The chapter on religion and polity is perhaps somewhat out of place in a dissertation which primarily deals with political history; in any case it is not important. However, our purpose is to find out how far religion influenced political developments, administration and society in Ladakh. To judge this impact of religion, naturally, we shall be concerned with some details about the origin, different sects and monastic organisation of Lama Buddhism. But due to inadequacy of sources, it is not possible to present a more comprehensive picture of religion of the Ladakhis and go into details of the interrelationship of various monastic sects. The available records are also silent about the role of the monastic institutions in the external trade of Ladakh during the period discussed in this monograph.

Further, before its annexation by the Dogras in 1842, Ladakh continued to be governed by the native Kings, of course, for the past some years under the overlordship of the Sikh Maharaja. Therefore, it will be of some interest to know as to what was the administrative set up during this period.

Again, the system of gathering militia by the native Kings at the time of national emergency—an aspect discussed towards the end of this chapter—is deeply connected with the political developments dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

The information, this chapter contains, although mostly based on secondary sources, is thus quite relevant; references to it are made in the subsequent chapters.
Before the introduction of Buddhism in Ladakh about the third century B.C., the religion of Ladakh consisted in the amorphous mass of animistic and totemistic beliefs. This is attested by the graffitoes representing the ibex, which are of common occurrence in Ladakh. In the totemistic cult, ibex was the most sacred animal and its worship was quite common. These beliefs were later on organised into a well-knit religious system, which was given the name of Bon. In 241 B.C., Asoka sent Buddhist missionaries into Ladakh, where they propagated the peaceful doctrines of Sakya Muni, and the religion of Ladakh became Buddhism, as it prevailed in India. During the Kushan period, Buddhism was further strengthened in Ladakh, and from here it was introduced into China about the beginning of the Christian era and thence into Tibet in the middle of the seventh century A.D. Buddhism in Ladakh continued to flourish for many centuries, and this Himalayan principality remained under the deep impact of Indian religion and culture. This is proved by the numerous inscriptions of religious nature found in Ladakh. After about the eleventh century, Indian influence in the religion of Ladakh began to abate and this Himalayan kingdom, became under the impact of Toling.

2. Idem.
4. Idem.
Gage's great religious centre. But, as we shall see soon after, with the rise of the Yellow hat sect or the Gelugpa in Tibet in the fourteenth century, and coming into existence the institution of the Dalai Lamas there, Gage's influence declined and Ladakh became under the religious impact of Lhasa. In the period covered by this study, Buddhism in its Lamaist form was the popular religion in Ladakh.¹

Lamaism was a perverted form of Buddhism. The simple creed as propagated by Lord Buddha was first clothed into mysticism by the Tantrists; later on, the lamas impregnated it with the ancient gods and spirits of the former inhabitants, thus making it a medley of superstition, wild beliefs, and contradictions.² The doctrine of metempsychosis was curiously blended with tenets and precepts very similar to those of Christianity and with the worship of grotesque divinities.³

The number of lamas⁴ was quite large. In 1834, out of the total population of 168,000, about 12,000 were the lamas, thus giving one lama to thirteen members of the laity. This strength of the lamas was

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⁴'Lama' is a Tibetan word literally meaning 'the superior or exalted one'. Previously, use of this word was restricted to the monasteries and was strictly applicable only to abbots and highest monks, but later on out of courtesy, almost all lamaist monks and priests were given this name. (Waddell, op. cit., p. 43).

⁵Cunningham, Ladakh, p. 286.
maintained by a custom, under which almost every Ladakhi family having more than one son, sent one of the younger ones to a monastery. The sons of the Kings generally entered the hemis monastery. All the lamas were ordained to lead a life of celibacy. Women also took to monastic life and became nuns and lived in the monasteries. They were called chomos.

