing with the problems of Ladakh should act like a ‘social doctor’ or a ‘community leader’ to diagnose their problems to provide a suitable solutions and to monitor that the given solutions are effectively working or not. If it will not happen then the conflict stimulate surge up in term of unwholesome emotions and volitions. It leads to failure to see the problems and its causal arising and to comprehend its true nature. The same is happening in Ladakh for past three decades. The model of social doctor can be applied to such other communities of the world who are isolated and neglected.⁸² Economically the geography of Ladakh is considered as hostile and barren allowing only minimum agricultural produce to sustain. Because of emergence of alternative economy i.e. tourism the traditional base has been eroded and in the newly emerging tourism industry the people of Ladakh are not getting their due share. The religio-medical system of Ladakh was considered as obsolete and full of superstitions because of demantology and spirits. But for the people of Ladakh it is a time tested therapeutic measures. The culture of Ladakh survived and flourished for thousand of years over this system. So, it has certain positive notions those are considered as essential for the society of Ladakh. Recently the government of India has appointed the *Amchis* in the villages of Ladakh on government payroll. There is need to integrate the traditional medical system with the modern medicine. Because this medical system is highly scientific and accurate and Tibeto- Chinese medicines is gaining wider popularity globally. The people of Ladakh believes and perpetuates the inter- religious, inter-communal harmony as it is represented in their popular eco-system and culture. The environmental challenges that Ladakh now grappling with will require technical expertise, well concerned policies, high degree of administrative skills and local engagement. It

⁸¹ P. Manning & H. Fabrega Jr. ‘The Experience of Self and Body: Health and Illness in the Changpas Highlands’ pp. 254-255

⁸² Anand, Singh. ‘Environmental Concerns Amongst the Buddhist Communities of Ladakh: A Case Study’ pp. 430-35

may be presumed that all the developments, policies, practices are local and ultimately all religions and cultural traditions are local as well. Ladakh needs political as well religious leaders who can put their own tradition for local development, economic sustainability, congruity and peace rather than conflict and ecological erosion.

Lamaism & Co-existence with Environment

The introduction of Buddhism in Ladakh has been traced back to reign of Asoka when he sent nine missions for propagation of Buddhism. The Mahavamsa informs that Majjantikas was sent to Kashmir and Gandhara region.⁸³ During this phase the people of Ladakh and Tibet got first acquaintance of Buddhism. It is said that the Lichchhavi prince Khri-tsampo became king of Tibet in 250 BCE. He was defeated and exiled from his own kingdom and sought refuge here.⁸⁴ However the authenticity of this instance is doubtful. The Lichchhavis are Kshatriyas and one of the oldest republics of India but the Buddha is not related to them. Vaisali has been great seat for Buddhism since the age of the Buddha but the Vajjis and Lichchhavis both are more acquainted with the Jainas especially Vardhamana Mahavira. The regular intercourse with missionaries and teachers of Buddhism began only in early Christian era when it was introduced in China.⁸⁵ In 399-400 century CE Fahien, Hwei-king and his fellow travellers reached *Yu-thian* (Khotan) and from here he reached *Kie-chha* where snow never melts and people of the region are known as men of snowy mountains. He informs that the king of the country holds the quinquennial assembly (*Pan-che-yu-see*). Such assemblies were earlier organized by emperor Asoka. The king and his ministers make offerings to lamas. The mountain region is very cold and only wheat is produced here. *Kie-chha* had Buddha's begging bowl made of stone and this place also possessed tooth relics of the Buddha. There were 1000 monks belonged to Theravada sect.⁸⁶ Alexander Cunningham informs that tooth relic of the Buddha was deposited in a dung –ten or in a solid stupa in Leh which was plundered by Ali Sher of Balti who presumably threw it in the Indus.⁸⁷ Hiuen-tsang says Ladakh is 2000 li and its capital (Leh?) is based on rocky crags of the mountain on the river Indus. There are ten *sangharamas* with 500 monks belonged to Sarvastivadin sect. He also informs that emperor Asoka built a *stupa* here.⁸⁸ In the seventh century CE the Devanagari script was introduced in Ladakh and Tibet by Thumi Sambhota who taught them the use of Kashmiri method of writing.⁸⁹ The real interaction with Ladakh with rest of India and Buddhism started only after seventh century CE. It was continued till medieval age when Sultanate and Mughal empire finally cut the cultural exchanges between Ladakh and rest of India. There are two phases of diffusion of Buddhism in Ladakh- *ngadar* (early diffusion) which

