

Changpas – The Transhumants of Ladakh

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ABSTRACTS The Buddhist Changpas are a tribe of tent (*Rebo*) - dwelling pastoral transhumants of Ladakh who form an ethnic entity. Their way of life shows a capacity to adapt themselves to rugged cold desert environment. Animal husbandry is a way of life, and Changpas' whole existence revolve around the migration of their flocks in search of pastures. The vast area supports a large population of yak, sheep, goats and horses. The Changpas main economic strategies are of conserving abundance into storable form that can be utilised throughout the year. Changpas follow the traditional system of grazing wherein the headman - the *Goba* decides areas for animal grazing. Changpas who traverse the difficult terrain all the year long have social and functional groups to provide social security to all its members. The scattered and constantly shifting tent camps of Changpas still conforms to old age system of community organisation. Traditionally, the Changpas were able to manage their affairs without outside intervention. Their own societal controls like polyandry and cutting of excess animals, helped in turn by their customary rights and equity in resource allocation has helped them. Political events beyond their control have led to the transformation of their traditional economic system, forcing them to reorient it. Despite their remoteness and inaccessibility, over the past 30 to 50 years impact on the life of these people. Changpas are vulnerable to these pressures since their life-styles are linked to surrounding ecosystem. Changpas transhumants are in a state of transition. Despite the intrusion of the forces of change, they are still able to maintain their ethnic identity and way of life.

In Ladakh District, transhumance with or without agriculture becomes profitable where high pastures are available. Availability of pastures in Ladakh is restricted to high altitudes. Interestingly, only 0.75 sq. km are under forest in the Ladakh region though the region covers 70 per cent of the total area of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (Fig. 1). Ladakh region is almost devoid of vegetation and scattered grass patches, stunted cedars and willows are found in the moist scattered

strips. Owing to the disproportionately low percentage of grasslands, fodder crop production has been in practise. The principle fodder crop is *Alfa-Alfa*. It is a recognized fodder for its nutrient content. *Alfa-Alfa* is grown as a secondary crop in areas not used for cereals and other crops. Scarcity of cultivable land restricts shift to fodder production as it would result in acute food shortage.

The Chang-Thing sub-division of Ladakh District (Fig. 2) supports large animal population owing to the presence of the natural grass lands in the area. The Changpas are a tribe of tent-dwelling pastoral nomads who migrate in the Chang-Thing sub-division of Ladakh (Illus. 1, 2). Chang-Thing sub-division with an area of 21,000 square kilometres is the most prominent area in the map of Ladakh. It occupies strategic position. The sub-division is sparsely populated due to its geographic position and climatic rigours. More than three quarters of the entire area is totally uninhabited because average altitude is more than 4,000 metres. Human habitation is thus confined to approximately 25 per cent of the entire area.

The sub-division's headquarter is located at Nyoma, about 200 kilometres from Leh and is connected to it by a motorable road. The area is restricted and outsiders need a permit to go beyond Nyoma. Due to the strategic position of the sub-division, there is massive military presence. Troops are stationed in Nyoma and the area is traversed by a well maintained motorable road (highway) which passes through Nyoma. The areas not lying on the highway, still have poor transport facilities.

Chang-Thing (Chang-north, Thing-plain)

literally means the "north plain" but in common parlance a elevated plain or wide open valley, too high and too cold for any but pastoral use. It is a whole plate which uplifted at the end of Tertiary, and is a landform consisting of plateau basin of gently undulating plains with abundant scattered lakes. The levels of the plateau rises gradually from 4,500 metres in the south to 5,200 metres in the North. Chang-Thang is the name given collectively to the plateau (Illus. 3) through which the Ladakh-Tibet border runs stretching from Chustul south-east many hundred of miles in to Tibet (Rizvi, 1983). In Chang-Thang sub-division of Ladakh, the altitude ranges between 3500 to 4500 metres above sea level (ASL) and some peaks are as high as 5500 metres ASL. The entire region is exposed to high velocity winds and abounds in natural lakes. While cultivation is confined to lower altitudes, the main source of livelihood is cattle breeding. The vast area of 21,000 square kilometres of Chang-Thang sub-division supports a large population of yaks, sheep, goats and horses (Illus. 4). The rearing of animals in this area is facilitated by the presence of highland natural grasslands at the altitude varying from 2400 metres to more than 5000 metres ASL. Topographical features include deep gorges and vast plateaus (sometimes 50-60 kilometres long and 20-30 kilometres widegrounds) which range from undulating to sloping lands. The Chang-Thang area is characterised by little rainfall and snowfall (only three inches of precipitation on an average per year has been recorded). The temperature in Chang-Thang during summer (from April to September) varies from 6.1 to 13.2 with the highest average of 17°C in July-August. During winter months, temperature decreases far below the freezing point (Khan and Wani, 1986). As the precipitation is minimal, the source of water is melting snow on the heights. There is little or no moisture in the atmosphere to temper the effects of rarefied

air. The effective heat on the plateau is greater than on mountains of the same latitude and altitude. This is due to the heating of the great mass of the plateau, where the summer temperature of the whole toposphere is higher than that of surrounding regions (at the same elevation). In addition on the plateau, solar radiation is stronger and there is less moisture on the plateau than on smaller mountain. The low precipitation and arid atmosphere is accompanied by high speed winds that result in the wind erosion of soils. Some parts are subjected to severe water erosion because of excessive slopes. The severity of erosion has resulted into deep gullies and ravine formation.

The soils of the area are shallow skelton with poor physical conditions like sandy to sandy loam texture, higher rate of infiltration and percolation. The surface of the hills is chiefly disintegrated rocks, and the surface of the valley is earth or gravel. Loose stones, cobbles and gravels are found frequently. Vegetation is extremely scant, here and there is some green by a spring or along the moistened bank of a stream, and on some hill-sides is a thin herbage. It is this herbage which supports the flocks and herds which in turn sustain the small population of the area.

In the higher pastures more than two hundred species of wild plants grow. The most palatable of these are species of *Astragalus*, *Artemisia*, *Agropyron*, *Festuca*, *Orzopris*, *Lolium* and *Stipa* are prominent. Because of little rainfall and snowfall (only 10 cm of precipitation on an average per year) and shortage of soil moisture, the condition of pasture is deteriorating day by day. A unpalatable grass of *carex* species is growing in the area, indicating the depletion of grasslands. Chang-Thang is short of fuel wood, people use bushes and roots of different grasses as fuel. The Changpas prefer sheep and goat pellets as fuel because it burns for a longer time and emits more heat. These pellets are regularly collected and stored by

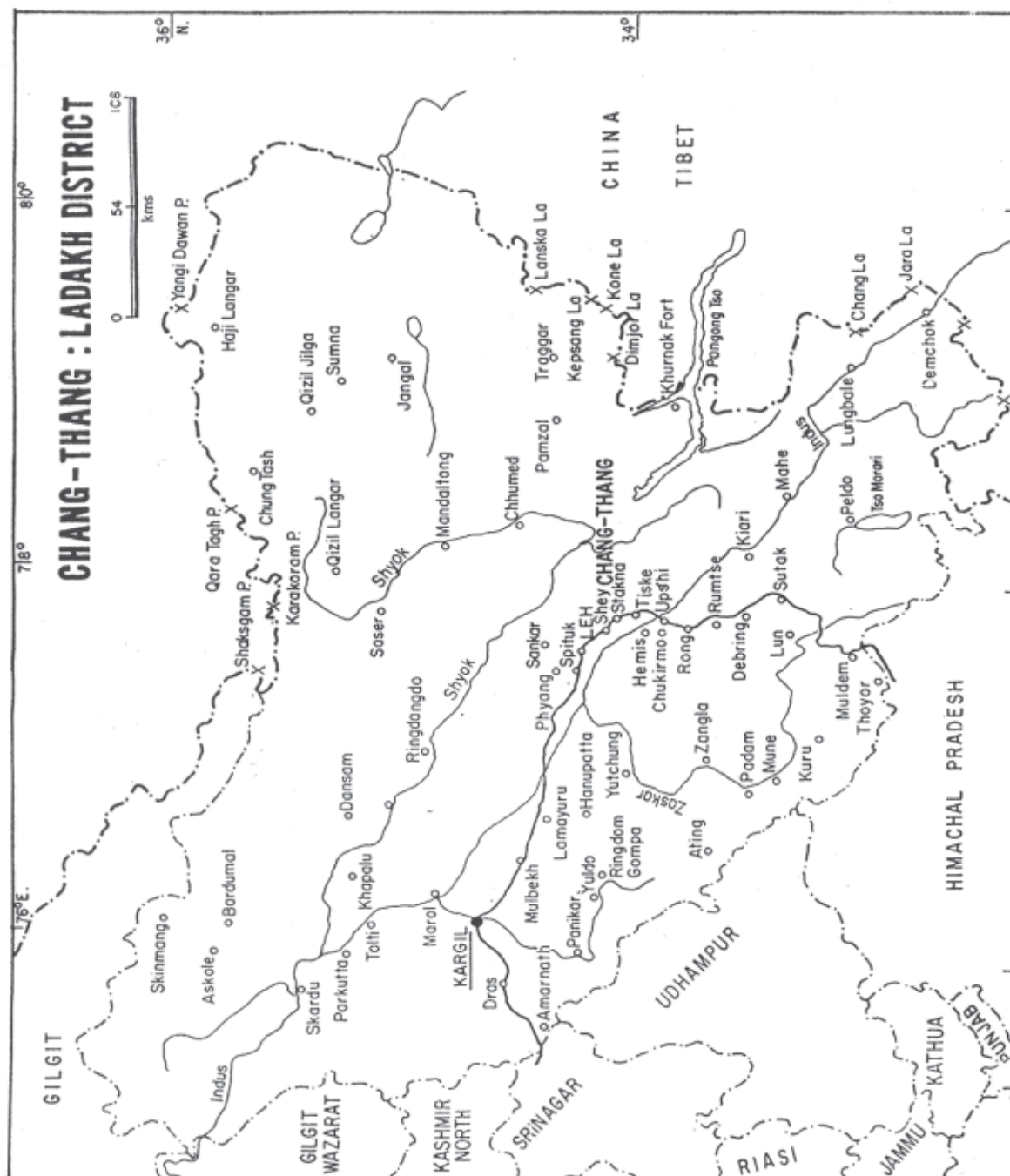


Fig. 2. Ladakh Region showing Chang-Thing

Changpa women.

Chang-Thang sub-division of Ladakh District exhibit a pattern of vertical and horizontal life zones, and these life zones are integrated by human into resource exploitation strategies. Chang-Thang sub-division is inhabited by 'Chang-pas' or northerners, a term applied to the Tartar shepherds of northern plain in the high altitude of Himalayas. Originally they migrated from 'Hor' of Tibet during A.D. 800. The name 'Hor' was given at first to the Uighurs found in Kanchow. The modern nomadic Horpas of the west (Nup-Hor) in Tibet (Occupied by China) may still bear their name. Tibetans settled in Ladakh around A.D. 500-600. From A.D. 930 Ladakh came under the direct rule of Tibetan Kings. It was also the time that Tibetan feudal chieftains built their citadels. Rupshu was under such chieftains, who were all powerful till the 17th century. Part of Rupshu adjoining the Tibetan plateau is called the Chang-Thang, hence the name Chang-pas.

In addition to the Chang-pas proper, other groups are found that regard themselves as directly derived from the Chang-pas or claim a common or collateral ancestry. In most of the villages of the regions through which Chang-pas migrate, is a considerable sedentary population of Chang-pas. Some of these are recent settlers, while others are third or fourth generation. In some of the villages, the whole population regards itself as a settled section of the tribe, while in other places the settlers are dispersed as individuals or in small family groups.

The ecological adaptations among Changpas of Chang-Thang are as follows : (1) Transhumance based on sheep, goats yaks and horse herding without agriculture as practiced by Chang-pas of high plateaus of Rupshu, Kharnak and Karzok region. In Rupshu and Kharnak, the entire population lead a nomadic life where as in Karzok about ninety per cent population move from one ecological zone to another; (2) Transhu-

mance based on goats and sheep rearing with marginal agriculture as practised by Changpas of Kerey and Chumoor. In summer they cultivate their lands and grow barley. As they have more goats and sheep they graze their animals at higher mountain valleys; and (3) Sedentary farming with limited live-stock raising as practised by the people of Kuyul, Damchok, Kery, Chumathang, Nyoma, Ney, Kesar, Linkchey etc. settled along the river. They generally raise one crop annually and produce wheat and barley. Besides this they cultivate vegetables like turnip, potatoes and peas. Mustard is also grown in some villages.

The Changpas of Chang-Thang are pastoralists by tradition. Before the closing of the border they used pastures on both sides of the border. Along with their pastoral activities they carried on barter trade. The environment in this area has no potential for agriculture. In areas where cultivation is possible, it is extremely limited. Poor soil, extreme cold weather, scanty rainfall, short working season make agriculture a difficult proposition. Because of poor technology, intensive cropping is difficult. They are still carrying on trade, selling wool, butter, cheese, salt and sheep and goat in other parts of Ladakh. Their main source of earning is 'Pashmina wool'.

Chang-Thang sub-division can tentatively be divided into two major cultural areas. The *Drok* and *Rong*. The *Drok* culture area corresponds to transhumant Changpas and *Rong* culture to semi-transhumants Lon-pas and sedentary Rongpas. The Changpas are traditionally and still predominantly Pashmina goat breeders. They lead nomadic life on the upland valleys. They graze their animals on pastures at upper slopes known as *Brog* (Pronounced as *Drok*). They do not have permanent villages or well constructed settled houses. They spend their whole life in *Rebos*, large portable yak-hair tents (Illus. 5). They use different valleys for winter and summer

grazing and use different parts of the valley for a particular period. Their grazing movements are regulated by strict code of communal law. The economic strategies of Changpas in this region seems to be the utilisation of different biotopes at varying altitudes.

