CHAPTER IV

LADAKH'S CULTURAL TIES WITH BUDDHIST TIBET DURING THE 16th TO 19th CENTURIES

The second dynasty of Ladakh is called rNamgyal dynasty, the last dynasty to rule Ladakh when Ladakh became a part of Jammu and Kashmir, India.

Lha-chen Bhagan is regarded as the founder of the rNnamgyal dynasty.\(^1\) According to Tashi Rabgias, Lha-Chen Bhagan's real name was Rin-chen-rNamgyal and his bad reputation had earned him the nickname of Bhagan or Old Bull.\(^2\) He is believed to have reunited the two medieval kingdoms in Ladakh, which were divided between two brothers during the reign of Grags-bum-ide.\(^3\) The two kingdoms were the one with its centre at Leh or Shey, and the other one of Basgo or Tingmosgang. Bhagan was a grandson of King Basgo.\(^4\) After having reunited the two kingdoms, succeeding kings of second dynasty took the surname of rNamgyal, which means victorious.

The king Bhagan had two sons, Lha-dbang rNamgyal and bKra-sis rNamgyal.\(^5\) The two sons were different personalities. Lha-dbang rNamgyal had great physical strength and was clever at many royal sports. But his younger brother, bKra-sis rNamgyal was very crafty.\(^6\) To attain his aim, bKra-sis rNamgyal caused his elder

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6. Ibid. p. 37.
brother's eyes to be blinded and usurped the throne.\textsuperscript{7} Then he sent his blind brother to Lingshed on the borders of Zanskar.

bKra-sis rNamgyal seems have been an energetic and able ruler. He conquered the neighboring areas under his rule. bKra-sis rNamgyal is described in the Chronicle of Ladakh as a deeply religious person despite the crime committed by him to his elder brother. He carried out many religious activities, which included the offerings to various monasteries in Tibet, and building new monasteries in Ladakh. According to the Chronicles, the king made many offerings to Bri-gung, Sa-skya, Gandan (dGa-idan) and Samyas (bSam-yas). Besides, he also brought the bKa-gyur Canon from Tibet.\textsuperscript{8} The king invited C'os-rje iDan-ma, a great Lama of Bri-gung-pa sub-sect in Tibet to Ladakh. With the advice of the Lama, the king founded the sGan-Snon bKra-sis-cos-adzong or Phyang monastery.\textsuperscript{9} bKra-sis-rNamgyal also built the Castle, now in ruins on top of the rNamgyal-rtse-mo hill behind Leh and the Gon-khang; a temple, below it.\textsuperscript{10} He also founded the hamlet of Chubi at the foot of the western declivity of the rNamgyal-rtse-mo.

In the field of monastic education, the king introduced an important custom. Every family having more than one male child had to give up one son, not necessarily the eldest, to become a monk.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, the reign of bKra-sis-rNamgyal marked a partial renewal of the Bri-gun-pa sub-sect of bKa-gyud-pa influence in Ladakh.

\textsuperscript{7} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{8} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid. p. 37.
\textsuperscript{10} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{11} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 85.
Around this time, the Central Asian adventurer, Mirza Haider Dulat invaded Ladakh. In his campaign in 1532, Mirza Haider encountered resistance first in the Nubra valley. He, however, overcame this resistance. But in Central Ladakh, he met stiff resistance from the king, bKra-sis-rNamgyal. In this battle, Mirza Haider lost many soldiers and their bodies were buried on the rNamgyal-rtse-mo hill. Then the king built the Gon-kang, housing the statue of the protector deity above the corpses of the soldiers. The invaders returned with heavy losses. However, Mirza Haider, after becoming the ruler of Kashmir, invaded Ladakh a couple of more times. He raided Ladakh again in 1545 and 1548, but with no lasting consequences.

bKra-sis-rNamgyal died childless. After his death, his elder brother Lha-dbang-rNamgyal, whom he blinded, and his family found release from Lingshed. Lha-dbang-rNamgyal had three sons, Ts’e-dbang-rNamgyal, rNamgyal-mgon-po and Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal. The eldest son, Ts’e-dbang-rNamgyal (1530-1560 A. D.), succeeded his uncle, bKra-sis-rNamgyal. He emerged as a wise and a great conqueror. The Kingdom witnessed significant expansion under him. He conquered in the south Dzum-la (Jumla) and Nun-ti (Kulu), and in the west Si-dkar in Baltistan. He wanted to attack the Khan of Yarkand in the north but the Nubra people advised the king against it as it would seriously damage the trade through the passes, which was of vital importance to Nubra. Guge and Rudok remained separate kingdoms but had to pay tribute to Ladakh.
Besides, Ts’e-dbang-rNamgyal carried out many religious activities. He built Mani walls and stupas in many places in Ladakh. He also maintained and added many statues and monasteries, which were built by his ancestors. His reign was marked by a continuation of Bri-gung-pa sub-sec influence in Ladakh. In order to facilitate trade and commerce activities, he built two roads. One was the road to Baltistan near Dha-Hanu, in the west of Leh, and the other one was the road to Zanskar, at Hanupata.\(^{18}\)

Tse-dbang-rNamgyal had no heirs and he was succeeded by his younger brother Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal (1560-1590 A. D.). When Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal came to the throne, he faced a difficult situation as after the death of his brother, all the vassal princes rose in revolt. The new king tried to re-establish his prestige by intervening in a conflict between Tse-rin Malik of Cig-tan and the chief of Purig.\(^{19}\)

The king Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal decided to go to the assistance of Tse-rin Malik of Cig-tan.

The popular tradition has the following account about the beginning of his campaign. "It was late in the year when the Ladakhi soldiers were on the point of starting their campaign, and it was not considered lucky to start before having celebrated the New Year's festival. However, to wait for the Tibetan New Year would mean a delay of two months. Therefore, the king decided that the New Year's festival was to be celebrated two months before it actually fell. Ever since the New Year (rgyalpo Losar) has been celebrated about two months earlier in Ladakh than in Tibet".\(^{20}\)

\(^{18}\) Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 158.

\(^{19}\) A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 38. And also see its translation, pp. 173-74.

\(^{20}\) A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 91.
The outcome of the conflict was a disaster. The forces of Baltisan under the ruler of Skardo, Ali Mir, outmaneuvered the Ladakhi army and overran the whole of Ladakh, plundering its riches and destroying its religious treasures with iconoclastic zeal. The king was taken prisoner to Skardo. The king of Skardo placed the king of Ladakh in honorable confinement. The daughter of the king of Skardo, named Gyal Khatun, was placed in attendance to Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal, whereby they were married. Whatever the truth, the kingdom of Ladakh was restored to Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal and for the time being ensured peace for Ladakh's western frontier. Gyal Khatun was recognized as an incarnation of the White Tara.

After the above disaster the king turned towards the internal affairs of the kingdom and towards religion. To provide relief to the people, who had suffered during the war, the king granted remission from the land revenue and extended monetary help to many. He renovated various monasteries and Caves, which had been damaged by the Balti invasion. The king sent presents to various monasteries and sects in central Tibet. The recipients of his generosity were the Jo-bo-K’an of Lhasa, the Ge-lug-pa monastery of Bras-spuns, and the Brug-pa monastery of Ra-lung. He also sent an invitation to sTag-ts’an-ras-pa, a learned Brug-pa lama, who was in Zanskar on a journey to Uddiana enjoined upon him by his master. He turned down the invitation for the moment, as he had not yet accomplished his journey to Uddiana.

21 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 33.
23 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 34.
24 Ibid. p. 34. Also see A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 39.
25 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 35.
Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal’s Muslim wife bore him two sons, Sen-ge-rNamgyal and Norbu-rNamgyal. Before he married Gyal Khatun, he had another wife named Ts’e-rin rgyal-mo. His first wife also bore him two sons, Nag-dban-rNamgyal and bsTan-dzin-rNamgyal, who were excluded from succession. Later the elder brother Nag-dban-rNamgyal became the head lama of Lahul. According to the Chronicles, his religious name was Dzam-gling-grags-pa and in 1630, he left for central Tibet as the head of a religious mission. He stayed at bKra-sis-Lhun-po and Bras-spuns under his former name Nag-dban-rNamgyal. And his younger brother, bsTan-dzin-rNamgyal, was appointed as Gyalpo (King) of Spiti by Sen-ge-rNamgyal, when Sen-ge-rNamgyal succeeded to the throne of Ladakh.

During Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal’s reign the first recorded visit of a European to Ladakh took place, a merchant from Portugal named Dioga d'Almedia, who stayed two years in Ladakh. Ladakh impressed him as a rich country. Its capital was Basgo. The presence of this western merchant is explained by the fact that trade through Ladakh to Tibet and Central Asia was very active.

The next king who came to the throne was Sen-ge-rNamgyal, elder son of the king Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal and Muslim wife. The death of Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal was followed by an interregnum, during which Gyal Khatun carried on the government on behalf of her elder son Sen-ge-rNamgyal. According to Luciano

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26 Ibid, p. 36.
29 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 55.
30 O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, p. 141.
31 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 36.
32 Ibid. p. 37.
33 Ibid. p. 38.
Petech, there was a quarrel between the king and his younger brother Norbu-rNamgyal. An agreement arranged by Lama sTag-ts’an-ras-pa\textsuperscript{34} resulted in the younger brother Norbu-rNamgyal being placed on the throne.\textsuperscript{35} But the younger brother reigned only for a short time, after which Sen-ge-rNamgyal ascended the throne.\textsuperscript{36}

Sen-ge-rNamgyal was very strong, brave and an expert in archery and horsemanship from his childhood. His was one of the most glorious and eventful reigns in the history of Ladakh. The main problem of his first years of reign, and one whose solution won him his greatest success was the conflict with Guge. It started immediately after the death of his father. For a long time there had been a violent quarrel between Guge and Ladakh. Some more information on this subject is from the letter written by Andrade\textsuperscript{37} in 1633 which tells us:

"That eighteen years before the king of Guge had a Son, the heir to the throne, born to him, but at his birth the queen had lost her reason, 'so that she is still ailing'. When after two years all effort to cure her proved useless, the king resolved to contract a fresh marriage, although the Tibetan religion permits no bigamy. The new bride was a sister of the king of Ladakh. The marriage-contract was made by proxy, but when the new queen, on her way to her husband, was at two days distance from Tsaparang, he suddenly forbade her to proceed and ordered her to go back to Ladakh.\textsuperscript{38}"

\textsuperscript{34} A learned Brug-pa lama from Tibet visited Ladakh.
\textsuperscript{35} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 40-41.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. p. 41.
\textsuperscript{37} He was a Jesuit missionary and was traveling in the area.
\textsuperscript{38} S. L. Wessels, Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia, 1603-1721 (First published in 1924 and reprinted at New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), pp. 75-76.
The Ladakhi king immediately declared war against the king of Guge, which with occasional intervals continued for eighteen years impoverishing the country by rendering impossible the working of fields or mines.

