

Recent Research on Ladakh 4 & 5, Henry OSMASTON & Philip DENWOOD eds., London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1995, 429 p., fig., plates.

Recent Research on Ladakh 6, Henry OSMASTON & NAWANG TSERING ed., Bristol, University of Bristol, 1997, 374 p., fig., plates.

Review by Isabelle Riaboff

Since 1981, international colloquia on Ladakh have been regularly convened in Europe, and once in India, by a group of scholars who formed the International Association for Ladakh Studies in 1987. Open to all who are interested in the study of Ladakh, Westerners as well as Indians (among whom are a number of Ladakhi), the IALS forums gather not only academics (geographers, historians, sociologists, anthropologists) but also professionals who take part in modern Ladakh's destiny.

Two recently published volumes record the proceedings of three successive colloquia, held in Bristol (1989), London (1992) and Leh (1993). It is regrettable that the editors did not classify the papers other than alphabetically by author. However, if classified by rubric an important imbalance would have been evident: social and religious customs are poorly dealt with, whereas history, social development and ecology appear to be major concerns.

Among the anthropological contributions, a few are worth recalling. John Clarke (RRL4) surveys the technical and social aspects of metalworking. Kim Gutschow (RRL6) contrasts some Ladakhi and Zanskari irrigation systems with the Tibetan management of water distribution. Smriti Srinivas (RRL6), on the basis of fieldwork carried out in the Nubra valley (Tegar and Hundar settlements), analyses the way Muslims and Buddhists behave jointly at village level. As for religious topics, we are indebted to John Crook (RRL6) and Thierry Dodin (RRL6) for accounts of the lives of two modern Buddhist masters, Tipun Padma Chogyal (born in Chemre in 1877) and Negi Lama Tenzin Gyaltsen of Kinnaur (1894-1977).

History papers are of two kinds: a number of articles are dedicated to factual history, while others shed light on the history of Ladakhi studies. In addition to studies focusing on nineteenth-century events, some authors turn to earlier times: Rohit Vohra (RRL4) and Philip Denwood (RRL5) examine Ladakh's situation before its Tibetanization; Neil Howard (RRL6) investigates the dynastic history between 1450 and 1550 AD; lastly, several

Ladakhi episodes involving Tibetan diplomacy (from the eighteenth century to the 1940s) are presented in detail by Peter Schwieger (RRL6) and John Bray (RRL5). As for Ladakhi studies, in total, seven papers deal with the predecessors that Ladakhologists celebrate, namely, William Moorcroft, Alexander Csoma de Kőrös (the London colloquium commemorated the 150th anniversary of his death) and August Hermann Francke. The critical reading of Moorcroft's writings by Nicky Grist (RRL5) is particularly interesting, as well as Peter J. Marczell's analysis (RRL5), which shows how in the 1930s, the figure of Csoma de Kőrös was used by Hungarians to serve both personal and institutional ambitions.

When reading these proceedings, one cannot but note that the modernisation of society has influenced Ladakhi life as a whole. The large military presence, the strengthened administration, the expansion of employment opportunities, road construction and increased tourism have deeply affected the economic, social and religious structures. James Crowden (RRL5; RR6), David Mallon and Roger Prodon (RRL6), Helena Norberg-Hodge (RR6), Henry Osmaston (RRL4), Harjit Singh (RRL4; RRL6), Prem Singh Jina (RRL6) all consider the impact of 'progress' on the traditional way of life. John Crook (RRL4) reports how the use of "small houses" has changed; Sonam Phuntsog (RRL6) recalls that sacrifices offered to local deities have been abandoned by the Buddhist Dards since 1991; Nawang Tsering (RRL4) and Paula Green (RRL6) describe the new educational structures established for monks and nuns. Many contributors ponder over what policy to follow, in order to support development while protecting Ladakh from ecological and cultural disruptions.

The wide range of papers dedicated to historical and developmental issues shows that most of the Ladakhologists no longer convey the atemporal image of Ladakh which prevailed for years in academic literature. Ravina Aggarwal (RRL6), who denounces this romantic cliché, adds that Ladakhology wrongfully encapsulates Ladakh under the domain of Tibet, denying the other influences that have affected Ladakhi culture. Yet, Aggarwal's paper no longer seems valid. Thus, the number of contemporary works considering Ladakh as being at the cross-roads of various cultural worlds is striking. In the proceedings under review, Rohit Vohra (RRL4), on the basis of myths, points out the possible connections that might have existed with Gilgit and Hunza prior to the eleventh century; in another paper (RRL5), he presents the relationship between Ladakh, China and the Turks of Central Asia during the seventh and eighth

centuries. Kulbushan Warikoo (RRL4) describes nineteenth-century Ladakh as a transit emporium in Indo-Central Asian trade. Mark Trewin (RRL5), ethnomusicologist, shows how a song composed *circa* 1825 has been further adapted to different musical schemes of Balti and Indian of inspiration. Lastly, Islam appears to have become a major concern within Ladakhology: Abdul Ghani Sheikh (RRL4) and Pascale Dollfus (RRL5) relate the history of Muslim settlement in Ladakh, whereas Nawang Tsering Shakspo (RRL4) and Smriti Srinivas (RRL6) provide accounts of the co-existence of Muslims and Buddhists in some villages of the Nubra valley and the Purik area.

More recently, the contributions presented at the seventh and eighth colloquia of the IALS held in Bonn (1995) and Moesgaard (1997) confirm this trend: Ladakhology today grows enriched with fruitful comparisons with Ladakh's neighbouring regions (such as Baltistan).

