USE OF THESES

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Except where otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents my own original research.

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Sê Rinpoche and Gegan Khyentse at the Apo Rinpoche Gündzog in 1981, at Kardang Gonpa.
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Abstract

The thesis studies the continuity and revitalisation of Tibetan Buddhism of the Drukpa Kargyu tradition in the district of Karzha in Lahul, Himachal Pradesh (India). The study is centred on the religious community of Kardang Gonpa and on the associated village of Kardang.

Chapter 1 presents Karzha and Lahul as seen by the Indian administration. This 'external' description is further developed in Section I of the thesis, with the historical survey and presentation of the perspective of the outside observer. After this 'external' description, Section I introduces the 'internal' perspective, the sacred geography of Karzha Khandroling ('Karzha, Land of Dakinis'), and considers the relationship between the two perspectives.

Section II presents descriptions of the village, the households which make it up, and the cycle of agricultural and calendrical rituals which are performed there. Attention then turns, in Chapter 5, to the gonpa and the links between its practitioners and the village households from which they come. The origins of the gonpa early this century, in a period of religious revitalisation stemming from the activity of the East Tibetan teacher, Shakya Shri (1853-1919), and his Karzhapa disciples, Kardangpa Norbu (1885-1947) and Kardangpa Kunga (1883?-1967), are narrated.

A more recent period of revitalisation, associated with the ritual and teaching activities of Shakya Shri's refugee grandson, and continued after the latter's death by his teaching assistant, Gegan Khyentse Gyatso, and his son, Sé Rinpoche, is explored in Section III. Chapter 7, which focuses on the building of a chorten (stupa) in Kardang village during the period of fieldwork, is both indicative of this revitalisation and demonstrates the relationships between village and gonpa.

Section IV considers the stories told about the origins of Kardang Gonpa in the light both of stories about earlier religious teachers in Karzha, particularly the early Drukpa teacher Gotsangpa, and of the general Tibetan tradition of namthar or hagiography. Such narratives play a vital part in maintaining Karzhapa ways of
thinking and behaving and so validate the continuity of the Drukpa Kargyu tradition of Buddhism, which allows the people of Kardang to respond in a positive and constructive way to processes of change, 'development' and incorporation into the modern state of India.
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Dedication
for A.S.B.

Pure Land of the Lord Heruka,
Place of Vajra and Ghanta, mountain of Means and Wisdom,
Gathering place of viras and dakinis,
Place for the faithful to gather the Two Kinds of Virtue,
Mountain where the worldly can purify the Two Obscurations to Knowledge,
Place where practitioners can increase their experience and insight,
Place where hypocrites disappear in the wind.
Above the southern clouds float in the sky,
And a gentle shower rains incessantly.
The mind is clarified here and confusion diminished.
Experience and insight are born in this place.
To the right and left are many kinds of crops and
In front the mandala is prepared with devotion.
Here in this central spot where the three valleys come together
Is the place of the triangle from which all phenomena originate.
The mountain to the right is like a pile of jewels,
The mountain to the left like the fierce deity King of Wrath,
The mountain in front like the Triangle of Origin piled up,
The mountain behind like a crouching lion.
Such is this best and most blessed place,
An abode of the siddhas of the past,
A place for Dharma practitioners to stay in the future.
In this threefold place the dakinis stay and make offerings,
Best of places for the achievement of all Dharma activities.
As a holy place for all beings, may it long remain!

Tibetan, Karzha and Sanskrit terms

Tibetan words are given as pronounced in Karzha. They are underlined the first time they are used, with the Tibetan given in brackets following (italicised and in Wylie transcription). These words appear again in the Tibetan and Karzha Glossary. Karzha dialect words also appear underlined on first usage and are included in the Tibetan and Karzha Glossary. Sanskrit words are designated by ‘Skt.’ on first usage (except where now in common English use). Diacritics are not marked in the text, but these terms are included in the Sanskrit Glossary with correct diacritics.

Place names in Lahul are often confused with variant spellings, different names used in different dialects, and haphazard phonetic renderings. Peter, a Moravian missionary stationed in Ladakh between 1930-1940, has published an extensive list of place names for ‘Western Tibet’, which includes Lahul, and a brief summary of its historical or cultural significance (Peter 1977). There has been no formalisation of spelling of many names, although as Peter observes, this would be useful.

‘Lahul,’ for instance is often rendered Lahaul or Lahoul, (and sounds like Lauhl) and frequently claimed to be a corruption of the Tibetan Lha yul, ‘country of Gods,’ or Lho yul, ‘southern country,’ although Tibetans and the people from the region do not commonly use the name Lahul, but rather Karzha (see Tobdan 1984:7-9). The capital is frequently rendered Keylong, though Kyelang, from the Tibetan Kye lang or Kye glang may be more appropriate.

Some names, such as ‘Karzha,’ have several different Tibetan spellings, because they are dialect words which have been approximated in Tibetan. For most names, a Tibetan equivalent is given on first usage and appears in the Tibetan and Karzha Glossary, although it seems that some of names are dialect words, rather than Tibetan.

Throughout the thesis I use the form of the name which seems to be in most common usage, noting variants if appropriate. For example, I use Rohtang, as the Indian administrators usually spell it, although the Tibetan is ro thang, and it is also anglicised to Rothang by some.
Kardang gonpa, (middle ground) with Drilburi in background (right). Note fields & terracing, willow trees near gonpa, the remnants of the once thick forests and the avalanche walls built behind the gonpa.
Chapter One
Introduction: Towards Historical Ethnography
(or Making Ethnographic History!)

...my radical conclusion [is] that all ethnography is fiction... (Leach, 1989:34).

Anthropologists have long been aware of the problems of objectivity in fieldwork, and increasingly concerned with the interpretation of data collected in the writing of ethnography, evidenced in several recently published volumes on 'post-modern ethnography', 'the new ethnography' or 'the anthropology of experience', to mention three voguish typifications of this now central concern (Bruner 1984a; Turner and Bruner 1986; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Tedlock 1983; Tonkin et al. 1989). Conversant with these issues, which are addressed to a greater or lesser extent in undergraduate textbooks on anthropology (Keesing and Keesing 1971; Keesing 1981), the apprentice ethnographer cannot be but tentative when faced with Sir Edmund Leach's 'radical conclusion', quoted above. However, a closer examination of Leach's theorising on the ethnographic process reveals that his conclusion is not so radical, after all, and further that a reductionist ethnography is no longer regarded as an adequate analysis of society, in spite of the limited insights it may offer.

Context to Leach's declaration, initially made in 1987, not long before his death on 6th January, 1989, reveals the process of his critical evaluation of his fieldwork and the classic study of 1954, Political Systems of Highland Burma, in the light of current theoretical concerns. His assessment is made, and his conclusion drawn, with all the benefits of hindsight:

... at that time I still accepted the conventional view that my task was to discuss an indigenous social system of which I myself was not a part. Thus the missionaries and the colonial administrators and the British military recruiting officers were not really part of my story. I see now that this was a mistake. (Leach 1989:41)

Leach continues his evaluation of 'Tribal Ethnography; past, present and future' with these admonitions:
There can be no future for tribal ethnography of a purportedly objective kind. Ethnographers must admit the reflexivity of their activities: they must become autobiographical. But with this changed orientation, ethnographers should be able to contribute to the better understanding of historical ethnography...

Historical ethnography is not just a matter of recognizing that the way 'we', the ethnographers, see 'them', the people about whom we write our books, changes over time; there is also the question of how they see us. We need to look again at the mythology and traditions of 'tribal peoples' to see what they can tell us about their changing evaluations of the others (i.e. the foreigners, especially the Europeans). (Leach 1989:45)

Others theorising on ethnography have formulated their concerns and analyses in different terms. Ethnography is seen as narrative, and through the use of biography, "cultural narratives become personal narratives" (Bruner 1984b:6; see also 1986a), while others use the image of dramatic performance to present events within the ethnography (see e.g. Turner and Bruner 1986).

Crapanzano suggests that the ethnographer must make the text produced convincing. Even though it is impossible for ethnographers to tell the whole truth, if they are successful their ethnographies will not contain lies. (Crapanzano 1986:52-53). Tedlock, among others, suggests that authenticity is a valued quality in ethnography and its presentation. He sees an authentic translation of dictation as one which uses broken English, unlike the translation made by the professional translator. He suggests that the ethnographer's problem is how to present an encounter in which the two participants, the ethnographer and the observed informant construct a textual world between them (Tedlock 1983:12,19).

This concern with authenticity? recurs in the evaluation of ethnography, and indeed in doing ethnography:

---

1 Early this century, British mountaineers made their initial assaults on Mount Everest, spending some time in the region and several times visiting the local Buddhist clergy, who resided at a small establishment at the altitude of 16,500 feet. Several of these mountaineers recorded and published their impressions of these meetings. In an interesting and reflexively illuminating comparison, Macdonald has presented some of this material, juxtaposing it with accounts of these meetings made by one of the clergy in his autobiography (Macdonald 1973).

2 See Kaplan (1974) for a critique of the 'new' anthropology of authenticity.
Moreover, such questions as authenticity affect our perception of others, both as participants in a culture that privileges self and originality and as ethnographers constantly testing the behaviour of our informants so as to judge whether or not we are being fooled. (Abrahams 1986:65)

The 'new ethnographers', and those who currently analyse ethnography draw heavily upon modes of analysis and share concerns previously in the domain of literary criticism. Lecturing in 1969-1970, Lionel Trilling explored four hundred years of literary creation and criticism in Europe, with the efflorescence of autobiography from the late sixteenth century in Europe, and the associated social changes, which gave rise to the conceptualisation of the qualities of 'sincerity', 'authenticity' and related concepts such as 'personal integrity' (Trilling 1974).

Ethnography, and theorising about ethnography, is no longer without historical context. Moreover, history is seen to be subject to the same structuring as any other narrative occurring in a structuralist frame, and is similarly reducible to text (Ardener 1989:23). In ethnography, the focus on oral history, and biography, arise out of the issues and trends outlined above.

Technically, it is the advent of the tape recorder, especially of the small pocket-sized cassette recorder which has replaced the notebook and pencil as the ethnographer's tools of trade, which has changed ethnographic focus. The production of cassettes full of 'oral texts', transcriptions, and translations, and the 'cottage industry' of ethnographic tape making in which the informant is left to produce the recorded information, to be collected by the ethnographer at a later date, fundamentally challenge and change the process of fieldwork (Tedlock 1983:331-333). The video camera, with its compact size and ease of use, is similarly altering fieldwork potential, as is the portable laptop PC. These days, it is a rare ethnography which is not the product of 'word processing'.

With due respect for reflexivity and the relative nature not only of fieldwork and ethnographic writing, but of all perception and interpretation, and some understanding of the interdependence of all that arises, I leave Leach and hindsight's insights, theorising on 'post-modern ethnography' and the like, to outline the key issues that structure this thesis.