⁸³ *Mahavamsa*, pp.85-86

⁸⁴ Alexander, Cunningham *op. cit.* p.357

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p.357-58

⁸⁶ Samuel, Beal. *Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yun from China to India (400 A.D. to 518 A.D.)*, pp. 15-17

⁸⁷ Alexander Cunningham. *op. cit.* pp.1-3

⁸⁸ Samuel, Beal. *Si-Yu-Ki, Buddhist records of the Western World*, pp.298-304

⁸⁹ Alexander Cosma de Koros *A Grammar of Tibetan Language*, p.178

existed till the ninth century C E when the Tibetan empire collapsed. The second diffusion (*sarmapa*) was started by the rulers of Guge in the late tenth century. The Imperial dynasty at Purang patronized many Tibetan and Indian scholars and encouraged native people to visit Indian monasteries to learn real Vajrayana practices. He patronized great scholar and translator Rinchin Zangpo (958-1055 C.E) who visited great Vajrayana centers of mainland India and after his return he founded not less than 108 monasteries in Ladakh. These kings also invited great scholar monk from Vikramsila monastery, Dipankara Srijnana or Atisa (980-1054 CE). He revived Buddhist tradition in Ladakh and Tibet. His tradition was known as the Kadampa tradition which later on developed as the Gelukpa tradition. Atisa's tantric practices was based on celibate monasticism and he recommended that monastic traditions should not be engaged in higher tantric practices. He recommended practical rules in his work *Bodhipatahpradipa*.⁹⁰ Later on when invasion of Ghaznavids and the Ghors started in India, the cultural connection between Indian Buddhism and Ladakh finally ended however cultural reciprocity with China, Tibet and Nepal was never went off. At this juncture Ladakh started devising their own mechanism and tradition to sustain and flourish in difficult terrain which was only possible with coexistence of supernatural power reigning over Ladakh. The villages of Ladakh and *gompas* maintain economic and cultural reciprocity among themselves. It is almost obligatory for the every family to send the youngest son to join the monastic life. The monks of the village *gompa* provide all the religious obligations and services to the village folks as per their social, economic and religious requirements. The monastery also supports non-producing groups, sick people, elderly persons and children.⁹¹ The monasteries protect the socio-ecology of Ladakh. They own majority of the agrarian land tilled by the villagers in lieu of the religious services. These establishments also function as the grain banks and provide economic help to the people from time to time.⁹² Most of the houses of the villages are full of Buddhist religious symbols such as chapels, text, *thangapas* and other religious symbols passed from generation to generation.⁹³ The sacred complex of Ladakh includes a multiplicity of benevolent and wrathful spirits and deities. These spirits can get anguished when people pollute environment, chop the trees, pollute the streams, water points. The shepherd of the Broq-pas who do not care of their flock and show negligence to their duties or allow them to damage the fragile ecology invite the wrath of the mountain spirit. To placate them the altars are adorned with sacrificial offerings, juniper leaves and blood of goat. These spirits are symbolic of natural spirits showing the life supporting and life threatening attributes of the mountainous terrain. These spirits enormously safeguard their domain against the human encroachments but favours sheep or goat because of its resemblance with ibex, the live stock of mountain spirit. This belief provides the quasi-religious ties regarding the sacredness of goats and the pivotal role they play in their religious and oracular

⁹⁰ Geoffery, Samuel. *Introducing Tibetan Buddhism*, P.137

⁹¹ Anna, Grimshaw. 'Celibacy, Religion and Economic Activity in a Monastic Community of Ladakh' pp.121-134

⁹² Helena, Norberg Hodge. 'The Ecological Tradition of Ladakh Meets the Future' pp 48-49