Rong cultural area lies in the high altitude mountain valleys and along the narrow valleys of high mountain in the north. The Rong-pa living in these areas may or may not be transhumant, the choice depending entirely on the number of animals owned by the family. Traditionally, their ancestors were nomads. At that time Chang-Thang had good fertile pastures, but in course of time the condition of pastures deteriorated which resulted in severe decline in the livestock population. According to Cunningham (1853), the sheep population was 250 thousand, whereas at present population is only 90 thousands. At present, fodder is not sufficient in the pasture to support the present livestock population. There is a marked decline in the land's fertility every year, resulting in the further fall of livestock population. The vegetation has not developed resistance against the close grazing and browsing animals. Thus over stocking and over grazing have led to disastrous results. This kind of ecological change in the area has gradually forced a new cultural adaptation. These Changpas underwent cultural change and become settled and semi-settled farmers. The attempts at optimising their new ecological and socio-economic adaptation have led to the emergence of new section of Changpas -Lun-pa and Rong-pa.

Lun-pas, the residents of Kerey and Chumoor villages in the northern region of Great Himalayan range are semi-transhumants. Here, they have few cultivated fields where they grow barley in summer. As they have large number of sheep and goats, they migrate to higher mountain valleys or pastures zone with their flocks. Both Kerey and Chumoor villages are high plateaus at 5500 and

6500 metres ASL. As these villages are situated along the higher narrow valleys, they are popularly called Lunpas. Even under adverse weather conditions, these people are able to grow barley, peas and turnips with simple technology. The light wooden plough with its narrow iron tipped blade is drawn either by horse or by a pair of yak or dzo. Irrigation works are generally undertaken by co-operative activities under the supervision of *Goba*. These villages do not have water shortage for irrigation. The head decides the dates of irrigation and other agricultural activities. Besides agricultural work many families are engaged in pastoral and trading activities. They rear sheep, changra goats for wool and Pashmina. A family in Kerey has an average 5 yaks, 4 demos, 10 sheep and 15 goats, whereas in Chumoor, the average family has 15 yaks, 10 demos, 20 sheep and 25 goats. The 80 per cent of Chumoor families live in *Rebos* while on pastoral duties. The rest of the families make arrangements with families with tents to take over their animals for grazing on cash and kind payment. In the Kerey village, only 32 per cent families have tents and are engaged in transhumant activities, while rest 60 per cent families are engaged in agriculture and trade.

The cultivated areas and settled population of Rong-pas are mostly found in the villages of Kuyul, Damchok, Kery, Chumathang, Nyoma, Ney, Kesar and Linkchey situated along the Indus river. Agriculture is the way of life of people. The people here are almost completely dependent on artificial irrigation. Water is drawn by channels from natural rivers and stream in the area under the supervision of "*Churpan*". They generally raise one crop in a year and produce wheat and barley. Besides they grow vegetables like turnip, potatoes and pea. Mustard is also cultivated in a few villages.

The pastoral economy of the Changpas depends on the utilization of pastures. These pastures are markedly seasonal in their occur-

rence. Changpas travel from higher pastures to lower pastures seasonally, though there is a marginal difference in height of about 200-300 metres between the two. Summer pastures are at higher altitude while winter pastures are at comparatively less height. While Chang-pas are at winter pastures, the summer pastures rejuvenate, and when they are at summer pastures, the seeding and flowering of winter pastures take place. Poor pastures are available throughout the winter. In spring the pastures are plentiful and good in the areas of low and middle altitudes; but they progressively dry up. Usuable pastures are found in summer, though these grasses may dry up during the latter part of the summer, the animals subsist on withered straw, supplemented by various kinds of brush and thistles. The autumn season is generally poor throughout, but then the harvested fields with their stubble become available pasturage. The organisation of the Changpa migration and land use pattern is facilitated by traditional law, which specifies schedule of departures and duration of occupation of the different localities.

Chang-Thang has a great variation in the topography of the various parts of the sub-division and animal husbandry contributes to some extent to the economy of the households. The extent to which a family depends for its subsistence on livestock varies according to the locality. The social organisations of transhumance, semi-transhumance and sedentary-farming societies of Chang-Thang show slight differences. Although Changpas practice one or the other of the three adaptations, transhumant groups are found in every part of the sub-division at least during some season, agriculture is also entering the economy. Pastoralism, trade and agriculture form the basis of economy in this region. Due to past and present over use and lack of scientific management of pastures, lots of damage has been done to the pasturelands in this area. The infiltration of Tibetan refu-

gees with their flocks have increased the grazing load, thus upsetting the ecological balance. Political events beyond their control have led to the transformation of their traditional economic system, forcing them to re-orient it. Variation in the economic strategies of Changpas emerge from several factors, showing interrelations of ecology, technology and social organisation.

Early western travellers prove poor sources on the transhumant tribes of Ladakh; but at least Changpas names and little description of the Chang-Thang is given (Cunningham, 1853; Moorcroft and Trebeck, 1837; Drew, 1875; Francke 1907; Heber and Heber, 1923).

The people of Chang-Thang are of Tibetan race and are not different from other Ladakhis in their customs and religion. Changpas have a projecting chin, typical Mongolian eyes and large and flat noses. "Long hair, which surely has not made the acquaintance of brush and comb for years if ever, and which ends in a pigtail, surmount faces unaccustomed to washing, but well acquainted with smoky fires" (Heber and Heber, 1923). Young ones have started adorning chic shorter hairstyles to their long greasy plaits and trendy outfits to their traditional robes.

The costume of the Changpas, both men and women is characteristic and striking, consisting of wide long coat *Shanglak* of sheep skin which reaches just below the knees. The fronts of these overlap, and in lieu of buttons they wear long broad *Sharak* round their waist to keep their coats closed. They wear long boots reaching up to knees, with a thick soles, called *Kolam*. Both male and female are fond of ornaments. *Perak* and *Nalyan* are important and essential ornaments of the ladies. Women also wear *Docha*, a silver ornament worn below the belly, *Kau* (silver and gold ornament for the neck) and *Serduk* (ring of gold and silver). Male and female both use garlands of precious stones

like turquoise and coral, besides males wear *Fho-tip* on their head. The dress of Changpas, though seemingly awkward and unweildy, is advantageous in rough weather, and the voluminous hold created above the waist by the *Sharak* is often pressed in to service for keeping anything from small articles to newly born kids and lambs. The Changpas generally carry on their persons a host of accessories; a knife (*Zugtöl*) to open sacks, a needle box (*Khapshuk*), key (*Kulik*), a tobacco box, a pipe, a tinder box (*Mechak*). A Changpa rarely goes unarmed in these areas. Usually he carries a sling (*Yug-do*) or a sword with straight, strong, two-edged blade, stuck slantwise through his belt, like a dagger. Utility and the adjustment of clothing to the wearer's activity, has been given the attention that it deserves.

Aspects like freedom of movement, reinforcements of wear areas receptacles for tools, loops and *Sharak* for support of pouches and equipment, and proper distribution of weight over the body have been taken into account. Another important factor in the Changpa dress is the durability and the availability of material.

Broadly speaking there is no caste system. However, families who are having higher *ranking* within the community because of their wealth, profession or position are called as *Kaga* and rest as *Tronpa*. *Gara* (iron-smith), *Kange-zen* (who eat kyang (wild horse) flesh) and *Sebde* (whose body emits bad smell) have lower social status. Traditionally, the Changpas and other Ladakhis did not marry. However, when Ladakhi King Singe-Namgyal married Kalzang Dolma, a girl from the family of Rupshu *Goba*, the inter-marriage with other Ladakhis began. Now-a-days, even Tibetan refugees are marrying Changpa girls. As a matter of fact, Tibetan refugees are good traders and after marrying local girls, they get maximum profit while mediating in the wool trade. They barter flour, rice, kerosene oil etc for Pash-

mina and coarse wool and sell these to Kashmiri traders at high rates, thus earning huge profit for themselves.

Changkyet, a Tibetan dialect is spoken by Changpas. Changpa's ancestor followed an animistic religion called Bon. They were defeated in series of battles and forced to live a nomadic life. After that they adopted Tibetan Buddhism of *Ka-rGyud-pa* sect. Many customs and religious life of Changpas is influenced by central Ladakh.

The Transhumant Changpas (Drok-pa) : The transhumant Changpa (Drok-pa) inhabit the high plateaus of Rupshu, Kharnak and Karzok. In Rupshu and Kharnak whole community leads transhumant life, while in Karzok 90 per cent are transhumant and ten per cent lead sedentary way of life. In Karzok, pastoralism, trading and marginal agriculture are the economic pursuits followed by Changpas.

Rupshu is the most elevated area in Ladakh and one of the loftiest inhabited regions at 15,634 feet (4750 metres) in the world. Rupshu is bounded on the north by Ladakh proper, on the east by the Chinese district of Chumurti, on the south by Lahul and Spiti and on the west by Zaskar. It is 90 miles (145 kilometres) long and 62 miles (100 kilometres) broad with an area of 5,500 square miles (14500 sq. km). Two valleys of Rupshu, the Tsomorari and the Pangolumba are separated from one another by the ridge of the Karzok Tso, composed of granitoid rocks of gneiss and schist. Snowline in Rupshu is upto 6500 metres. The climate is severe and extreme dry. In summer the sun is strong but there is coolness in the air. The evenings are cool. When the sky is overcast, water freezes during the night. Changpas use dung of cattle and wild asses and bushes as fuel. Quantity of water varies in different areas during different season. The whole area is characterised by the scarcity of supplies, occasional scarcity of water and difficulty of crossing passes at high altitudes. Karzok was the headquar-

ter of the Rupshu situated near the shore of the lake Tsomurari. It was centre of the central Asian trade before 1947. It lies approximately between the north latitude $32^{\circ}58'$ and the east longitude $78^{\circ}15'$ at the height of 4600 metres. It is located at the south-west corner of Kyangdum along the western side of Tsomurari in the Rukchen valley of Leh district. The history of Chang-Thang indicates that it was once ruled by the powerful feudal lords who were called the Rupshu 'Goba'. The Gobas had organized the nomadic groups and systematically planned the resource use. After these Gobas lost their power in the 17th century, the smaller villages organized themselves and elected headmen who now come to be called Goba. During Rupshu 'Goba' reign ten mud houses and one Gompa was permanently built at Karzok. Karzok was a small village, where the retired parents and sick remained when the encampment moved to Indus valley. Karzok is one of two or three places in Rupshu where there is cultivation. Some 12 acres of land are sown with naked barley (which does not always ripen) at Rupshu and only five acres at Karzok. The land is irrigated from the stream of the side valley. Besides this stream, there is a perennial spring flowing down the mountain side. The villagers have dug a *Nallah* along the higher slope and diverted this spring water to the village. This *Nallah* is out of reach of animals. This water is only for drinking purposes. The hill stream has two channels, one for the working of water-mill and another for irrigation. People wash clothes in this. The irrigation channel is divided into number of canals to irrigate fields. The irrigation is on pre-planned schedule.

Presently the Karzok village is inhabited by 27 permanent settlers. There are number of stone houses which are used as stores by Changpas living in *Rebos*. The Gompa in Karzok own agricultural land as well as number of animals. *Lorapa* looks after the Gompa fields. The Gompa animals are looked af-

ter by three households in rotation. The *Rebos* are pitched in Karzok Fu, a camping ground amidst the towering peaks. It has a sizable pasture and a clear snow melt stream. There are around 70 *Rebos* in this vast grasslands.

But things have started changing now. The road and transport has reached Karzok. Till six years ago, old people had not seen automobiles which are visiting this area now-a-days. Along with road and transport came the stories of the world outside. People have started visiting Nyoma, some 60 km away from Karzok. There is an open air school in Karzok, a ration shop has recently been built and a makeshift dispensary is slowly acquiring medicine stocks. The old in Karzok have better life now, and it is even encouraging young Chang-pas to settle down permanently in Karzok, and change their way of life. A traditional way of life is changing with the arrival of new technology.

A net work of feed banks at central locations have been established in the Chang-Thang area in order to provide fodder and feed to animals during the harsh winters. The feed banks are particularly useful in reducing the mortality which normally follows heavy snowfall with the consequently non-availability of pastures in Chang-Thang.

The 8,000 square miles (210,00 sq. km) of Rupshu, Karzok and Kharnak are inhabited by 2,900 people. For generations pasturing has been the traditional occupation of Changpas, whose wealth is measured by the number of sheep, goats and yaks. Pastoralism is a system of production devoted to gaining a livelihood from the care of large herds of animals. Pastoralism is a specific adaptation and is based on transhumance i.e. cyclic movements from lowlands to highlands that are necessary for the year round care of herds of domesticated animals.

The technology of the pastoralism requires that the life practices of the people be adjusted to the requisites of the animal, that is movement to pasture, water and salt, as re-

quired and protection from predators.

MAKING A LIVING

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Animal husbandry is a way of life, and Changpas whole existence revolve around the migration of their flocks in search of pastures. The Changpas keep a variety of domesticated animal. Of far the great importance are *Changra* (*Pashmina*) goats the products of which provide the main subsistence. Other domesticated animals are the yak, the *Huniya* Sheep and the horse. Yaks are raised for their transportation value, milk and butter, meat, hide and hair. The *Huniya* sheep is also a pack animal which provides in addition coarse wool and ultimately meat. As such animals are not raised for eating because Changpas are aware of their real value in terms of recurrent supply of milk, wool and power. Meat is rather a by product of the necessary process of slaughtering animals from the flock, which takes place before the winter, so as to avoid wasting scarce fodder on animals which have outlived their usefulness. This system has the incidental advantage of providing a supply of meat at the season when the climate gives natural refrigeration, enabling it to keep for weeks or even months; and of providing a source of protein when the weather puts the greatest strain on the human body. Rupshu has highest livestock population and consists on an average 300 animals per family. The horses are used for riding only, mostly by men. Cattle are not kept, as the environment is not conducive and the length of Changpa migrations and rocky nature of the terrain in some areas prohibit its raising.