The increasingly rare opportunity to conduct fieldwork in a region previously unresearched by anthropologists became possible after lengthy negotiations with the
Government of India. Library research revealed quantities of statistical data produced by government administrators and civil servants. The facts presented in these documents pertain to an administration which developed out of the era of British colonialism — the Raj in India.

A corpus of this administrative material is presented in the second half of this chapter. It represents the type of data that is readily available on Lahul. I amass an array of information, accompanied by pertinent indications (some in footnotes) as to some of my reservations with regard to the data presented. The severity of the ecological and environmental destruction faced in Lahul, and elsewhere in the Himalaya must not be underestimated (Chopra 1982; Goldstein 1981; Hatley and Thompson 1985; Lall and Moddie 1981; Rizvi 1981; Tobias 1986; Vidyarthi and Jha 1986). In presenting the ethnography I highlight issues relevant to my argument. I intend this presentation of data drawn from Gazetteers and Census reports to represent one of the levels of social analysis that can, and has been undertaken with great frequency throughout the third world, those countries ‘developing’ in the wake of colonialism.

As such, this level of analysis is indicative of one of the ‘voices’ of social analysis encountered in the study of Lahul, to borrow the model of ‘dialogic’ interaction developed by Mikhail Bakhtin in the field of literary criticism which is now frequently referred to by theorists of ethnography (e.g. Clifford and Marcus 1986; Mumford 1986; 1989:esp. 12; Tedlock 1983:321-338).

As my research progressed, I found that although the British had made several observations especially about the political structure and exploitable natural resources of the region, and collected statistical data and natural specimens in Lahul and the surrounding Himalaya, this colonial voice was somewhat muted by that of a small group of Moravian Missionaries who had resided in Lahul in the middle of the nineteenth century.3 It was these men, studying the Tibetan language in order to translate the Bible and the religious customs in order to convert the natives, who began calling this part of the western India Himalaya, which includes

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3This statement applies principally to the scholarly work available on Lahul, which the British did not rule directly (see Chapter 2). One of the legacies left by the British, who introduced a sophisticated system of Forestry departments to manage/exploit the timber at the time when the rail system was constructed, is the drastic decline of the Himalayan region as an ecosystem (Tucker 1983).
Lahul, Spiti, Zangskar and Ladakh, ‘Little Tibet’, ‘Indian Tibet’, and ‘Western Tibet’.4

In this sense then, my fieldwork, which occurred with the motives, techniques and methodologies appropriate to an anthropologist in the 1980’s, along with this dissertation, is a rediscovery of a small Himalayan valley previously explored a hundred and thirty years ago by a small group of Moravians en route to Mongolia and Central Asia to await the Second Coming. I do not deal directly with the events of the nineteenth century in this thesis. The Moravians in Western Tibet constitutes a sizeable research project for the historian. I do amplify the ‘voice’ of the Moravians and its resonance in Lahul throughout the thesis.

I also allow the Lahuli people to speak for themselves on several occasions, and employ four key quotations from transcripts in the ethnographic record as a basis for the four sections of the thesis.

Section I introduces Lahul in terms of its importance as a place of pilgrimage in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The sacred landscape is explored in relation to this tradition’s revealed or discovered teachings that are embedded in the geographical features of valleys, mountains, rivers and their confluence. The presentation of an historical analysis of Lahul follows. The key theoretical themes of the continuity of cultural practice and spiritual revitalisation are introduced, as is the apparently opposing dynamic of cultural change and development in terms of the Indian polity. A diagrammatic representation of the inferred relationships between these theoretical perspectives is developed. Following this contextualisation, the specific ethnographic focus of the thesis is presented, and a particular Lahuli village, Kardang, and its inhabitants are introduced.

The main ethnographic body of the thesis is presented in Sections II and III. Here I examine Kardang’s small village gonpa (dgon pa), which at this stage I shall uncritically gloss as ‘monastery’, and its development since its founding early in the twentieth century.5 The social relationships between the village and its gonpa are explored, becoming particularly transparent in the chapter on the construction of a chorten (mchod rten), the Tibetan term for ‘stupa’ (Sanskrit, hereafter Skt.),

---

4See photograph of Moravian rock carving, Chapter 3.

5See photograph at beginning of this chapter.
which may be conceived of in simple terms as a symbol of the enlightened mind of the Buddha.

The importance of the teachers of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, who in teaching, transmitting and ritually transforming create the continuity of practice through which the Tibetan Buddhist culture is renewed, is one of the themes explored particularly in Sections II and III. The intertwining of lineages — genealogical, reincarnation, teaching and transmission — in one particular family is examined in order to elucidate the continuity of practice in Tibetan Buddhism.

A secondary theme in the thesis is the anomaly of the female. The high value placed on the feminine principle in Tibetan Buddhist practice is explored in the first section of the thesis, and contrasts with the social position of women, and particularly of female practitioners, which is discussed in the ethnography.

From this discussion, the framework for which was introduced in Section I, an historical ethnography, or an ethnographic history, emerges. This presentation of the events occurring throughout this century in Lahul is sensitive to the 'voice' of the people of Kardang, and their evaluation of and response to the 'foreigners' encountered, missionaries, administrators, tourists (and the odd female anthropologist!) (see Leach, above).

In the last section of the thesis, Section IV, I introduce the genre of Tibetan hagiography and examine the local oral traditions surrounding pilgrimage sites. This discussion is furthered by considering the oral biographies collected. This adds an extra dimension to the preceding ethnographic analysis, emphasising the interpretation which the people themselves give to the founding of the gonpa. The role of the teacher is seen to be of paramount importance in the growth of the gonpa community, elucidating the process of revitalisation and the continuity of social and cultural practice.

Moreover, this material allows me to further consider the relationship between the female as ideally conceived in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and as spiritual practitioner. The importance of transmission and of the people's ongoing engagement with the meditation practices is significant in the continuity of this cultural tradition, an appreciation of which enhances the interpretations made about the biographical data.
Trucks laden with potato held up on the narrow road. as two trucks have entangled attempting to pass each other.
HIMĀCHAL PRADESH

AFTER REORGANISATION OF THE STATES IN 1976

32°N
The Analysis of the Administrator

On 31st March, 1981, near the beginning of my field work, a Census was taken in Lahul-Spiti. Census data is collected every ten years in India. The following consists of information extracted from the Himachal Pradesh Government's *Statistical Abstract* for the District (Government of H.P. 1981), and from the Himachal Pradesh *District Gazetteer* for Lahul and Spiti (Government of H.P. 1975), unless otherwise indicated. The material on the District of Lahul-Spiti and its administrative divisions is presented in order to provide background information providing an initial contextual layer for the thesis, which will orient the reader to the political reality of the Lahul Sub-District, the larger field area.

**Orientation:** Lahul is a Sub-District of Lahul-Spiti District in the state of Himachal Pradesh, India (refer Map I; latitude 32° N, longitude 77° E). The administrative capital is Kyelang. Spiti is the adjoining Sub-District to the east, bordering Tibet. To the south lies District Kulu, separated from Lahul by the Great Himalayan Divide. While the Kulu-Manali valley experiences the monsoon season (June-September), the valleys of Lahul-Spiti are in the Inner Himalaya, and experience dry, arid conditions typical of the rainshadow. To the north is Zangskar and Ladakh in Jammu-Kashmir State, districts geographically, climatically and culturally related to Lahul-Spiti.

**Topography:** Within Lahul the ranges rise to a mean elevation of 5,480 metres (18,000 feet) above sea level, with the highest peaks exceeding 6,400 metres (20,950 feet), and the lowest pass being the Rohtang at 3,980 metres (13,050 feet), joining Lahul to Kulu-Manali. The perpetually snow covered twin peaks of Gephang (5,800 and 6,000 metres = 19,000 and 19,600 feet) opposite the Rohtang Pass are clearly visible from the Kulu valley. The topography of Lahul is extremely rugged and barren, with several glaciers hanging above the valleys. Waters from these glaciers are the main source of irrigation in this naturally arid region.6

**Climate:** The average precipitation in Kyelang, the only station recording details, is 554.6 millimetres per annum. Precipitation is less, with more snowfall, to

6For further information on a tributary of the Bhaga, the Biling, a stream fed by the Gangstang Glacier, see Munsi (1965).
the north and east. In Kyelang, about three quarters of the precipitation occurs as snowfall caused by a series of western disturbances in the winter months of November to March. Rainfall in Kyelang, over the spring and summer months is therefore in the vicinity of 140 millimetres. Spring lasts until the end of May, followed by a short summer of four months, June to September. October and early November are transitional.

There is no meteorological observatory, though temperatures around Kyelang range in the vicinity of 6°C to 25°C in summer, and minus 20°C to 7°C in winter. Conditions can change quite rapidly at any time of the year, with altitude and wind increasing the chill factor. Avalanches are a common occurrence, limiting habitable sites and preventing movement between villages during much of winter.

Seismologically, Lahul-Spiti District lies within the Alpine-Himalayan mountain system, a major earthquake belt. Between 1902 and 1975 there were twenty-two shocks of magnitude varying from 5.0 to 7.0 on the Richter scale (Sengupta R. 1982:168. See also Chaudhury 1981:99-119).

River valleys: The narrow valleys of the two main rivers which drain Lahul, the Chandra (length 112 kilometres, falling 12.5 metres per kilometre) and the Bhaga (length 65 kilometres, falling 23 metres per kilometre) in their lower reaches are populated, as is the lower, broader valley of the conjoined Chandrabhaga (falling 5.7 metres per kilometre) which flows west to Pangi, Chamba District and is there known as the Chenab River. The valleys have been subjected to recent alpine glaciation and above the level of fluvial erosion are U-shaped, with evidence of terminal moraine and morainic dams. The mean elevation of inhabited areas is about 2,700 metres or 8,900 feet above sea level, with the confluence of the Chandra Bhaga at about 3,000 metres or 9,800 feet.

Flora, Fauna and Forests: Extreme cold, scanty rainfall, low humidity and poor, thin soil combine to discourage vegetation, which belongs to the Siberian and Central Asiatic variety. Spiti is climatically more extreme than Lahul and less

\footnote{These two rivers rise on the same pass. The figures are from the District Gazetteer (1975:8-9) and Datta S.C. (1970:212), whose figures correct the fall of the Bhaga from 28 to 23 metres. All figures are approximations as the District has not been thoroughly surveyed, a difficult task in this terrain.}

\footnote{For more details on soil types see Sarkar (1967). Rau provides a detailed survey of western Himalayan flora (Rau, M.A. 1981).}
vegetation grows there. To 3,350 metres (11,000 feet) the slopes are vegetated, with naturally occurring forests of kail or blue pine (*Pinus excelsa* or *wallichiana*),9 deodar (*Cedrus deodara*), paper birch (*Betula utilis*), pencil cedar (*C. tortulosa*) juniper and dwarf juniper shrubs (*Juniperus macropoda, J. communis, J. recurva*). Willow (*Salix fragilis*) is cultivated near villages with irrigation, as is the Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra*), introduced by the Moravians during the nineteenth century. Between 3350 and 4875 metres (11,000 feet to 16,000 feet) shrub growth (to 4,270 metres = 14,000 feet) and herbaceous plants predominate over the woody species, and above that there is minimal vegetation.10 There are many flowering species, notably wild roses (*Rosa brunoni*), Androsace, *Iris kumoanensis*, Anenome and *Ranunculi* etc, and several important medicinal herbs including *Artemesia, Enhedra, Aconitum*, and Kuth, also known as Rutha (*Inula hemeniom* or *Saussurea lappa*) which was introduced from Kashmir in the 19th century (Asboe 1937:76; Prince Peter 1963:311).