The bride may have been Nor-dzin dban-mo, elder sister of Sen-ge-rNamgyal. The long period of tension between Guge and Ladakh led to the military conflict between Guge and Ladakh. Sen-ge-rNamgyal and his troops marched into Tsaparang. The information on this subject from Coresma, who described about the people and the area, and tells us that the king of Ladakh had appointed a governor for Tsaparang.

The conquest of Guge in the east brought Ladakh into direct contact with central Tibet. During this period, the relations between Ladakh and Tibet were cordial as envoys and missions were exchanged. In 1632, the Ladakhi king Sen-ge-rNamgyal sent envoys to Brug-c’en and to the abbots of bDe-c’en-c’os-kor and rgyal-byed-ts’al: along with them he dispatched a complimentary mission to the sTan sde-srid. In 1634, the sTan ruler sent reply of his to Ladakh.

In the southwest, king Sen-ge-rNamgyal conquered Zanskar. Zanskar at that time was ruled by Sen-ge-ide, also called Dzo-ki who had married Sen-ge-rNamgyal’s sister rgyal-dzom. This matrimonial relation contributed to maintain cordial relations between the two courts. But in 1638, the husband and wife quarreled

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39 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 42.
40 Ibid. p. 45.
41 Another Jesuit missionary in the area.
42 S. J. Wessels, op. cit. 38, p. 84.
43 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 46.
44 Ibid. p. 46.
47 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 48.
and it gave Sen-ge-rNamgyal a reason to conquer Zanskar. Sen-ge-rNamgyal also conquered Lahul and got hold of upper Lahul. 48 Against the Muslims in the west, he invaded Cig-tan, spelt as Pyi-btan, and other places in that area. 49 Cig-tan, like most of Purig had become by then a Muslim area, as shown by its local genealogical tradition. 50 There are contradictory reports about the outcome of this military campaign of Sen-ge-rNamgyal in the west against the combined Balti-Mughal army. The Chronicles of Ladakh record a victory of Sen-ge-rNamgyal over the combined Balti-Mughal army at Bodh Kharbu (mk'ar-bu). 51 The Mughal sources recorded the defeat of Ladakhi forces who settled for peace and promised tribute to the Mughal Empire in Delhi, a promise which Sen-ge-rNamgyal never kept. 52

Whatever the military outcome, this conflict had a serious consequence on the trade relations in the area. According to Luciano Petech:

"As an economic reprisal against the Mughals, the king prohibited the passage of caravans through Ladakh and even forbade any person from Kashmir to enter his dominions. As a result, traffic from India to central Tibet shifted to Patna-Nepal-Lhasa, while the trade of Kashmir with central Asia had to take via Skardo and Shigar to Kashgar." 53

It was a wrong decision keeping in view the economic realities at that time, because the economy of Ladakh then, as always, depended above all on the transit trade.

Apart from his military successes, Sen-ge-rNamgyal is remembered for his contribution to the promotion of religion and cultural development in Ladakh. The

48 Ibid. p. 49.
49 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, pp. 179-80.
50 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, pp. 172-75.
51 Ibid. p. 40.
52 Janet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 50.
53 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 51.
religious life of Ladakh flourished under him. He is remembered for his association with the great Lama sTag-tsan-ras-pa from Tibet who came to Ladakh during his reign. The great Lama achieved the gradual conversion of the royal house to the Brug-pa sub-sect. The contribution in promoting Buddhism in Ladakh was significant. The king was assisted by the great Lama in founding many monasteries of the Brug-pa sub-sect of bKa-dgyud-pa, including Hemis, the most famous and the richest monastery in Ladakh even today. Besides Hemis, which became and remained the royal monastery of Ladakh, the other major monastery which was built by this king was De-c’en-rNamgyal monastery at Wam-le. At Hemis monastery, Sen-ge-rNamgyal installed the images that he brought from an ancient monastery at village Meru. According to A. H. Francke, the Meru monastery used to be one of the important monasteries in Ladakh, but its founder was not known. It lost much of its glory when king Sen-ge-rNamgyal made it the “mother” of Hemis monastery. On that occasion, not only the “spirit” of the Meru monastery was carried off in a bundle of twigs, but also most of the images were transferred to Hemis. Another remarkable building was the Maitreya temple at Basgo. In memory of his father, Sen-ge-rNamgyal built the two-storey Maitreya statue as big “as he (Maitreya) would be in his eight years” out of clay and cooper guilt.

The king along with his teacher, sTag-tsan-ras-pa, built several Mani walls to gain religious merit, and one at Basgo with rNamgyal (symbolizing victory) and
bYang-chub (symbolizing enlightenment) Chortens at either end.\textsuperscript{59} This Mani wall is said to be the longest in Ladakh.\textsuperscript{60} Another one is at Lingshed that bears the inscription ‘built by Sen-ge-rNamgyal’. During his reign, many talented monks and lay people were taught to write letters with gold and silver.\textsuperscript{61} The king appointed dPon-Gnang-mkha-dPal-mgon as the chief calligrapher and under his supervision the king had the bKa-gyur text written with gold and silver letters. Some of it is still preserved at the temple in Basgo.\textsuperscript{62}

The most important and magnificent secular structure built by the king Sen-ge-rNamgyal was Ssel-c’en dPal-mkar, the nine-storeyed royal Palace towering over Leh.\textsuperscript{63} The Palace contains many auspicious rooms, chapels and Buddhist symbols, and it was completed in three years and all the workers were rewarded.\textsuperscript{64} Although far less imposing now, it resembles the Potala,\textsuperscript{65} the palatial fort in Lhasa, which was built by the fifth Dalai Lama. Besides, the king also built a wooden bridge across the Indus River at Alchi.\textsuperscript{66} The construction of monasteries and other buildings were encouraged with guidance from Buddhist Tibet through Lama missionaries. Apart from the building activity, Sen-ge-rNamgyal also sent frequent missions with presents to the various religious establishments in central Tibet.\textsuperscript{67}

During the reign of Sen-ge-rNamgyal, the Portuguese Jesuit Francisco de Azevedo visited Ladakh. The purpose of his visit was to obtain permission from the

\textsuperscript{59} Nawang Tsering Shakspo, op. cit. 22, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{60} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 181.
\textsuperscript{61} Nawang Tsering Shakspo, op. cit. 22, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid. p. 27.
\textsuperscript{63} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{64} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, pp. 183-84.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{66} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{67} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 52.
king to preach the Gospel in Tsaparang.\textsuperscript{68} He passed through Hanle and rGya\textsuperscript{69}, and reached Leh on 25 October 1631. The king received him, and Azevedo gives descriptions of the physical appearance of the king and the queen bsKal-bzan.\textsuperscript{70} After some negotiations, he obtained a document ensuring the freedom of preaching the Gospel.\textsuperscript{71}

Sen-ge-rNamgyal died at Wam-le on 27 November 1642.\textsuperscript{72} He was less than fifty years old. His reign is remembered as a glorious period in the history of Ladakh. After his death, there was an interregnum during which his widow, bsKal-szang, acted as regent for her sons who must still have been minors. bsKal-szang and Sen-ge-rNamgyal had three sons between them. bDe-Idan-rNamgyal was the eldest followed by Indrabodhi, also called Indrabodhi-rNamgyal, and bDe-mc'og-rNamgyal.\textsuperscript{73} The second son Indrabodhi-rNamgyal, initially joined the monkhood and become a disciple of sTag-tshang-ras-pa.\textsuperscript{74} However, on 15 February 1647, all the three brothers were consecrated as kings, but the eldest as paramount ruler.\textsuperscript{75} The kingdom was divided between the three brothers. Indrabodhi-rNamgyal, who became a monk, received Guge; bDe-mc'og-rNamgyal, the youngest, obtained Zanskar and Spiti and rest of the 'mNa-ris-skor-gsum' in upper and lower Ladakh was assigned to the eldest son, bDe-Idan-rNamgyal.\textsuperscript{76} Nevertheless, the two younger brothers

\textsuperscript{68} S. J. Wessels, op. cit. 38, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{69} Two places in the Southeast of Leh.
\textsuperscript{70} S. J. Wessels, op. cit. 38, pp. 103-109.
\textsuperscript{71} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid. p.56.
\textsuperscript{73} A. H Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 41.
\textsuperscript{74} Nawang Tsering Shakspo, op. cit. 22, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{75} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{76} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 41.
acknowledged the supremacy of their elder brother, bDe-ldan-rNamgyal, who in turn responded to that gesture by patronizing his younger brothers.

Ladakh suffered a raid by Turki (Hor) forces from Kashgaria in the year 1647, led by Babak Beg and Sara Beg (Bha-bag-bhi, Sa-ra-bhi), who reached C'u-sod-gzun. The fight that took place resulted in many casualties and damages.\(^77\) It was the Lama sTag-tstan-ras-pa who mediated on the request of the Ladakhi prince\(^78\), and avoided further casualties and damage. The Turks called the Lama by the Muslim title Pir.

bDe-ldan-rNamgyal showed great interest in the governance of the kingdom even during his youth. He had thus acquired competent knowledge in the statecraft under the guidance of his father. Fifteen years after his accession, bDe-ldan-rNamgyal faced a major problem in relations with Kashmir and through Kashmir with Mughal India.\(^79\) As mentioned earlier, after the battle of mK'ar-bu, king Sen-ge-rNamgyal had promised tribute to the Mughals but this tribute was never paid. But when in 1663, the new emperor Aurangzeb made his first and only visit to Kashmir\(^80\), “the Ladakhi king, perhaps feeling uneasiness about the presence on the border of a ruler who nursed a rightful grievance against Ladakh and had the means to enforce redress of the same; sent him an embassy.”\(^81\) The envoys were received by the emperor and repeated to him the king’s pledge tribute, promised that a mosque would be built, have the ‘khutba’, the prayer for the secular authority recited, and coins struck in the name of the emperor.\(^82\) These promises were also ignored, until few

\(^77\) Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 58.
\(^78\) The name of the prince is not available but it should be one of the sons of Sen-ge-rNamgyal.
\(^79\) Janet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 52.
\(^80\) Ibid. p. 52.
\(^81\) Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 63.
\(^82\) Ibid. p. 63.
years later, when a mosque was built in Leh, the first in central Ladakh. The added pledge to encourage Islam in Ladakh was certainly not taken seriously, nor the tribute paid regularly, or at all. The trade between Kashmir and Ladakh, which was blocked earlier by Sen-ge-rNamgyal, was lifted.

