

reading for anyone interested in understanding the phenomenon as it is developing now.

Ladakh: Culture, history, and development between Himalaya and Karakoram edited by Martijn van Beek, Kristoffer Brix Bertelsen and Poul Pedersen. (Recent Research on Ladakh 8). Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1999. 414pp. ill.

Reviewed by Maria Phylactou

The first colloquium for Ladakh studies was held in Konstanz in 1981 and its proceedings were published as *Recent Research on Ladakh*. The International Association for Ladakh Studies was set up at the third conference in Herrnhut in 1987, largely at the initiative of Henry Osmaston who has guided the Association through its first ten years and to whom this volume is dedicated. The volume includes an account of his remarkable career as forester, farmer, geography lecturer and mountaineer. In 1993 and 1999 IALS meetings were held in Ladakh. Ten of the contributors to this volume are from the region and attended the colloquium in Moesgard in 1997.

The editors remark that the collection “reflects both the depth and breadth of recent research on Ladakh”. One is certainly struck by the sheer number of papers (27 in all) and the variety of topics. The collection does not include editors Martijn van Beek and Kristoffer Brix Bertelsen’s own work on practices of representation in Ladakh, an important recent contribution to Ladakh studies. A brief introduction might have helped guide the non-specialist through the recent history of the field, identifying particular interests, trends, and broader regional and theoretical contexts.

The regional scope of Ladakh studies has been significantly broadened with the addition of studies of some of the nomadic communities of Changthang, and of the region’s Muslim communities, especially in the district of Kargil in the west. One of the papers relates to the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

Monisha Ahmad describes the annual salt trek to Tso Kar lake in Rupshu, east Ladakh. Salt extraction began here after the cessation of the traditional salt trade with west Tibet in the 1960s, and continues today despite the availability of subsidized sea salt. In the 1970s and 1980s the rights of the Rupshu nomads to salt extraction and grazing at the lake were contested by nomads from Kharnak. The

nomadic community of Kharnak is discussed by Pascale Dollfus. The territory of Kharnak is protected by a number of named local deities associated with particular mountain peaks and worshipped at small shrines, which Dollfus contrasts with central Ladakh where local deities are not associated with particular peaks, which are neither 'mountain deities', nor places of pilgrimage.

The village of Yangthang in a northern side valley of the Indus in Sham, western Ladakh, is discussed by Reinhard Herdick. Established in the mid-19th century by the founder of the nearby monastery of Rizong, and on its land, the settlement maintains strong links with the monastery. The paper contains a wealth of detail on its households, agriculture, and relations with the monastery. Still further west lies Hanu, a village at the crossroads of 'Leh, Kargil, and Baltistan', vividly described in a short piece by Sonam Phuntsog. According to the myths, it was originally settled by people from Gilgit; later it came to be annexed by the kings of Ladakh; in the 18th century the villagers converted to Buddhism. The ritual life of the village preserves something of this distinctive and rich identity.

Until now there have been few studies of religion or ritual among Ladakh's Muslim communities, but this volume contains two accounts of Muharram: one in Leh, and one in Kargil district. David Pinault describes the procession held by Leh's Shia community on the occasion of Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram, which commemorates the death of Husain, grandson of the Prophet, on the plain of Karbala. Buddhists are present as onlookers, and are invited to the matam serai for a 'funeral feast' on the fourteenth day. The procession also includes a group of Sunnis who do not, however, participate in the gestures of lamentation. Prior to the 1950s, the Shia community did not commemorate Muharram publicly, whilst Sunnis only began to participate in any number after 1989. Nicky Grist presents an account of Muharram as she observed it in the Suru valley south of Kargil in 1994. Here two local Shia factions form separate processions which converge at certain points. In the 1960s and '70s one of the factions was associated with millenarian beliefs.

Martin Sokefeld writes about the Northern Areas of Pakistan and traces the emergence in Gilgit, in the late 1980s, against a background of continuing demands for political reform, of a discourse emphasizing a common historical and cultural identity across the region, despite its ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity.

Several contributions deal with historical material. John Bray and Chris Butters examine the role played by the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyu lama Jamgon Ngawang Gyaltshen, who was sent as head lama to the palace at Leh and stayed in Ladakh for several years, in consolidating relations between Ladakh and Bhutan in the 18th century. Nawang Tsering Shakspo discusses the teachers of the Ladakhi kings, and

in particular the role of the seventeenth-century Drukpa lama, Stagtsang Raspa, and his later incarnations; whilst a paper by Peter Marczell concerns the teachers of Alexander Csoma de Koros, the nineteenth-century pioneer of Tibetan studies, at Dzongkhul monastery in Zanskar.