The *Huniya* sheep, constitutes a good part of the wealth of the Chang-Thang nomads. This big-boned animal lives comfortably at 4,500 metres thriving on the scanty grasses and desert plants. It gives large quantities of

rather coarse wool, which is used for making clothes for self consumption and its long staple serves as a raw material for carpet industry. Its value as pack animal is of importance. It is much larger than any of the Indian breeds, the height averaging from sixty five to seventy five cm. They are food, clothing and carriage.

The large size of *Huniya* sheep helps in carrying salt from the lake site and in exchange grain is brought to countryside on the sheep back. A small pack of double pack is made to hung over the back, filled to average weight of 10 kg, some may carry up to 15 kg. Two types of goats are kept here by Changpas, the larges of the two is used in the same way as sheep. The others is the famous shawl-wool goat, a small long haired species. The wool from which the beautiful *Pashmina* shawls are made is an undergrowth at the root of the long hair of these smaller goats. This undergrowth comes in all domestic and wild goats as a protection against severe cold. At the beginning of the summer the wool grows out or loosen; it is then combed out from the goats and sent to Leh, where it is picked free from hairs and either worked up or sent to Kashmir. *Pashmina* herd is a wealth of Changpa. Sheep's and goats milks are mixed during milking, but yak cow's milk is kept and processed separately.

The yak is short, but broadly and stoutly built, with a small head, short horns, and a wild-looking eye. This long black hair reaches close to the ground before it is cut. The yak is used for carrying loads. Yak provide heavy transportation and has great endurance to extreme cold weather. It is the only animal that can carry Changpas heavy black tents during migration which weigh around one hundred kilogram. Yaks provide food, shelter and clothing for the Changpas. Their coarse belly hair is spun and woven into tent material and their soft wool is used for ropes and blankets. Their hide is used for the sole of the boot and its flesh provides large quan-

tities of meat. The yak cow (*Brimo* or *Demo*) is kept only for milk. The hybrid of male yak and common cow is *Dzo* (bull) and *Demo* (cow). As yaks are intractable for the plough, in areas where cultivation is practiced, Changpas used *Dzo* or horses for ploughing. The *Dzo-mo* yields much more milk than the yak cow, and of a much richer quality. The milk is used chiefly for butter, of which almost every Ladakhi consumes a certain quantity in his tea. Cheese (*Chrupe*) is made from sour milk or junket which is eaten either fresh or after long intervals. Cheese production is rarely attempted in periods of daily migrations. Male yaks are the only animals that can be left untended in the high mountain valleys for grazing and can be brought down when the need arises.

The products derived from sheep, goats and yaks are milk, meat, wool and hides. These products are variously obtained and processed, and are consumed directly, stored and consumed, or traded. Changpas main economic strategies are of conserving temporary abundance into storable form that can be utilised throughout the year. The supply of milk year round is not uniform as sheep, goats and yak give different amounts of milk and for different duration of time. Sheep and goats do so for only part of the year, sheep for only three months and goats for four-and-a-half months in summer. Only the female yaks give milk year round. Changpas, consequently transform a large portion of summer milk into butter and cheese which can be stored and utilized/bartered when the need arises.

In the periods of maximal production of milk, it is taken fresh and is also processed for storage. By simple pressing in a guaze like bag the curds may be separated from the sour whey; these curds are then rolled into walnut-sized balls and dried in the sun for storage. The whey is usually discarded or fed to dogs.

As summer is the time of milk producing,

winter is the time for meat abundance. At the start of winter animals are killed when they are good stores of fat which gives them good taste. This good health of animals is achieved by good summer and autumn grass. The number of animals slaughtered for food varies according to the wealth of the household. Mostly males or small kids are slaughtered for meat, which is eaten fresh, smoked, salted or dried as or when the need arises.

Sheep are sheared once a year (in late July, and yield about half kilogram per animal. Wool is spun in to thread. The hides of the slaughtered animals are valuable and useful. These are plucked and turned inside out and used as storage bags for — *Tsampa*, water, sour milk and buttermilk. The skin of the kids are utilized as containers for butter etc.

In the Changpa economy wool is the most important animal product. Changra *Pashmina* sheep wool and yak hair are sold, or spun and used in weaving and rope making. Goat hair is spun and woven.

Sheep and goats are generally herded together, with flocks of up to 300-400 to one shepherd assisted by dogs. About one ram is required for every ewes to ensure maximal fertility in the flock, where as in case of a single male appears to be much greater. Lambing in the Chang-Thang takes place in the months of February/March every year when the weather is extremely cold and harsh. As a result of the extreme cold at this time of the year mortality rate is high among newborn lambs and kids. At the time of lambing in the early spring when the temperatures are low, the Changpas have to be more careful. Newborn wet kids have all the chances of freezing. To avoid this, the kids have to be dried up immediately with dirt. During lambing, Changpas sleep with the pregnant females of the herd, so that the steps to save kids can be taken there and then. A large number of lambing sheds have been built in various parts of Chang-Thang, so as to reduce the mortality rates. Normal-

ly 20 per cent of the labour charges for the construction of these lambing sheds, are borne by the breeders themselves. Weaning is achieved by placing the lamb temporarily in a different flock from that of its mother.

The animals have a high rate of fertility with moderately frequent twinning and occasionally two births a year. However, the herds are also subjected to irregular losses by extreme cold; mainly heavy frosts at the time of lambing. In bad years, the herds may suffer average losses of as much as 50 per cent. The sheep and goats resistance to extreme temperature, whether cold or hot is less. This has been experienced by Changpas who sedentized. Their herds suffered a lot, if they were kept at a place throughout the year. The migratory cycle is thus necessary to maintain the health of the animals, apart from their requirements for pastures.

In the further processing of some of these raw products, certain skill and crafts are required. For this they are dependent on their own devices in the production of the products for self consumption. Most important among these is the spinning and weaving. All locally used wool and hair is spun by hand on *spindlewhorls* of their own - an activity which consumes a great amount of the leisure of the women. All saddle bags, pack backs and sacks used in packing the belongings of the Changpas are woven by the women from this thread, as are the rugs and the carpets used for sleeping and sitting. The characteristic black cloth of the tents (*Rebos*); which has water repellent and heat retaining properties along with insulation against radiation and permitting free circulation of air, are woven by Changpas themselves. All weaving and carpet making is done on a horizontal portable loom (*Thak*), which can be worked by fastening *Sketaks* (Back straps) behind the back of the man who works with *Sikpa* (Handle).

Simple utilitarian objects of wood such as tent poles and pegs, wooden hooks and loops

bent over heat, and pack saddles are produced by Changpa themselves. Ropes for tents, and securing pack loads and hobbling animals are twined with 3-8 strands. For heavy loads, ropes are woven. Various repairs on leather goods are done by Changpa themselves, though no actual production of articles of tanned leather is in practice. Clothes for self consumption are woven from the coarse wool staple of *Huniya* sheep.

Shearing : Wool is shorn once a year from the sheep and yak in the month of July and August. The best wool, called *Leña*, is of soft, silky texture, and is the short downy growth near the skin of the goat, which grows in winter under the long shaggy hairs, and is removed for export in summer. The soft *Lena* wool is sent in large quantities to Kashmir, where it is known as *Pashmina* and is woven in to celebrated Cashmere shawls. For shearing, mostly shearers are employed and they get two kilo wool per day. The sheep are washed before shearing is done. For clipping fleece from sheep locally prepared scissors are used. The average wool yield per sheep is 800-900 grams. Yak wool is for self consumption. Shearing is a happy time for pastoralists, as it is like a harvest is for farmers. They keep some for self use and large quantities are sold. The wool for self use is first spun with a wooden spindle during winter. It is difficult to assess the number of new birth, say in a flock of hundred every year. But Changpas hold that if a person has 100 sheep, he can sell 10 every year, without reducing the size of his flock. In the case of goats the corresponding figure is 15. But one family of Changpa is able to sell 3 to 4 sheep and 1 to 2 goat every year as the mortality rates of animals is high.

Lambing in the Chang-Thang area generally takes place in the months of March/April every year when the weather is extremely cold and harsh. As a result of the extreme cold at this time of the year mortality is high among the new born lambs and kids. So a stone corral is built which has a covering at the top, the

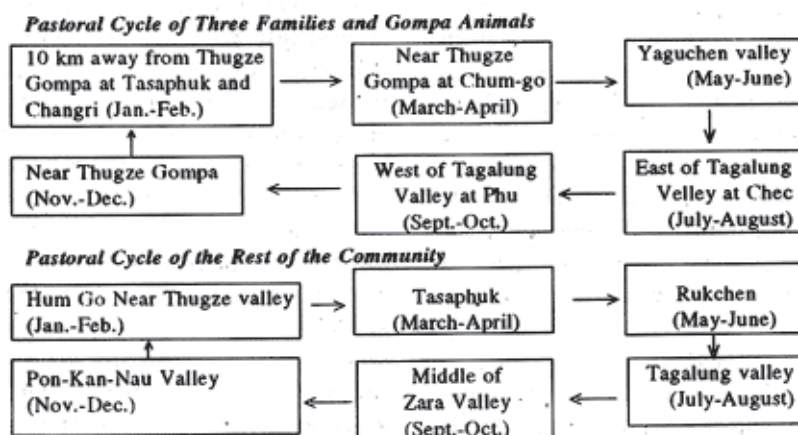
heat of the goats and sheep help to keep small lambs and kids warm. Newly born kids are wet and have all the chance of freezing. To prevent freezing of kids, the kids have to be dried immediately.

Pastoral Cycle

During Summer the Changpas move in the mountain areas and in winter they come to the sunny open fields along the Indus basin and camp by the side of the Indus river. In winter their cattle survive on tough grass and during severe winter many animals die for want of fodder. Spatial mobility is required to achieve a balance between man, animals and pastures. The organisation of spatial movements are important in pastoral communities. Among Changpas these movements are regular and cyclic between the areas of summer pastures and winter pastures. The orbit of routes and pastures, the routine, direction and schedules of migration are fixed. The Changpas have communal pasture land with strong community regulation of land usage. Changpas follow the traditional system of grazing where in headman—The *Goba* decides areas for animal grazing. The '*Goba*' has a list of all the pasture lands and the families who has access to particular pastures. The whole area under his control is divided in to two zones—one for Gomba animal grazing and the other for community

animal grazing. The Gomba animals and horses of community are taken for grazing by three families which are selected annually by *Goba*. These three families take Gomba animals along with their own herds to the allotted pastures (*Lungrung*). The duties of these families are decided before hand. One family will look after Gomba animals along with his own animals. Other two families will graze their own animals along with community horses. The community and Gomba animals graze at pastures which are quite far off from each other. The good pastures are reserved for the Gomba animals. The families who look after Gomba animals are in an advantageous position as their animals also has good graze, along with Gomba animals. The whole community separates in summer and frequent distant pastures, but reunite in winter. They make about six moves in a year regulating it with the variance in the season (late or early); thus they stay at each camping-ground for about two months. When community is grazing their animals near Thugze Gomba during November, December, they do not move with their tents. Their tents remain at 'Pon-Kan-Nau'. At the end of December they move towards Thugze Gomba and the whole community reunites. Grazing cycle of one of the group of Rupshu Changpa can be depicted as follow :

The migratory pattern adopted by the



Changpas in this region of Ladakh enables their goats and sheep to be sustained not by the carrying capacity of any given pastures but by successive exploitation of pasturage at different valleys. Changpas occupy higher pastures (a marginal difference in height of about 200-300 metres) during early summer, and lower pastures in winter. The summer pastures of Changpas are Tagalung valley, Yaguchen and Rukchen. For winter grazing Changpas take their herds to Kakjung or Kiang Chu. Kakjung is a pastoral valley along the banks of the Indus between Nyoma-Mud and Chibra at 4500 metres. Kiang Chu is a camping ground in the middle of the Rupshu plateau, 22.5 kilometres north of Rukchen. Both these areas are frequented by Changpas from December to February. No supplies procurable, water from small streams is available. In summer that too becomes scarce. Fuel is available in large quantities and grass in patches only. Road from Rukchen is good. The autumn grazing is in Zara valley. In summer when there is a great scarcity of water in the Kiang plain, Changpa come to Zara valley camping ground, close to the south of Debring.

During annual migration, while Changpas are on the way to summer pastures or are returning to the winter basis (during the spring and autumn) they graze their animals for 20 to 25 days on both the slopes. These are intervening pastures of the Changpas. The purpose of their stay on these areas, apart from grazing, is to get rest after long and arduous journeys through hostile environments. They prefer areas where water, fuel and grass is available. When they reach the place of migration, five-six tents of relatives and friends are erected at one place. They stay at a place in the camping area for seven-eight days and then make a move. They make about four major moves during the year and their stay at each camping ground is nearly two to three months on an average. At camping grounds the animals are herded at *Les*. *Les* is

a 90 to 120 cms high circular wall, with one side open. It is normally constructed by small stones and slates. The movement of animals is regulated through open side. They graze their animals with mutual understanding and co-operative nature. Near their camping sites they erect *Thayore* to scare of wild dogs and other animals. *Thayore* is a stone erection where in stones are placed on one upon other in such way that in dark it looks like a man. Near their encampments Changpas build toilets (*Chaksa*) as in other parts of Ladakh, where a central hole and a mound of sand/mud is piled in a corner. After using a toilet, the inmates cover it with sand. The sand from the hearth is also emptied into it periodically. The covered waste is converted into compost. The villagers engaged in farming go to camping grounds and bring back compost to spread it on fields before the agricultural season.