Whatever the relations between bDe-Idan-rNamgyal and the Mughals, he adopted a forward policy to the west. The Ladakhi soldiers under the command of Sakya-rgya-mtso invaded the chiefships of lower Ladakh and Purig in 1673. A year later, Ladakhi activities extended to Baltistan, where K’a-pu-lu and C’or-bad were seized, the first chiefship being conferred upon Hatim Khan and the second upon Sultan Khan.

With Tibet, Ladakh’s elder brother in terms of religion and culture, relations were cordial. This was reflected in the continuance of the mission to central Tibet. Lama sTag-ts’an-ras-pa, in spite of advancing age, was very active in the construction of temples and sending missions. In 1643, he sent a mission to bDe-c’en-cos-k’or. Two years later, in 1645, a mission was dispatched to Lhasa, headed by 'Brug-pa-rdo-rje on behalf of Hemis monastery and Tub-bstan-Lha-dban and A-ku dkon·mcog on behalf of the Ladakhi court. This mission arranged for the funeral rites for Senge-rNamgyal at Lhasa during the Smo-lam festival of 1646.

Like his father, bDe-Idan-rNamgyal took keen interest in religious activities. With the advise and guidance from Lama sTag-ts’an-ras-pa, the king built several

83 Janet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, pp 52-3. Also see Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 64.
84 Janet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 53.
85 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 67.
86 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 41.
87 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 67.
88 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 40.
temples, Mani walls, Chortens and palaces. For the spiritual welfare of his father, king bDe-Idan-rNamgyal built a temple and the three-storey statue of Lord Buddha, made up of clay, copper and guilt\textsuperscript{90}, at Shey.\textsuperscript{91} We can see this magnificent image of Buddha and beautiful mural paintings inside the temple at Shey even today. He also built a Chang-chub Chorten (a stupa symbolizing the enlightenment of Buddha), decorating the wheel, the Sun and the Moon on the upper portion of the stupa with copper.\textsuperscript{92} The present Avalokitesvara temple in Leh was built during his reign.\textsuperscript{93} Besides, the king constructed the eight hundred and fifty metres long Mani wall, below Leh, known as Taire-rong Mani wall.\textsuperscript{94} Following the tradition of his father, the king annually invited hundred monks from Zanskar, Nubra and Timosgang to recite a million mantras.\textsuperscript{95} Apart from the temples, he also built a few palaces, including one at Shey and another at Rudok in a similar style to the palace of Leh.\textsuperscript{96}

The great Lama, sTag-tsan-ras-pa, who played a major role in the religious and cultural development in Ladakh, passed away on the 29 of January 1651 at Hemis.\textsuperscript{97} The death of sTag-tsan-ras-pa left a gap, which was difficult to fill. Although his incarnation was soon found in Ladakh, he never exerted any substantial influence.\textsuperscript{98} Under the influence of sTag-tsan-ras-pa, the Brug-pa sub-sect had become predominant in Ladakh and enjoyed the special patronage of the royal family. The relations with the Yellow Church in Tibet, which had been fairly cordial in the

\textsuperscript{90} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{91} About fifteen kilometers southeast of Leh.
\textsuperscript{92} Nawang Tsering Shakspo, op. cit. 22, pp. 29 & 30.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid. p. 30.
\textsuperscript{94} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 225.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid. p. 227.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid. p. 223.
\textsuperscript{97} Luciano Petech op. cit. 3., p.59.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid. p. 60.
lifetime of sTag-ts’an-ras-pa, tended to deteriorate, ushering in a serious political problem. It concerned the treatment of Ge-lug-pa in Ladakh and Guge and of Brug-pa; under the dominance of the Dalai Lama, both sects felt themselves discriminated against by the ruling power. This resentment was sorted out for the time being. But the mutual suspicions remained and in fact, this was the background to the quarrel that broke out between the two countries in the late 1680s, under the next king of Ladakh.

bDe-Idan-rNamgyal had three wives; his first wife Ku-dzon bore him a son, bDe-legs-rNamgyal; the second wife was dPal-mdzes and the third was Bu-k’rid rgyal-mo. Joseph Gergan mentions that the king married Bu-k’rid rgyal-mo as his third queen, who bore the king three sons: Nag-dban-p’unogs-rNamgyal, Jig-bral-rnamgyal and T ‘ub-bsatn rNamgyal.

The next king, who came to the throne, was the eldest son, bDe-legs-rNamgyal. According to Alexander Cunningham, bDe-legs-rNamgyal succeeded his father, who resided in the fort of Stuklakte. Some other sources, including Luciano Petech, had serious doubts whether bDe-legs-rNamgyal was a full king. Whoever was the king during the time, the decisive event in the history of Ladakh at the time was the three-corner conflict between Ladakh, Tibet, and the Mughals.

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99 Ibid. p. 60.
100 We shall see more on this subject later.
101 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 69.
103 Ibid, p. 405.
104 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 233.
106 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 70.
which brought to an end the short-lived paramountcy of Ladakh in the western Himalayas and reduced it to the present boundaries.\textsuperscript{107}

From the Tibetan point of view the causes of the war were the increasing hostility of the Ladakhi kings towards the Ge-lug-pa sect and the raids carried out by the people of Glo-bo and Rudok against the Tibetan districts of Sa-dga and Gro-sod.\textsuperscript{108} According to another source, the cause was the king of Ladakh's support to Bhutan during the war between Lhasa and Bhutan in 1676. The Ladakhi king, as a supporter of the Brug-pa sub-sect, sent a letter to Tibet saying that he would help the Brug-pa ruler of Bhutan.\textsuperscript{109} Eventually the conflict between the two countries started in 1681.\textsuperscript{110} According to Luciano Petech:

\begin{quote}
The decision for war was taken by the Dalai Lama himself, without the concurrence of the Qosot Khan, his patron and protector, although the latter was responsible for the defense of the realm.\textsuperscript{111}
\end{quote}

In 1679, a small Tibetan force consisting of 250 men, marched west\textsuperscript{112}, and met the Ladakhi advanced guard in some inconclusive skirmishes in different places in Guge\textsuperscript{113}. These initial meetings of the two forces were by no means decisive. Both the forces were small, hardly more than vanguard. But the main Tibetan army of about 5000 men in all\textsuperscript{114} arrived in the summer of 1680. According to Janet Rizvi, the Ladakhi forces were decisively defeated in the battle on the approaches to the Chang-

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid. p. 70. \\
\textsuperscript{108} Life of P 'o-lha-nas bSod-nams-stobs-rgyas (1689-1747), this Tibetan sources is cited by Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 70. \\
\textsuperscript{109} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 42. \\
\textsuperscript{111} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 71. \\
\textsuperscript{112} Janet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 54. \\
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid. p. 54. \\
\textsuperscript{114} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 72.
\end{flushright}
The king and his generals fled the field. The Tibetan army continued their westward march without much resistance until they came upon the remnants of the Ladakhi army, blocking their advance to Basgo for three years, which was one of the best defensive positions. The king and government resided at gTin-mo-sgan, about thirty miles further west. The king of Ladakh asked the Mughals to help him and with the help of the Mughal army the Ladakhis forced the Tibetan forces to retreat to Tashigon, beyond the present border.

After the retreat of the Tibetan army, the Mughals presented their condition for the help and it was rather heavy. The condition was that the king had to accept Islam, which he did under the name of Aqibat Mahmud Khan. Other conditions were that every encouragement was to be given to Mohammedanism in Ladakh, to build a mosque at Leh, and to send the king’s younger son Jigs-bral-mamgyal as a hostage to Kashmir. Another important clause of the treaty according to Luciano Petech, was the concessions to Kashmir of the monopoly of the wool export and transit trade, which was important for the shawl industry, the main produce of Kashmir along with saffron. Besides, the kingdom also had to send a small tribute to Kashmir, which consisted of 18 piebald horses, 18 pods of musk and 18 white yak tails. In exchange, the king was to receive yearly 500 bags of rice from Kashmir.

After hearing that the king of Ladakh had embraced Islam, the Tibetan regent Sans-rgya-mtso, who ruled the country after the death of the 5th Dalai lama, was

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115 Jenet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 54.
116 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 73.
117 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 245. Also see Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 75.
118 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 111.
119 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 75.
120 Ibid. p. 75.
121 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 246. Also see A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 112.
122 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 112. Also see Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 246.
seriously concerned for the Buddhist religion in Ladakh and he requested the 6th Brug-cen-Mi-pam-dban-po (1641-1717 A. D.), who wielded great influence on the Ladakhi royal house to travel to Ladakh. The Brug-cen accepted the proposal. According to Luciano Petech, Brug-cen started his journey in the winter of 1683-84 A. D., traveled to gTin-mo-sgan and pleaded with the king for the case of Buddhism in general and the Brug-pa sub-sect and the Ge-lug-pa sect in particular.