Deforestation is a serious problem, especially around Kyelang, resulting in landslides and erosion. Some replanting is occurring both under the Forest Department’s directives and around some villages through their own initiative, with governmental assistance (see below, village Panchayat). In the Lahul-Spiti District a total of 8,493.89 square kilometres are forested, with 70.54 square kilometres demarcated reserved forest, and 109.74 square kilometres protected forest (1981 Statistical Abstract, Forest Department).

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9Some species names have been modified to include not only the name used in the nineteenth century, a usage which persists in the Government publications, but also the more recently adopted species name (Tucker 1983:149, 199 note 5).

10Such a statement, which is found in the District Gazetteer (1975:19), applies to the ‘natural’ state of vegetation found in the nineteenth century, and is derived from the assessments made by the British colonial administrators, rather than to the seriously denuded mountainsides which are the reality today, as evidenced by the photograph of Kardang Gonpa and the surrounding area at the beginning of this chapter. A clearer assessment of the ecological balance in the Himalaya is presented in the collection of articles edited by Lall and Moddie (1981).
Most wild animals are now scarce, even in the uninhabited regions, including the ibex, bharal or blue sheep and musk deer; snow leopard, wolf, brown bear and red fox; marmot and pika or mouse-hair; snow pigeons, chukor and snow cock.11

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry: The total area of the District is estimated (Surveyor General of India) to be 13,688 square kilometres with just under half, 6,097 square kilometres, in the Sub-District Lahul, while the area available for cultivation in the entire district is 3,303 hectares (33.03 square kilometres or 8,162 acres). Of the total work force, 84.39% is engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Lahul Sub-District is divided into a Tehsil and Sub-Tehsil for administrative purposes: Tehsil Lahul, which consists of the inhabited regions of the Chandra and the Bhaga Rivers; and Sub-Tehsil Udaipur which is the Chandrabhaga valley. Whereas approximately 3/4 of the arable land in Lahul Tehsil is growing potato, in Udaipur Sub-Tehsil 3/8 is planted with potato, which is better suited to the higher colder conditions of the Chandra and Bhaga valleys. Some hops (not shown in census figures) maize and oilseed are grown in the lower Chandrabhaga valley, which also has 127 times more land devoted to grazing than do the narrower, higher valleys.

In Lahul Tehsil, 1,293 hectares are cropped, with 915 hectares under potato, 179 hectares growing barley, 118 hectares wheat, 68 hectares millet (including buckwheat), 2 hectares pulses (peas), and 1 hectare fruit and vegetable. The additional 10 hectares under cultivation are devoted to kuth, an aromatic herb with medicinal value. Twelve hectares are fallow, and 26 hectares are double cropped. Irrigation is required for all agriculture (1981 Census).

In Udaipur Sub-Tehsil the comparative figures are: a total of 877 hectares are cropped, with 345 hectares under potato, 208 hectares growing barley, 124 hectares wheat, 162 hectares millet, 19 hectares maize, 8 hectares pulses, and 2 hectares fruit and vegetable. Five hectares grow kuth, and 4 hectares oilseed. There is no fallow, and 207 hectares are sown more than once per annum. Irrigation is required for all agriculture (1981 Census).

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11This statement belies the severity of the situation. Several species have been hunted to the point of extinction, either for sport, a pastime which gained popularity during the colonial era, or for 'animal by-products' such as furs, and in the case of the musk deer, musk (Schaller 1980:esp.71, 191-192).
Productivity figures apply to Lahul Sub-District and were collected in 1968. The average yield per hectare is: 5,598 kg for potato; 1,400 kg for barley; 1,306 kg for wheat; 933 kg for buckwheat; 1,213 kg for peas (Datta 1970:221).12

In Lahul Tehsil, 1,389 hectares are permanent pasture or other grazing land, providing grass and hay which is stored for winter (1981 census). In Udaipur Sub-Tehsil, the comparative figure is 177,122 hectares, giving a total of 178,511 hectares for the Lahul Sub-District. Figures from the 1977 livestock census are given for the Lahul Sub-District. There were 323 yaks in Lahul; 7,313 head of cattle (mostly yak-cow cross breeds); 201 horses and ponies; 717 donkeys; 83 mules; 43,969 sheep and 5,762 goats; and 1,801 chickens.

Population, Administration and Development: It is difficult to establish population growth over this century due to lack of comparative records, resulting particularly from the reorganisation of administrative units. Between 1846, when the region came under the nominal rule of the British Raj, and 1940, Lahul formed part of the Kulu sub-division of Kangra District. The Chandrabhaga valley was part of Chamba District (Pangi Tehsil) at this time, and remained so until 1975. In 1941 a separate sub-tehsil comprising Lahul and Spiti was formed.

Independence in 1947 caused major upheaval throughout the small Hindu principalities of the hill regions, as their amalgamation began the formation of Himachal Pradesh. Kangra and Lahul-Spiti remained within the state of Punjab, with areas of Himachal to the east and west. In 1960 a separate district of Lahul-Spiti with administrative headquarters in Kyelang was created by the Punjab Government, which continued jurisdiction over the region until 1966, when Lahul-Spiti became part of Himachal Pradesh (then a centrally administered territory) as a fully-fledged District. On January 25th, 1971 Himachal Pradesh achieved its statehood, becoming the 18th state of the Indian Union. The current administrative arrangement with the formation of the Udaipur Sub-Tehsil out of the Pangi Tehsil of the Chamba District, and its addition to Lahul Sub-District dates from 1975, with the transferrence of 4,030 persons for administrative purposes (Statistical Abstract, 1981; Charak 1979a:287-316).

12 Productivity figures from 1981 Census given in tonnes for the entire District, including Spiti with lower yields. Datta's figures while out of date do not include Spiti.
The following table should be viewed in the light of the administrative changes outlined above. Note that the figures for 1941 include Spiti for the first time, while the figures for 1981 include Udaipur Sub-Tehsil in Lahul-Spiti District. Of the 32,063 persons counted in the census in 1981, 10,383 were from Spiti Tehsil; 7,796 from Udaipur Sub-Tehsil, and 13,884 from Lahul Tehsil. The first census in Lahul was taken in 1868 by the Moravians and the population was reckoned to be 6,265, which indicates that the population has more than doubled in the intervening 112 years (Harcourt 1972 reprint:40, 110).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>FEMALES PER 1000 MALES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>10,444</td>
<td>1009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>10,903</td>
<td>1009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>10,660</td>
<td>1015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>11,481</td>
<td>1005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>11,986</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>12,728</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>20,453</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>27,568</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>32,063</td>
<td>782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 Growth of General Population

In 1966, when Himachal Pradesh acquired the District, all inhabitants of Lahul-Spiti were again defined by Parliamentary Act as Scheduled Tribes (Central Act 31 of 1966; Section 28 (2) and Schedule xi). The criteria and some implications of The Schedule (Article 342) of the Constitution of India are discussed in Thakur Sen Negi’s pioneering research into the Scheduled Tribes of Himachal Pradesh,14

13 See Table 1.2.

14 Lahul was first declared a Scheduled Area in 1950 (Fifth Schedule to the Constitution of India, Part C, para 6, sub-para 1 under the Scheduled Areas (Part A States) Order. Simultaneously under The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, the Gaddi, Swangla and Bhot or Bodh tribes of Lahul were declared Scheduled Tribes, defined in Article 342 clause 1 (Tobdan 1984:61).
in which a profile of all that state’s Tribal groups is drawn (Negi, T.S. 1976:6-7, 160-169; see also Tobdan 1984:61). The majority of the inhabitants of Lahul-Spiti are identified as belonging to the ‘Bodh’ tribe, both signifying a connection with Tibet, ‘Bod-yul’, and adherence to Buddhism or ‘Bodh’(Negi, T.S. 1976:66-67). The other main tribe in Lahul, confined to the Chandrabhaga valley is that of Swangla (Negi, T.S. 1976:97-110).

The five criteria which Negi finds apply by usage to Scheduled Tribes are:

(i) Autochthony.
(ii) Groupism or a very strong community - fellowship, if not descent from a common ancestor or loyalty to a common chief.
(iii) A principal, if not an exclusive territorial habitat.
(iv) A distinctive way of life, primitive or backward by modern standards, and apart and aside from the main current of culture.
(v) Economic, political and social backwardness. (Negi, T.S. 1976: 6, see also 160-169)

Several points emerge out of the information presented above, which is largely extracted from government publications. Firstly, it is clear that classification as a Scheduled Tribe by the Government is inextricably bound up with development policy which is conceived in terms of short term economic gain, without regard for long term consequences. Further, it is clearly intended that disparate ethnic groups should be homogenised into the fabric of Indian society. Secondly, development and modernisation, however it is implemented, is engineered to occur in a manner and with projects that are deemed appropriate by the administrators and government. Inducements take the form of special considerations and economic benefits offered to Scheduled Tribes. Consequently, it is largely a matter of politics as to which ethnic groups in each district are classified as Tribal, and classification changes with parliamentary Acts. Further,

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15 This socio-linguistic analysis is indicative of the degree of sophistication employed by the administrators.

16 This has tremendous impact on the environment in the Himalaya. Furthermore, as this region does not constitute a closed eco-system, environmental degradation in the mountains has catastrophic effects on all of the sub-continent, particularly the northern plains (Lall and Moddie 1981; Rizvi 1981; and discussion above).
conscious manipulation occurs in the political arena in order to establish recognition as a Scheduled Tribe because of the benefits which accrue.

I provide a brief summary of the intentional manipulation of social identity in the Kumoan region of Uttar Pradesh, the state adjoining Himachal Pradesh to the East. From before the arrival of the British in the area a group of Bhotia had been involved in establishing their identity as Rajputs, with a relatively high social status in the caste hierarchy. This process in Indian cultural dynamics, in which a minority ethnic group manufactures a new identity in terms of the dominant religious and political arena, is recognised in the anthropological literature as 'Hinduisation'. Since Independence and the closure of the border with Tibet, and the instigation of the administrative classification of Scheduled Tribe, with its associated preferential advantages, this group of Bhotia retracted their efforts to become Hinduised, and in 1967 achieved their political goals and were Scheduled as Tribals (Das and Raha 1981).17

Clearly, development policy, as it is conceived of and implemented by the administrators, has consequences and effects well beyond the stated intentions. Moreover, the implications of this in terms of social analysis and environmental degradation is enormous, and critical to the sustainability and continued habitation of huge segments of the sub-continent.18 This summary of a critical appraisal of development policy underscores the outline of the administrative aims and attitudes, which follows. However, I merely indicate areas of concern which are discussed in greater detail throughout the thesis, thus giving priority to the administrative voice, my intention in this chapter.