Allocation of Pasture

The allotment system of pastures among Changpa prevents over grazing and destruction of resource base. The whole area is divided into number of named pastures of various sizes with defined borders recorded in a Register book which a *Goba* inherits from his predecessor. Although the boundaries of pastures are not demarcated but are well known by Changpas. At the time of selection of new *Goba*, households receive allotment of multiple pastures proportionate to the number of animals owned for use in different seasons. At this time, it is decided which group of houses will have customary rights/leases to routes to specific pastures allocated to them for three years. Changpas are completely independent of each other in terms of control over their pastures and animals. As such there are no common pastures open to all. When the camp moves for its seasonal migrations, that means all independent households move to their pastures, but they move in groups. At the next triennial meet-

ing another group of Changpas will be allotted this route and the previous group of this route will be allocated another route. This rotation helps all the households to have access to all the pastures and there will be equity in pasture usage. The size of group varies in number, some groups are large while others are small. Changpas traditional pastoral system balances pastures and livestock by shifting pastures between families according to the result of a triennial household livestock census. Families whose livestock have increased are allotted additional pastures. Newly established households are allotted separate pastures. Traditional law of shifting pastures triennially helps in conserving the resource base and utilisation of all types of pastures by all families.

The eldest son of the Changpa household, obtain rights at birth in the pastures of his camp. These rights are without restrictions in the sense that there is no limit to the number of animals one may keep on communally owned pastures. Changpas invest labour in looking after their animals and in satisfying the immediate needs for the comfort of the household members. Changpas society lacks organizational arrangements for improvement of communal pastures or roads etc. That is why pastures of Changthang are in poor shape.

Goba uses his power to organize larger enterprises only for making arrangements for communal feasts, festivals, sports and for animal grazing of Gompa. Changpas have no way of organizing themselves for maintenance of pastures and roads etc. Who would tend their flocks while they were engaged in the work, why should one particular group do it, when the fruits of labour would profit all of them? They are organizationally equipped only to exploit natural environment as it is, not to invest labour in modifying it for subsequent more efficient utilization.

Changpa focus their whole attention on the well being of flocks. They do not slaughter their animals only for eating. They take

care of their animals, so that the herd should grow in size. But this is not so easy because of large risk factors, of early frost, heavy snow-fall and shortage of fodder and fuel during the harsh winters. Mortality rates of flocks are high. As Changpas had no organisational means to check mortality, a large number of lambing sheds have been built in various parts of Chang-Thang by Government agencies, so as to reduce the mortality rates. Now-a-days, 20 per cent of labour charges for the construction of these lambing sheds are borne by the Changpas. A network of feed banks at central locations have been established in the Chang-Thang area in order to provide fodder and feed to animals during the harsh winters. The feed banks are particularly useful in reducing the mortality which normally follows heavy snowfall with the consequently non-availability of pastures in Chang-Thang. Besides grazing, each animal has to be provided with one kilogram of salt every year. This is considered to be indispensable for the health of the animals.

A major part of the Changpas labour is thus invested in the care of his flock, in increasing them and building them up. As soon as a man's herd passes a certain minimum threshold which is essential for his and his family's survival, it starts growing. However, as the size of the herds increases, its net productivity rate for the owner declines. No effective means have been developed among the Changpas to protect the rights of the big herd-owner. As the herd size increases, the owner is not able to look after them properly. If hired shepherds are employed, the owner is cheated out of his profits because of real or fictitious losses. Shepherds are more careless of their masters flocks than they would be of their own; they sell livestock and claim the animals have been lost.

In cases, where the profit margin increases, the Changpas tries to convert the net profit in to stored wealth, mainly carpets and female jewellery. Most families wish to have a cer-

tain amount of such goods to exhibit as status of symbol and wealth, but wealth in this form give no economic returns. In Chang-Thang, Changpas can convert the surplus wealth from animals in to landed property.

Apart from the domestic animals, the area is full of wild animals. The Changpas are good hunters; they make long journeys in search of games and penetrate to distant, uninhabited and inhospitable regions. The icy and barren area is inhabited by wild yak, wild ass (*Equus hemionus*) wild horse (*Kiang*) and antelopes. The wild yaks and wild asses are hunted for their skins, the antelopes for their horns.

Hunting and collecting are of importance in the economy of Changpas, as hunting is favourite sport of some of the men. Few wild plants are also collected during migrations. In the high mountain the rivulets are abundant in snow trout. During autumn, the Changpa catch them in basketfuls. These fishes are dried and eaten during winter. Normal diet of Changpas consists of *Tsampa* (grilled and ground barley). It is very expensive commodity among Changpas and they are as sparing with as possible. A man eats little more than one or two handfuls of it a day; on the other hand, he is continually drinking innumerable cups of *Gur-Gur* tea (beaten up with butter and salted). This with dry, marcellated cheese (*Churpe*) forms the real basis of Changpa food. They add to it a respectable quantity of meat supplied by the dead animals of the herd, beasts killed during hunting and few yaks and sheep slaughtered on great occasions. As a rule, the animals for food are killed at the end of autumn, when they are well fattened and to avoid wasting scarce fodder on animals which have outlived their usefulness. They are cut into quarters, which are hung up to dry; and during the rest of the year, the natives eat this raw meat which they cut into thin shreds. Pork and poultry are unknown to Changpas. They drink large quantities of *Chhang* (local beer).

While grazing in high pastures, Changpas depend on Thugpa, prepared from wild green vegetables viz. *Pong-Chad*, *Neba*, *Za-chod* etc. which grows freely upto an altitude of 4500 metres. Besides this *Yud* a grounded mixture of *Churpe* (dry cheese), dry meat and jaggery is taken. *Tsampa* is consumed as it is, or by boiling in water or as unleavened bread with meal. Tea-leaves are predominantly obtained by trade. In the past, though *Tsampa* was a precious commodity, now-days it is comparatively easy to obtain. In families, where few members have sedentized and are growing barley, it can be exchanged for wool, meat or cash.

TRADE

Among Changpas, a great number of the necessities of life are obtained by trade, which includes both agricultural and industrial products. *Tsampa* (roasted grounded barley), the most important food stuff consumed with every meal, tea and some finished items are such products which are entirely or predominantly procured by trade. The large portion of the Changpa supplies are obtained from trading partners in sedentary villages. These trading partners usually become bond brothers or ritual friends. The quality of such relation is economic as well as social. Each Changpa has stable relations with a number of such trading partners in sedentary villages along the migratory route of his section. Mostly things are bartered in exchange of butter, cheese, hides and rugs. Though clothes for self consumption are woven from the coarse wool staple of the *Huniya* sheep. Materials for clothes, ready-made clothes and shoes; China and metal articles including of cooking utensils thermoses and saddles and thongs as well as few other luxury goods are also purchased. In return the products brought to market are butter, cheese, pashmina goat wool, sheep wool, lamb skins, hides, occasional livestock, salt and small amounts of borax and sulphur.

Pashmina goat wool and coarse *Huniya* sheep wool, Changpas obtain from their flocks. Borax and salt are procured from Puga and salt lake district, respectively. Changpa bring salt from an in-let in the northern shore of Tsokar lake. This deposit is best and plentiful when a good dry season succeeds the snow-melting. The salt thus obtained has an admixture of magnesium salt; it is bitter in taste and is not liked by those who are used to pure salt, but is consumed all over Ladakh. Traditionally, this salt was taken to Kulu and Lahoul and also into Gar in Tibet and was exchanged for grains in Kulu and Chinese tea in Gar. Salt extraction is still in process for self consumption only as ready made salt in plastic bags is available in other parts of Ladakh. However, Changpa still sell wool of sheep and goat and sheep and goat for meat at Leh market.

All the domesticated animals with the exception of pashmina goat are used for carrying loads. Traditionally, Changpas were carrying loads on their flocks and herds between central Ladakh and Tibet or Lahoul in India. They were transporting merchandises and were being paid either in cash or kind. They were importing food grains from Kulu and Lahoul. The Chang-Thang (Rupshu valley) was a central point where traders from Lhasa came annually with brick tea for Leh; from Sutlej Valley came the Kuns (people of mixed Tibetan and Indian breed) and from Lahoul and Kulu came traders with grains. The Changpas acted as forwarding agents. They carried tea to Leh and brought food grains. There was a traffic from Punjab to Leh, Yarkand by the road that passes through Rupshu. The traders from 'Lower Ladakh' the Indus Valley below Saspul and Baltistan carried salt to Zaskar and Kargil, where they bartered it for butter and *Tsampa*. The Changpas from Kharnak in Rupshu came down to Zaskar region with caravans of thousands of sheep each carrying about 15 kilograms of salt in small saddle bags and

these they traded for barley and peas. They came twice a year, in July and September, the journey taking a month each way, the salt being dug from high altitude lakes in that region. The people of Zaskar have to buy salt from Changpas if they want to have wool from Changpas. The wool from Changthang is of long staple and much in demand by Zaskaris for making cloth for *Gonchas*.

Each Changpa household act as, an independent unit in economic marketing relations. Each household must deal with agents of impersonal market. They adapt to this by establishing ties with village traders through which they transact economic exchange. Though *Goba's* involvement in these economic exchanges is nil, but in cases of disputes, his authority and presence helps the Changpa cause. Stable relation with outside agents are informally mediated by *Goba*. The economic transaction of the Changpas with sedentary markets take two forms : cash sales and purchases in the bazars of the larger towns of Kulu, Srinagar and Leh, and barter relations with personal trading partners in small villages of Zaskar and sedentary villages scattered along the migratory routes. Direct sales of *Pashmina* goat's wool and sheep wool represent a major portion of the turnover of the Changpa household. About 70 per cent of the total wool and *Pashmina* is sold to Ladakhis at Leh market and afterwards it is sold to Kashmiri merchants who used to be stationed at Spituk near Leh. The wool is brought to Kashmir for processing and making in to world famous Kashmiri shawls. This has been the practice since the treaty of Tingmosgar in 1684, which conferred on Kashmiris the sole right to buy *Pashmina* (Bhatt and Gupta, 1990). The rest of the ten per cent wool is sold to merchants from Himachal Pradesh and the remaining wool is for self consumption. Sometimes, buyers from Kashmir and Leh visit the area and deals are transacted individually after much haggling. The Chang-

pas are eager to sell to these agents, since they feel that price they get in the bazar is lower than what they can obtain in their own area. Earning cash is important in Changpas economy as certain necessary items are like rice, jaggery, flour, *Tsampa* and tea leaves for long winter season are to be brought from Leh market.

DOMESTIC UNITS

The Changpas count their numbers and describe their camp groups and section in terms of tents (*Rebos*). Each such *Rebo* is occupied by an independent household, typically consisting of a polyandrous family; and these households are the basic units of Changpa society. They are units of production and consumption; represented by their male head they hold rights over all movable property (including *Rebos* and flocks). There are about 140 *Rebos* at Kharnok and about 180 *Rebos* in Rupshu Karzok area. In Rupshu-Karzok village there are 205 households under the *Goba*, about 120 of them belonged to or had home base in Karzok village and the rest of the 85 households are living in other areas.

As Changpa rear large herds of *Changra* (Pashmina) goats, Huniya sheep, yaks and horses, for the year round care of animals they remain mobile and do not invest in permanent houses. They live in *Rebos* (tents) with designs which are intimately linked with the local economy and availability of raw materials locally. Normally they have yak or goat hair tent which are hand made. A yak hair tent is more durable than goat hair tent. A yak hair tent lasts for more than 10-12 years, whereas goat hair tent lasts for five-six years only. It takes a lot of labour to weave a tent. It takes about two months to weave a tent, if five six members of a family weave daily. Tents are not replaced yearly but are repaired as and when required. The black hair-cloth *Rebos* are of a peculiar

form; they are constructed in two peices, which are not closely united; but are put together so far as to leave an opening of 15 cms all along the top for the smoke exit (Illus. 6). These *Rebos* are snow or rain proof, but strong winds blowing in the area are major problems. Strong winds start blowing in the afternoon which takes the form of almost a storm by the evening. Igniting the fire wood or bushes for hearth becomes a big problem in such weather conditions. To avoid this Changpa pitch their *Rebos* in such a way, that smoke exit out easily through the top hole. They use *Mechok* for ignition. Usually, the fire keep burning in the *Rebo*, as a big steaming cattle of tea is always on the stove. Spatula of burning coals are exchanged when fires have to be started. In the case of fall of snow or rain (which is almost negligible) the hole may be temporarily covered with a piece of carpet. The space within the tents is enlarged by the hair cloth being pulled out here and there by extra ropes, which are led over a forked stick and then pegged down. Generally, the *Rebo* is about 4 metres long, three metres wide and nearly two metres high. Normally, a *Rebo* is inhabited by six-seven persons of a family, and it covers on an average 13 square metres. The tent is ornamented with little flags and yak tails are fastened to the poles. The tents are adequately furnished with sheep skin mats and their day-to-day provision stored in goat skin bags or goat hair sacks (Illus. 7). The one corner of the *Rebo* is reserved for the rituals and religious ceremonies. Water and milk skin bags are placed along one side on a bed of stones or twigs; the belongings of the family are piled in a high wall towards the back, closing off a narrow private section in the very back of the tent. A shallow pot for the fire is placed close to the entrance. Dry wood *Ayug*, which is found on the mountain and dried dung is used as fuel.