The mission of the 6th Brug-cen was successful; the king and the ministers of Ladakh declared their return to Buddhism. A treaty was signed at gTin-mo-sgan in 1684 called the gTin-mo-sgan Treaty. According to the treaty, it was declared that the quarrel between Ladakh and Tibet should be considered things of the past and to maintain friendly relations. The boundary between the two countries was fixed bisecting the Pangong Lake, as it exists presently. As for trade, the goat-wool (pashmina), produced in mNgaris-skor-gsum would be sold to the merchants of Ladakh only. According to Luciano Petech, the price of pashmina fixed was two dnuL-dmar-zog (red silver goods) or one rin-dnul (price-silver; a rupee) for eighty nags (15 nags= one kilogram). In Rudok, only Ladakhi merchants sent by the king would have the right to do business of any kind. The pashmina traders from Kashmir would not be proceeding beyond dPe-t’up. For the purposes of pashmina trade, four Kashmiri merchants would reside at dPe-t’up and after having made their

\[123\] Luciano Petech op. cit. 3, p.76.
\[124\] Ibid. p. 76.
\[125\] Jenet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 55.
\[126\] A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 112.
\[127\] Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 251.
\[128\] Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 77. Also see O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, p. 159.
\[129\] Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 251.

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purchases they would have to return to Kashmir.\textsuperscript{130} The Ladakhi merchants, who went to Changthang, the far southeastern uplands of Ladakh, to purchase pashmina, would be allowed to sell it to Kashmiri dealers within the territorial jurisdiction of Ladakh only.\textsuperscript{131} Besides, the exchange of trade missions between Ladakh and Lhasa, the annual trade caravan from Lhasa to Ladakh popularly called C’a-pa or ‘tea man’ would consist of 200 animal-loads of tea and in return, Ladakh sent offerings to Tibet for the Smon-lam and for the blessing of the Dalai Lama every third year, known as Lapchak.\textsuperscript{132} The exchange of these missions further strengthened the old institutional links between the monasteries of the two countries. Several of the larger Buddhist monasteries in Ladakh periodically sent combined religious and trading missions to Lhasa. As per the treaty, Rudok, Guge, etc., were to be annexed to Tibet for the purpose of providing the wherewithal for the sacred lamps and for the Smon-lam festival in Lhasa.\textsuperscript{133}

Thus, as far as Ladakh’s religious and spiritual ties with Tibet was concerned, it remained more or less constant and was not much affected by the three-corner conflict. This is shown by the fact that the gTin-mo-sgan treaty was the result of the effort of the 6\textsuperscript{th} Brug-c’en, the head Lama of the Brug-pa sub-sect from Tibet.

The next king who came to the throne was Nyi-ma-rNamgyal who succeeded his father. He began ruling in 1691 and became the titular king around 1694/95.\textsuperscript{134} He occupies a special place among the kings of Ladakh in the field of justice. He always consulted the state officers when delivering judgment. He appointed elders (rgan-po)

\textsuperscript{130} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 77. Also see Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 251.
\textsuperscript{131} O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, pp. 159-60.
\textsuperscript{132} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{133} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{134} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 81.
on a lower level from each district to assist him. He instituted the council of state officers and elders, and laid down the rule that the primary origin of any dispute must be traced before the verdict was pronounced. On the whole, this resulted in a sharp decline of crime, such as robbery and theft.\textsuperscript{135}

In the field of culture, the king encouraged printing and printing blocks of some devotional works were carved.\textsuperscript{136} According to A. H. Francke, the art of painting had come to Tibet from China, where for many ages whole pages of books had been engraved on wooden tablets from which they were printed on paper.\textsuperscript{137} The king brought one hundred and eight volumes of the bKa-gyur text from Tibet, which is now kept at the palace of sTok.\textsuperscript{138} Besides, the king built a Mani-wall close to the village of Choglamsar.\textsuperscript{139} Many Ladakhi folk-songs were written during his reign and are popular even today.\textsuperscript{140}

During this period relations with Lhasa were cordial. According to the Chronicle, the king presented to all the monasteries of Tibet, from Lhasa to bSam-yas, gold water and sacrificial lamps.\textsuperscript{141} To all the great lamas he gave presents. The contacts between various monasteries were continuing. This period witnessed a greater Ge-lug-pa influence in Ladakh. bDe-ldan-rNamgyal's second son, blo-bzan-nag-dban-p’un-ts’ogs, who was studying in Tibet, came back during this period. He became the abbot of Thiksay (K’rig-se) and the head of the seven ser-po-dgon (Ge-

\textsuperscript{135} G. Tucci and E. Ghersi, \textit{Secrets of Tibet} (London: n/d, 1985), pp. 43-44.
\textsuperscript{136} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{137} A. H. Francke, op cit. 1, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{138} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 288.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid. p. 289.
\textsuperscript{140} Nawang Tsering Shakspo, op cit. 22, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{141} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 44.
lug-pa) monasteries in Ladakh. 142 These seven monasteries were, according to Luciano Petech, Lha-k’an dBur-ma on the rTse-mo hill at Leh, K’rig-se, dPe-t’ub, Likir (klu-k’yil), Disket (bDe-skid) in Nubra, Karsha (dkar-sa) in Zanskar and bSam-dkar near Leh was added later. 143 During this period, not only the close institutional relations between Ladakh and Tibet but also the direct contacts between the two countries were not lacking. Luciano Petech, citing from Tibetan sources mentioned that, on 10th August 1655, envoys of Ladakhi kings arrived in Lhasa. 144

The Ladakhi king also maintained good relations with the Mughal emperor. The traffic on the Kashmir route was regular. This was witnessed by the Jesuits Manael Freyre and Ippolito Desideri who came to Ladakh in 1715 from the Zoji-la. 145 The Italian Jesuit Ippolito Desideri and company reached Leh on 26th June 1715, and he gives a graphic account of the country, the court, the lamas, etc. The king was Nyima-rNamgyal, who treated them with courtesy and honour. 146 The whole country is described as mountainous and fairly unproductive. It produced plenty of barley, little wheat, and as regards fruit, chiefly apricots. Trade with other countries was limited to very fine wool, a small quantity of gold-bearing sand, musks, etc. There were numerous monasteries and many monks, all of whom lived under a chief Lama. To attain to this dignity, however, study in one of the universities of Tibet was necessary, which indeed, was required of every one who wanted to rise. 147 But the relations with Balti chieftains were not cordial. Dynastic ties with the chief of Ka-pu-lu 148 could not

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142 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 85.
143 Ibid. p. 85.
144 Ibid. p. 86.
147 Ibid. p. 213.
148 A. Cunningham, op. cit. 107, p. 30.
be translated into good relations. Rather, it exposed K'a-pu-lu to anemity to the other chiefs and compelled Ladakh to shoulder a heavy military responsibility in the medieval period.

Nyi-ma-rNamgyal was married twice\(^{149}\). His first wife died after the birth of a son, bDe-skyon-rNamgyal.\(^{150}\) Then the king married Zi-Zi Khatun, who was from K'a-pu-lu.\(^{151}\) She bore him a son, bKra-sis-rNamgyal and a daughter, bKra-sis-dban-mo.\(^{152}\) bDe-skyon-rNamgyal became the next king.\(^{153}\) bDe-skyon-rNamgyal’s mother died early, he was brought up by his stepmother, Zi-Zi khatun, whom he loved dearly. Hence, at her request, bKra-sis-rNamgyal was given Purig as a separate kingdom, with the capital Mulbhe.\(^{154}\) bKra-sis-rNamgyal, son of Zi-Zi Khatun was a monk and renounced his monkhood by contracting marriage with a daughter of a noble family of the village Stok (sTog).\(^{155}\) The couple, however, remained childless.

Coming back to bDe-skyon-rNamgyal, one of the most vexing problems of his reign was a family quarrel. The issue was the marriage of aKra-sis-dban-mo, daughter of Zi-Zi Khatun, to the ruler of Kashtwar. The royal house was divided. bKra-sis-rNamgyal and his mother were in favour of the proposal while bDe-skyon-rNamgyal and his ministers were against the idea.\(^{156}\) The wedding, however, took place but this matrimonial alliance was short lived. bKra-sis-dban-mo could not live comfortably for long with her husband under the restriction of purdah, where she could not see

\(^{149}\) A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 119.
\(^{150}\) Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 301. Also see Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 95.
\(^{151}\) Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 95. Also see Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 301.
\(^{152}\) A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 44.
\(^{153}\) Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 96.
\(^{154}\) A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5; p. 44.
\(^{155}\) Ibid. p. 44.
\(^{156}\) Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 98.
even the sunlight of the day. The Kashtwar family had been converted to Islam in 1687. As the news reached Ladakh, Zi-Zi Khatun recalled her daughter back to Ladakh. Her husband claimed her and he also came along with her to Ladakh so that he could settle the matter amicably. At this point, Zi-Zi Khatun, being afraid of the arrival of her son-in-law, suspected he might conspire with bDe-skyon-rNamgyal at Leh to oust her son bKra-sis-rNamgyal from Purig. As Luciano Petech mentioned, “His (son-in-law) arrival might represent a menace to bKra-sis-rNamgyal’s rule over Purig, caused him to be murdered, a servant of her pushing him into the river from a bridge marking the frontier between Keshtwar and Paider.” It was intended to pass this incident as an accident but the news leaked out and the people denounced the action of Zi-Zi Khatun. The widow bKra-sis-dban-mo was married a second time in the royal house of K’a-pu-lu.

bDe-skyon-rNamgyal married thrice: his first wife was Ni-zla-dban-mo, a princess from Glo-sMon-t’an, what is presently called Mustang, situated in the northwest of Nepal. She gave birth to Sa-skyon-rNamgyal, but the couple soon separated on account of disagreement of temper, and the queen returned to Glo-bo. The king then contracted a second marriage with Bu-k’rid-dnab-mo from Nubra, who gave birth to P’un-t’ogs-rNamgyal. His third wife was bstan-dzin-dban-mo, a princess of Zanskar (Zanskar), but the king sent her back to rule Zanskar.

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157 O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, p. 167.
158 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 98.
159 Ibid. p. 98.
160 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 302.
161 Ibid. p. 301.
163 Ibid. p. 99.
164 Ibid. p. 99.
The king bDe-skyong rNamgyal died in 1739. He reigned for about twenty years. He continued the policy of his father towards Ladakh's neighbors. Regular direct contacts with Lhasa took place during his reign. Besides, the king was also in contact with the Chinese through Tibetan authorities. As Luciano Petech mentioned, "bDe-skyong rNamgyal had sent communication to the Chinese court through the Tibetan authorities in Lhasa regarding the movements of the Dsungar in the Yarkand region."  

The queen Bu-krid-rgyal-mo sent to the Dalai Lama general offerings for her deceased husband bDe-skyon.