The general bulk of the people did not understand anything about religion and were strictly under the influence of the monks. In reality, the laity took a conveniently lax view of their religious duties. The monks were present on the occasion of birth, marriage and death ceremonies. They administered medicines and cured the sick. They also acted as exorcists and magicians and saved the laity from the evil designs of bad spirits. They were looked upon as saviours from the pangs of suffering and liberators from the evil of transmigration. In fact, these monks acted as advisors and guides to the laity in every matter, and in lay life there was too much respect for these monks and unquestionable obedience to their wishes. These monks, thus played a very important part in society and their influence pervaded in every phase of a Buddhist Ladakhi's life.

4 Knight, Three Empires, p. 132.
5 Douglas, Beyond the High Himalayas, p. 169.
6 Annapra J.I., 1883-84, II, p. 102-103.
Prayer-wheel, Mania and Chortens

In the religious service, prayers occupied an important part, which was entirely the work of the lamas. Prayer was also performed through mechanical operation i.e., with the help of a prayer-wheel. It was made of all sizes, from the pocket wheel to be turned on the hand as one walked along, to the common wheel of the village which was turned by water, and prayed for the community in general. The prayer-wheel consisted of a cylinder, in which were arranged, one on the top of the other, sheets of paper inscribed with the sacred formulae and the sheets were wound on the axis. The prayer-wheel has to be turned in a particular direction, doing contrary was considered as sacrilegious. The Buddhist magic formula 'Om-Mani-Padme-Hum', meaning 'O, thou Jewel in the Lotus!' was uttered by the laity and the monks alike. The formula seems to have originated in India, and was addressed to Avalokitesvara or Padmapani, and has been popular as the land of the lamas; p. 50.

Victor Jacquemont botanically proving this point remarked that lotus was peculiar to the lukewarm and temperate waters of India and Egypt. There was not one of its genus or even of its family in Tibet. Its extreme beauty and abundance in the tanks dug near the Indian temples rendered it celebrated in the Hindu legends. (Jacquemont, Letters from India, I, p. 297; see also, Rockhill, Land of the Lamas, p. 320).

far back as fourth century A.D. 1 Flags inscribed with prayers were fixed at the top of the houses and monasteries: as they fluttered in the wind, they were considered offering prayers for the community in general. 2 In every village and often along the roadside in the uninhabited area, there were Manis or stone dykes which varied in shape and size. These Manis were sometimes half a mile long, 3 on which were flung small pieces of slate or flat stone, inscribed with mystic formula. These slabs were votive offerings from all classes of people for the attainment of some particular object. 4 While walking, these Manis were to be left on the right hand. 5 People often made considerable detours in order to do so. In larger villages there were chortens or dedicatory pyramids erected in honour of Sakya Thubba or of some holy Buddhas. 6 These chortens consisted of a square basement, surrounded by some steps, on which stood the dome or principal part of the edifice, which in shape was like an inverted truncated cone. The dome was surmounted by a lofty pinnacle, crowned by a sacred crescent shaped emblem. 8 Sometimes on many big rocks on the

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1 Rockhill, Land of the Lamas, p. 336.
2 Egerton, Journal of a Tour through Spiti, p. 55; Knight, Three Empires, p. 149.
3 Henderson, Lahore to Yarkand, p. 49.
5 Egerton, Journal of a Tour through Spiti, pp. 56-57; Drew, J & K Territories, p. 159.
7 E. F. Neve, Beyond the Pir Panjal, p. 143.
8 Gazetteer Kashmir and Ladakh, 1890, p. 545.
road side, colossal figures of some deities were carved. All these monus, chortens, and stone-inscriptions represented signs of the people's thought for their religion.

Monasteries

But by far the most important religious edifices in the country were monasteries or the abode of the lamas. Almost every village had a monastery of greater or lesser importance; it sometimes held one or two lamas, and sometimes it was the home of hundreds. Generally these were situated at secluded places.

Inside these lamaseries were the images of Buddha, of apotheosised lamas, of Atibochi, Atisha and other saints. These monastic establishments were quite rich and controlled important portions of the wealth of Ladakh. From early times the kings had made numerous grants of lands to the monasteries, and some, like Hemis, the monastery of the royal house, held extensive properties. According to Cunningham's estimate of the revenue of Ladakh before the Dogra conquest, 4,000 households out of a total of 24,000 were assigned to the monasteries. The lands of the monasteries were


2Cunningham, Ladak, pp. 312-13; I.L. Bishop, Among the Tibetans (London, 1904), p. 47.