⁹³ Ibid. *Ancient Futures, Learning from Ladakh*, p.34

performance.⁹⁴ It is believed that the terrible *Ihu* lives on *Ihu-bang* in and around the spring and water sources and the gods of mountain live on *Iha-singh* (god trees). The ritually unclean persons (*ba-ngags-pa*) are not supposed to cross canals or the water sources which could annoy the *Iha* or *Ihu*. To placate the water spirits *Ihu-stor* ceremony is performed by the Buddhist community of Ladakh.⁹⁵ At the entrance gate of the villages and on some vital points a special structure *rig-sum-ngon-po* consisting three *chor-ten* painted in white, red and blue are built. The white *chor-ten* belongs to Avalokiteśvara or Padampāni who acts as a guardian watching and protecting interest of the people. He is white in colour and always display *varadamudrā* in his right hand and in his left hand he is holds the lotus. Another idea related to white colour is *Iha-yul* which may be related to worshipping of goddess Tārā. The Tārā is worshipped in many colours-white, green, yellow, blue and red. She is the goddess bestowing prosperity and carries lotus in her left hand and show *Varadamudrā* in the right. Some of them displays Amoghsiddhi in her crown.⁹⁶ The blue coloured *chor-ten* represents Vajrapāni. His colour is blue and symbolizes Vajra. He is the spiritual son of *dhyani* Buddha Aksobhya and is supposed be the chief God of Vajrayāna and is widely respected in Tibet and Ladakh.⁹⁷ He symbolizes power and his pantheon includes *Ishu-yul* i.e. all subterranean guardians and water spirits. The red colour belongs to Manjusri who is considered to be one of the greatest Bodhisattvas and can confer upon wisdom, intelligence and eloquence. The Manjusri carries sword in his right hand and *Prajnapāramita* in his left hand. His one form is worshipped in the red colour otherwise generally he is depicted in golden colour.⁹⁸ His domain includes *bstan-yul* i.e. the land of terrestrial deities and demons. The holistic approach of their religion can be drawn in the framework of sacred complex in which their sacred beliefs and spirits i.e. *Ihu*, sacred geography i.e. *chor-ten* and sacred specialists and performers i.e. lamas are influential components.

The lamas are their sacred specialists who propitiate their supernatural powers for the benevolence of the society and their religio-cultural complex of beliefs is based on the notion of purity, impurity, pollution and sacred. They worship nature, hills, various type of spirits and ibex horn as a natural outcome of their ecological conditions. The monasteries not only fulfill the socio-economic requirements of their people but also facilitate the festivities and entertainments. The *chaam* dance is one of such religious dance in which all the folk members participate. The sound of drums, horns and chanting of hymns makes it humorous as well as religious. The *Chaam* is a mask dance in colourful costumes representing various pantheons and deeper symbolism.⁹⁹ It is well choreographed secret Buddhist dance performed by the lamas accompanied by the mystic music played on the monastic orchestra. The dance is purely religious in nature as only lamas can perform in the dance wearing mask illustrating the previous

⁹⁴ Veena, Bhasin, *op. cit.* 2008, p.87

⁹⁵ Robert B. Ekvall. *Religious Observances in Tibet: Pattern and Functions*, pp.31-35

⁹⁶ Binoytosh, Bhattacharya. *op. cit.* pp.306-07

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p.53

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 102-03

⁹⁹ Helena, Norberg Hodge. *op. cit.* 1992, p.48

birth of Buddhas. The aim of it is to symbolize the destruction of evil spirits and dramatize the illusions of life. The masks represent the various forms of Dharmapalas, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in their wrathful *tantric* forms. They wear costumes made of brocades, silk decorated with Robertbones and horns. Historically this dance began to celebrate the death of king Langdarma, the formidable enemy of Buddhism in Tibet. Lama Lhalung Pal Dorji Zanak (black hat) killed the king wearing the black mask and black hat. This dance provides the psychological strength to these people to cope up with the hostile environment of Ladakh and to eliminate the evils of the society. Recent changes in the infrastructure and growing outside influence have increased the rituals and religious activities in Ladakh as it gives a coping mechanism to deal with the rapid changes and pressure. In the past the religious rituals developed as a power transcending into a social power because people depended on them. The modern changes disturbed their peaceful and sedentary lifestyle which they thought as a wrath of super naturals and also their frequent visits to the lamas offer one of the another possible coping strategies.