P'un-ts'og-rNamgyal (1740-1760 A. D.) 166 was the next king who came to the throne. He was bDe-skyong rNamgyal's second wife's son. Sa-skyon-rNamgyal, the eldest son of king's first wife had joined the Hemis monastery as a monk. 167 Queen Bu-k'rid-dban-mo was active in royal politics. In fact, Tashi Rabgias mentioned that she ruled for about ten years from 1740-50 A.D. 168 She played an important part in influencing the eldest son to join Hemis monastery so that her son may become the king. During this period, Purig was still ruled by his uncle bKra-sis-rNamgyal. Not much had been mentioned about these kings except a crisis, which was mediated by a Lama, sent by the Dalai Lama. 169

According to the Chronicle of Ladakh, the upper Ladakhi view of the matter was that bKra-sis-rNamgyal, the king of Purig, tried to seize exclusive control of the lucrative Kashmir trade and to encroach with fair or foul means on Ladakh proper. 170

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165 Ibid. p. 97.  
166 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 120.  
167 Ibid. p. 120.  
168 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 317.  
169 Luciano Petech op. cit. 3, p. 103.  
170 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 45.
Whatever the case, the conflict between uncle and nephew became more and more embittered and a potential threat to the commercial interests of central Tibet. Both parties addressed themselves to the government of Lhasa and the government of Kashmir. The seventh Dalai Lama, Skal-bzang-rgya-mtsho (1708-1758 A. D.)\(^{171}\), was ruling that time. He deputed Ka'-t'og Rig-dzin Ts'e-dban-nor-bu (1698-1755 A. D.)\(^{172}\), who was the rNin-ma-pa incarnate from Kham, to Ladakh to resolve the conflict. Ka'-t'og Rig-dzin was in Nepal at the time when he was asked for the job, and he left Nepal on 11\(^{th}\) May 1752.\(^{173}\) Both the king of Leh and the king of Purig along with their ministers were at Wam-le where negotiations were taking place. When the Ka'-t'og arrived there, the real negotiations began and they concluded in December 1752.\(^{174}\)

After listening to the different parties grievances, the Lama resolved the dispute of succession and related matters by laying down the following guidelines for resorting to peace and deciding for the future the question of succession. These guidelines were, first of all, that whatever the number of sons, only the eldest son of the ruler shall succeed to the throne of Ladakh. Secondly, all the younger brothers shall become Lamas. Third, in no case shall there be two kings in Ladakh, nor shall the kingdom be divided.\(^{175}\) However, bKra-sis-rNamgyal was allowed to retain his kingdom of Purig so long as he lived. Since he had no child, it was decided that the territory he ruled should be merged into Ladakh after his death. The other exceptions were the king of Zanskar bsTan-srin-rNamgyal, having his dominion at the Indian

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\(^{171}\) Nawang Tsering Shakspo, op. cit. 22, p. 36.
\(^{172}\) Ka'-t'og is a rNin-ma-pa monastery some forty moles South-East of sDe-dge.
\(^{173}\) A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 45.
\(^{174}\) Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 105.
\(^{175}\) Ibid. p. 105. Also see A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 121. And O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, p. 170.
frontier, shall remain king as before;¹⁷⁶ the Chief of Hi-nas-sku was also allowed to retain his principality on the plea of his royal descent and smallness of that Chiefdom.¹⁷⁷ Lastly, commercial traffic between Ladakh and Kashmir would continue without disturbance and the custom duties were inscribed on copper plates in five copies, of which four were deposited at Leh, Mulbhe, Zanskar and Hemis, and the fifth probably sent to Kashmir.¹⁷⁸ Thus, this meant the introduction of 'primogeniture' and it saved further partitions of Ladakh. In 1758, the king of Purig died and the kingdom was reunited with Ladakh.¹⁷⁹ This agreement is popularly known as the “Wam-le agreement”. The successive kings had to follow the rule that the eldest son became the king and the younger sons became monks.

Whatever the domestic problems, cultural relations with Tibet were continuing and consistent. The government missions were also continuing. Luciano Petech, citing from Tibetan sources mentioned that, in 1740 envoys of the La-dvags rgyal-po (Ladakhi king) bKra-sis-rNamgyal were in Lhasa.¹⁸⁰ Besides the continuation of the Ge-lug-pa influence, this period saw a revival of Brug-pa influence in Ladakh. This is indicated by the visits of the ⁷th Brug-c’en dKar-brgyud P-rin-las-sun-rta to Ladakh.¹⁸¹ Also, rGyal-sras Rin-po-c’e came on to the scene around this period. He was the son of king bDe-skyon-rNamgyal and queen Ni-zla-dban-mo¹⁸², who became a monk at Hemis.¹⁸³ He is also known as the Hemis sprul-sku, the head of the monastery. Luciano Petech, citing from Tibetan sources states

¹⁷⁶ Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 105.
¹⁷⁷ O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, p. 170.
¹⁷⁸ A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 46.
¹⁷⁹ Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 110.
¹⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 100.
¹⁸¹ Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 332.
¹⁸² Ibid. p. 334.
¹⁸³ A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 45.
that Hemis sprul-sku in January 1740 came to Lhasa and shortly after he arrived at bKra-sis-lhun-po, he was recognized as a younger brother of the Pan-c’en.184 In Ladakh, under the abbotship of rGyal-ras Rin-po-c’e, Brug-pa in general and Hemis in particular continued to develop. The number of monks increased and monastic rule was enforced more strictly.185 Many of the silver stupas, which can still be seen in the monastery, were constructed during this period.186

Three kings were to come to the throne after Pun-tsog-rNamgyal, till the first Dogra invasion of Ladakh. They were Ts’e-dban-rNamgyal (1760-1780 A. D.) Ts’e-brtan-rNamgyal (1780-1790 A. D.) and Ts’e-dpal-mi-gyur-don-grup-rNamgyal (1790-1841 A. D.).187 About these kings not much has been written about. Ts’e-dban-rNamgyal II (1760-1780 A. D.), reigned for about twenty years. The Chronicle names Kun-dzom as his mother.188

During the first year of Ts’e-dban-rNamgyal’s rule government affairs were entrusted to the minister Kun-skyun-dpal-p’el, usually known as Kun-skyob.189 During this period, the relations with Lhasa were maintained. Diplomatic missions were also taking place. As Luciano Petech mentioned, envoys of the La-dvags Saksyon were received at bKra-sis-lhun-po on 2nd February 1760.190 Religious and spiritual ties with Tibet were consistent. Normally novices who went to different monasteries in Tibet for their higher studies were not mentioned and recorded, unless they were sent by the royal court. But in 1767, the abbot of Hemis came to bKra-sis-

185 Nawang Tsering Shakspo, op. cit. 22, p. 37. Also see Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 335.
186 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 335.
188 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 44.
189 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 112.
190 Ibid. p. 114.
lhun-po, bringing with him thirty novices from Hemis, who were given their vows in solemn congregation.\textsuperscript{191} It is remarkable that a Brug-pa abbot should seek ordination for his disciples in that great Ge-lug-pa center. It shows the closeness of religious ties between the two countries.

Ts’e-dban-rNamgyal contracted several marriages. One wife was from Zanskar\textsuperscript{192}, who however, deserted him when the king felt in love with a low-caste Bheda woman and married her.\textsuperscript{193} Then the king married a princess, Begum-dban-mo, of Sod village in Purig.\textsuperscript{194} She bore him two sons, Ts’e-brtan-rNamgyal and Ts’e-dpal-mi-gyur-don-grub-rNamgyal\textsuperscript{195}; she also bore him three daughters. The king contracted a fourth marriage, with Kha-tun-Ts’e-rin, who bore him a son, Jigs-med-rNamgyal.\textsuperscript{196}

Nothing much is known about the construction enterprise of Ts’e-dban-rNamgyal. According to an inscription, he restored the Likir monastery after a fire; and the restoration of the Mangyu monastery was apparently carried out during his reign.\textsuperscript{197} The next king who came to the throne was his eldest son, Ts’e-brtan-rNamgyal (1780-1790 A. D.).\textsuperscript{198} As per the “Wam-le agreement”, his younger brother Ts’e-dpal entered the Hemis monastery\textsuperscript{199} and their half-brother Jigs-med-rNamgyal took holy orders at Thiksay.\textsuperscript{200} According to the Chronicles, of his three sisters, one

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid. p. 119.
\textsuperscript{192} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 340.
\textsuperscript{193} O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{194} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 344.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid. p. 344.
\textsuperscript{196} O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, pp. 172-73.
\textsuperscript{197} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{198} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 349.
\textsuperscript{199} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{200} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 46.
was married in the royal house in the royal house of Pa-skyum, another was married off to No-no Ts’e-dban-don-grub and the last one probably lived unmarried.201

Ts’e-brtan-rNamgyal grew to be strong, and handsome, and had proficient knowledge in the material arts as well literature and above all in calligraphy.202 The king was proficient in Tibetan grammar and arithmetic and could speak many languages including Kashmiri, Yarkandi, Turkomoni and Persian.203 The king was devoted and treated the people with respect. In the funeral memory of his father, the king built the Kiudrag mani-wall, with the rNamgyal and the Jangchub mChorten at each end.204 He also erected a two-storey tall silver mChorten (stupa) in his Palace at Leh.205

The official relations with Lhasa continued. In 1784 A. D., a mission of twenty-five Ladakhi persons was received in the Tibetan capital. The most important was the invitation tendered to the 8th Brug-c’en Kun-gzigs-c’os-kyi-sna-ba (1768-1822 A. D.).206 The Brug-c’en set out on his journey in the 5th month of 1801, visiting the Kailash en route and reached at Hemis in October the same year.207 The king and nobles honored him by offering many valuable things, including gold, silver, horses, goats and sheep.208 So, the Brug-pa sub-sect influence in Ladakh still continued during this period.