This structure is the home of a small fam-

ily group. The household is built around one elementary family of a man, his younger brothers, his wife and their children with the occasional addition of *Phorsak* (additional husband) or by some kin who would otherwise be alone in his *Rebo*. The household occupying a *Rebo* is a commensal and property owning group.

The household depends for its subsistence on the animals owned by its members. The flocks must include sheep and goats as producers, yaks to transport the belongings on the migrations and a dog to guard the herd and tent. Some household do have horses which are used for riding as well as ploughing in the areas where agriculture is practiced. There is normally no loaning or harbouring of animals except for weaning purposes; each household keeps its flock concentrated.

Among Changpas, the whole families are crowded promiscuously in tents which are always too close and sleep in greasy beds eaten up with vermin, in an atmosphere tainted with smoke. Neither the men nor the women take any care of their persons. They wear their clothes very long without changing, brushing or shaking them, keep them on even at night and take them off only when they drop off of themselves. They never wash their bodies and rarely wash their hands and faces. However, to protect themselves against the bites of the wind, they cover themselves with most rancid butter.

Through the law of *primogeniture*, the eldest son inherits the property of the parents including *Rebo* and polyandrous marriage provides the required labour to set themselves as an economically independent and viable household unit. Though the herd of the household is administered and utilized as unit, individual brothers, may hold separate title to the animals. When things are going smooth, sometimes fathers may give few animals to their younger sons, to stimulate their interest in care of animals. Boys whose fa-

thers are poor usually seek work as shepherd with the owner who has no sons and in return for such work they are given a few lambs every year, with which they can build up their own herd. Or with good luck they can end up getting married to the female heir of the household.

DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION

Distribution of authority and division of labour within each *Rebo* follows highly elastic pattern, depending on the composition of each household and the working capacities of its members. All *Rebos* have a recognized head, who represents the household in all dealings with outsiders and the formal officers.

However, with respect to divisions in the domestic and families domain, men and women are more nearly equal and the distribution of authority between spouses is a matter of individual adaptation. Decision about migration routes and camp sites are taken by male members following orders of *Goba*. All matters of kinship and marriage, socialisation of children, decision to become sedentary are taken by both the spouses and other adult members of the household.

Division of labour among the members of *Rebo* is by sex and age; but this is not a very formalized division, except women do the spinning and weaving and men do the herding. Out of the labour to be done, it may be grouped in to following categories : domestic, herding, collecting, trading and other miscellaneous activities. The flocks, of sheep and goats are usually cared for by men. The handling of stock requires the masculine freedom from child bearing and probably also the masculine kind of musculations. The male control of animals creates a predilection for patri-orientation in residence, filiation and heritage. It also tends to reduce the social role of women though not their economic value. Women normally do all of the milching, churning, cooking and collecting of



Illus. 1. Changpa inside a 'Rebo'



Illus. 2. Changpa Cooking inside a 'Rebo'



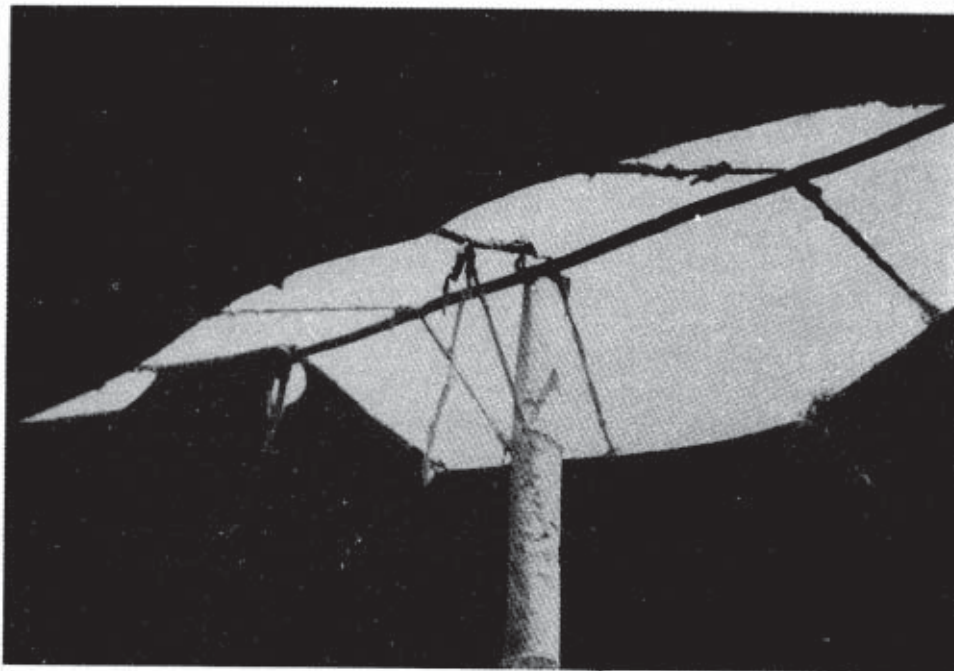
Illus. 3. Chang-Thing Plateau, inhabited by Changpas, these transhumants grow no crops, but subsist on products of their animal



Illus. 4. Animals pasturing in Kakjung pastoral valley



Illus. 5. Changpa 'Rebo' in Kakjung valley



Illus. 6. Snow and rain proof 'Rebo' with smoke exit at the top



Illus. 7. Kitchen corner of a Changpa 'Rebo'. The 'Rebo' is adequately furnished with sheep skin mats and day-to-day provisions



Illus. 8. A 'Latho', where horns of Yak, Sheep and Dzons are heaped. Changpas offer flowers or strips of rags to the unknown god for the safety and welfare of animals

dung, fuel and water. Youth is generally given the responsibility for flocks while still serving under an authoritarian brother, thus combining both the independence of action and the acceptance of authority. Old men and women with their small children remain in *Rebos*. During summer, young Changpas get up early in the morning and take milching animals from *Les* to nearby grazing ground. At 11 A.M., they return to their respective *Rebos*. Old men and women at the camp milch the animals. During milching the sheep and goats are tied neck to neck, but with alternate heads looking in opposite direction. After milching, they are freed by simple expedient of pulling the end of the rope. After milching they are again taken to pastures. From there they return to camps by 4 P.M. and are again milched and herded at *Les* for the night.

The middle aged Changpas graze their animals in two groups. In one group sheep and goats are taken and in another the yaks. Both groups of animals are grazed at far distant pasture ground. At about two they come for lunch and subsequently go back to pastures. They came to their tents along with the animals in the evening. During animal grazing they always carry *Mechak* for igniting fire wood or bush, *Yug-do* (catapult) for throwing stones at animals and dogs with them. Through *Yug-do* they control the movement of animals. The Changpa remain on one side of the herd and dogs on the other. The Changpa throw stones by *Yug-do* from one side of the herd and the dog bark at the same time from the other side. This controls animals to graze in one group.

Each household may possess one or more yak depending on their wealth status. Male yak does not require constant herding, after they have served the purpose as beast of burden they are released in the higher pastures to graze. They are again brought down when required. Not many yaks are slaughtered for purpose of food.

The women and old people staying back in the *Rebo* are busy in the food processing; spinning wool and weaving clothes apart from other household work. The work with in the household is generally done by women and girls. This includes food preparation, mending and washing the clothes and looking after the children. It is true that women shepherds do not exist here, however, women look after their husbands and family and cook for them while on migration. When yak milk is brought home, women churn it and prepare butter, cheese etc. All *Rebo* owners carry their own *Lakskor* (stone grinder) and *Thaks* (indigenous loom). Ladies besides milching grind *Tsampa*, fry peas and grim. The staple food of Changpas is *Tsampa*, which is made by lightly roasting Grim and peas. For roasting grain is mixed with sand to prevent grain from catching alight, in a large metal pan. The grain is thus sieved to remove the sand and the roasted grain is ground in the *Lakshor*. The frying process of peas and grim is called *Phes-Nos*. The *Thaks* is portable loom which can be fixed at any place and the man works with a *Sikpa* (Handle) by fastening *Sketaks* (back straps) behind his back. It takes about five-six days to weave one *Pattu*. Small children go with animal kids to near by pastures. Along with they collect fuel wood and bushes.

Marriage

Marriage in Chang-Thang is either *Bagma* (patrilocal and patrilineal) or *Mag-pa* (matrilocal and matrilineal). *Bagma* marriage is a fraternally polyandrous, all brothers of the bridegroom becoming automatically husbands of the bride. *Mag-pa* marriage can also be polyandrous, if the heiress so desires. But in this case, it is non-fraternal and woman usually has the right to choose husband. The institution of *Phorsak* also exist in Chang-Thang, where in a man is called if the bride remains childless. Among Changpas, marriages are locally endogamous, but mar-

riages with closely related individuals are prohibited. Few marriages have been conducted with non-local. As a rule, the Changpas and other Ladakhi did not inter-marry in the past. However, when Ladakhi King Singe Namgyal married Kalzang Doma, a girl from the family of Rupshu Goba, the custom of inter-marriage with Ladakh's began. Today, many people from Chang-Thang have migrated to Leh and its surrounding areas after their marriage. Likewise, Chang-pas are also getting married with Tibetan refugees who arrived from Tibet after the Chinese aggression.

Tradition prohibited marriages between close kinsmen a custom that appears to have been honoured till now. Thus minimal descent lines cannot perpetuate their affinal alliances across adjacent generation. In other words, the children of two sibling sets, united through one or more marriages, are barred from marrying one another. There are no structural grouping like caste among Changpas. There are two classes of people '*Kaga*' the high ranking people and the '*Tronpa*', the rest of the people. The '*Kaga*' are people whose flocks are bigger, who possess more yaks and horses and have prestige in the community for their far sightedness. The individual households are related by unilateral consanguinal ties. The situation become more complex and relations overlap as the marriages, within the society occur regularly. Though marriages are contracted randomly, the differences in family size or number of boys in a family does create latent affinal groups. A family with few sons or one son is able to pay a greater bride price and is always a welcome catch. A family with many sons have to make separate arrangement for sons, two will get married to one girl third will join Gompa and the fourth one will join another house as *Mag-pa*. Though Changpas emphasise that they have no preferential marriages, nevertheless preference for a bride-price is always there. The girl from *Kaga*

(high ranking) family will prefer a boy from another *Kaga* family and *Tronpa* will marry among themselves. The preferential local endogamous marriages influence the formation of institutionalised, intravillage affinal factions and raise a potential crop of helpmates in their affines. Analysed as a particular group of descent group organisation, the Changpa structure would seem to be highly fluid, extremely "loose" and rather enigmatic.

Traditionally, marriages are arranged by the parents of the boy but the wishes of both are respected. Bride price is paid in cash and gifts. The negotiations are conducted and betrothal concluded by boy's maternal uncle or paternal uncle sent by the suitor's father. He fixes a bride price with the father of the affianced bride, who later instead of returning only an insignificant present, sends back almost the equivalent of what he received and the bride-price does not represent the purchase price of the wife. The parents of the girl give her clothes, utensils, boxes, domesticated animals and jewellery etc. At the same time the bride's mother demands for a *Zo-Rintho* or *Ome-Rin* (price of milk) from the parents of the bridegroom. The amount of such demand and compensation is however meagre and customary. The bride is considered to have always belonged to the family which she enters by the marriage rule. Her parents who have provided for her maintenance until the wedding day, are like foster-parents whose expenses are refunded with the bride price and price of milk.

The marriage rite itself is divided into three parts : the arrival of wedding party (without bridegroom) at bride's place and the mock fight between the friends of the bridegroom and friends and relations of bride, which typifies the old wars in consequence of which clan supremacy was obtained; the ceremony by which the young girl is parted from the gods of her family; lastly the introduction of the bride to her husband's domes-

tic hearth, the purification rite *Zab-Luk* which she is made to undergo for avoidance of any misfortune which the bride might have carried. An earthen pot containing dirt, residues and left offers of various kinds are whirled round the head of the bridegroom. This is done by Lama. The pot is then thrown against a stone to break it into pieces. At present the changpas are polyandrous, polygamous and monogamous, the changes are only in regard to the relative number of each. There are no hard and fast rules about it. Polyandrous marriages are still in vogue, but younger people are ashamed to admit it. The form of marriage practised by the family depends on its economic condition. The younger brothers examine the relative prospects, of independent existence *versus* polyandrous marriage and make their decisions. The basic rituals and ceremonies performed for these marriage types remains the same. The ceremony is financed by the boy's parents. The initiative for the alliance is always from the boy's side. Changpas practise polyandry exactly as the other sedentary populations of Ladakh does, out of social conformity. There were no nuclear families hundred years ago. The nuclear families could not carry out the necessary mixed economic activities. Polyandrous household had the size and composition to look after diversified economic activities. Rüpshu has highest livestock population and consists of an average 300 animals per family. To control such large number of animals, Changpas lived in joint families. Polygamous households come in to existence, when *Mag-pa* husband is joined by the sisters of the wife into matrimony. In such cases no marriage ceremonies are performed so that they are free to leave and to remarry. But in the meantime, that the children they may have with the *Mag-pa* are considered as those of the family of the first wife. Marriage is indeed a financial problem for Changpas, who lose their children labour, have to finance their weddings and give

them their share of property.

Division of Property Between Parents And Children

When the eldest son of a Changpa family in Chang-Thang marries and starts his family the time has come for his parents to leave their migratory life and settle in Karzok. In Karzok they have a small house, little piece of land and few animals sufficient for the support of the several fathers, the mother and unmarried younger sisters. The remaining, larger portion is acquired by the eldest son or daughter in case of no sons. This custom, which forces parents of grown-up, married children to retire from active life and the responsibilities of their household when they have still not passed their middle ages is valid for both *Bag-ma* and *Mag-pa* marriage. It is assumed that as the parents are getting old, they can no longer lead a migratory life nor can they continue to bear the burden of the recurring festivals. So they go to Karzok where they have no obligation any more, on festivals and social occasions, children visit them.