3Kangra D.G., 1883-84, I., p. 112; Drew, J & K Territories, p. 255; Dainelli, Buddhists And Glaciers of Western Tibet, p. 265.


6Cunningham, Ladak, p. 270.
cultivated by the working lamas and often these were given to farmers on metayer basis, that is the tillers handed over half the produce to the monasteries and were exempted from taxation and begar or free carriage.

In order to maintain the large establishment of monks and pay the expenses of ceremonials, these monasteries had various avenues of income. Its own endowment lands were the primary source of income. It received alms from the laity and also derived a good income by engaging in trade, and advancing money and grain on loan to the laity. Though sometimes the poorer classes were heavily in debt to these religious institutions, yet they were not harsh creditors. The Editor of the Imperial Gazetteer of India remarked:

Even the debtor is hopelessly involved, the monastery takes possession of half of his land for a period of three years. The land is restored to the debtor and the debt written off. The monastery will never sue a debtor nor is land permanently alienated for debt.

Monastic Organisation

In each big monastery, there were two kinds of lamas, who worked under two different head lamas. In spiritual matters skushok was the head. To assist him there was a Lolon or abbot, one Chos Pimpa, or a controller of the lama meetings, and chhomspon or the

2. Knight, Three Empires, p. 300.
3. Thomson, Western Himalaya, p. 185.
4. Foreign Department Secret Consultations, 31 December 1847, No. 130.
director of the religious dances. These spiritual monks devoted their time to prayers, and in holding religious congregations and ritual dances.

In temporal affairs, Chagzot or Chagzot was the managerial head. He was assisted by a Nyerchhen or a steward, a Nyerpa or a store-keeper, and Phi-Nyer or a farm-steward. Some of the Chagzot had good business powers and to some was also entrusted the administration of a small district around the monasteries. These working monks attended to the temporal interests of the community, they cultivated land, carried trade, collected rent from the tenants of the monastery, travelled through the villages to beg alms for the brotherhood, and advanced grain and money on loan.

In addition to these administrative duties, the working monks performed some military functions also. According to Cunningham, in eastern Ladakh forts were “castellated monasteries”, the defence of which was entrusted to the monks assisted by a few of the armed peasantry, who performed the duty by turns, under the command of one dignified with the title of Kharpon. Sometimes high

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2 Drew, J. K Territories, p. 256; Doughias, Beyond the High Himalayas, p. 197.
3 Amar Nath, Echo of the Unknown, p. 137; Mohan Krishna Bhar, loc. cit., p. 74.
4 Drew, J. K Territories, p. 256.
7 Cunningham, Ladak, p. 279.
lamsas participated in the affairs of state; in 1848, when Lieutenant Henry Strachey visited Hanle, he found the whole district "under the secular control as well as religious ministration of the Prior and his monks."

The paucity of information available makes it impossible to tell how and by whom these working monks were appointed, what was their tenure of office and to whom were they responsible.

Monastic orders or sects

A group of monasteries with a common organisation and doctrine formed one monastic order or sect. Each order acknowledged one master as founder and interpreter of its doctrine. In Ladakh, there were many monastic orders, most important being those of the bka'-rgyud-pa, with its main monastery at Hemis and the dge-lugs-pa, with its main monastery at Spituk. The bka'-rgyud-pa or the Red sect lamas considered the Dharma Raja or Great Lama of Bhutan as their head and wore red clothes. It controlled majority of the monasteries including, the one at Hemis which was the richest and most influential in Ladakh. The followers of this order were less ascetic than the Gelugpa or Yellow sect lamas: they were allowed to marry and engage in trade and farming. All the monasteries belonging to this order, in whichever country they were situated, looked to the Dharma Raja of Bhutan as