201 Ibid. p. 46.
202 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 349. Also see A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 46.
203 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, pp. 349-50.
204 Ibid. pp. 351-52.
205 Ibid. p. 352.
206 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 124.
207 Ibid. p. 124.
208 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 350.
Ts'e-brtan-rNamgyal died very young, leaving a posthumous daughter. He was barely twenty-four years old.\textsuperscript{209} After the death of the young king, his even younger brother Ts'e-dpal-mi-gyur-don-grub-rNamgyal, was called from the Hemis monastery, where he was living as a monk.\textsuperscript{210} He was made to abandon monkhood and shoulder the responsibility of the kingdom. That happened in about A.D. 1790.\textsuperscript{211} He reigned until about 1841 A. D.\textsuperscript{212} According to another source, he reigned until about 1830 A. D.\textsuperscript{213} Unlike his elder brother, Ts'e-dpal-mi-gyur-don-grub-rNamgyal lived an easy life, and was lazy in every respect. He was an ineffective ruler, who left affairs in the hands of his ministers.\textsuperscript{214}

The relation with Baltis in the west was not good. During his reign there were a few clashes with the Baltis. Besides, plenty of trouble also arose in the south. In 1822 A. D. armed parties from Kulu, as a result of a long-standing commercial dispute, invaded Spiti and ravaged it; the local people clamored for retaliation but the king was unable.\textsuperscript{215} Then again, forces from Kulu, Kunawar and Lahul raided and sacked Zans-dkar.\textsuperscript{216}

The relations with Tibet were cordial. The bDe-c’en-c’os-kor Yons-dzin-ye-ses-grub-pa accepted the invitation of the Ladakhi king and undertook the voyage to Ladakh in 1814 A. D.\textsuperscript{217} The missions were going on, on a regular basis. It was during Ts'e-dpal-mi-gyur-don-grub-rNamgyal reign that William Moorcroft and

\textsuperscript{209} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{210} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 365.
\textsuperscript{211} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{212} O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{213} Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 365.
\textsuperscript{214} Janet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{215} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, pp. 130-31.
\textsuperscript{216} A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{217} Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 132.

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George Trebeck traveled to Leh. They reached Leh in September 1820 and remained there for a period two years, until September 1822. They described about the general character (p. 261), trade and commerce (p. 334-35, 346), population (p. 319-20) etc. in their travelogue travels in the Himalayan provinces on Hindustan and Punjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Pashawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara, from 1819-1825. The king was Ts’er-mel-mi-gyur-don-grub-rNamgyal. As Moorcroft and Trebeck mentioned: “the present Raja of Ladakh was a lama, but on the demise of his elder brother was called from his convent to rulership.”

Another important person to visit Ladakh was Alexander de Koros, called the founder of modern Tibetology. He arrived at Leh on 9th June 1822, and stayed there for 25 days. Then he started back for Kashmir and on the way he met Moorcroft at Dras, and agreed to return to Leh. Moorcroft mentioned this meeting as:

"On my journey to Dras I was met by Alexander Csoma De Koros, European in the garb of an Armenian, who traveled over land from Hungary to Tibet. He remained with me for some time, and after I had quitted Ladakh I obtained permission from the Kholon for him to reside in the monastery of Yangla in Zanskar, for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of the Tibetan language, and from his erudition and acquirement accurate information on these points may be expected."

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219 Ibid. p. 334.
220 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 376.
221 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 131.
222 Ibid. p. 131.
223 W. Moorcroft and George Trebeck, op. cit. 218, p. 338.
224 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 131.
225 W. Moorcroft and George and Trebeck, op. cit. 218, p. 338.
Alexander de Koros returned to Leh, where the prime minister received him well and recommended him to the Lama of bZan-la in Zanskar, upon which he left at once for that place.\footnote{226 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 131.}

Coming back to Ts’e-dpal-rNamgyal and his contribution towards religious and secular building activities, he built the present sTog palace.\footnote{227 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 132.} Besides the palace, the king erected a number of statues mostly made of gold and silver.\footnote{228 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 3, p. 48.} Ts’e-dpal-rNamgyal married the widow of his brother Ts’e-brtan-rNamgyal.\footnote{229 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 128.} She bore him a daughter and a son, called Ts’e-dban-rab-brtan-rNamgyal, who according to some sources, got the royal title around 1830, but the Chronicle is silent on the subject.

From 1834-1842, Ladakh witnessed several invasions from the Dogra army of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, under the commands of Zorawar Singh and Dewan Hari Singh Chand. Finally, by the signing of an agreement between Buddhist Tibet and Dogra on 17\textsuperscript{th} September 1842, Ladakh lost her independence.\footnote{230 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 151. Also see O. C. Handa, op. cit. 27, p. 205.} The agreement confirmed the existing border, allowed the continuation of the Lapchak and C’a-pa missions on a commercial basis without political implications, and provided for the supply of transportation service (u-lag) for Tibetan traders in Ladakh and for Ladakhi traders in western Tibet.\footnote{231 C. L. Datta, op. cit. 110, p. 149-50. Also see A. H. Francke, op. cit. 3, p. 53.} The monarchy was abolished and the royal family was given as Jagir the sTog estate with the Palace and the Ma-spro estate.\footnote{232 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 151.}
Government and Administration

The government of the kings of Ladakh was quite different from that of the Dalai Lamas of Lhasa. The supreme ruler was a lay king, popularly known as 'Gyalpo'. His office was hereditary. The king was assisted by a Council of offices. According to the Chronicles of Ladakh this Council was made of three grades of officials. The first were Chief Ministers (bka-blons) four or five in number and hereditary. The second were Ministers (blon-po), and the third the elders (dganpo). According to Cunningham and Moorcroft, the conduct of affairs was generally entrusted to the Prime Minister.

The territory of proper Ladakh was divided into a certain number of small districts called Yul, under an official. The territory of outlying regions was under the feudatory chief. At the end of the kingdom there were eight feudatory chiefs including four Muslim chiefs of Pa-skyum (Purig), bStod (Purig), Suru and Dras, and usually they were called rzong. Others were the king of Zanskar, the only one for whom the royal title was normally employed, the No-No of Spiti, the chief of Nubra, and the chief of rGya who was the only one situated within Ladakh proper. Nono means junior, and the younger son of the king of Ladakh ruled Spiti that time.

Justice was ministered on the old patriarchal pattern. There was no distinction between administration and judicial officers. As per procedure, punishment (C’ad-pa) included fines, imprisonment (btson-c’ad) and in extreme cases, banishment with

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233 Ibid. p. 156.
234 A. Cunningham. op. cit. 107, p. 258.
branding and even death. However, the death penalty was seldom awarded and still rarely executed.\textsuperscript{235}

The Important monasteries built in Ladakh during the period.

There are many monasteries that have been founded in Ladakh. The foundations of these monasteries were associated with the effort of active lama missionaries and with the encouragement, guidance and support from Buddhist Tibet. The earliest foundations of monasteries in Ladakh mentioned in the second chapter are mostly associated with the activities of Rin-chen-bzang-po, the Indian yogin Naro-pa, etc., and several of them belong to the bKa-dams-pa sub-sect. With the arrival of the Ge-lug-pa monks in Ladakh in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century many monasteries of the Ge-lug-pa sect were founded in Ladakh.\textsuperscript{236} By the second half of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century this sect was firmly established in Ladakh. The establishment of the Brug-pa branch of the bKa-gyud-pa sect in Ladakh was due to sTag-t’san-ras-pa and the other Brug-pa Lamas. Also in the case of the Bri-gun-pa sub-sect, rNi-ma-pa and Sa-skya-pa sects, the establishment was due to the active Lama missionaries and royal patronage. All the four major sects and several sub-sect of Mahayana Buddhism were established in Ladakh in due course of time.

**Spituk (dPe-t’up)**

This monastery is on the hilltop near the Indus, about seven kilometers from Leh. This monastery was founded in the 11\textsuperscript{th} century by Od-ide, the king of Guge.\textsuperscript{237} Initially it belonged to the dKa-dams-pa sect. Then during the time of King Grags-pa-
ide, it was transferred to the Ge-lug-pa sect.\textsuperscript{238} It is regarded as the first Ge-lug-pa establishment in Ladakh.\textsuperscript{239} The name dPe-t'up is of Tibetan origin, introduced by the first Ge-lug-pa monks\textsuperscript{240}, who visited Ladakh during the reign of Grags-pa-bum-ide. dPe-t'up means 'Effective as Examples' and thus was a suitable base for their first monastery in Ladakh.

Inside the monastery there are several temples of various sizes. The first one is the Jokhang (Jo-bo-k'an), which takes its name from the central statue of Buddha Shakyamuni in a tantric form, called the Jowo Rinpoche. This statue was brought from Tibet and assembled and gilded with gold by the Ladakhi artists. The other main statues in this room are that of a Padmasambhava and of White Tara, besides, a rNamgyal chorten (stupa). The next temple is called Drolma Lha-khang, dedicated to the twenty-one manifestations of the goddess Green Tara. These statues were brought from Tibet. Besides, there is a seat for the Rinpoches\textsuperscript{241}, near the window. Above this seat is a photograph of the former Ling Rinpoche, tutor to the present Dalai Lama.\textsuperscript{242}

The Tsogchen is the main assembly hall for the large ceremonies attended by monks of all the branch monasteries of dPe-t'up.\textsuperscript{243} Inside the Tsogchen, several long rows of seats lead up to two high thrones. The left one is reserved for the Dalai Lama who visited this monastery on several occasions. The other one is for the head Lama. The walls on either side of the room are lined with old texts. A door leads to the inner room, where several statues can be seen including the large one of Buddha

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Tashi Rabgias, op. cit.2, pp. 86-87.}
\bibitem{Ibid. p. 107.}
\bibitem{The incarnate lamas.}
\bibitem{dSang-mkhar, Sa-bu etc. are the branches.}
\end{thebibliography}
Shakyamuni. The Chikhang is another assembly hall for the monks living at the dPe-t’up monastery. On either side of the main entrance are paintings of the four guardian kings. Inside, there are several rows of seats for the monks, a throne reserved for the Dalai Lama and various statues. A door leads through to the near room, where the main statue dedicated is to the protector of the Chikhang. The Gon-khang (mGon-k’an) another room, dedicated to the protector divinities, which is a little apart from the main monastery buildings, at the very summit of the hill. It is the oldest part of the monastery.

The dPe-t’up branch of monasteries has more than one hundred monks. These branches are dSang-mkhar, Stok and Sabu (Sa-phu), each with about thirty monks, who all assemble during the major festival. Of these smaller branches, dSang-mkhar serves as the head Lama’s private residence. It is smaller and well maintained. The Du-khang is well decorated and contains various statues including those of Buddha Shakyamuni, Tsong-kha-pa and the Eleven-Headed Avalokitesvara.