The monasteries or *gompas* are one of the finest structures in Ladakh which are very lofty and generally built on hillsides. It is always the best structure of the locality. One can recognize the monastery from distant places by the poles upon the roof from which droop streams of yak tails and Buddhist flags are fluttered. It is to avoid bad spirits to harm the monastery. For placating local spirit related to the monastery a special *lha-tho* is placed above the roof or at high place near its vicinity. The monastery includes temples, rooms for the lamas, nuns and rooms for *sadhana* and worship, kitchen and guest rooms.¹⁰⁰ The oil lamps are kept burning throughout year before the chief deity of the monastery. Ladakh is dotted with numerous monasteries large and small, belong to different sects of Vajrayana. The large monasteries are often seat of one of the sects and small *gompas* are offshoot of them. In smaller *gompas* whole mechanism is maintained by one or two lamas. Generally such *gompas* are situated in the villages.¹⁰¹ The *gompa* often plays an influential role in the socio-cultural context.¹⁰² The word *gompa* is wider in application and practice than monastery. It does not mean the community of celibate monk but a religious community or establishment that may consists of the lamas who have wider role from abbot of the monasteries to community leadership. Such lamas should be a efficient skill to perform tantric rituals and should also have ability to control the spirits existing in environment.¹⁰³ A prospective lama has put strenuous hard work to accomplish over a prolonged period of time to learn the ritual practices and spirit world. It is pertinent here to transmit these values from generation to generation because it adopted this technique not only to achieve Buddhahood but also in larger context for sustaining the society by compromising or

¹⁰⁰ Alexander, Cunningham. *op. cit.* pp.312-13

¹⁰¹ M.L.A. Gompertz. *op. cit.* pp.132-33

¹⁰² H. Singh. 'Ecology and Development in High Altitude Ladakh: A Conflicting Paradigm' p.242

¹⁰³ Geoffery, Samuel. *op. cit.* pp.132-133

placating the natural elements. It is seen as viable method for protection of community.¹⁰⁴ Vajrayana in Ladakh which is popularly known as Lamaism, was not a traditional form of Vajrayana but a specific kind of mechanism for local conditions. The lama who are equivalent to *guru* in Sanskrit, has wide range of interpretations who can be a celibate monk or a householder. The lama is opposite to *geshe* tradition who are generally *kalyanmitra* and their role is limited to teaching of non-tantric traditions. The lama is both teacher as well as performer of *tantra*. These *tantras* are mainly rituals and it was necessary to pass it from one generation to next. The hereditary lineages of the lamas have successfully continued such traditions. The ordained monks of Theravada or Mahayana could not perform *tantric* practices because of celibacy. Here Buddhism works as a functioning religion with the help of the lamas who give teaching, performance of rituals and religious leadership. It was local circumstance and to avoid any sort of misgivings, the lama as married householder was adopted, such lamas can choose his wife as consort for tantric practices. In some of the higher tantric practices like Mahayoga and Anuttarayoga and performance of Hevajra, Cakrasamvara, Guhyasamaja and Kalacakra *tantras* sexual practices became necessary. These practices were directed towards controlling of internal energies and embedded with strong ethical orientation structured with the altruistic motivation of *bodhicitta* with an intention to relieve the sufferings of the world. Probably under rigorous environmental conditions the Buddhist *tantric* practices incorporated a number of pragmatic, ritualistic and magical rituals into its fold. The Buddhahood and the *bodhicitta* was given new form of *guruyoga* in which lama is worshipped as a *tantric* deity and as a form of the Buddha. He incorporates at that time all transcendental qualities of the Buddha to obtain the desired result. The lamas extend their services from religious teachings to community leadership. To be a celibate is not a requirement of a lama. The Gelukpa sect put great emphasize on celibacy and lamas in this sects are generally monks while in other traditions of Nyingmapa, Sakyapa and Kagdyupa the lamas can be married. The Sakyapa practice hereditary lineage of Lamaism and emphasize upon the teachings (*lamdre*) on Hevajra cycle. They continued difficult tantric practice of the Vajrakilaya from the *ngadar* period to modern time. The Kagyudpas also preserved practice of Cakrasamvara. These tantric practices (six teachings of Naropa), includes the conscious direction of the reincarnating consciousness (*namshé*) through the process of dying and rebirth. The teachers of Kagyudpa sect claimed to be rebirth of earlier lamas.

In thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it led to birth of *tulku* system (reincarnate lamas). The word *tulku* is derived from *trikaya* doctrine of Mahayana and corresponds to third viz, *nirmankaya* or material body.¹⁰⁵ The system of or reincarnate lama has been adopted by majority of the monastic system. The identification of reincarnate lamas has been done by recognizing rebirth of a deceased lama and then child was trained to take his temporal and political positions. One of the first identification began with Dusum Kyenpa (1110-1193 CE),

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p.34

¹⁰⁵ Geoffery, Samuel. *op. cit.* p.33

who was a disciple of Gampopa. Gampopa was disciple of Milarepa. Karma Pakshi (1203-1283 CE) was born ten years after Dusum and recognized as reincarnation of Dusum Kyenpa. After Karma Pakshi's death in 1283 CE, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339 CE) was identified as his rebirth. His identification was on instance of Karma Pakshi. This is the first full incident of *tulku* system. He was recognized as the third Gyalwa Karmapa and Dusum Kyenpa as the second.¹⁰⁶ The *tulku* system was adopted by majority of the monastic system of Ladakh and Tibet since sixteenth century CE onwards where reincarnation was accepted for the monastery's founder. The procedural part includes some predictive identity about the intention of deceased lama before his death, divination performed by leading lamas of the sect, sending of the search parties to identify suitable children and giving them objects that belonged to deceased lama mixed with other objects to recognized the real possession of that lama. The identified child was recognized as *tulku* who will be trained in all dimensions of that monastic tradition.¹⁰⁷ The reincarnation of lamas has also been adopted by the Gelukpa sect. It began with Gedundrup. The Dalai Lamas are recognized as emanation of Avalokiteshvara. Traditionally he heads the Karma Kagyud and Drukpa Kagyud.

The hereditary system of Lamaism was practiced by the Sakyapas. It was prevalent in number of prominent lama families like Kons. One member of Kon family was minister to king Trisong Detsen and a disciple of Padmasambhava. The other member was one of the seven earliest Tibetan disciples who were chosen to learn *tantric* practices. They preserved and transmitted Padmasambhava's Vajrakilaya (Phurba) practice which was based on worshipping and placating of Hayagrva or Vajrapani. Kon Konchong Gyelpo became disciple of Drokme Lotsawa. Lotsawa was trained in India under great tantric teacher Virupa. Konchong founded a small monastery 'Sakya' where Atisa was said to have prophesized emanation of great Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara, Manjusri and Vajrapani. Konchog developed a comprehensive practice of *tantras*, the *lamdre* incorporating both Sutra and *tantra* components. Sakya Pandita, a thirteenth century scholar of this family became very famous. He wrote *Domsum Rabye* (Analysis of Three Vows). Their main branch is still maintaining hereditary succession.¹⁰⁸ Another form of lamas are *skushok* who are supposed to be like the Bodhisattva or the Buddha. A *skushok* can only born as *skushok*, not for his material end but to remove the sufferings of the world. The process of identification is same as the *tulkus* and possible children are identified to select real *skushok*. The child identified as *skushok* must qualify all specific attributes of that *skushok* who is going to be incarnated. The recognized child will be with his mother till his upbringing and then taken to particular monastery for monastic and spiritual training.¹⁰⁹

The Buddhism in Tibet and Ladakh region was initially patronized by the kings and other members of royal families. The first monastery at Samye and temple at Chasa were founded