The elder son or daughter who has acquired ownership of the *Khang-chang* takes care of rights and obligations. Thus an elder son has to look after his younger brothers, share his wife with them and look upon the children born to her as just as much theirs as his own. Younger brothers are at liberty to leave and contract marriages elsewhere if they wish so; actually, they often do become *Mag-pas* of heiresses, in which they forfeit their right to property in the *Khang-chang* of elder brother. Sometimes, they become Lamas and join Gompa, in which case they are entitled to retain their share or give it up.

Among Changpas, the animals are held privately, but they still follow the principle of Tibetan polyandry, where in strict conception of the privilege of the first born and unity of genealogical line, which must not be broken and scattered into numberless divergent

branches. It is closely connected with the rule of property, which is concentrated in one hand and settled by primogeniture because, it is necessary that the possessions of the ancestors, should be preserved in their integrity. This can be seen by the fact that when one of the brothers leave the parental roof and settles down apart to live on his industry and his work, he can marry and settle down with his wife who belongs to him alone and over whom his brothers have no rights as she does not live on the property of the family. At the same time, he retains his rights over the wife of his brothers as over the parental inheritance, of which he continues to enjoy the usufruct to the extent of his share.

Though parents are relieved of social obligations towards community, they are not abandoned. Usually, the *Khang-bu*, where in the parents (father, father's brothers and their wife) reside is a viable unit, as they possess part of the productive property and control the necessary labour force to pursue the transhumant way of life. But the problem arises in case of incomplete *Khang-bu*. Arrangements have to be made whereby productive property in the form of animals can be looked after by additional labour force. A shepherd or servant may be engaged. Orphans or boys whose fathers are poor or the second or third son in the family usually come and stay in incomplete *Khang-bu* and work as shepherd. In return for their services, they are given a few animals every year, along with food and lodging. Mostly households enter into small co-operative herding units to secure additional labour by sharing the burdens.

The relationship between a shepherd or servant or his masters is based on explicit economic contract, whereby the former is supplied with food and shelter, new clothes at *Losar* (New Year), and few animals per year. Unmarried and propertyless men usually take up such contracts. Such contracts are

not usually made with relatives or with complete strangers, since the man has to be trusted with his treatment of animals. He lives as a member of the household, but generally eats separately or after his masters have taken their meals. The ambition of such shepherd is to establish themselves as small independent herd owners; and this may take around 12-15 years of work. But very few households have such means to employ outside labour in this way. However, where present, it serves to maintain the isolated incomplete individual household as a viable unit by supplementing its labour pool from outside sources.

Description of basic unit of Changpa social organisation; the household occupying a *Rebo* and the activities whereby this unit maintain itself and produces itself portrays a picture of independence and self-sufficiency. Though these units apparently independent and self-sufficient are dependent on external market in sedentary and agricultural communities. Small herding units are formed for more efficient herding, the composition of which is not structured on kinship or other basic principles of organisation.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Rupshu has the highest livestock population, with an average 300 animals per family but a low population density to look after them. To control such a large number of animals, Changpas prefer to live in polyandrous joint families. The social structure, social organisation and community life of Changpas has emerged out of the needs of its individuals and social groups. A transhumant society like that of the Changpas who traverse the difficult terrain all the year long is bound to have social and functional groups to provide social security to all its members.

The pattern of social, functional and administrative groups in the transhumant Changpas have emerged out of the needs to

meet the demands of a migratory mode of production. The kinship groups are *Nang-Chang* or *Khang-Chang* (household), *Gyut* (lineage) and *Pha-spun*. At the time of crisis in the lives of the people, *Gyut* and *Pha-spun* members extend help which is a strong institution of reciprocal mutual assistance. On the basis of economic activities, the Changpas have functional groups like herding unit, group of household migrating together and *Yato* (friendship groups). An administrative organisation constituting *Goba* (headman), Members and *Gatpas* (elders) to look after the interests of transhumant Changpas, maintain relations with sedentary societies and Indian administration apart from resolving disputes, organising grazing pattern and other community problems.

SOCIAL GROUPS

The *Khang-Chang* or *Nang-Chang* is the smallest and most important unit of social organisation. The Changpas do not have settled houses. They live in *Rebos* (tents) with their families. Generally they are recognised by their family head's name. It is the economic unit, as well as the unit of participation in all public, social and religious project. The household is the commensal unit and possesses its own hearth and provides its own fair. The type of households which predominates in the social scene among Changpas are either fraternal polyandrous households, supplemented by *Phorsak* (additional husband) or by some kin; monogamous or polygynous households. The nature and type of household is directly dependent on the form of marriage i.e. polyandry, monogamy or polygyny. In the households where there are no sons but daughters, in such cases after the marriage of the daughter her husband is brought to live in the house. Such households are referred as *Magpa Nang-Chang* after the son-in-law who is known as *Magpa*. Being a polyandrous people, a typical household in Chang-Thang is virilocal in resi-

dence, patrilineal in descent, patronymic in nature and patrilineal in inheritance. In Chang-Thang, brothers live in the same *Rebo* under the headship of the eldest brother, with their common wife or wives. Thus the establishment remain joint but the definition of horizontal family remains incomplete as all brothers do not have one wife for each of them but one or in some cases more than one wife in common.

In Chang-Thang, soon after the marriage of eldest son when he (or sons collectively) begets the child the father hands over the undivided household property to him. However, he keeps a small part of property for his old age. After separation the eldest son becomes the defacto head of the household as he interacts and participates with the people in religious, social and economic situations. The separated parents family is called *Kha-on* or *Khang-bu* and newly established household constituted by sons and their wife is called *Khang-Chang*. With the emergence of *Khang-Chang* all the responsibilities of the old parents are transferred to the eldest son. The old parents continue to earn their own livelihood, besides this they have no other obligations of any kind.

Though the household is the smallest and most important unit of production and consumption in Changpa society, there are activities that demand collective participation viz., marriage, birth, funeral ceremonies and communal work like construction and repairing of Gompa or arrangements of festivals. In a narrow sense, the household unit might be called the economic unit, but it is not self sufficient, and participation in a wider group is necessary. It is also clear that a household cannot take its herd for pasturing alone to distant places. Co-operation is found among neighbours who may or may not be kinsmen. There is also mutual assistance even when co-operation is not essential to the performance of a task, e.g. in pitching a tent, for it is conventional to ask people for help, the

obligation to assist being part of customary relationships. It must be understood, that all economic activities in grazing and migrations of the community are always in a sense collective actions, for even when there is no apparent co-operation between households, the whole community passively participates in them by the dictates of *Goba* who decides dates of departure and arrival to appointed places.

The Changpa households are related to each other through patrilineage. The patrilineal kins partake in the rituals concerning birth and marriage ceremonies and observe pollution at the death of any member in the limitation of patrilineage. Thus the members related through unilineal descent and married women brought as wives in the household are the potential members of *Gyut*.

Second category of kins is that of those related through marriage who are equally important and close in relationship. This group of relations include man's sister husbands and their sons; father's sister husbands and their sons and married daughters of all these. Relations between such households are of close type. Members co-operate with each other in their economic activities and come to their rescue when they are in need or trouble.

Gyut and Pha-spun : *Gyut* is the most important factor in establishing patrilineal kinship and tracing the same. Prince Peter reported a distinction between *Brgyud* and *Shagyud* or house or flesh lineage which function in the regulation of marriage (1963 : p.23). However, all the Changpas are not conscious of their *Gyut* names and can hardly remember their own *Gyut*. However, patrilineage is recalled through the *Gyut* name only and can be traced for not more than two to three generations span. Lineage linkage in Chang-Thang seem not to have a stronghold and no household can trace its ancestry for more than two to three vertical generation span. The person who have married as *Mag-*

pa or have been adopted into another house, have no way of retaining agnatic kinship ties. Descent and consanguinity are of less relevance in relation to principle of residence. A joint family having a common name is a descent group being synonymous with the residence. There are of course, informal ties of friendship and neighbourliness. Every family is also involved in an enduring mutual-aid-groups (*Yato*) and *Pha-spun*, the core of which is made up of other families of the village.

As in whole of Ladakh, the Chang-pa society is divided into named patrilineal *Pha-spun*. Every person inherits a *Pha-spun* affiliation from his or her father. *Pha-spun* literally means 'father brothers' i.e. brothers with a common father. It is a Tibetan word which means a close brotherhood within the village community, who though not necessarily related by blood; worship a common god (*Pha-Lha* - father god). The group recruitment is based on patrification rather than descent (see Prince Peter, 1955). These are originally relations, though outsiders may be sworn in at a special feast, and all worship at a common altar, presided over by a special deity. It is their duty to support one another on all important occasions in the life cycle such as birth, marriage and death. Co-operation and duties of *Pha-spun* are strictly regulated by rules and rituals. The Changpa society is linked up together in the bonds of brotherhood based on religion. They are also a group of kinsmen who have definite obligations towards each other at the time of death. The cremation of dead body is performed by the *Pha-spun*. When death occurs in the family, the *Pha-spun* members are informed immediately. It is they who arrange for the last rites and it is only the *Pha-spun* members who carry the dead body for cremation which the family members are not supposed to witness. Grenard (1904) described *Pha-spun* in Tibet as "little mutual burial-societies, composed of neighbours and friends who are not

related by blood, but who all have same god and who, consequently are assimilated to descendants of the same ancestor (*Ruspa Chig Chig*) — they are called *Pas-pon*, or cousins, and it is their duty to provide one another with burials; and none but a *Paspon* can show the last honours to a deceased person, for the shades reject the homage of any stranger to their family and cult" (Grenard, 1904 : p. 315).

Internal relations within the *Pha-spun* are principally those between the heads of the independent households. Cousins of all degrees do not have same problems of adjustments, which prove difficult between brothers. They inherit, as it were the patterns of relations already established between their fathers in previous generation. There is not in general, therefore, the same sort of tension between cousins as there between brothers. Relations commence on a basis of reciprocal rights which have already reached a level of stability.

Pha-spun association is a form of co-operation and mutual insurance, and through it a man maintains a range of significant interpersonal relations within a wider society in which he lives. This association is the core of social life through which an individual maintains himself as full social being and not merely an isolated unit or even as the member of a small isolated group. Camping ties and the day to day co-operation in affairs large and small that result from intimate, face to face relations among close agnates are of real and considerable importance. In ecological conditions which pertain in the area, help is needed on various occasions. Although this sort of help is reciprocal, yet members of *Pha-spun* are always available as ready source of help. This is an adaptation to environment and *Pha-spun* as a social organisation is instrumental in insuring help in calamities. This institution of self-help, physical support, obligation to assist and in giving moral and vocal support to individuals, acts

as a mutual insurance in these remote and isolated areas. The principle of reciprocity is strong, if one *Pha-spun* gives daughter in marriage to another, the latter should give in return. In fact, whenever feasible, it is felt proper that two single households should reciprocate by exchanging daughters in marriage. Parallel cousins are the members of the same *Pha-spun* and therefore are forbidden to marry. The bonds in the Chang-pa community are strongest at the community level as most alliances are contracted within the community. A significant function of *Pha-spun* is ancestor worship.

FUNCTIONAL GROUPS

The transhumant way of life makes it necessary for Changpas to have functional groups for pursuing their pastoral activities. For most part of their lives the Changpas are on move and live as members of these functional groups. These functional groups are formed in different ways and can accommodate kinship groups, friends and affinals.

The primary functional group among Changpas is the herding unit. Herding unit is formed by four to six *Rebos* depending upon the size of the flock and people to look after it. Since these factors are not constant, the membership of herding unit keeps on changing. Once the size of the flock becomes larger or smaller than is manageable, it effects the efficiency of herding operation, a *Rebo* chooses to break away and join another unit. Kinship plays little part in this type of shift as viability of herding unit is based on the size of the flock and the availability of manpower. It cannot be however, said, that kins do not or cannot, form herding units. As a matter of fact, they try to do so, keeping in view the other requirements of unit. Small herds are rather difficult to manage, while milking is made easier when large number of people combine to drive and control the herd. Individual households milk their respective animals.

The tents of such herding unit are always pitched together with herds spending the night besides them in the *Les*. The relationship among members of herding units is regarded as a partnership among equals and household heads are free to change their herding units as these groups are not structured.

Though household is the smallest unit of consumption and production, in case of need, existing group larger than the household and smaller than the *Pha-spun* are also available. These *ad-hoc* gatherings of relatives and friends coming together to assist a person in whose interest the group carries out a defined job. These mutual-aid group among Changpas consists almost entirely of groups of neighbours and/or kinsmen related in one way or another to the person concerned. It is important to note that mutual-aid groups (*Yato*) are not based on kinship in general, but on being member of the same herding unit, group of people migrating together or pitching their *Rebos* in the same neighbourhood on customary lines. All these families standing in these relationships to one another are obligated to give each other gifts of food stuff, and small sums of money, as well as personal labour, at certain established times of festivity or need. The work exchange system among Changpas rests on fact that certain economic activities require more labour than the family alone can provide. During their migrations, all families of herding unit or people who are migrating together help each other in carrying loads or pitching *Rebos*, carrying water or collecting firewood and herding. These groups may contain friends, near relatives or distant ones. These groups are formed on interfamily relations and its pattern keep on changing as there are no institutionalised cognatic groups or segmentary system based on nestling principle. Some neighbours may be excluded from this group not for any stigma or status factor but because they just do not fall in the custom-

ary line of relation formation.