Thiksay (Krig-rtse)

This is the most impressively positioned of monasteries in Ladakh. This is also a big Ge-lug-pa monastery, which was built probably about the middle of the sixteenth century, the original period of Ge-lug-pa influence in Ladakh. According to Thupstan Paldan, “Shes-rab bzang-po of sTod (upper Ladakh) first built the temple of Stagmo Lkhang at the top of the Thiksay and then his nephew called Paldan

244 David Snellgrove and Tadeusz Skorupski, op. cit. 239, p. 109.
245 Janet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 175.
Sherab founded the Thiksay Monastery.246 There are many well-decorated temples in this huge complex.

A few steps above from the courtyard is the Du-khang, the assembly hall. Every morning about 6.30, all the monks of this monastery assemble in the Du-khang for prayer, which normally lasts for about an hour but on special occasions gets extended. Many statues and religious objects can be seen in this room. It also contains racks of books on both sides of the wall. A door leads to the inner room, where the main images are that of the Buddha, Padmasambhava and Avalokistesvara.

The Gon-khang is a smaller and dark chamber. It contains the protector divinities. The faces of the protector divinities are kept veiled and are unveiled once in a year during festival time. The festival (Krig-rste dGu-gtor) takes place on the 17th and 18th of the 12th Tibetan month.247 The other temples are Chamba-Lhakhang and Drolma-Lhakang, added to the building complex recently. The monastery has also a small old library that contains old religious books and objects.

Hemis

This monastery lies at a distance of about 45 kilometers south of Leh. It is one of the largest and richest monasteries in Ladakh. It belongs to Brug-pa, a sub-sect of the bKa-gyud-pa sect, of Tibetan Buddhism. It was found in 1630 by sTag-ts’an-ras-pa248, under the royal patronage of King Sen-ge-rNamgyal. The annual festival commemorating the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava held in summer, which is why it is well known to outside visitors. Lama Mipam Tsewang introduced

this festival.\textsuperscript{249} It has also now probably the biggest courtyard for the monastic dances.

The main temple of the monastery is the Du-khang, and it contains seats for the monks and the head Lama. Apart from these, there are many images including that of \textsuperscript{s}Tag-ts’an-ras-pa and of Vajradhara, the bKa-gyud-pa hierarchy and of various Brug-pa sub-sect Lamas. The biggest Thangka is also in this temple. The Tshogs-khang is another important and interesting temple of the monastery. This contains in the central position a huge and impressive image of Buddha Shakyamuni, and many chortens (stupas) adorned with silver and gild. Guru-Lhakhang is another temple where a huge image of Padmasambhava can be seen. It was built around the 1980s. Besides, there are several smaller temples in the monastery.

\textbf{Chemde}

This is another monastery that was built by \textsuperscript{s}Tag-san-ras-pa\textsuperscript{250} and it also belongs to the same sect as that of Hemis, the Brug-pa sub-sect. It is situated to one side of a tributary valley of the Indus, just off the road leading to the Chang-la, about 45 kilometers from Leh. The Du-khang contains images of \textsuperscript{s}Tag-san-ras-pa and other Brug-pa Lamas. Behind the images are murals of Shakyamuni flanked by his chief disciples. A smaller temple upstairs, known as the Lama temple (bLa-ma-lha-khang)\textsuperscript{251}, contains images of various Brug-pa Lamas and of the Buddha, as well as a copy of the Tibetan Canon. There is also another small temple dedicated to the twenty-one manifestations of the goddess Tara. The last temple, almost at the very

\textsuperscript{249} Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid. p. 57.
\textsuperscript{251} David Snellgrove, and Skorupski, op. cit. 239, p. 132.
The top of the monastery contains many images, including that of Guru Padmasambhava. This temple and Drolma Lhakhang have been constructed recently.

**Thak-Thok (Brag-tok)**

This monastery is situated a few kilometers from Chemday, above the village of Sakti. It was founded in the reign of Ts’e-dban-rNamgyal in the second half of the sixteenth century. The monastery is constructed around Padmasambhava’s Cave, in which he is believed to have meditated. This is the only monastery of Nin-ma-pa, the oldest sect of Tibetan Buddhism in Ladakh. The Cave contains images of Padmasambhava and Avalokitesvara. The Du-khang contains a big image of Padmasambhava and several other statues. The Kanjur-Lhakhang contains a copy of the Tibetan tripiṭaka (Canon) and image of Buddha Shakyamuni. A new and bigger courtyard has been constructed near the road. According to Thupstan Paldan, “Monks of this monastery become skilled in the ‘white’ astrology (of India) and the ‘black’ astrology (of China).”

**Stakna (stag-sna)**

It lies at a distance of about 40 kilometers south of Leh on a hill shaped like a stag-sna (Tiger-nose). A great scholar saint Chosje Jamyang Palkar founded it during the reign of King Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal. This monastery has several well-maintained temples, including the Du-khang, which contains a silver gilt stupa, images of three Brug-pa Lamas, Padma-dkar-po, Ngag-dban-mamgyal, the strong man of Bhutan in the 18th century, and Ngag-dban-rGyal-mtshan. Most of the murals in the

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252 Janet Rizvi, op. cit. 4, p. 179.
253 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, pp. 50-51.
254 Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 23.
255 David Snellgrove, and Tadeusz Skorupski, op. cit. 239, p.131.
monastery look new, presumably of fairly recent date except in a few smaller chapels
where some murals and images probably date from the monastery's foundation. This
monastery had close ties with monasteries of Bhutan.

Matho (Ma-spro)

This monastery lies across the Indus and directly opposite of Thiksay. It is
also known as the 'Thuptan dPal-bzang Chokhor'. It is also the only monastery that
belongs to the Sa-skya-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism in Ladakh. The Sa-skya
scholar rDorje dPal-bzang who arrived there after having extensively traveled
throughout Tibet founded this monastery. The most famous event of the monastery
is its annual festival of oracles which takes place on the 25th and 26th of the 2nd
Tibetan month. It is known as Ma-spro Nag-hrang. The oracles are two Lamas,
chosen by lot every five years. The two chosen Lamas have to meditate for a few
months before the festival and become the receptacles for the particular deity. Once
possessed of the god the oracles do the most extraordinary things. According to
Jamyang Gyaltsan:

"The oracle tradition has existed here since the
establishment of the monastery. Originally,
the protectors were brothers who lived at a
place called Khawa Karpo in Kham (in eastern
Tibet). Having become attached to the Sa-skya
Scholar, rDorje dPal-bzang, he propitiated them
with sacrificial cakes, and when he came to
Ladakh, they followed him."
The monastery contains an old and a new temple; a special shrine housing the Buddhist Canon, and a shrine in honour of the Sa-skya Lamas which contains the images of Sa-skya-pandita and of other important Lamas of the same sect. Another shrine houses the protectors of the Dharma. Women are not permitted to enter the old shrine of the protectors. The cave near the monastery is where rDorje dPal-bzang, a scholar of the Sa-skya sect, is believed to have resided when he first arrived in this area.

Phayang (P’yi-dban)

This monastery occupies a hilltop of a valley north from the Indus, about 20 kilometers west of Leh. It is also known as the sGan-snon-bkra-sis-c’os-rdzon monastery. It was founded by Chos-rje Idan-ma, who was invited by the king of Ladakh in the late fifties of the 16th century. This monastery along with Lamayuru is represented by the Bri-gung-pa, a sub-sect of the bKa-gyud-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

Many temples can be seen in this monastery. The Du-khang contains images of Vairocana, Shakyamuni and the important bKa-gyud-pa Lamas. Another temple, known as Du-khang gsar-pa contains several interesting images. It also contains Kashmiri bronzes. Snellgrove describes it as, “a small group of Kashmiri bronzes, which by the very nature of the case cannot be later than the 14th century or so.” The Gon-khang as always contains the protector divinities. Besides, the

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261 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 29.
262 Ibid. p. 29. Also see Tashi Rabgias, op. cit.2, pp. 169-72.
263 Situated about 130 kilometers west of Leh.
264 David Snellgrove, and Taduez Skorupski, op. cit. 239, p.123.
265 Ibid. p. 123.
monastery contains several smaller old and new temples and a private room for the head Lama.

**Rigzong (Ri-dzong)**

This monastery lies at a distance of about 80 kilometers west of Leh. It is known as ‘Vuma Changchubling’ and was founded by Lama Tsultim Nime about 140 years ago. The monastery belongs to the Ge-lug-pa sect of Mahayana Buddhism. It has maintained its strict discipline, more than in most of the monasteries in Ladakh. According to Thupstan Paldan, “since the monastic community places particular importance to the observance of the ‘Vinaya’ precepts, the traditions of the coercive rites which include sacred dances and hurling votive offering are not especially observed.” A few kilometers down the gorge is the Chomoling (Nunnery). The Nuns come up to the monastery when there is special prayer. Besides, the nuns perform the works of spinning wool, milking, and extracting oil for the temple lamps.

**Karcha (dkar-cha)**

This monastery is the largest in Zanskar. It was founded by Shes-rab bzang-po of sTod, a native of Mar-yul (Ladakh), who introduced the Ge-lug-pa sect in this monastery. Many temples can be seen in the monastery. The Du-khang was redecorated after being destroyed by fire. Next is the Gon-kh~g, which contains the protector divinities. The oldest part of the monastery is the ‘Maitreya’s place’ (Byams-pa-gling). In fact, the Chronicles of Zanskar translated by A. H. Francke suggest that the foundation of Byams-pa-gling along with Kanika Chorten and

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266 Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 13.
268 David Snellgrove, and Tadeusz Skorupski, op. cit. 46, p. 42.
269 Ibid. p. 48.
Pipiting are the earliest religious establishments in Zanskar. Besides, there are several smaller other temples containing images, the Buddhist Canon etc.

Stongde (sTon-sde)

sTon-sde is situated at the extreme end of the Padum valley. The monastery is renowned as having been founded by Lama Marpa and its name is Marpaling, belonging to the bKa-gyud sect. Later, Gyaltsan Ludub Palzang introduced there the Ge-lug-pa sect, the Ge-lug-pa. Like most of the monasteries, this also occupies a hilltop. Many temples in the monastery like the Du-khang, the Gon-khang, the Kanjur Lha-khang, and the Nyung-gnas-Lha-khang, contain images, murals, and the Buddhist Canon.