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p.146

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.p.147-48

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. pp.140-42

¹⁰⁹ M.L.A. Gompertz. *op. cit.* pp.112-114

only in late ninth century. Slowly Buddhism started localizing itself and became essential component of people. That localization was embedded in their religious scriptures, rituals and life. Avolokitesvara was accepted as ancestor of people of Tibetan region. He was incarnated as monkey to guide the people to survive in the environment of this area. He introduced techniques of agriculture to people of Tibet and Ladakh and uses to take rebirth as the Bodhisattva to solve their problems.¹¹⁰ It is not under state patronage as in India but embedded in local tradition and culture. It became intrinsic part of communal life of the Ladakhis and deals with day to day problem of health, livelihood, economy and avoidance of misfortune. The bodhisattva is not an intellectual identity for attainment of knowledge but a transformation of identity to remove everyday suffering of the common people.¹¹¹ The early and later diffusions evolved two sets of practices in Ladakh. The Nyingmapa was off shoot of first diffusion while the *sarmapa* tradition began with the second diffusion. It seek its teachings that traced back to early contribution from Indian monasteries. These teachings were revived and reshaped between ninth to twelfth centuries CE. In the eight century C.E. first group of seven Tibetan monks from aristocratic background were selected to get tantric literature which were given Tibetan shape at Monastery of Samye in East-Central Tibet. The literature like *Guhyasamaja* was brought and translated. Later on Padmasambhava tamed local spirits and facilitated the development of Buddhism. He chose twenty five disciples including king Trisong Detsen, the princess Yehe Tsogyel for propagation and consolidation of Buddhism in Tibet and Ladakh.¹¹² Vajrayana in Tibet and Ladakh divided into for major sects and many sub-sects-Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Kagyudpa and Gelukpa. Nyingmapa is the earliest sect which claims its origin directly from age of the Buddha. Their organization is based on lineage of hereditary lamas these lamas are householders as well as well as celibate monastic lamas. The Nyingmapa tradition was reshaped during early medieval period by method of *terma* or rediscovery. It is said that *tantra* was taught to great teachers by transcended form of the Buddha. The main tradition was developed during age of Padamsambhava when series of eight ritual cycle (*kagye*) was fully developed. It was transmitted to his disciples. Since eleventh century onwards a new cycle of rituals and teaching were developed. It is said that these teachings were originally taught by Padamasambhava to his trusted twenty five disciples. Theses disciples did not disclose these teachings in the *ngadar* period. These were written down by Yeshe Tsogyal, the tantric consort of Padamasambhava along with its meaning, ritual symbols, images and objects and buried to wait for the right time to come when these will be rediscovered and interpreted. The lama who is able to is discover them are known as *terton*.¹¹³ The *terma* consists of few cryptic words that can be expanded and explained by *terton* in many volumes. It is healthy practice of introducing new pattern and concepts that can be useful for society and religion.¹¹⁴ The visionary powers of *terton* lama can

¹¹⁰ Geoffery Samuel, *op. cit.* pp. 8-10

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* pp. 26-27

¹¹² *Ibid.* pp. 31-32

¹¹³ *Ibid.* pp. 33-34

¹¹⁴ *Ibid* p.35

discover the entire body of teachings at which they were divinized. It permits lamas to perceive more knowledge than ordinary human being. It also requires the right female partner and right circumstances to reveal the *terma*. It introduced new knowledge into the Nyingmapa tradition and gives scope for continuous creation and innovation.¹¹⁵ The Sakyapa, Kagyudpa and Gelukpa are *sarmapa* (new) sects finally started taking shape when second diffusion of Buddhism from India to Tibet began during 7th century C E onwards. The Gelukpa order is headed by successors of Tsongkapa, the founder of the Gelukpa school. The government of the Dalai Lama at Lhasa was known as Ganden Podrang but now shifted to Dharmashala. The Panchen Lama's seat was based on Tashilhun.¹¹⁶ The Kagyudpa found its origin from Naropa who transmitted his teachings to his Tibetan disciple Marpa. Marpa again transferred his teachings to Milrepa who was again a great teacher. Kagyudpa has four important schools mainly based on monastic characteristics and has little philosophical difference. These are-Karma Kagyudpa, Drukpa Kagyudpa, Drikung Kagyudpa, and Taklung Kagyudpa. The Sakyapa was born in Sakya gumpa in west central Tibet and later on divided into two main orders-Ngorpa and Tselpa.¹¹⁷ So *gompas* and *lamas* have more than one identity in Ladakh in terms of protecting social equilibrium, environmental virtues and religious obligations. They not only perform their duties in present context but also act as custodian to transmit these traditional values to future generation.

Buddhism and Environment in Northeast (Tawang) and Nepal (Lumbini):

In northeast Tawang is ideal place to explore tradition and continuity among the Buddhists. Tawang is part of Arunachal Pradesh lying on stretches of eastern Himalayas. It has close proximity with Tibet and Bhutan. Tawang monastery is main epitome of culture and tradition and people of this region mainly follow Vajrayana Buddhism especially Nyingmapa and Kagyudpa schools. The Monapas of Tawang are main followers of Buddhism. They belong to Tibeto-Burman family. The *gompas* play important role in their life and plays as bridge between them and harsh environment.¹¹⁸ Tawang was situated on main caravan route which traversed Tawang across the Himalayas. It accentuated acculturation in the region. It was with Tibet and Bhutan and Later on Gelukpa sect under leadership of Mera Lama (Lodre Gyatso) consolidated his sect with the help of fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682).¹¹⁹ Just like Ladakh and Tibet in Tawang lamas help the common people in every cause. In addition to religious practice in the *gompas*, the lamas serve as *Amchis*, educationist, and ritual performer. The monasteries and nunneries are major centers of domestic and religious life of Arunachal Pradesh.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p.144