1 Francke, Antiquities, II, p. 133.

2 Strachey to Lawrence, 25 September 1847; Foreign Department Secret Consultations, 31 December 1847, No. 130.

3 For a sectwise list of monasteries in Ladakh, see Ramsay, Western Tibet, p. 83.
As this dignitary headed the mother monastery, all the abbots of the monasteries of this order were appointed by an order given in his name. The monasteries of the same order were also linked by what may be called the chain of affiliation. For instance the abbot of the Guru Ghantal monastery in Lahul sent a yearly tribute of about rupees thirty, half in cash and half in goods to the abbot of the Togna monastery in Ladakh, who forwarded it with other tributes on his own account to that of Kangri Donjan near the Lake Mansarovar in Tibet, whence it went in the same way to the head monastery of Pangtang De-chinling in Bhutan. Generally, the kings of Ladakh were the patrons of this sect. For this patronage, sometimes they paid a heavy price. We are told by the chronicles of Ladakh, that one of the causes of the Tibetan-Ladakh-Kashmir war of 1881-84, in which Ladakh lost all the territory to the west of Mayum pass was religion.

The Gelugpa or the Yellow sect was founded in Tibet by Tsong Khapa (1357-1417 A.D.). He was a monk of exceptional intellectual attainments, religious devotion and proselytising ability. Being indignant at the vice and corruption of the monks of his time, at the superstitious practices and the rites of sorcery, which degraded Lamaism, Tsong Khapa undertook to purify

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2. Lyall, Settlement Report, p. 128; see also, Kangra District, 1888-90, I, p. 110.
4. See infra pp. 91-92.
it and restore the primitive cult as propounded by Lord Buddha. He even sent a mission to Ladakh, where it was enthusiastically received by the Ladakhi King, Trak-bum-de (ca. 1410-1440 A.D.)². Probably, as a result of this mission, the King adopted the doctrines of the reformed sect and issued the Mulbe/ edict aiming at abolishing the ritualistic practices of the Dards, especially animal sacrifices.³ In 1578, Sonam Gyatso, the reincarnate Lama of the Yellow sect and a zealous missionary received the title of Dalai Lama⁴ from Altan Khan of Tumed, the leading prince of Mongolia. Hereafter the followers of this sect began to look to the Dalai Lama as their spiritual head and were ordained to lead a life of celibacy and asceticism.⁵

The austerity, discipline, and spiritual quality of the Dalai Lama attracted the attention of some influential nobles of Tibet and kings of the neighbouring states. The last King of the first Ladakhi dynasty is also said to have sent rich presents to the first Dalai Lama.⁶ The aura of religious supremacy of the Dalai Lama spread in all the neighbouring lands.

¹Richardson, Tibet And Its History, p. 40; see also, J. De Milloue, "How the Temporal power of the Dalai Lama was founded", IA., XXXIII (1904), p. 311.
³Francke, "The Rock Inscriptions of Mulbe", IA., XXXV (1906), pp. 75-76.
⁴Literally, 'Tale' (Dalai) means 'Ocean'; later on this title was applied retrospectively to his two predecessors. (Richardson, Tibet And Its History, p. 41).
⁶IA., XXIV, No. 0 (Sept. 1948), p. 219.
such as Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Burma, Western China and Mongolia, and Lhasa came to be recognised as the home of the Buddhist world. When Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama (1642-1682 A.D.), assumed temporal and religious powers, his religious supremacy, as well as his government appears to have been vaguely recognised by other Lamaist sects and governments of the neighbouring Tibetan-speaking states.

The spiritual supremacy of the Dalai Lamas, sometimes influenced the policies of an immediate neighbouring country. Both Ladakh and Bhutan, on some occasions appealed to Lhasa for the settlement of their ruler's royal succession. We also find members of the royal family of Ladakh, performing the funeral rites of the kings at Lhasa. The abbot of Hemis monastery in Ladakh, though a follower of the Red sect, many times visited Lhasa and Tashilhunpo in connection with receiving ordination for a batch of novices. This recognition of religious supremacy of the Dalai Lama by the independent rulers of the neighbouring states has often been called, though quite erroneously, political supremacy of the former over the latter.