Negi's analysis and classification of the Scheduled Tribes of Himachal Pradesh was the result of recommendations arising out of the Conference for Anthropologists held in New Delhi, May 1972, when it was established that Lahul, Spiti and Kinnaur, all in Himachal, were unresearched. The report called for the "multi-dimensional study of the processes and problems of adjustment of the

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17There are several implications which arise from the analysis of this case, which involved different degrees of involvement in the process of Hinduisation between two groups within the Kumoan Bhotia, that are beyond the scope of the present discussion.

18Keesing's research in the Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh reveals significant contradictions in the political manipulation of identity, and significant environmental devastation in the implementation of development projects (personal communication).
Scheduled tribes to the new social environments" with special attention to
geo-political perspectives (Negi, T.S. 1976:158 and 1-5), in order to assist the
administrators in their task of governing these isolated border areas, integrating
them into the young Indian nation.

Given the extreme physical conditions in these areas, and the many pressing
concerns facing the nation and its Government, such as population growth, scarce
resources and economic development, little progress has been made in furthering
research in these areas. The social analysis which has been undertaken for
administrative purposes has been superficial. These constraints to research have
been exacerbated by the political difficulties posed by strategic border zones, with
extensive military activities and restrictions of secrecy, preventing foreign access.

Tribal communities constitute approximately 7.5% of the total population
of India. In his review of tribal development in India presented in a paper at the
Xth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (New
Delhi 1978), B.D. Sharma divided these communities into seven broad regions, in
which the Scheduled Tribes of Himachal Pradesh are grouped with those from the
hill regions of the adjoining state of Uttar Pradesh (Sharma, B.D. 1980:1-6).
Sharma traces the evolution of governmental policy towards the Scheduled Tribes
in the country's Five Year Plans for development. In the Plan for 1978-1983,
education was accepted as the highest priority programme, aiming for the
universalisation of elementary education and eradication of illiteracy. In Lahul, this
policy has contributed to the shift from Tibetan, as the *lingua franca*, to Hindi. The
latter is taught in government schools, attendance at which is 'compulsory' for
children aged 6 to 12.

In 1966, Nirmal Kumar Bose, the former Director of the Anthropological
Survey of India, stated his opinion that "Integration begins at the economic level
of life, spreads over to the political, and then has to be consolidated by social
integration brought about through education." (Bose 1966:50) He also commented
on the rapid economic development brought about through the Five Year Plans,
and the rate at which tribal people are brought into contact with plainspeople, and
consequent social tensions, with educated tribespeople not only wishing to preserve
their identity but also becoming "nationalistically-minded" (Bose 1966:51).
Government policy has the stated objective of encouraging respect and appreciation of tribal culture, whilst simultaneously eliminating the isolation of the Scheduled Tribes. The Government's model for development is evidenced by the Community Development projects which are intended to encourage grass roots initiative - projects planned and implemented by the villagers themselves, with the government offering financial and technical assistance, rather than modernisation imposed directly from above.¹⁹

The administrative vehicle for this direct participation has been instituted in the system of Panchayat. Gram Panchayat is comprised of a group of villages represented by the Sarpanch (president), Upa Sarpanch (vicepresident) and Panchs (members). In the 1978-1983 Plan it was accepted that the village panchayat should oversee all developmental programmes in tribal areas and be enabled to attend to all aspects of citizens' problems in their dealings with the administration (Sharma B.D, 1980:21 and Pratap 1980:36-37, 42-44).

The stated aims of the administrators are concerned with aiding the transition of these once peripheral communities into the broader Indian context and, in the terms of this development policy, with improving the lot of the Tribals, primarily through education, health care and housing, and the development of economic opportunites. These aims and their implementation, which frequently have consequences and effects well beyond the stated intentions of the administrators, constitute the process which has been called 'Indianisation'.²⁰

In the administration of Lahul-Spiti, building roads, increasing transport (bus services) and communications (wireless stations and post offices), supplying electricity from the three Hydro Generating Stations, as well as the development of the Co-operative movement are all seen to be significant in this process, with far-reaching consequences. Mention is made of some of these issues in later chapters.

There are twenty-nine Gram Panchayats in the District. In Tehsil Lahul there are fourteen Gram Panchayats, in Sub-Tehsil Udaipur six, and in Spiti ten.

¹⁹But consider qualifications outlined above.

²⁰As evidenced by the case study among the Kumoan Bhotia, mentioned above (Das and Raha 1981).
In Lahul-Spiti some Government subsidies for house construction, plus old age pensions, and widows pensions are available (Statistical Abstract 1981:9, 43).

Some staple foods such as rice and wheat, which cannot be grown at these altitudes, are also available at subsidised rates to these Lahuli Tribals, encouraging the increased production of cash crops such as potato, rather than a subsistence economy producing barley and buckwheat, which had been the basis of agriculture until 1970. Some respect for cultural differences and preferences in diet are evidenced by the rulings which permit Scheduled Tribals to brew their traditional alcoholic beverages.

Population and Literacy figures from the 1981 census are given in the following tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tehsil or Sub-Tehsil</th>
<th>Total Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Females per 1000 males</th>
<th>Growth rate, 1971-1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lahul</td>
<td>13,884</td>
<td>7,563</td>
<td>6,321</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>6.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udaipur</td>
<td>7,796</td>
<td>4,291</td>
<td>3,505</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiti</td>
<td>10,383</td>
<td>6,140</td>
<td>4,243</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>44.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 1981 Population, Gender, and Growth Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/Tehsil/Sub-Tehsil</th>
<th>Total Persons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>% of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>3,579</td>
<td>3,247</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>16.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>7,486</td>
<td>6,322</td>
<td>1,164</td>
<td>26.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>10,132</td>
<td>7,724</td>
<td>2,408</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981: Lahul</td>
<td>5,276</td>
<td>3,848</td>
<td>1,428</td>
<td>38.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udaipur</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>1,739</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>28.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiti</td>
<td>2,656</td>
<td>2,137</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>25.58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3 Literate Population
Education. In the 1860’s the Moravian Mission attempted to establish several schools in the region. Due to lack of response from the local populace, this venture was short-lived, with most schools closing within a few years (see also Tobdan 1984:61).

In 1919, the District Board, Kangra opened the first primary school in Kyelang. By 1937 there were three schools and by 1947 there were six primary schools and one middle school with 90 boys and 28 girls in attendance in the Lahul-Spiti Division. In 1966 when the Lahul-Spiti District became part of Himachal Pradesh, there were 36 primary schools, 7 middle schools and 2 high schools. In 1981 there were 144 primary schools, 17 middle schools, 12 high schools and 1 higher secondary school in the District.

Five of the high schools are in Lahul Tehsil, at villages Kolang or Khangsar, Gondhla, Sissu, Shansa and Malong. The higher secondary school is in Kyelang. Three of the high schools are in Udaipur Sub-Tehsil, at villages Jalma, Triloknath and Tindi. The remaining four high schools are in Spiti. In 1980 in the Lahul-Spiti District there were 3,630 students enrolled in the education institutions within the District: 2,370 children were attending primary school; 932 middle school and 328 high school and higher secondary school.

The Lahuli clerics operate a school in Kyelang which teaches both Buddhist philosophy and Tibetan language, subjects lacking in the state-run schools. Similar training is gained from the gonpa throughout Lahul. These activities, however, are not really part of the administrators’ view of the region.

Health Care. There is one hospital in the District at Kyelang, and two Primary Health Centres, one in Gondhla (Lahul Tehsil) and the other in Spiti. In Lahul Tehsil there are three Allopathic Dispensaries, and four Ayurvedic dispensaries, with a further two Ayurvedic and one Allopathic Dispensaries in Sub-Tehsil Udaipur.

Outside the administrators’ perspective, there are several physicians and herbalists trained in the Tibetan system of healing who serve the local community.

Roads. The old Simla-Leh route is the main transport artery of Lahul. The British realised the importance of the road over the Rohtang Pass for trade opportunities and in 1863 improved the bridle pathway and constructed a wood bridge over the Chandra, replacing a rope one. In 1870-71 they continued the
upgrading of this route, allocating Rs 5,000 to the Lahul road, and Rs 5,000 to the Rohtang road, which they planned to shorten by building another wood bridge over the Chandra opposite Koksar, requiring two thousand porters to carry wood (Harcourt 1972 reprint:15-16). Such projects are evidence of the exploitative colonial usage of resources.

Now, this national highway (No. 21) continues from Manali, across the Rohtang Pass, and passing through Lahul, continues on to Leh. It is claimed to be the highest mountain road in the world and is fit for vehicular traffic during the summer season. It was not until the jeepable road over the Rohtang was upgraded for use by trucks and buses (operating 1970) that potato as a cash crop became viable. Buses travel daily between Manali and Darcha via Kyelang in summer, and to Udaipur. In 1980 the PWD (Public Works Department) maintained 258 km of double lane road (see photograph, above, page 9), 250km of single lane road, 49 km of jeepable road, and 110 km less than jeepable in the District. The comparative distances in 1972-73 were 232 km double lane, 41 km single lane, 10km jeepable, and 65 km less than jeepable, with an overall increase from 348 km to 667 km.

Electricity: There are three hydro generating stations at Biling, Shansa and Sissu, producing 308,180 kwh. In 1980, 19 villages were connected to electricity, increasing the number of villages with power in the Lahul Sub-Division to 97.

Co-operatives: During the 1979-80 year there were seventy-nine Co-operatives operating in the District, with a membership of 5,540 individuals and a working capital of Rs 4,536,570. Fifty-three of these Co-operative Societies were agricultural, and the remaining twenty-six non-agricultural. The Co-operative movement began in the District in 1949 when the Co-operative store in Kyelang was opened. The stated object of the Co-operative movement is to provide regular and resourceful rural credit on a socialist pattern, avoiding usury and exploitation (Census 1981).

Such financing has been particularly important for developing a cash crop economy. Until the border with Tibet was closed in 1959, the medicinal herb kuth had provided the basis of economic development within Lahul, combined with the acquisition of land in the Kulu-Manali valley for orchards (Datta 1970:222).
Orcharding has continued to be of great importance to the economy of Lahul, encouraging many families to diversify the base of their activities and move either permanently or semipermanently to the warmer, fertile Kulu-Manali valley.