¹¹⁶ Ibid. P.15

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p.16

¹¹⁸ K. S. Singh, *People of India, Arunachal Pradesh*, Vol. IV, pp.243-44

¹¹⁹ Christoph Von Furer Haimendorf. *Highlands of Arunachal Pradesh: Anthropological Research in Northeast India*, pp.148-50

The social structure of Tawang is highly democratic but class discrimination is significant. The society is patriarchal and caste difference is almost negligible. The social structure runs with the help of sanctions, praise and prohibitions in which Buddhism plays a vital role.¹²⁰ The festivities are same like Ladakh but with some regional differences. During such festivals thousands of butter lamps are lit to celebrate and remember the auspicious occasion. The festivals like *choikar* (harvest festival) and *torgya (chaam)* lamas participation are quite important. Losar is most important festival celebrated with much pomp and show. In the *gompas* special prayers are arranged that day under guidance of lama or Rin-Poche.¹²¹ The people are quite simple, generous and hard working. The Buddhist way of life is dominating their all prospects of life. Their belief in reincarnation and *karma* ideals make them honest. The *gompas* and lamas still play prominent role in the life of people of Tawang. They are consulted in every aspect of life since birth to death. It is almost a rule to seek blessings of their respective lamas every month on the eighth, fifteenth and thirtieth day. On such auspicious days hunting and fishing are avoided. It is not only monthly consultation but whole life cycle has been divided on basis of some holy years and months.¹²²

The economy is characterized by cultivation of barley and role of yak in all agricultural activities. The most of the villages are self sufficient in food grain and some villagers are also engaged in trade. The land ownership belongs to Tawang monastery as well as to village communities and individual. The agricultural activities start with rituals performed by Rin-Poches and life style shows a kind of harmonious co-existence between commoners and monasteries.¹²³ Even during the age of globalization the co-existence between people and lamas have not been eroded. Due to growing economy the pastoral culture is lagging behind and people are more settled now. The monasteries are projected as tourist spots. But growth of economy has not only change the life style but monasteries are now more engaged in academic and social activities.

Lumbini is the birth place of the Buddha and one of the most sacred space in the world. There are certain attributes and characteristics that explores Siddhartha Gautama was born in the forest or garden near the village of Lumbini. There was a pool nearby where his mother Mayadevi bathed before giving birth. It has been described that when time of Siddhartha's birth had nearly come, her father, King Suprabuddha, requested to King Suddhodana, at Kapilavastu that he has been informed that Maya, your Majesty's queen, is now with child, and already far advanced in pregnancy, and as I fear that when the child is born, my daughter will be short-lived, I have thought it right to ask you to permit my daughter to come back to her parents home.. I have prepared a palace in the Lumbini Garden for her reception.¹²⁴ The biographical tradition was to

¹²⁰ Purul Chandra Dutta. 'A Note on the People of Arunachal, their Culture and Matters of Anthropological Interest' p.20

¹²¹ Takhe, Kani. *Agricultural Festivals of Arunachal Pradesh*, p.91

¹²² Niranjana, Sarkar. *Buddhism Among the Monapas and Sheradukpens*, pp. 80-81

¹²³ M. L. Bose. *History of Arunachal Pradesh*, pp. 31-32

¹²⁴ A. Lillie. *The Popular Life of the Buddha*, p.9

locate the event of the Buddha's birth in the forest of Lumbini and the park was named for her (Maya's mother) after having been made by Mayas's father, Suprabuddha, at a point half-way between the towns of Devdaha and Kapilvastu.¹²⁵ On the way, she and her party passed the pleasant Lumbini grove, where she stopped to enjoy the flowers and chirping of birds.¹²⁶