As animals are not stall-fed nor is there any provision of stored fodder, the animals have to be taken out for herding for 365 days of the year. As different categories of animals are herded separately, each family sometimes needs three herders every day of year. The households who have deficient labour supply, make up co-operative units with neighbours for herding different categories of animals. Several households in encampment pool their animals and share the work involved in animal grazing. The flocks of each household have distinguished markings for their identification.

All the families have a recognised head, who represent the *Rebo* in dealing with *Goba* (Headman), village counsel, community matters and strangers. In the polyandrous, household, eldest brother is the head, when there are no sons, eldest daughter is regarded as the head of the household. In such cases, a *Magpa* is invited to live and represent the *Rebo* in the community matters. If there is no issue, adoption (*Phuddat*) from the *Gyut* is allowed. Generally, two children; a girl from the wife's side and a boy from the husband's *Gyut* is adopted. From the point of view of family law and domestic religion, the essential thing is not so much the material reality of filiation as the legitimacy of the wife, the recognition of the child by the father and its initiation, into the family unit. It is for this reason, that the Changpa who is unable to have a child by his wife or wives, sometimes introduces a *Phorsak* (additional husband) for the perpetuation of his line in his place and stead. In reality, this *Phorsak* becomes a conventional brother, having the same rights as real brothers.

Possession of animals, grazing rights, *Rebo* effects as well as *Rebo* itself is normally vested in *Rebo* ownership. Though, separate sons may own animals, but the grazing rights are inherited by the eldest son. Traditionally, Changpas look upon the family as a

group of such absolute unity that there can be only one adult who is first born of each generation. He alone has power of attorney and lieutenancy over the land of his ancestors; he weilds authority over the persons of the family and administers the patrimony; he is the living link of the chain that is formed by dead ancestors and their unborn descendents. Now-a-days, the younger sons examine the relative prospects of, independent existence *versus* polyandrous marriage and make their decisions. If they want to have a separate establishment, they have to approach *Goba* for grazing rights. Once they establish their own *Rebo*, they become members of the community in their own right and have to fulfil their communal duties. Each *Rebo* has to contribute money and labour to those community enterprises and institutions that operate for the general welfare of the people. Each family contributes to the ceremonies performed at the Gompa. Compulsory work and contributions are expected when festivals are held and rituals are performed to ward off evil spirits and natural calamities. Gompa animals and community horses have to be taken for grazing.

Among Changpas, the component *Rebos* are economically independent. Each *Rebo* owner has its own animals, grazing rights by virtue of his community membership wherein he selects his *Goba* and Members. Community awareness is created by repeatedly arriving at consensus of opinion. The relationship among members of herding unit is habitual and is always regarded as a relationship among equals. *Rebo* heads are free to attach with any herding unit they wish within their camp. The whole Changpa society is divided into unstructured herding units. They can act as shepherd or help in other economic activities. The person who serve as shepherd is not considered as servant and is not regarded as one. Such practical consideration, as well as friendship and enmity and a belief in the good or bad herding luck of different persons, seem

to dominate a man's decisions about which herding unit he joins. While married sons initially tend to retain their flocks in the old herd and thus stay in the herding unit of their father. These bonds are freely broken at any time and new ones are formed.

The scattered and constantly shifting herding units of the Changpas are in a real sense the primary communities of Changpa society. They correspond to hamlets among sedentary people. The members of a herding unit make up a socially bounded group. Unlike a sedentary community, which persists unless the members abandon their house and land and depart, a herding unit of transhumants can only persists through continuous re-affirmation by all its members. Every day the members of the herding unit must agree in their decisions on the vital questions of length of its stay at a point, its movements, its routes and how far they should move in a day. These basic decisions are important to graziers life style, as these effect their social and economic life. All these decisions are taken by the consent of the members of the herding unit by taking into account the individual problems—for the maintenance a herding unit as a social unit. The composition of a herding unit will thus indirectly be dependent on the ways and means whereby the movements of economically independent households can be controlled and co-ordinated. Community awareness can not be created by repeatedly arriving at consensus of opinion, there should be some hidden principles of kinship where by the unity of group is maintained.

Among Changpas, marriages are locally endogamous, but marriages with closely related individuals are prohibited. Few marriages have been conducted with non-local women. Tradition prohibited marriages between close kinsmen—a custom that appears to have been honoured till now. Thus minimal descent lines cannot perpetuate their affinal alliances across adjacent generations. In other words,

the children of two sibling sets, united through one or two marriages, are barred from marrying one another. The preferential local endogamous marriages influence the formation of institutionalised, intracamp affinal factions and raise a potential crop of helpmates in their affines. The whole Changpa society is a composite of overlapping egocentric kindreds. The diversified kinship ties bind together the tents in an emergent entity—the camp. Changpas define the "kinsmen" very broadly. Defined strictly, the affines cannot be included within the kindred, as they do not share common ancestry. Yet Changpas treat in-laws as kinsmen who are a potential reservoir of help in case of need. The economic autonomy of individual Changpa *Rebo* is a fundamental feature of Changpa organisation. These separate households are structurally united only when there is a community of vested interest between persons in two or more such units. The law of primogeniture and polyandry forbids the division of property and the *Rebos* as such are inherited by eldest brother. Bonds of sentiments between brothers remain arising from shared interest in a contemporary situation. For a camp to persist as a social group, its component tents must be knit together by agnatic, matrilineal and affinal bonds. These bonds are necessary to hold camps larger than the herding group.

ADMINISTRATIVE GROUPS

Traditionally, Chang-Thang was once ruled by a powerful feudal lord. Till 17th century he ruled over Chang-Thang. His regime was extended up to Rupshu Karzok, Hanley and Nyoma. He was popularly known as Rupshu *Goba*. After his death Chang-Thang was divided into many village level administrative units. Subsequently all villages in Chang-Thang had independent administrators, *Gobas*, Members and *Gatpas*.

The scattered and constantly shifting tent camps of the Changpas still conforms to age old system of community organisation. These

camps are held together and welded into unit by their political system, under office of the *Goba* (Headman), who regularly exercises his authority in allotting pastures and coordinating the migrations and settling the disputes. The Rupshu *Goba* had a list of all the pasture lands as well as the families who had access to particular pastures. Now-a-days, each *Goba* has lists of pastures and households for the area under his control and households have continued to use the pastures to which they have customary rights. The *Goba's* register "*Kishi Deb*" contains name of all the head of households, its members, new births, deaths of the year, livestock statistics in the area under his jurisdiction. With the extension of the Indian Penal Code, the *Goba's* administrative duties have greatly increased. He is responsible to the administration for maintaining law and order, preventing crime and collecting revenue. He must carry out all orders and instructions issued to him, and render any assistance required from him, by officers of the Government; he is expected to co-operate with District Commissioner and other members of the administration in all sorts of economic, social and educational schemes and developments. His formerly undivided control over every aspect of public life has thus been divided among various governmental department with superior authority.

The socio-political structure of Changpas tends to follow status hierarchy, yet it does not amount to very much in terms of rural politics. There is one official head *Goba* and Members (*Ghansum*), number of which depends on the size of the camp. Apart from this, should some problematic situation arise that affects the community as a whole, a group of village elders (*Gatpas*) who hold special position in the society either because of their charismatic personality or profession—*Amchi* (medicine man), *Chanspa* (Magico-religion man), *Onpo* (Astrologer) or educational qualifications. Such a group will al-

ways contain some of the big people, as well as some community minded and/or upwardly mobile men of middling status. These ad-hoc committies have no official powers or responsibilities and no means to enforce compliance with anything. It can be easily said that *Goba*, Members (*Ghansum*) and village elders (*Gatpas*) collectively, be said to "run" the community affairs.

The scattered tent camps are managed by *Sangcho*, camp heads, who are responsible for the management in their sections to the *Goba* and in his turn *Goba* is responsible for the whole group. *Goba* is selected and registered with *Tehsildar*, while Members are selected by village council and registered with National Congress Office in Leh. Through them the village council is connected to wider political party. Each section has a *Kotwal* appointed by *Goba* who act as constable, messenger and odd-job man. *Kotwal* informs the people about the meetings; and collects funds. He is not part of the judiciary but acts as messenger. He is nominated by *Goba*.

Among semi-nomadic Lunpas, *Lorapa* (watch man) is appointed to look after and develop village lands for agriculture and cattle breeding and to prevent stray animals from entering fields. Water use or irrigation facilities are looked after by "*Churpan*" in sedentary Rongpa villages. These Rongpa villages are also provided with *Dutupal* who acts as *Goba's* deputy. In villages, where there is no water shortage, there is no "*Churpan*".

The indigenous systems of prestige and power among Changpas is based on relative egalitarianism, as this society is largely unstratified. This system differ from "kinship societies" as well as there are no divisive characteristics of a kinship system overpowering the socio-political system. There are no social classes, and the whole population carries out the same kind of economic activities. Normally there is no hereditary political authority, rank or status. It is largely open to any man to advance himself socially by his

own merit and charismatic qualities.

Changpas socio-political system conforms to community organisation. Changpas are governed by headman (*Goba*), by Members, by the council of village elders (*Gatpas*) and by an assembly of all males from separate household. Though, it may appear that the office of *Goba* has a coercive authority, in actuality, *Goba* leadership has been diffusely exercised by a number of prestigious and influential men within the community. These elder men have distinguished themselves by their industry wealth, generosity, oratory and wise counsel. Although their advice may be persuasive and sustained conversations people continue to solve problems, air their differences and arrive at collective decisions, which on occasions receives public enunciation in a formally convened meeting.

The political structure of Changpa camp has a definite structure. There are formal mechanism of social control and individuals build group of followers, or form alliances or factions, that would develop effective short term dominance over the camp. *Goba* is normally selected for a period of three years. Sometimes this term can be extended up to five years depending on the members of village organisation. *Goba* is always selected and not elected.

In this democratic form of government, the village council (*Chogdus*) select *Goba* (Headman). The village council consists of all the male heads of the separate households. Membership and affiliation in village council is founded on the formal recognition of both descent and residence rules. A person is allowed to attend village council, if he has fulfilled his duties as a member of the society. Selection of the *Goba* is by consensus. This consensus is arrived by finding the person with positive qualities of simplicity, honesty, truthfulness, social status, reputation and dealing ability. A sound economic background is not an essential factor, but it is an added qualification. Sometimes consensus is

not reached for the selection of *Goba*. The life and culture of Changpa is strongly religion ridden. Religion is a dominant force and its manifestation can be seen in all aspects of Changpa life. Ecological conditions in the area make religion and religious dignities an important part of their life. Gompa men, *Chhog Jot* and *Kushok* (Head Lama) have final say in the selection of *Goba*, if consensus is not reached. In turn *Goba* selects Members, *Sangcho* (camp heads) and *Kotwal*.

The officials are paid no salaries, but receive, by way of privilege certain presents on various occasions; accession gifts; parting presents and so on. They have also various sources of profit, lawful and unlawful. *Goba* gets five per cent of the revenue collected; all others get workmen free or almost free of cost for their personal work. During litigations, few lumps of butter, mutton, wool etc is brought to officials as gifts. The Changpas display special courtsey or *Ju-Ju* towards the *Goba*, Members and village elders. Only *Kotwals* have no special status, they are only bonafide messengers of village council.

The formal apparatus of the *Goba* administration is quite simple in view of the difficulties of communication. *Goba* deals directly with his subjects, but he does take the opinion of Members and village elders in serious matters. All Changpas are equal in direct relation of subordination to the *Goba*, who may give any person an order which the latter must obey without regard to any pre-established organizational pattern. The hierarchy of organization consists of channels of communication from the *Goba* to all his scattered subjects. The fields in which *Goba* regularly exercises his authority, may be grouped as follows : allotting pastures and co-ordinating the migration of the Changpas; settling disputes that are brought to him; collection of revenue and representing the Changpas with authorities. Maximum number of cases are of trespassing into other's graz-

ing grounds. *Goba* visits the spot of trouble and impose the fine on defaulter. This fine goes to village fund. The *Sangcho*, the camp head assist him in deciding about a case. He plays the role of a watchman and travel to all pastures to see that grazing rules are observed and people should stick to their pastures and routes. There is no fixed time and place for community meeting. It depends upon *Goba's* order. Normally *Goba* calls meeting for the election of new community Members or to discuss community problems. *Goba* annually appoints one family for taking care of Gompa animals and other two families for taking community horses. With the increase in livestock number, sometime *Goba* appoints three families to look after Gompa's animals and community horses. He controls the distribution and use of grazing land, organises collective feasts, regulates grazing timings and collects revenues. There is no prescribed schedule or rules for imposing taxes although *Goba* inherits a Register (*Kishi Deb*) and a written book of rules from his predecessors. It is at the discretion of the *Goba*. He has to deposit a lump-sum of money as revenue to authorities. People generally have faith in *Goba*, that whatever he demands is fair. Whosoever breaks the rule is fined by the *Goba* depending on the number of animals he possesses. During the time of annual festivals at Gompas of Karzok, Thugze, Henley and Chumoor, the respective village organisations take the responsibility for conducting Gompa functions smoothly. Besides Gompa festivals, sport festival *Jipe-Changa*, where in traditional games are played is organised by the *Goba* and village organisation.

Goba also nominate one person from one household to act as *Kotwal*. This is done in rotation as this position carry no rewards and the person can be summoned any time by *Goba* and Members for council work. He acts as a messenger and execute the physical beating ordered by *Goba*. Similarly, during

the visits of V.I.Ps or senior government officials one meal is arranged by *Goba*, and the subsequent meals if required are arranged by families who are ordered by *Goba*. Besides this, people help in erecting welcome arches, burning of *Shukpa* or *Dhup* and presenting *Khataks* (scarves) etc. In this way people show their faith in *Goba* and village elders.