Two of the papers on Ladakhi history help to place the discussions concerning recent economic development in wider context. Janet Rizvi tells the story of the valuable trade in shawl wool that passed through Ladakh. The trade had ceased completely by the 1960s, though pashmina is still produced in Ladakh, its value soaring in recent years. Abdul Ghani Sheikh's account of the Ladakhi economy over the last two centuries highlights the economic hardships of the Dogra period: forced labour and debt were especially heavy burdens. Nowadays, he writes, Ladakhis are comparatively well off, but he notes, as do the papers on development, the move away from agriculture and an increasing reliance on subsidized food imports.

Mohammed Deen Darokhan provides a wide-ranging discussion of the significance of traditional agriculture in Ladakh and considers how it can be made more economically viable and ecologically sustainable, whilst Sonam Dawa provides extensive quantitative material which documents the remarkable scale of demographic and economic change over the last 40 years.

In development terms, the district of Kargil has in the past been overshadowed by Leh. Mohammed Jaffar Akhooon considers its potential for tourism. Mohammed Raza Abassi looks at the role of the Youth Voluntary Forum Kargil, established in 1990, in guiding the younger generation, especially by providing educational opportunities and facilities for poorer members of the community. Kaneez Fatima discusses the development of women's education and employment opportunities in Kargil, where women were less likely to receive an education in the past, and female literacy is low. Numbers have increased, but the drop-out rate remains high.

Several papers highlight women's central role in Ladakhi agriculture, and their increasing workloads and responsibility as more men are employed outside the villages. With fewer women in paid employment, women's work and contributions to the household tend to be undervalued. Katherine Hay notes some curtailment in female mobility, more widespread notions of female purity, and greater polarization in gender relations. Regarding women's centrality in the household, she suggests that a traditional 'site of power' may be turning into a 'site of marginalization'. Spalzes Angmo discusses activities taken up by the Women's Welfare Society, founded in 1994. Growing vegetables for sale has provided a significant livelihood, and village women stress the importance of continuing to teach children traditional farming methods, besides school education. David Sonam Dawa points out that

education in Ladakh needs to address the very specific needs of the society, especially of its isolated village communities. He highlights the demanding nature of the present curriculum, and the multiple languages that Ladakhi students are routinely required to learn.

Language features in two further papers. Bettina Zeisler notes the absence of Ladakhi as a medium of instruction in medium and higher education and is critical of what she sees as the 'passive assimilation' and use of foreign loanwords in Ladakhi. She expresses concern for the future of the language and advocates a means of writing the 'ordinary' (i.e. spoken) language that retains a recognizable form of (classical) Tibetan orthography. Anandamayee Ghosh suggests that the form of Ladakhi used in the Gesar epic may be a distinct literary language akin to literary Tibetan.

Finally, John Clarke looks at the development, during recent decades, of Ladakhi metal stoves. Neil Howard discusses the dating of ancient Ladakhi painted pottery. Mick Khoo and Tsering Norbu Martse present a highly readable account of Tibetan Buddhist cosmology and Ladakhi beliefs about solar and lunar eclipses; Khoo describes his own experience of a partial solar eclipse in Ladakh in 1995. Kim Gutschow describes the events at the centre of the *smyung gnas* fast at Karsha in Zanskar, concluding that ideals of renunciation undermine norms of hospitality only, finally, to reaffirm them through the elaborate exchanges of foods that follow the fast.

This is an important collection covering a broad range of subjects that will be of value to anyone interested in Ladakh, and Himalayan studies more generally, though its very breadth leads me to wonder whether the proceedings of future colloquia might not benefit from being thematically arranged and more fully introduced and discussed.

Tibetan Mountain Deities: Their cults and representations edited by Anne-Marie Blondeau. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998. 214 pp., maps, photographs.

Reviewed by Martin Gaenzle

In recent years the religious significance of mountains in the Himalayas has been the object of growing scholarly interest, and this has resulted in a number of fascinating and valuable descriptions and discussions. The present volume is one of the latest contributions to this field. It is the outcome of a panel at the International