During the mid-1960's, the Indian government reassessed its policy in the hilly tracts of its northern boundaries, as a result of the Chinese aggression in the North and North-east. The Government reasoned that increased economic output would not only improve the conditions of the peoples inhabiting the border areas, but assist in providing basic food requirements for Indian army personnel required to defend the previously unattended border. The necessity of road works, both for speedy movement of personnel and goods, including perishable food produce and cash crops became a priority (Negi, L.S. 1965:118-123).

At this time India was spending millions of Rupees each year, a serious drain on the economy, importing seed potato requirements (Negi, L.S. 1965:123-128). Recognition of the potential for growing blight-free seed potato in the high and dry conditions of Lahul, combined with defence considerations, provided the impetus for extensive road work projects, including the road over the Rohtang Pass. Lahul now provides all India's seed potato requirements and imports rice and other grains grown at lower altitudes, which replaces barley and buckwheat in the diet.22 The Lahuli Potato Growers Co-operative in Manali has greatly facilitated the development of potato as a cash crop. The ramifications of this change in the agricultural and economic base to Lahuli society are considerable, with the impact experienced both environmentally and socially.

Industries: Geographical and climatic conditions militate against large-scale industrial development. During the winter months small-scale manual operations of spinning, weaving and knitting are undertaken, both privately and in twelve Weaving/Handloom Units.

The three Hydro Generating stations in Lahul rely on water volume from glaciers and are small-scale operations which do not require dams. Plans to build a large-scale Hydro Generating scheme, by damming the Bhaga River, which developers thought would allow Lahul to export electricity across the Rohtang Pass.

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22For further information on agricultural development in Lahul, see Titus (1980); Guleria (1980a, 1980b); and on potato see Saxena and Misra (1980), Dahiya and Sharma (1980).
via a tunnel, have not come to fruition, as yet. The environmental impact of this plan would be devastating.

This analysis of the administration of the Lahul Sub-District of Lahul-Spiti District, which draws heavily on the Census Data from 1981 and other government publications, provides context for the village ethnography and several of the issues discussed in the thesis.
Across the Rohtang-la you will find Lahul. You go down to the Chandra River. Tomorrow you will go to Gondhla. You will see there is a tall tower there. That's the Thakur's place, the bride's family. Day after, on to Gemur, Tod Valley, which is my place — a different valley. I am from the Tod Valley Thakur family. Then the entire party will come back here, across the Rohtang to Rangri, with all the villagers in a couple of buses, for the reception and festivities here. You don't understand about Lahul yet. Here, I'll explain a little. [Taking my notepad and pen, Prabhat Thakur began drawing a map, reproduced as Map 2.]

There are six or seven, eight gates into Lahul, paths by which you can enter. Rohtang-la, that's the main one from Manali-side. That brings you face to face to Gephan, those twin peaks, you know? The devta there is Lahul's protector. With Gephan's aid you can travel in these mountains. Now there's a road which in the summer months after the snow has gone you can travel in any vehicle, buses, jeeps or maybe a good car though it's steep with many sharp bends. Then there's the Hampta which you approach from the other side of the Beas River. That brings you past Deo Tibba Mountain, further up the Chandra. Then through to Spiti-side is the Kunzom-la. From the Baralacha-la where both the Chandra and Bhaga Rivers are born there is a military road up to Ladakh, through Rubshu, but you cannot go that side. Instead you can pass through Darcha to the Shingo-la, into Zanskar. There is a very high pass across glaciers that the Gaddis use to cross to Bir, Kangra side, Kukuti-la. Then also you can leave into Chamba, following the Chenab, the Chandra Bhaga River, and there's another high pass, also for Gaddis, Manimahesh-la.
You see the rivers, both the Chandra, the ‘Moon’ River, and the Bhaga, that’s the female, are born at the Baralacha-la then they travel away from each other, and are married again at Tandi to become the Chandra-Bhaga, or they call it the Chenab. There is a story about their union. That place where they join is very important. Right above there is Drilburi, that bell-shaped peak, Khorlo Demchog’s place. This is the centre. The Chandra and the Bhaga encircle it and join. This is Karzha.

But now... Lahul... [Prabhat paused, sketching in the details of the map.] We also have this Chandra-Bhaga Valley. We call it Manchad, or Pattanam. Then Chandra above Tandi where it is inhabited is called Tinan or Rangloi. That’s to Koksar and Grampu, near Rohtang-la. This is Gondhla Thakur’s place. Above that again the Chandra is wild, uninhabited. Then upper Bhaga we call Tod valley. This is my place. Then the lower Bhaga to Tandi again is called Punaan or Gar. In each of these four valleys we have a different language. The also these Lohar and Shipis, blacksmiths, have their languages too. That’s six altogether.

So you see Lahul is quite interesting, not just one people. These fellows from Manchad you can tell easily. They look Aryan, Swanglas. They are Hindu and their language is more like Sanskrit. We Tod-pa speak quite like Tibetan. Also Tinan and Punan, these Karzhapa. We fellows are Buddhist, though there is some Hindu influence there also.

Now do you understand about Lahul? Tomorrow you will go with the groom’s party to fetch my bride! [Transcript, Tsultrim Nyima, Rinpoche/Prabhat Thakur, June 1981.]
The confluence of the Chandra (mid-ground); Bhaga (to the left foreground); and the Chandrabhaga (to the right foreground).
Chapter Two
Histories’ Scope and Sacred Landscapes

On the eve of my departure from the Kulu-Manali valley into Lahul, my soon-to-be-married friend, Prabhat Thakur, explained the lie of the land to me (see pp.24-25 and Map 2). Even then, at the beginning of my fieldwork, it seemed he was describing not only a physical reality, with rivers, valleys and mountains, but also a mandala (Skt.), or a sacred landscape of some sort (see Maps 2 and 3). More questions were raised than were answered by this description. But at that time, there was no opportunity to explore any of them. Instead I was given precise instructions on appropriate social behaviour: how to sit, how to eat and drink, how to show respect and whom to respect and so on. For the next few days I would be very much in the public eye, and first impressions were obviously important.

Collecting a bride is exclusively male business, the groom’s party consisting of his close kin and friends. The opportunity to have the whole event recorded on film had resulted in the suggestion that I should join the party (gender notwithstanding) and so I embarked on my first trip across the Rohtang (ro thang, ‘plain of corpses’) Pass (3,980 metres, 13,050 feet),1 early in June 1981. I again went to Lahul later that summer, to Kardang (mkhar (m)dang(s), (d)kar sdang) Gonpa where I decided to focus my research, returning there for the following two summers. Presenting the material I collected and recorded on weddings, and on the Thakur families of Lahul, are projects awaiting my attention. In this thesis I examine the relationship between gonpa2 and village, and the lives of the religious practitioners and the lay folk, from Kardang, a village in the Bhaga (Skt.) valley of Punan or Gar, on the opposite bank from Kyelang, Lahul’s administrative capital.

Prabhat Thakur was given the Tibetan name of Tsultrim Nyima (tshul khrims nyi ma). He is recognised as a reincarnate lama (bla ma, guru Skt., ‘teacher’) from

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1 All heights of passes etc. are approximate, but reasonable. There is some variation in figures from reliable sources.

2 Initially glossed as ‘monastery’, see Chapter 1.
Rizong (Ri rdzong) Gonpa in Ladakh, though he has chosen to abdicate from his position at that gonpa and instead looks after his family estates - both Gemur in Lahul, and Sunview Orchards established by his grandfather at Rangri, a few kilometres below Manali on the West bank of the Beas River. Both in the man, and in his description of Lahul (introducing this Section), are intertwined several identities. This speaks clearly about Lahul, and its inhabitants. As Prabhat had earlier pointed out to me:

Lahuli men typically have a little moustache, and perhaps a goatee beard, as they have some facial hair, unlike Tibetans who are smooth-skinned, and unlike Indians, especially Sikhs, who are well-endowed with facial fuzz. Usually our hair is a little wavy, unlike Tibetans who are straight-haired. Our eyes and nose, and our skin colour on the other hand, is more like the Tibetans, less like Indians, except for Pattanam side. You can see we are quite a mix-up. This is what we Lahulis are. Our women too. They combine the best features of Tibetan and Indian, and some are very beautiful. Also in this dress which our women wear, a little like a Punjabi suit with a special Tibetan-style coat-dress. This is uniquely Lahuli. You will not see it anywhere else. (Transcript, as above.)

In the remainder of this chapter I further develop the ‘voice’ of the inhabitants of Lahul which introduces Karzha Khandroling (dkar zha mkha’ gro gling), pilgrimage place in the Western Trans-Himalaya. I also survey the evidence contained within the historical record which demonstrates that this region, on one of the main trade corridors through the Western Himalaya, has long been subject to several different cultural influences.

3For information on Rizong Gonpa which belongs to the Gelugpa (dge lugs pa) order, see Snellgrove and Skorupski (1977:119–120); and Khosla, R. (1979:90). Romi Khosla claims Rizong, established in 1872, is the newest monastery in the Western Himalaya. Although he deals with Kardang Gonpa in his book on monastery architecture, he has failed to note that it was built in 1912, and is thus more recent than Rizong Gonpa, which was established by Tsultrim Nyima, a trader, and his son. Prabhat Thakur is the tulku (sprul sku, ‘reincarnation’) of the founder.

4The Kolong (ko long) or Khangsar (khang sar) Thakur’s were the first Lahulis to acquire land in the Kulu-Manali valley, a grant from the British (late nineteenth century) in recognition of services rendered. Following the example of the Bannon’s and other British orchard growers, they established the Sunview Orchards. This family split in about 1922, with Amar Chand, the elder brother’s side retaining Khangsar in Tod valley, and Manghal Chand’s side (Prabhat’s father’s father) building their home nearby in Gemur village.
The epithet 'Khandroling' which is applied to Karzha, the Tibetan name for the central valley of Lahul, is examined. This discussion indicates the high esteem in which the feminine principle is held in the practice tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, and reveals the indigenous perception of the sacred quality of important geographical features. I precede this with a brief summary of my fieldwork itinerary.

Fieldwork

I spent three and a quarter years in India, with a break of four months before the final year's fieldwork. The first months in India were spent obtaining research permission from the Government of India. During that time (late 1980 to early 1981) I toured much of Himachal Pradesh, including McLeodganj and the pilgrimage site of Tso Pema (mtsho padma, 'Lotus Lake,' also called Rewalsar), and devoted myself to language studies, both Tibetan and Hindi. I finally took up residence with the Thakur family in Rangri, near Manali, and on most days walked the few kilometres to Apo (a pho) Rinpoche Gonpa in Chittyari, where I began my studies of the Drukpa ('brug pa, ‘dragon ones’) Kargyu (bka' brgyud or dkar brgyud) lineage, as advised by Drukpa Tuksé (thugs sras) Rinpoche (rin po che, ‘precious’, a title for revered teachers), whom I had met briefly in Delhi during the initial stages of negotiations for research permission.