Buddhist literature agrees on the existence of a *salvana* ('sal forest'), a *Lumbinivana* and *Mahavana* ('great forest') in Kapilavastu. In these forests, the majority of trees were sal trees. The Buddhist literature also mentions that the Sakyas of Kapilavastu and Koliyas of Devadaha jointly maintained the garden of Lumbini. The garden of Lumbini was also called *Lumbinikanan*, *Lumbinivatika*, *Lumbiniupavana* and *Lumbinichittalatavana*.¹²⁷ The continuity of forest traditions still continue in *tarai* region and probably it was Buddhist tradition that forests are still protected in the region. Lumbini lies in the sub-tropical climatic zone, which experiences all four seasons. From March to May, there is a brief spring, which is followed by a long summer season, with high temperatures (up to 42.5°C), low humidity, thunder showers and heat waves that originate from the heat of the land. Monsoon is the rainy season between mid-June and August. October and November is the autumnal season, with a dry and warm climate in the daytime and cold temperatures at night. December, January and February are the winter seasons with foggy mornings and cold temperatures at night, which can drop to 5°C. Occasionally, cold spells occur throughout the *tarai*, with a dense layer of low fog. This fog hinders the penetration of sunlight and causes severe drops in the mean daytime temperature from 25° to 15°C. This may last for about a month and represents a threat to plants and animals and also poses a health hazard to human beings. The annual average temperature rise ranges from 0.06°C to 0.12° C in the middle mountain and the Himalayan region, and of 0.03° C in the Siwalik and *tarai* regions. Changing weather conditions in the past have had devastating effects on the area around Lumbini. It is also possible that some natural disasters, such as drought, famine, floods in the rainy season, or earthquakes caused people to abandon Lumbini.¹²⁸

The sacred place of birth is the focal point of the Lumbini to symbolize the birth space of the Lord Buddha. The form of a circle enclosing squares embodies the mystic symbol of the universe in the Buddhism with purity and simplicity. The sacred area surrounded by the pond and a circular levee link to protect against the inundation.¹²⁹ At present, the Lumbini inscription is built around the central idea that the site is the birthplace of Lord Buddha. The area around the inscribed zone contains significant archaeological resources, as well as elsewhere within the Sacred Garden. While expert consensus exists around the importance of Ramagrama because it

¹²⁵ John, Strong. *The Buddha: A Short Biography*, p.39

¹²⁶ Peter, Harvey. *An Introduction to Buddhism, Teaching, History and Practice*, p. 16

¹²⁷ B. Bidari, *Lumbini: A Haven of Sacred Refuge*, p. 65

¹²⁸ B. Bidari. 'Lumbini Beckons: A Glimpse of the Holy Birthplace of the Buddha and its Master Plan and the Ashoka Pillar Inscription and the Marker Stone-The Exact Birthplace of the Buddha', p.30

¹²⁹ K. Tange & Urtec. *Report of Final Outline design for Lumbini*, pp.19-20

possesses relic of the Buddha. The site's hinterland could yield much important information about the use and chronology of the site. Tilaurakot is considered to be the site of Buddha's father's family and one of best preserved urban forms and environs of any provincial city within the early historic archaeology of South Asia.¹³⁰ However much more remains to be learned about the origins and evolution of the site. The governance of the historic Buddhist region will be carried out under special provisions adopted by the Government of Nepal. Development is taking place based on the concept of conserving the heritage sites. An appropriate system of governance is going to be established to ensure the sustainable development of the regions spanning across the three districts of Kapilvastu, Rupendehi and Nawalparas. The understanding of the historic Buddhist region in Nepal and the subsequent recognition of the importance of conservation and development depends on the results of future archaeological survey work and on the thematic orientation chosen. For example, the region could be understood to be based on the diverse key sites in the life of the Lord Buddha and afterwards: Lord Buddha's birthplace (Lumbini) Lord Buddha's father's home where Lord Buddha remained until 29 years of age (Tilaurakot) and the most intact *stupa* of those eight *stupas* built to hold his relics (Ramagrama). There is however also the theme of the birthplaces of the three Buddhas, each site commemorated with an Asoka pillar: Siddhartha Gautama in Lumbini, Kanakamuni in Gotihawa and Krakuchanda in Nigliva. A further theme is comprised of the Chinese pilgrim sites commemorating the pilgrimage route associated with Buddha, which could be used and developed for the tourists to extend information about sustainability and growth. In all such activities it has been planned that the Buddha's love for nature should be primarily and preciously considered.

¹³⁰ R. A. E. Coningham. 'Identifying, Evaluating and Interpreting of Physical Signature of Lumbini and Associated Sites of Presentation, Management and Long-Term Protection.' P.15

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