Rangdum (Rang-Idum)

Driving from Kargil to Zanskar, the first monastery one comes across is the Rangdum. It was founded by Blo-bzang dge-legs Ye-shes grags-pa of mNga-ri-tshang during the reign of King Ts’e-dban rNamgyal (1753-1782 A. D.). It belongs to the Ge-lug-pa sect of Mahayana Buddhism. There are several smaller temples containing a number of statues, and the Tibetan Canon. In addition, there is a private quarter (gzin-chung) of the head Lama. The successive reincarnations of mNga-ris Tulku act as the incumbents.

Bardan (Bar-gdan)

This monastery lies at a distance about of 15 kilometers from Padum, the capital of Zanskar. The monastery was founded by bDe-ba-rgya-mtsho in the 17th

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{270}} \text{A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 160.} \]
\[ \text{\textsuperscript{271}} \text{Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 27.} \]
\[ \text{\textsuperscript{272}} \text{Ibid. p. 27.} \]
\[ \text{\textsuperscript{273}} \text{David Snellgrove, and Tadeusz Skorupski, op. cit. 46, p. 55. Also see Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 29.} \]
\[ \text{\textsuperscript{274}} \text{Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 29.} \]
century. It belongs to the Brug-pa sub-sect of Mahayana Buddhism. Bardan along with dZong-khul and Tagrimo, all in Zanskar, are associated with the monastery of sTag-sna in central Ladakh.

Zongkul (dZong-khul)

This spectacular cave monastery of Zanskar falls on the Padum-Kishtwar trekking trails. The monastery is associated with the famous Indian yogin Naropa. The two caves present in the monastery are said to have been used by the famous yogi for solitary meditation. There are few smaller temples in the monastery, which contain old thangkas of Mi-la-ras-pa, Marpa and Vajradhara. Besides, there are several images and holy objects. As mentioned above, this monastery belongs to the Brug-pa, sub-sect of the bKa-gyud-pa sect and it comes under the jurisdiction of the head Lama the of sTag-sna monastery in central Ladakh.

Sani

This monastery is situated a few kilometers before Padum on the main road leading from Kargil. Unlike most other monastic foundations, it is built on flat land. Sani is also believed to have been visited and blessed by Guru Padmasambhava. The famous Kanika chorten (stupa) is at the back of the monastery. This monastery is associated with the Brug-pa sub-sect and comes under the jurisdiction of sTag-sna.

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275 David Snellgrove, and Tadeusz Skorupski, op. cit. 46, p. 55.
277 David Snellgrove, and Tadeusz Skorupski, op. cit. 46, p. 55.
278 Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 27.
Lingshed

This monastery lies at a distance of about three days journey from the south of Yuru village, on the Yuru-Padum trek routes. According to Thupstan Paldan, “originally this monastery was established by the translator, Rinchen Zangpo, later Changsem Shesrab Zangpo, having expanded it, established the Ge-lug-pa order there.” 279

Disket

This monastery is situated in the Nubra Valley, about 120 kilometers north of Leh. This monastery is one of the largest in the area. It was founded in about 1420 A.D. by Shes-rab bzang-po of sTod and it is reckoned as one of the branches of Thiksay monastery.280 Several treasured thangkas, murals and other holy religious objects are found in this monastery.

Samstanling

This monastery is also in the Nubra valley. Lama Tsultim Nima founded it about 130 years ago.281 The monastery maintains the same discipline as that of Rigzong (Ri-dzong).282

Monastic role in Ladakh: religious/spiritual and social

As mentioned above, many monasteries have been established in Ladakh due to its close religious and spiritual contacts with Tibet. In fact, many writers called Ladakh as ‘the land of monasteries and lamas’. The population of the central and

279 Ibid. p. 29.
281 Ibid. p. 24.
Zanskar regions of Ladakh is predominantly Buddhist and the central religious institution is the monastery (Gonpa). The monastery essentially functions as the religious and social centre of the people. A Buddhist life is based on the achievement of religious merit. And the importance of this religious merit is transmitted through the Lamas and Nuns. Besides, they also function as teacher, astrologer, prescribe and supply traditional medicine, participate and direct drama and dance at the time of monastic festivals and conduct the birth, marriage and death rites for the people. The monasteries also run educational institutions, which teach religion, art, culture, the traditional system of medicine and the philosophy of the Buddha.

**Some Important Royal Castles**

Many important royal castles have been built in Ladakh. The largest one is the Palace at Leh known as Slel-c’en dpal-mk’ar. It was built in 1600 A. D. by King Se-ge-rNamgyal. This Palace still looks magnificent.

**Shey (Shel)**

This is another important castle situated at a distance of about 16 kilometers from Leh. It was the castle of the first king of Ladakh, Lha-chen aPal-gyi-mgon. The ruins of this fortress may be seen at several higher levels above the present Palace. The temple contains a sacred copper-gilt statue of Lord Buddha, which was built by King bDe-idan-rNamgyal in the memory of his father.

**Basgo**

Basgo lies at a distance of about 40 kilometers west of Leh. It is the most impressive of Ladakhi Citadels. It was built by King Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal and Se-

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283 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 5, p. 40.
284 Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 17.
ge-rNamgyal, father and son. According to Luciano Petech, Basgo was the capital of King Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal around 1603 A. D. The present Maitreya temple there was built by Se-ge-rNamgyal. Besides two magnificent Maitreya statues, there are many scriptures and commentaries written out in gold and silver, which can still be seen.

gTin-mo-sgan

It was also an important royal citadel, which lies at a distance of about 90 kilometers west of Leh. This castle was built by Grags-pa bum, the younger brother of Grags-bum-ide. Presently there are two temples, of which one is dedicated to Avalokitesvara and the other to Padmasambhava.

sTok

This palace is at a distance of about 15 kilometers south of Leh. It was built by King Ts'e-dPal-rNamgyal. Not long after it was built, Ladakh came under Dogra rule. The monarchy was abolished and the family was given as ‘Jagir’ the sTok estate and the Palace. Since then the royal family has resided there. Besides the residence, it houses a museum in which many religious objects, and a collection of war-like quivers, arrows, guns, and swords. Coins and seals and the queen’s ornaments can be found. There is also a temple. All the temples of royal citadels belong to the Bru-pa, sub-sect of bKa-gyud-pa sect.

286 Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 12.
287 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, pp. 36 & 37.
288 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 181.
289 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 25. Also see Thupstan Paldan, op. cit. 246, p. 11.
290 A. H. Francke, op. cit. 1, p. 132.
291 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 151.
Important Lama visitors to Ladakh during the period.

There are many lamas who visited Ladakh during the period. They played a major role in spreading Mahayana Buddhism in Ladakh.

sTag-ts’an-ras-pa

sTag-ts’an-ras-pa Nag-dban-rgya-mtso (1574-1651 A.D.), was a Brug-pa lama who visited Ladakh during the time of Sen-ge-rNamgyal. Stag-ts’an-ras-pa was the scion of the K’on family, i.e., of the house of the Sa-skya prince-abbot, and an outstanding member of the Brug-pa sub-sect. The King Jam-dbyans-rNamgyal invited him when the Lama was in Zanskar enroute to Uddiyana when he was enjoined by his master. The Lama turned down the invitation for the moment, as he had not yet accomplished his journey. He came to Ladakh at the time of Sen-ge-rNamgyal and stayed mostly at rGya and Hemis. sTag-ts’an-ras-pa became the religious teacher of the king of Ladakh. With the help from King Sen-ge-rNamgayl, sTag-ts’an-ras-pa built many monasteries in Ladakh, as mentioned above.

After sTag-ts’an-ras-pa, many other important lamas visited Ladakh from Buddhist Tibet. One of them was a Brug-pa scholar Nag-dban-rgyal-mts’an (1697-1732 A.D.). He became the court chaplain (dbu-bla) of Nyi-ma-rNamgyal. Another important Lama who visited Ladakh was bDe-c’en-c’os-k’or Yons-dzin ye-ses-grub-pa (1781-1845 A.D.). But most important was the 7th Brug-c’en dKar-
brgyud-P’rin-las-sin-tra (1718-1766 A.D.), who visited Ladakh. They all played a major role in the establishment of the Brug-pa sub-sect of Mahayana Buddhism in Ladakh.

C’os-rje dam-ma

C’os-rje dam-ma Kun-dga-grags-pa was invited by the kings of Ladakh, bKra-sis-rNamgyal and Ts’e-dban-rNamgyal. The Lama accepted the invitation and came to Ladakh. C’os-rje dam-ma requested the king to donate some land so that he could build a monastery. The king gave him the permission to take land wherever he wished for his purpose. The Lama chose a place about 20 kilometers west of Leh. Then he built the present monastery of Phyang (P’yin-dban).

As mentioned above, this monastery along with Lamayuru belong to the Bri-gung-pa sub-sect of Mahayana Buddhism in Ladakh.

rDorje dPal-bzang

rDorje dPal-bzang, a sa-skya scholar, visited Ladakh from Tibet. He was responsible for the founding of Matho (Ma-spro), a Sa-skya monastery.

Shes-rab-bzang-po

He was from sTod (upper) Ladakh and was a very well known Lama. He along with his nephew Paldan Shes-rab was responsible for building many Ge-lug-pa monasteries in Ladakh. These monasteries are mentioned above.

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298 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 332.
299 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 29. According to Tashi Rabgias, the king was Jam-dban-rNamgyal.
300 Tashi Rabgias, op. cit. 2, p. 171.
301 Luciano Petech, op. cit. 3, p. 29.
Conclusion

Thus, lama missionaries played an important role in spreading all the four major sects and several sub-sects of Tibetan Buddhism in Ladakh.

This chapter has surveyed the medieval period of Ladakhi history, characterized by the emergence of the rNamgyal dynasty and its patronage of the Tibetan Buddhism sustained by Ladakh’s spiritual ties with Buddhist Tibet. The emphasis shifted to primarily Buddhist preoccupation such as the patronage and support of construction of monasteries and stupas in Ladakh, and moved away from violence as a policy and way of life of the entire population. In terms of long historical development and evolution Ladakh earned the present day reputation as a peaceful Buddhist Community.