Having perused various aspects of the religion of the Ladakhis we may now sum up the influences of this religion. In Ladakh, it played a very important

1Cf. Francke, Antiquities II, p. 121.
3Ibid., XXIV, No. 3 (Sept. 1948), pp. 220, 227.
part in the daily and social life of the people. In
the midst of the ignorant Ladakhis, who were full of
superstitions, veneration and fear, the lama was a
universal man, the savant par excellence: he was doctor,
astrologer, sorcerer, educator and teacher. Further,
by segregating a large proportion of young menhood into
monks and an enforced celibacy, it checked the increase
in population. This social consequence indirectly led
to the economic prosperity of the Ladakhis.

In political affairs, Lamaism, did not assume
the same position as it did in Tibet. No doubt, lamas
often participated in the affairs of state, yet all
officials of the government were laymen. This was
unlike Tibet, where the administration was run by the
monk officials. Further, unlike the Dalai Lama of
Tibet, who was an incarnate Lama and the supreme controller
of spiritual and temporal affairs, the supreme ruler of
Ladakh was a lay king.

Very little is known about the structure of the
Ladakhi Government before the Bogra conquest. Various
travellers, men of pluck and courage imbued with the
spirit of adventure and new explorations, who visited
this Himalayan principality and have thrown a flood of
light on the social, geographical and economic aspects
of the country are sadly silent on the administrative
set-up. In the chronicles of Ladakh and writings of
William Moorcroft, we find only stray and inconclusive
references. Alexander Cunningham is the only author,
who gives some details, but in some respects his
observations are incomplete and self-contradictory. Thus, in the absence of any treatise and adequate source-material, it is difficult to present a comprehensive and detailed picture of the administration of Ladakh under its own kings. Here an attempt is made to draw only a general outline.

The nature of government was a mild despotism. The head of the state was King, popularly known in Ladakh as Gyalpo (rgyal-po). His office was hereditary and for centuries he was a descendant in the same family. Leh was the capital of the country.

In running the central government, the King was assisted by a council of officers. The constitution of this council has been variously described. The chronicles of Ladakh tell us that this council was made of three grades of officials. The first were the chief ministers (bkah-blons) in number four or five and hereditary; the second, the ministers (blon-po), hereditary, and also few in number, and the third, the elders (rgan-gsum), three or four persons of some standing and experience especially selected. The council in the form described above was established by King Nyi-ma Nam-gyal (Ca. 1705-1734). Sometimes, the King and his group of officers took counsel with important monks.

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2 Note by K. Marx in Francke, Antiquities, II, p. 123.
3 Ibid.
According to Cunningham and Moorcroft, the conduct of affairs was generally entrusted to the Prime Minister or Kahun. He was also styled as "the minister", or Kangri Kahun, or "the powerful minister". Other chief officers, who took part in running the central government were Kuk (or Kono) Kahun or deputy minister; Kangpo (hien-po) or chief municipal and military officers and governors of towns, Mako or "Commander-in-Chief", Ghanpo or "lord high treasurer", Shakspon or "Chief Justice", Lhunpo or "magistrates", Kako-Ladei or head-master of the horse, and Changpo or "Koval", an officer equivalent to that of the mayor. In addition to participating in the administration of the central government, sometimes some of these officers were petty rulers of districts. When Moorcroft visited Ladakh, Kono Kahun was the governor of Kalbe, and perhaps was the same person as the Kahun of Purig.