The Drukpa Kargyu is one of the major lineages or traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, and its history is closely associated with Bhutan (Drukvul, 'brug yul, ‘Dragon Land’), far to the east along the Himalaya. The Appendix provides a brief outline of the lineage divisions within the Kargyu order, and of the branches within the Drukpa.

When I initially formulated my intention to do fieldwork with the Drukpa Kargyu, I had hoped to do research in Bhutan. This proved to be impossible at that time. Before this became apparent, Tuksé Rinpoche had suggested that I should...
focus my studies at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa, and at Kardang Gonpa in Karzha, Lahul. Little mention is made of these places in the literature on Tibetan Buddhism and my library research had not revealed that there was a strong Drukpa practice tradition in Lahul. The current study fills this gap in the literature.

Just before my second trip to Lahul and my first visit to Kardang Gonpa, I moved from Rangri to a small house near Apo Rinpoche Gonpa, where I would spend the winter. I returned to Manali during the following winters, as do many Lahulis, continuing my studies at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa, and working on transcriptions and the translation of collected material. Snow closes the Rohtang Pass, isolating Lahul from the rest of India, from late October until May, when the P.W.D. again snow-ploughs the pass for vehicular traffic and begins to repair the winter's damage to the road.

During the summer of 1981 I travelled through the valleys of Lahul, exploring for myself the terrain Prabhat had described to me the previous year (Map 3). With a party of five 'Tibetan' horses (two for riding and three for supplies and equipment), a guide and the horse man, I crossed the Rohtang-la (la, 'pass') and travelled up the Chandra (Skt.) through the uninhabited valley. This treeless, barren region with its glaciers, including the mighty Bara Shigri explored by mountaineers and geologists, is inhabited for the few months of summer, June to October at the latest, and I occasionally encountered a family operating a tea shop, and groups of tented P.W.D. road workers.6

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6 See the Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteer (1975:11-14). The highly glaciated upper Chandra valley is awe inspiring, and has been described previously (Wilson, A. 1875; Khosla, G.D. 1956:51-69; Harcourt 1972 reprint:6-7). I here recount something about the human habitation and ecology of the area, which I surveyed during this trip. The presentation in detail of this data is beyond the scope of this thesis. In 1836 the Bara Shigri fell, damming the Chandra River for several months. When it finally broke through the torrent of water swept away at least one village which has not been resettled. Gill recounts how numerous P.W.D. road workers, including many Tibetan refugees lost their lives in the upper Chandra valley due to early snowfall in mid-September 1962. At this time part of the Bara Shigri glacier fell, and an avalanche swept away one of the road workers' camps. People of all ages were trapped with inadequate clothing, shelter and food, and the rescue operation carried out under extremely difficult conditions (Gill 1979:40-53).
Inset:
Magnification of Karzha and Pilgrimage Routes
After my fieldwork map.
We left the road and followed the trail to Chandratal, meaning ‘Moon Lake’ in Hindi (14,000-14,500 feet), meeting nomadic Gaddi shepherds with their flocks on the high pastures, as well as a group from Spiti, collecting dung for fuel for winter, which they loaded on their horses for the journey back across the Kunzom (kun mdzom, ‘where all meet’)-la (4590 metres, 15,000 feet). The Gaddis reported that they had found poor pastures during their annual sojourn in the mountains and were returning to either Kangra or Chamba a month ahead of schedule. Even in these high and remote valleys, overgrazing and excessive demands on the environment have taken toll.

Crossing the eight kilometre long Baralacha-la (4,885 metres, 16,000 feet), the source of both the Chandra and the Bhaga Rivers, we descended past more P.W.D. road work camps and several Gaddi flocks, to Darcha (dar rtse), the end of the bus service from Manali. Here trekkers, and trains of horses and mules laden with goods, begin the journey to Zangskar across the Shingko (shing dkon ‘woodless’)-la (5,000 metres, 16,400 feet) and beyond to Ladakh. After the comparative isolation of the previous weeks, the comings and goings at Darcha emphasised the importance of trading routes through the Himalaya. We had stayed for a few days at Patseo, now nothing more than a lonely resthouse and its summer chowkidar (attendant) where I collected information about the large trade fare which had been an annual occurrence until the 1950’s (see Charak 1979a:243-244). As Darcha was the last place the horses could freely graze, we proceeded to Kardang Gonpa, where I deposited my equipment, and farewelled my trekking companions.

The rest of my explorations through Lahul took place on foot, with several shorter trips in the Bhaga Valley, visiting the many gonpa and staying there for a few days if the opportunity arose. A longer journey (with tent) down the Chandrabhaga to Udaipur, visiting two important pilgrimage sites, Triloknath and

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7I also collected fossils of sea shells from a ridge at about 17,000 feet. See Gazetteer (Govt. of H.P. 1975:14-17).

8For information on the Gaddis, who in Himachal Pradesh are classified as a Scheduled Tribe, see Shashi (1979:87-134); Negi, T.S (1976:137-144); and especially Tucker (1986:17-28), who examines overgrazing, degradation of forests and soil erosion in the region, noting the lack of documentation on pasture usage in Lahul and Pangi. In 1985, when he surveyed herd movement, the flocks were again returning a month earlier than normal.
the Markula (or Mrikula, mar gul) Devi (Skt.) mandir ('temple', of which, see later), and again from Tandi along the lower reaches of the Chandra to Grampu, where the horse trek had begun earlier that summer, completed my survey of Lahul.

I visited twenty-two gonpa in Lahul, leaving three which were unattended and therefore inaccessible. Some of these gonpa are very small, with only one or two part-time practitioners. Most are associated with one village, though some serve a few neighbouring villages, and are quite local in their operation. Some gonpa are built around caves associated with yogic practitioners from the past. The majority belong to the Drukpa Kargyu order, though some are Nyingma (rnying ma, 'old translation school,' one of the main orders of Tibetan Buddhism) and one, Otang ('o thang) in Pattanam, is Gelugpa (dge lugs pa, another of the main orders).

Kardang Gonpa is today the largest and most active gonpa in Lahul, as well as one of the most recently established. My fieldwork and this thesis focus on the village-gonpa complex at Kardang, which I first visited in 1981 and where I returned between forays into the rest of Lahul in 1982, and stayed for the entire summer of 1983. The information collected during the summer of 1982 provides the comparative basis for the description of the social structure and gonpa activity within Lahul.

In 1984, not long after I completed my fieldwork, Tobdan, a Lahuli scholar from Tod (stod, upper or higher) valley, who was at that time residing and working in the State Bank in Delhi, published his study of the History and Religions of Lahul: From the Earliest to circa A.D. 1950. We had met on several occasions, and I particularly appreciated Tobdan's insights into the history of the region which he had thoroughly researched using available sources in English, Hindi and Tibetan, and local inscriptions. He is a good example of the new generation of Lahuli: his education has taken him out of his Himalayan home and brought him into the

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9The District Gazetteer mentions that there are 18 gonpa in Lahul, 7 less than my count, which includes some smaller, little used gonpa. Lauf lists 28 gonpa in Lahul, including Triloknath, the ruined gonpa at Muling and another ruin. More detailed presentation of this material awaits my attention (Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteer 1975:54-60; Lauf 1971:364-376 esp 374-376).
nexus of the larger Indian society. This is reflected in the concluding remarks to his study:

Although Lahul has a long history of about 2000 years of Buddhist tradition, its monasteries are known among the prominent Buddhist places of pilgrimage and has witnessed continuous flow of pilgrims of repute; it **has produced not even a single person worthy of mention.** Many of its monasteries were in the charge of Lamas from Ladak, Zanskar and Spiti. Gandhola and 'Othang monasteries are still held by the Lamas from Zanskar. The practice of Buddhism in Lahul is once again at the point of change. Old traditions are fast disappearing with the introduction of modern education. We hope that the change is for the better. (Tobdan, 1984:87; emphasis added.)

Tobdan's assessment of Lahul has a strong historical emphasis, is directed towards the integration of Lahul into the broader Indian context, and primarily uses written sources. As a Todpa, his evaluation of Lahuli culture is also parochial. If I had located my field site in Tod valley, perhaps at Gemur Gonpa, my appreciation of the current situation may well have been in agreement with the above quotation.

My own research, focussing on Punan or Gar valley (which is referred to by the Kardangpa as Karzha), examines the changes taking place in Lahul up to the present time, with emphasis on the events of this century. At Kardang Gonpa I found that Lahul has indeed produced several Buddhist practitioners worthy of mention. Kardangpa **Norbu (nor bu)** Rinpoche, the founder of Kardang Gonpa, and his friend and spiritual brother, **Kunga (kun dga'**) Rinpoche, are two such men. Their stories, and that of the founding of Kardang Gonpa are presented in Section IV of the thesis, although this material is also discussed in its ethnographic context in Sections II and III.

Moreover, I examine the changes taking place in Lahuli society in terms of the resilience and continuity of cultural practice and spiritual revitalisation, in contrast to the apparently opposing dynamic of Indianisation, which as evidenced by Tobdan himself, and his assessments of Lahuli society, includes modern education. I discuss this perspective in the next chapter.
Overview

Karzha (gar zhwa; dkar zha; gar sha; ga sha; gar za)\textsuperscript{10} was once the common name for the region, and is still used by Tibetans, Ladakhpa, Zangskapa and in Spiti. It is also used in the dialects of Tinan, Punan (Gar) and Tod (Tobdan 1984:9). It seems that these three areas — the valley of the lower Chandra (Tinan), the lower Bhaga (Punan or Gar) and the upper Bhaga (Tod), together equivalent to the administrative unit known as Tehsil Lahul — along with the confluence of the two rivers and the Drilburi (drilbu ri, ‘bell mountain’) peak as the heart or centre, constitutes what was once known as Karzha. With the epithet ‘Khandroling’, which means ‘place of the dakini’ (Skt., feminine aspect of the Buddha, representing the wisdom of emptiness)\textsuperscript{11} this region is mentioned in the biographies of Tibetan practitioners and pilgrims who visited the region, and in other textual material dealing with spiritual empowerment and practice — a topic which I will further discuss.

These days, the people from Gozzang, Kardang, Labchang and Peukor (all on the left bank of the Bhaga) refer to themselves as Karzhapa, people from Karzha, perhaps emphasising the strength of their spiritual practice. In some contexts this usage separates these people from the ‘Lahuli’ in Kyelang, on the other side of the river, who are seen to be more integrated with the Indian polity as they live in the administrative capital. However, in other contexts people from the Kyelang side of the Bhaga River are included. This usage designates the area of the lower Bhaga valley in which the dialect Gar, or Punan, is used. Occasionally, the inhabitants of the lower Chandra are also considered to be Karzhapa. This is not the only identity which the people give themselves. In the larger political and administrative arena the people from Kardang consider themselves Lahuli. This

\textsuperscript{10}It is not uncommon for there to be several alternate spellings in the Tibetan language. Karzha is probably the indigenous name, which has been variously spelt by Tibetans. See note at start.