Goba also plays a crucial role in taking action against those who violates the law of their society. He has the authority to fine from Rs 5 to Rs 500 or 100 strokes of cane. The fine depends on the nature of crime. For minor crimes, the punishment is mild, the guilty has to offer *Khatak* while uttering *Zu-Zu* (a gesture of respect). In case of serious offences, the guilty are fined or publically canded. In case of rape, the fine is offered to the female. The ordeal is accompanied by offering of *Khataks* and uttering *Zu-Zu*. In case of elopement, the accused has to pay Rs 5/- and one goat to the parents of girl.

The *Gobas* role in mediating relations with Rongpas (sedentary population) in protecting the transhumant interests is of particular importance and derive a strong feeling of respect and dependence from its people. They understand that without their *Goba* they would be helpless in a number of recurring situations. Together with the *Gobas* important role in organising pastoral cycle and settling internal disputes, this might constitute a functional explanation of office of *Goba*. However, the persistence of an institution is not explained by demonstration of its usefulness.

If a person refuses to pay his fine, he is advised by *Goba* and village elders to act properly and honour their system. If still, he does not pay heed to the *Goba* and village council, he is threatened by social boycott (*Melam-Chullam*) and removal of his name from village council. In *Melam-Chullam* (social boycott) there is stoppage of exchange of fire and water with the person. *Melam-Chullam* is a disaster in these areas. This

type of socio-political system derives from the cultural fact that all decisions to a greater or lesser extent, involve people who are bound to each other in a network of common obligations and cultural goals. Law as a social phenomenon, cannot be easily separated from its cultural matrix. Though it may appear that office of the *Goba* has coercive authority, in actuality *Goba* leadership has been diffusely exercised by a number of prestigious and influential men (*Kaga-or Gatpas*) within the community. The position of *Goba* can only be successfully maintained and defended if it is supported by enough coercive power to enforce discipline and suppress opposition. The fact that many Changpas sooner or later in the course of their lifetime finds themselves in tricky position and need the help of *Goba*. But this power can be challenged if not exercised within the cultural boundary. Among Changpas there are structural groupings like the group of elders which can mobilize enough force to counter or challenge his decision and authority. This does not solve the problem as both sides can be adamant. The technique in such situations is of compromise, persuasion, and a keen awareness of the drift of group opinion. In case, *Goba's* work is not satisfactory, he can be removed from his post.

In the small and closely kint communities of Changpas that constitute herding units, most matters of law are governed by custom and compromise and regulated by diffused sanctions. Where disputes cannot be settled informally, recourse may be taken to the *Goba*, who alone constitute the court in their society. The cases that are brought to *Goba* are precisely such as cannot be mediated within the framework of tradition, for reasons of their subjects or personalities involved. The cases which cannot be mediated within the traditional framework, take its recourse to court of law. The *Goba's* court hearing lack in formality. The group of families which migrate together during seasonal

movements submit to the authority of Goba. It is a transhumant counterpart of sedentary village life.

Mechanism which lead to Settlement : Underlying these customary laws, which put pressures on the parties to settle a dispute, is the constant pressure of common residence. For common residence implies a necessity to co-operate in maintaining peace, and that peace involves some recognition of the demands of law and morality. It also involves mutual tolerance. These demands are backed by constant intermarriages which go in a limited area. The Changpas are linked in a web of kinship ties and new meshes are constantly being woven in this web with each marriage. These webs of ties, unite members to form groups. Local groups have common local interests.

These common local interests are reciprocated by category of arbitrators who may be called on to help settle disputes. The arbitrators are village elders. Though they have no forceful power of coercion, but related by kinship and common interests. The agreement is generally and easily reached and compensation paid or promised. The kinship status of "elders" is the conjoint between kinship and politics.

Conflicts are a part of social life and custom appears to exacerbate these conflicts : but in doing so customs also restrain the conflicts from destroying the whole social order (Gluckman, 1960 : p.2). Smaller societies have such well established and well known codes of moral and laws of convention and ritual.

Mechanism which lead to settlement of conflicts are the ecological necessities which force people to co-operate; the narrow limits of economy which force them to work in groups for the production of food; common residence and; code of conduct. On the one hand they have customary law and code of conduct and on the other their socio-political system has characteristic of Democratic Re-

public, where a *Goba* can be removed from his post, if his work is not satisfactory.

THE RITUAL LIFE OF CHANGPAS

The Changpas, as *Ka-rGyud* Buddhists, accept the general premises and proscriptions of Buddhism to the extent that they are familiar with them. On the other hand, they are aware of their own laxity in these matters, and are generally uninterested in religion as preached by Buddhist Lamas are indifferent to metaphysical problems. Before 14th century, there was no Gumpa at Rupshu, and ancestors of present Changpas were followers of the *Bön* or *Pön* religion. There was no religious institution at that time. In 14th century Muslims attacked Ladakh and destroyed many Buddhist Gompas. Later to strengthen Buddhism many new Gompas in Ladakh as well as in Chang-Thang were established. To support religious institutions each family then donated one son or daughter to the respective Gumpa. This practise later became a tradition and was followed by Changpas in Chang-Thang.

Although the Changpas of Chang-Thang are Buddhists, yet their real worship is that of local spirits. The Changpas live in the midst of formidable swarm of gods (*Lha*) and demons (*Deh*), whose rustling they hear, whose breath they feel, of whose vague forms they catch glimpses in the darkness. Changpa worship nature—mountains, water spirits and earth spirits, a natural outcome of their ecological conditions. Rituals are performed periodically to deities, who are to be pleased to avert the supernatural wrath. The rites are held to produce a harmonious relationship between man and the supernatural. They also serve as social occasions where large number of people come together for conversation, drinking and general gaiety. Rituals generate a given view of the world, and engenders commitment to existing institutional structures and modes of social rela-

tionship. Ritual restores equilibrium in an unstable or antagonistic situation or validates the *status-quo*.

Ceremonial life of Changpas consists of individual rites involving the family members. Some ceremonies include people outside the family, the *Pha-spun* members. Other ceremonies involve feasts and other entertainments that can be attended by people of all *Pha-spun*. The inter-*Pha-spun* participation include activities like joining a procession, accepting food, listening to a story, playing games, participating in an evening of songs and dances or simply acting as spectators. Among Changpas, there are three levels at which gods enter the community life — through household worship, *Pha-spun* worship and inter-*Pha-spun* worship.

Household Worship : In all Changpa *Rebos* the hearth is central to the life at *Rebo*. Every *Rebo* has its divinity (*Lha*), which ordinarily occupies the hearth, although at times, it is installed in other parts of the home. This god does not love strangers, who for this reason are admitted into his presence only with certain precautions. Every morning, the members of the household offer him water, milk ; they light a lamp before him and take care to revive the fire in the hearth with a branch of juniper, a sacred shrub. The domestic worship binds together the members of the household.

Pha-spun Worship : Each *Pha-spun* celebrate a commemorative ceremony one year after the death of their kinsman and every year in summer, they offer libations to the shades of their dead ancestors. Each *Pha-spun* partakes in feasting separately. The descendants of the same *Pha-spun* deposits the bones or ashes of their members at *Lha-tho*. The *Pha-spun* worship of ancestors represents the family authority and reverence extended to the supernatural realm.

Camp Worship : Worships are performed at *Lha-tho* for protection against diseases and ill-luck or for the fertility and prosperity of

their live stock. Changpas divide their camp worship in following categories : (1) the yearly festivals; (2) the life cycle ceremonies; and (3) special practices and avoidances. Changpas are supposed to perform many rituals during life time and even where they have the knowledge, there is great laxness in observing the prescribed customs. They pray irregularly and mostly individually. As such there are few communal gatherings of worshippers within a camp or even within a tent. Most of the ceremonies are held during the idle months, when there are no other means of socialising or entertainment. The migration themselves form a yearly cycle, and it is in accordance of these that Changpas organise their life.

There is remarkable absence of Buddhist monuments (*Chorten, Mani*) in Chang-Thang which form such a prominent features along the roads in Ladakh. Here and there on the hill tops, or on the way side are to be seen the simple square alters known as *Lhathos*, where horns of yak, sheep and Dzogs are heaped (Illus 8). Changpas offer flowers or strips of rags to the unknown god for the safety and welfare of animals.

Besides Gompa festivals, Changpa celebrate *Jipe-Change* festival every year. It is compulsory for one member from each household to attend this function, but in practice almost every body comes. The feast accompanying this festival is sponsored by few villagers, who become privileged players during the games. Mostly teenagers seize opportunity to play traditional games. Horse race among them is one of the popular game. In this game a target is fixed somewhere in the playing ground. When horse race starts, every rider endeavours to hit the target by stone throwing. If during the course of first race nobody is able to hit target, the race starts again and the process continues till the target is hit by one of the riders. The rider whose stone hits the target, is declared winner of the game. He is offered *Khatak* (white

scarf) and *Chhang* (local beer) by other participants. These celebrations are accompanied by drinking of *Chhang*, singing and dancing.

Rituals connected with life cycle are elaborate and relate mainly to birth, marriage and death. Now-a-days, Changpas are cremating their dead. It was reported by Cunningham (1853) "In the lofty districts of Rukchu and Chang-Thang, where no wood is procurable, and where burning with the Tibetan furze would be a tedious operation, the bodies of the dead are always exposed on hills to be eaten by vultures and wild dogs. Moorcroft and Trebeck (1837) state that the faces of the dead are covered when exposed; but my informants, both at Rukchu in 1846, and at Hanak in 1847, were silent on this point" (p.310). The group within which the death has taken place remains camped. Now, they are burning dead, but unlike in other parts of Ladakh, there is no proper *Spurkhan* (a burning platform). The cremation is performed by the members of the *Pha-spun* and the group remains camped. They said that in earlier days they used to drown the dead bodies in the lake by tying a stone around and sinking it. If they were away from the lake the body was left on the hill to be consumed by birds.

A certain number of special prescriptions and avoidances are also observed which have no direct relation to the yearly cycle or the life cycle ceremonies. These are generally associated with notions of good and bad luck, especially with respect to the flocks and with witchcraft and beliefs in the evil eye.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Buddhist Changpas of Ladakh form an ethnic entity. Their way of life show a capacity to adapt themselves to rugged cold desert environment. The Changpas of Chang-Thang are pastoralists by tradition. Before the closing of the border they used pastures on both sides of the border. Along with their pastoral activities they carried on border

trade. The environment in this area has no potential for agriculture. In areas where cultivation is possible, it is extremely limited. Poor soil, extreme weather, scanty rainfall and short working season make agriculture a difficult proposition. Even then they were able to manage their environment without outside intervention and carried on their economic activity. Their own societal controls like polyandry and cutting of excess animals, helped in turn by their customary rights and equity in resource allocation has helped them.

Before independence Rupshu was the centre of the central Asian trade. Changpas used to carry their goods on sheep and goats for trade between central Ladakh and Gartok and between Ladhak and Tibet. Traders from Lahul, Lhasa, Kulu, Yarkand, Punjab, Kunwas came here and exchanged their goods with wool and *Pashmina*. Mostly Changpas imported consumer items from Lahul, Lhasa, and Kulu (Drew, 1875).

Inter-regional trade treaty of 1930 confirms the trade between Sham side of Ladakh to Ruduk via Rupshu. A group of five-six traders with ten to fifteen donkeys laden with flour, *Tsampa* a dried apricots and small amounts of tea and textiles would visit the area. They had their trading partners in the area. Chang-Thang was an important centre since long. It is estimated that about 16,000 kgs of *Pashmina* is produced from Chang-Thang per year. More than 50 per cent of *Pashmina* is produced only from Rupshu, Karzok and Kharnak.

After independence, there was not much change in the traditional way of life of Changpas. But political events beyond their control have led to the transformation of their traditional economic system, forcing them to reorient it. China attacked India in 1962 from Chang-Thang border and captured a lion's portion of Indian territory in Chang-Thang sub-division, reducing pasturelands to their minimum levels. More than ten thousand Ti-

betan refugees along with their herds arrived from Tibet to different parts of Ladakh. Many of them settled in Chang-Thang, creating social and economic problems. The additional human and animals population in the area created a tremendous pressure on the carrying capacity of the land. Shortage of feed and fodder resulted in death of number of animals. Many Changpas left their traditional transhumant way of life and settled along valleys. Some of them have been engaged in smuggling activities which has resulted in low price pashmina market. Tibetan refugees do not co-operate with Changpas nor do they obey their social laws, or village organisations rules and regulations. Tibetan refugees have their own village organisation and they follow the instructions of their *Goba* for grazing etc. Consequently overgrazing has caused depletion of pastures.

Construction of roads, improvement in the means of transportation, establishment of army posts and opening up of Ladakh for tourists has contributed to the exposure of these people to outsiders. Despite their remoteness and inaccessibility, over the past 30 to 50 years a series of different but structurally analogous, events have had impact on the life of these people. The traditional social and environmental balance is being disturbed by the provision of new economic opportunities. Today about two hundred and fifty tourists visit Leh and *vice-versa* through Leh-Manali road during summer. This has resulted in the employment of many Changpas on road or in business related with hotels or restaurants at Sarchu, Pang etc. Those who are engaged in hotel/restaurant business enjoy better working condition than the Changpas in the traditional profession. Hence more and more Changpas are competing for land allot-

ments for hotels/restaurant at bus-stops in Chang-Thang sub-division, creating tension among people who were tension free. Similarly, educated Changpas are not interested in traditional way of life, they prefer to get government jobs, they do not want to follow polyandry system. All these factors will have long term effect on these people.

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