About the appointment of the Prime Minister, Cunningham wrote that this office was almost hereditary and was restricted to a member of one of the families of the principal Kahunos or governors of districts. The choice was determined as in other countries, either by royal popularity and successful intrigue, or by greater

3. Ibid., Moorcroft, Travels, I, p. 334; J.J. Cunningham, however wrote that the meaning of Kono or Kono was not deputy, but it was simply a title of respect, and as such was applied very generally. JASS, XIII, Pt. 1 (1844), p. 246.
4. Cunningham, Ladak, p. 239; Moorcroft, Travels, I, p. 335; Gazetteer Kashmir and Ladakh, 1890, p. 335.
The apparent power of the Prime Minister was absolute, but his real power was much curbed by the wide-spread authority of the monastic establishments, and by the partial independence of the petty Gyalpos and district Kahlons. The last Prime Minister before the Dogra conquest was Ngcrub Stanzin, who had married King's daughter, and was a petty Gyalpo of the Chimra valley.

From the events described in the chronicles of Ladakh, the relative power of King and Prime Minister seems to have varied. When the King was strong, he overruled his Kahlon and council of officers. Sen-ge Nam-gyal (ca. 1600-1645) never allowed anyone else to override his opinion and retained all the powers of government in his own hands. In the case of Nyi-ma Nam-gyal (ca. 1705-34), his Kahlon, who was a nobleman of Gya, "began to nibble away the royal power" and appropriated lands in places as far as Purig. Further, instead of sending his younger sons to the church, he gave them lands. About Ts¢-pal Nam-gyal (ca. 1790-1834, 1840-41), the last independent King of Ladakh, it is reported that

1 Cf. Ladak, p. 258.
2 Idem.
3 Ibid., XV, Supplement (1939), pp. 149-150.

Ippolito Desideri, who visited Ladakh in 1715 A.D., also tells us that the son of the Prime Minister was Governor of either Lama Yuru or Bazgo. F. De. Hippi, "Ippolito Desideri (1712-1727), (London, 1937), pp. 76, 378.
with the officials of the old regime he could not agree. This King took the privy seal from the Prime Minister (to the palace) and himself consulted with the headmen of villages, lords etc., all men of new type. The noble families he did not attend to. The king of Zanskar, the minister of Burig, and others were kept in Ladakh imprisoned. The men that stood before him were made governor of the palace, and everywhere the old customs were destroyed.

The administration of districts and towns was in the hands of hereditary chiefs, which once had been independent rulers. Under this category, Cunningham mentioned the Sylaps of Nubra, Gya, Spiti, Zanskar, Kekshym, Suh, Suru and Herbabs or Dzor. The titles of these officials varied in different districts. The petty Sylaps and Lhalongs were also called Depons or "District Chiefs" or Tangins. In western Ladakh, where Mohammedan elements predominated, they were known as Jut.

These chieftains were also Kharpuns or Commanders of forts, and exercised many powers. They heard cases of judicial nature and dispensed justice. The Dohas or headmen of the villages under their jurisdiction, in running the local administration were responsible to them. At the time of emergency, the Kharpuns raised local levies and arranged to supply allotted quota of

1Francois, Antiquités, II, p. 125. This King may have been active during the first few years of his reign; in 1820–22, when Moorcroft journeyed to Ladakh, about the King he remarked: "The character of the Raja is a compound of timidity, prudence and indolence. He gives up the reins of government wholly to the Ilahion and except on occasions of festivity or of ceremonies connected with religion, confines himself almost wholly to his houses of which in different parts of the country he has several suited to the difference of the seasons." (Moorcroft to G. Sivinon (Secretary to Govt.), 6 February 1822: Foreign Department Political Consultations, 20 September 1822, No. 68).

2Cf. Cunningham, Ladak, p. 258.

3Ibid., p. 260; Moorcroft, Travels, I, 325.
soldiers to form the militia. In addition, as referred to earlier, some of these chieftains also took part in the central administration.