\textsuperscript{11}Literally, mkha ’gro means ‘sky-goer’, and it indicates “moving in the sky of the expanse of wisdom” (Dilgo Khyentse 1988:101). See discussion in Chapter 8.
again is contextual. In particular, this thesis focusses on the Kardangpa, and more broadly, the Karzhapa — though at times I speak more generally of Lahul.

The majority of the Karzhapa and the other Lahuli people inhabiting the Chandra and the Bhaga Valleys (Tinan, Punan and Tod, three of the four regions of present-day Lahul) regard themselves as Buddhist, the majority belonging to two of the branches of the Drukpa Kargyu (see Appendix). The majority of the remainder of the Lahuli population known as the ethnically distinct ‘tribe’ of Swangla, from Manchad or Pattanam (the Chandrabhaga or Chenab valley, which is the fourth region of present-day Lahul, equivalent to Sub-Tehsil Udaipur), regard themselves as Saivite Hindu. There are many from Tinan, Punan and Tod who may regard themselves more or less as Hindu in some contexts, and Buddhist in others. This ambiguous identity and some of its social implications will be examined later in the chapter. I continue with the broader framework.

Since Independence and the region’s continuing integration into the Indian nation and with the increase of Hindi-teaching schools in the District, the lingua franca for the region has become Hindi. Previously it had been Tibetan, which is now known to some extent by the older folk, and the spiritual practitioners. Each of the four regions within Lahul has its own distinct dialect. These dialects are related to Tibetan. The Shipi (a.k.a. Chinal or Chahan) and Lohar (a.k.a. Domba or Gara), the two musician and blacksmith castes in the region, also have their own dialects, which are related to Hindi. There has been little recent research done in the field of linguistics, with Grierson’s original studies providing the standard classifications and the research by the Moravian linguist Heinrich Jäschke and by Georges de Roerich, whose study is focussed on the Tod dialect, being the most extensive (Negi T.S. 1976:97-113,170-181; Roerich 1934; Tobdan 1984:11-13).14

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12 Prabhat Thakur/Tsultrim Nyima is an example of someone with multiple identities. More discussion on this topic follows later.

13 For a description of the Swangla see Negi T.S. (1976:97-110), and Tobdan (1984:10,16-18,76-78), and later this chapter. Although visiting this valley and its famous pilgrimage sites, I did not conduct in-depth ethnographic research here, and discuss the area in general terms only.

14 See Grierson (1967). In vocabulary these dialects are related to Tibetan, whereas in grammatical structure they are akin to the Mundari dialects, such as Kunawari. Jäschke was the first to establish a connection between the Lahuli dialects and Kunawari language in 1865. From this apparent relationship Francke, another Moravian, and others have presumed some pre-historic (circa 2000BC) contact between the Munda, the ‘original’
There is no Lahuli orthography, although Tibetan, Urdu and Devanagri scripts, and the English alphabet, have been variously employed. Consequently, there is little formalisation in the spelling of place names (see note at start).

The Moravians

For nearly a century, until the 1940's, some scholarly work was undertaken in the region by a small but dedicated group of European missionaries, the Moravians, who established a mission in Lahul in the mid-nineteenth century. Thwarted in their original intentions to reach Mongolia, Eduard Pagell and William Heyde initially opened the mission in Kardang, in 1856. After a couple of months they reconsidered and found a more hospitable site on the other side of the valley, in Kyelang, where the mission house was constructed in 1857-1858. This house is now rented from its Lahuli owner as the dwelling of the District Commissioner (Rechler 1874:230, 237-238; Gill 1979:18; Bray 1983:50-53; Tobdan 1984:60-61 and field data).

The linguist Heinrich Jäschke (1817-1883) joined the mission as superintendent, a position he held for eleven years, 1857-1868. His particular work was to translate the Bible into Tibetan, which he accomplished with the assistance of speakers in Kyelang and Ladakh, and pilgrims from all over Tibet who travelled through Kyelang. Jäschke translated and published sections of the New Testament, hymns, a newspaper, a grammar and his Tibetan-English Dictionary, building on the original linguistic efforts of Csoma de Körös (1784-1842)15, although the complete Tibetan Bible was not published until 1948, with further work contributed by Francke and Gergan. The Moravians opened their lithographic press in Kyelang inhabitants of India and mongoloid peoples in these regions (Francke 1905 reprint 1978:181-191). See discussion in Tobdan (1984:23-26). Jäschke used the Tibetan script to render these languages in written form, incorporating vocabulary into his Tibetan-English Dictionary (1881 reprint 1975). More recently it has been asserted that the languages of Kinnaur (Kunawari) and Karzha (Punan, Tinan and Manchad dialects) are related to Zhang Zhung sMar-yig (Haarh 1968:8-9, 24-26; Kvaerne 1976a:10), an avenue of research with considerable implications for the ancient history of the region. For more discussion on Zhang Zhung see later this chapter.

15 For an account of the early studies in Tibetology and linguistics see Le Callac'h (1987). On de Körös in Ladakh see Le Callac'h (1985) and Shakspo (1985).
in 1859, first publishing *Dr Barth's Bible Stories* in Tibetan (Rechler 1874:238; Bray 1983:50-55).

The Kyelang mission school was opened in 1860, teaching Urdu, then the official language used by the colonial administrators. Other schools were opened in Lahul in subsequent years, despite some opposition from the local populace. It was particularly difficult to encourage the girls to attend school, though the wives of the pastors had greater success with their knitting classes. The knitting of the colourful jaquard socks worn by most Lahulis these days was learnt from the wives of the first three missionaries, who joined their husbands-to-be in 1859 (Rechler 1874:241; Bray 1983:51-53).16

Rechler succeeded Jäschke in 1868, reporting in his account of the mission in 1874 that all Christians in Kyelang were Ladakhpas (Rechler 1874:239). It seems the people of Lahul, including the Lamas, were prepared to participate in the church services and hymn singing, but were somewhat resistant to conversion.17 Within the first fifteen or so years of the mission, one Ladakhpama Lama who was residing at Kardang Jabjez (*zhabs rjes*, honorific for 'foot'18) Gonpa lost his life under what the Moravians felt were very suspicious circumstances. This Lama apparently had become very interested in the translated Christian scriptures, and is said to have fallen to his death from the top of a house in Kardang village whilst engaged in a drinking session (Rechler 1874:238-243; Schiel 1967:169). This

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16 Pagell and his wife established a mission in Spiti in 1865. They died during winter after eighteen years service there. Heyde left India in 1905 spending fifty-one years in service in India, from 1853 when he first attempted to reach Mongolia (Gill 1979:183). I have not substantiated this information from other sources. Gill is not totally reliable, mistakenly attributing the linguistic studies and Dictionary to Heyde, rather than Jäschke, although Heyde did work on Das' Dictionary (1979:183).

17 In 1897 there were only 29 converts, including children. Sir James Lyall in 1868 wrote: The very tolerance of the Boti race in religious matters will, I think, be one obstacle to their conversion. In the Sunday services of the mission house saw an old and learned lama, who lives there to assist Mr Jeschke in his Tibetan studies, join in the hymns and responses with great zeal and fervour. I do not think that either he or his friends saw anything inconsistent in so doing, though he had not the least intent of becoming a convert to Christianity. All worship is good seemed to be his motto. (*Kangra District Gazetteer* 1987 cited in Gill 1979:18).

18 For discussion of this name, which is pronounced in the dialect of Karzha as 'Jabjez', which is distinct from its Tibetan pronunciation, see later this chapter, and footnote 56.
incident may be indicative of Lahuli antagonism towards converts, although it may also have been an accident.\textsuperscript{19} Other reactions to the presence of the missionaries are examined later.

Although the missionaries met with little success in their teaching of the Christian doctrine, their agricultural activities met with acceptance. Heyde was a keen gardener, and cultivated the potato from the original eight that the missionaries had brought with them. The potato soon became popular in local gardens, being well suited to the altitude and climate.\textsuperscript{20} Lettuce, spinach and turnip were also introduced, becoming popular in the local diet (Rechler 1874:228; Bray 1983:53). The Lombardy poplar was also introduced, as well as the willow tree, which now grows in considerable numbers along the irrigation channels near villages.

The Moravians established a permanent mission in Leh, Ladakh in 1885. Although the mission continued its activities in Lahul, the Leh mission became the Moravian headquarters. Francke, the Tibetologist and historian, was posted there in 1896. He spent two years, 1906-1908, in Kyelang and is remembered particularly for his two volume \textit{Antiquities of Indian Tibet} (1913 and 1926, reprinted 1972. See also 1905, reprinted 1978).

Background information on Lahul is provided by the many observations of social practices and customs made by the Moravians. Walter Asboe who had been in Leh, was stationed in Kyelang in 1927, and in 1936 moved back to Leh, leaving India in 1947. He wrote several brief observations on agricultural practices, disposal of the dead, sacrifices and the custom of scape-goat, which were published in \textit{Man} between 1932 and 1937 (1937, 1932, 1936a, 1936b respectively).

Whilst in Kyelang, Asboe encouraged the locals to make and install the ‘combustion’ stove, with chimney. Previously, the fireplaces had a small opening in

\textsuperscript{19}There was no memory of this event among the Kardangpa at the time of my field work. Given that I had trouble establishing dates and events early this century, I have no reason to suspect suppression of information. Very little mention was made about the presence of the Moravians in Lahul during my field work.

\textsuperscript{20}An interesting comparison can be made with both Solo-Khumbu the Sherpa homeland, and the Rolwaling Valley (both in Nepal) which was first settled by Sherpas around 1860–1870 (Sacherer 1974:317–324; 1977:289–293). The potato was introduced to Khumbu between 1840–1860, the seed coming from the gardens of the British residents in Sikkim. By the 1950’s the potato had become the staple food (Ortner 1989a:30, 158–159).
the roof through which the smoke exited. The introduction of the chimney greatly alleviated the smoky interior of the houses. Although these small metal stoves, called tandoor, which are these days used in all Lahuli houses and in Manali as well, have made a considerable improvement to the cleanliness of the interior of the houses, this has been to the detriment of fuel economy. The Moravians are also credited with introducing glass window panes, and in some cases double glazing is employed for extra insulation. The details of the Moravians' departure from Lahul and India are confused in the political events of the years of turmoil of WWII and India's Independence.

The British

Throughout the time of the Moravian mission in Lahul, the region was politically under the control of the British. From 1846 until 1940 Lahul was part of the Kulu Sub-Division of the Kangra District (see Chapter 1). The British however did not rule directly in Lahul, but exercised their authority through the Thakur of Khangsar, one of the local petty rulers. This interesting era in the history of Lahul awaits thorough research (see above).