It appears that generally the administration of towns and districts in central Ladakh was in the hands of local hereditary chiefs. But in the case of districts situated at the fringes of the empire, such as Dras and Spiti, officials sent from the central government also exercised some powers. In Spiti, there was a Kho or local chief, but in addition an official of the Gyalpo who visited Spiti to collect the revenue at the time of harvest, also exercised some authority.¹

In Dras, there was a local ruler (do), and a Khappar or governor sent from Leh. They collected the revenue, managed to pocket one-third, and sent the rest half to Leh and half to a neighbouring Kashmiri landlord (fakir) who shared the district with Ladakh; also the Khap Khaliq had authority to raise contributions in the district towards the expense of building a fort.²

The local administration of government of villages was in hands of village headmen and elders known as Phung or Phons or Dongpons. The headman performed some judicial, revenue and military functions, and was under the control of petty chiefs or minister in-charge of his district. But in the case of villages, directly under the control of the King, in revenue matters, the village headman was accountable to the

¹Peacock, Travels, II, p. 69; Gerard, Account of Kashmir, ii. 148; Kangdi 1897, Its. II to IV, p. 76.

Phygzed, or Lord High Treasurer. The latter submitted such accounts to the Prime Minister, who was the keeper of the privy purse of the king and his family.¹

Much information is not available about the various departments of the central government under the native kings of Ladakh. However, some scattered and tantalizing references are found about the army.

There was no standing army in Ladakh. Every family or house throughout the country was obliged to send one ready-armed soldier at the call of the government.² The petty Kahlous, Lonpos, and Gobas also furnished various number of soldiers from their respective districts, towns and villages. In 1820-22, when Moorcroft visited Ladakh, Banka Kahlon, whose district was comprised of seventy villages, used to send seven hundred armed men into the field when required.³ Cavalry was formed of all those persons who had horses whereas the remainder formed the infantry.⁴ Artillery consisted of matchlocks, though these were not sufficient in number; in 1820-22, ten men had one matchlock.⁵ The arms were swords, lances, matchlocks, bows, arrows and shields.

Every soldier was responsible to arrange his own food. For this each man was generally attended by another male member of his house or family, who carried the joint provisions on his back during the daily marches, while the soldier usually carried his arms; occasionally, they relieved one another. Under this arrangement, in case of death also, the state had a substitute at hand, while the family preserved the arms, clothes and horse (if he had one) of the dead, all of which otherwise would have been lost.⁶

². Cunningham, Ladak, p.275; Moorcroft, Travels, I,p.335.
³. Moorcroft, Travels, 1,425.
⁴. Cunningham, Ladak, p. 276.
⁵. Moorcroft, Travels, 1,336.
The *Chronicles of Ladakh* allude that the position of general or *Makpon* was usually conferred upon a *Kahlon* or *Lonpo* at the beginning of a campaign. Other military titles such as *Stong-pon* and *Gyanon* were also conferred on the different *Kahlons* and *Gobas* according to the numerical strength of soldiers furnished by their respective districts and villages.

There were small castles throughout the kingdom which played important part in the defence of the country. These castles were controlled by local governors (Gobas) who were also designated as *Kharpons* or Commanders of forts. In Western Ladakh, Castles of Pashkym and Sod, at the time of Zorawar's invasion in 1834, were well fortified and offered stiff resistance to the Dogra army. In Eastern Ladakh, however forts were 'castellated monasteries', the defence of which was entrusted to the monks, assisted by a few of the armed peasantry.

Thus we find that in Ladakh there was no standing and centralised army; it was an army or militia based upon the military duties of local chiefs. This militia was not very reliable, took time to assemble, was undisciplined and ill-armed, and being composed of peasantry, could not be kept under arms for a long period. As soon as the war for which they were summoned was over, the militiamen returned to their homes.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding these drawbacks, this system of gathering militia appears to have suited well to the then Himalayan kingdom of Ladakh. The army thus collected was strong enough to repel all attacks of their immediate neighbours such as Baltistan, Rudok and Gartok, who were as ill-organised and unsoldierly as the Ladakhis themselves. But, the latter were bound to be defeated by a well-equipped and better-organised army such as that of the Dogras.

1. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, pp.113,127, 128,238,239,240,258. Cunningham (*Ladak*, p.276), however says that this "Makpon or Commander-in-Chief was either a member of the royal family or one of the principal Kahlons."

2. See *infra*, pp.152-53

3. See *supra*, p.52