I have mentioned, in Chapter 1, some of the contributions the colonial administrators made during this era, for instance constructing bridle paths and building bridges in order to facilitate trade opportunities with Tibet. The British

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21Fuel economy with the existing style of metal stove (tandoor) as currently used could be improved considerably. I suspect that the lace sewn on the Lahuli women's gown (dugpo) and some stylistic changes in the gown and waistcoat are attributable to the Moravians, though this suggestion was denied by the locals, who pointed out the resemblance of their dress to the Tibetan chupa (phyu pa, coat).

22Peter was at the mission in Leh and Kyelang between 1930-1940, and was interned at the outbreak of WWII at the Yule camp in Kangra (Gill 1979:183; Peter 1977:5). Theos Bernard, a member of the Kyelang mission, was murdered, apparently in 1945 (Khosla, G.D. 1956:196,20; 1980:75), after which the mission in Lahul was closed. The mission in Ladakh finally closed in 1956 (Friedl 1985:221-234).
were particularly interested in the shawl wool trade (Huttenback 1961:482-485; Harcourt 1972 reprint:74).

Another resource extensively exploited by the British was the vast Himalayan forests. In the 1850's extensive strands of hardwood forests in Pangi were felled, and floated down the Chenab River, despite heavy losses of logs as they travelled through this narrow river gorge. These colonial administrators also left their legacy in extensive archives relating to resource exploitation, and the bureaucratic organisation of Departments, such as the Forestry Department, which controlled these activities. Himalayan hardwoods were used extensively in the construction of the elaborate rail system built to facilitate the transport of resources out of India (Tucker 1983).

The British were particularly interested in the political system of the regions that they ruled, recording details and influencing events. Their observations of the social customs of the people whom they ruled, and their language studies, are found in the District Gazetteers, and Archaeological and Linguistic Surveys.

Another significant pre-Independence contribution to research in the area came from the Himalayan Research Institute of the Roerich Museum, established at Naggar, in the Kulu-Manali Valley in 1928. The results of this research were published in the Institute's journal, Urusvati. Several articles appeared on expeditions made through Lahul, Spiti, Rupshu, Zangskar and Ladakh.

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23 The British changed the 'capital' from Tandi, at the confluence of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers (and thus accessible to Chamba as well as Kulu) to Kyelang, and established the road from Tandi on the right side of the Bhaga to Kyelang, rather than on the left through Kardang (Harcourt 1972 reprint:17). Harcourt suggested that the pass between Gondhla and Kyelang, via Kardang, could be used to shorten the trade route, and avoid the difficult terrain between Tandi and Kyelang. This is part of the pilgrimage route around the Drilburi peak (see below) and is always traversed clockwise, from Kardang to Gondhla. I do not know if the British further pursued this suggestion, but it certainly would have been strongly resisted by the locals, especially when entering Lahul (Harcourt 1972 reprint:23).

24 Much of this material is reviewed by Tobdan, 1984; and re-presented in Charak's volumes (1979a etc). As well as the more frequently mentioned travellers accounts such as that of the veterinarian Moorcroft and Trebeck who passed through Lahul in 1820 (reprint 1971), there were others such as Samuel Bourne, who spent seven years in India (1862-1869) and made a glass plate photographic record of considerable interest, which is still extant. Bourne photographed the Hampta Pass and other western Himalayan sites (Felsenfeld 1982:82-91).

25 Unfortunately this journal is relatively difficult to obtain at the present time. See however, Roerich (1931a, 1931b, n.d.) and Koelz (n.d.).
de Roerich also made the most detailed study of the Tibetan dialects of Lahul to date (1934).

The remaining research conducted in Lahul focussed on the practice of polyandry. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark and his wife spent one month there in 1938, collecting most of his information with the assistance of the Khangsar Thakur (Prince Peter 1963:303-333, 575-583).

The Current Situation

Since Independence, the Indian administrators have continued the example set by their predecessors, using historical and ethnographic summaries of the region for administrative purposes. Some of this material was presented and discussed in Chapter 1, and is discussed further in Chapter 3. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Lahul was still largely unresearched in 1972, for although the administrators, both British and Indian, the Moravians, the scholars from the Himalayan Research Institute and Prince Peter had engaged in some historical and linguistic studies, and provided descriptions of aspects of the society and some social customs, little of this had been in-depth or comprehensive.

The continuing border disputes, not only with the Peoples’ Republic of China (P.R.C.), but also with Pakistan, have restricted foreign research in the region, and to my knowledge I am the only anthropologist the Government of India (G.O.I) has permitted in the area. Detlef Lauf, professor of philosophy and art historian, conducted some important research there in 1965, 1967 and 1968 (Lauf 1971; 1976; personal communication). Recent research has been conducted into the dialect of Spiti and Manchad (Sharma S.R n.d. and personal communication).26 Thus there has been limited post-Independence research.

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26I am not aware of any in-depth anthropological research conducted in Lahul by Indian academics, who have vast and varied field areas from which to select a site, many of which are not as physically extreme as Lahul. It is hoped that as the Lahulis themselves advance with their education there will be more like Tobdan who engage in further research.
Reconstructing a precise historical record and ethnographic overview from the scanty data available is problematic. For instance, although it is reasonable to regard Lahul as part of what is loosely called Ngari (mnga ris) or 'Western Tibet', it seems that Lahul may never have been part of Ngari Kor Sum (mnga ris skor gsum), the Western Tibetan Empire of the tenth and eleventh centuries (see discussion in Tobdan 1984:39-41; and Lozang Jamspal 1985). Confusion between a cultural perspective and that of a political history have resulted in misconceptions which have been compounded by relatively few and incomplete primary sources, and repeated use of secondary sources. Klimburg-Salter, for instance, suggests that "some Cis-Himalayan areas and valleys, such as Lahul and Spiti" in the tenth and eleventh centuries were under the rulership of the Kings of Ngari, and "thus... part of the trans-Himalayan cultural zone" (1982:152, my emphasis). I discuss Klimburg-Salter's research in more detail later, noting here that whether or not Lahul was politically part of Ngari, it was and is certainly part of the trans-Himalayan cultural zone.

The history of an area such as Lahul is by necessity an inter-disciplinary study. The lack of written records from Lahul itself means that greater attention must be directed to the iconography and art-historical record, and archaeology, for instance, though a precise and detailed history for Lahul will probably remain elusive (see Roerich 1931b:27-34).

References to Karzha are also available from the spiritual biographies or namthar (nam thar) of Tibetan pilgrims who have visited the area, and although these provide some historical and geographical information, this genre functions at another level, which is discussed in Section IV of the thesis. Similarly, the oral traditions of the region associated with the three saints: Padmasambhava (Skt., 'The Lotus-Born'); the siddha (Skt.) Ghandhapa (Skt.); and the yogi Gotsangpa Gonpo Dorje (rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje) may be historical, but function primarily to sanctify and empower the landscape for spiritual practice. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, and throughout the thesis.

The earliest verifiable Tibetan contact in Lahul is that of the great tenth century translator of the 'New Translation' school or sarmapa (gsar ma pa), and
builder of temples, Rinchen Zangpo (rin chen bzang po, 958-1055 A.D.). From his biography, for which there is an English translation, we learn that he travelled through Karzha in his eighteenth year, 975 A.D. (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977:15; 1980:87). There are no further details pertaining to Karzha in his biography.

Several gonpa throughout the Western Himalaya, such as Tholing (mthog ling) near Tasparang; Nvarma (nyar ma or myar ma) in Ladakh which is now in ruins; Tabo (ta pho) in Spiti and Sumda (gsum mda') in Zangskar are attributed to him. In all, it is said that he founded one hundred and eight gonpa (an auspicious number in Buddhism), the largest housing about twenty practitioners, and the smallest only one. Some of the temples he is said to have founded may be of later date. For example, Alchi (a lci) in Ladakh is attributed to him, but on iconographic evidence it probably dates from the second half of the eleventh century (Snellgrove 1982:72-74, 79; Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977; 1980).

In Lahul, Tonba (ston ba) gonpa in Gumrang (dgung rang) village is popularly attributed to Rinchen Zangpo. Most of the statues found therein are in poor repair. To my knowledge, no iconographical study has been carried out at this gonpa, although stylistically these images suggest an early date, probably tenth to twelfth century.

The local tradition also attributes a large chorten on the periphery of the village to Rinchen Zangpo. I was told that this chorten was built, following the instructions of Rinchen Zangpo, to protect the village from avalanches which periodically swept away sections of the village. The chorten still stands, evidence of the success of this measure.

Although Rinchen Zanpo features in the oral tradition of Gumrang and nearby villages on the right side of the Bhaga, there are no stories which associate him with Kardang, and the left side of the Bhaga. Thus these traditions are beyond the main focus of this thesis. It is unlikely that the historical connection between Rinchen Zangpo and the Tonba Gonpa, and the Gumrang chorten, will ever be established with certainty, although from the biography, it is clear that this important figure in Tibetan history did indeed travel from Kinnaur through Karzha and beyond to Kashmir.
In the historical analysis presented below, I begin with the more recent political history of the past four centuries about which reasonable information is available.

Lahul itself was divided into several small 'chiefdoms' ruled by the Jos (jos; Thakur in Hindi). Tod was under the Jos of Khangsar; Tinan under the Jos of Sila (Gondhla); and Punan divided by the Bhaga into the right side of the river under the Jos of Kyelang, and the left under the Jos of Barbog (bar 'bog). The Jos of Barbog lost economic rights in their territory probably because of their allegiance to Ladakh, in the late seventeenth century. However, the Barbog household owns more land than is usual, having land in every village from Barbog to Peukar. The Jos or Thakur exercised control over the lands in their territory, employing the people from the surrounding villages to work the land, and paying them a percentage of the harvest. Precise details are not available, though historical research on the Thakurs of Lahul (Khangsar, Gondhla and Gumrang) for the past century would throw light on this system of social organisation.

The several small chiefdoms within Lahul were not united, realigning themselves independently with Ladakh to the north, Tibet, or with the Kulu or Chamba Rajas (Tobdan 1984:45-54; Charak 1979a:269-280). This statement typifies the political situation in Lahul from at least the twelfth century. By the mid-sixteenth century the region seems to have been under the domination of the Kulu Rajas, and thus politically aligned with the petty Hindu kingdoms, rather than with Ladakh, which had exercised control from circa A.D. 1080/1110, while the Chandrabhaga valley known as 'Chamba Lahul', was under the domination of the Chamba Raja.

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Tobdan makes no mention of the Jos of Gumrang, whose position requires more research.

Discussion on the pre-1950 social situation in Tibet has argued over terminology such as 'feudalism' (e.g. see Goldstein 1986, 1988 and Miller 1987, 1988) which I avoid. See also Thargyal 1988, on Kham (East Tibet) social structure. Levine's recent study of the Nyinba of N.W. Nepal describing the social structure there provides a comparable situation, in my estimation (Levine 1988).

There have been several studies of Ladakhi history, which mention Lahul or Karzha in passing. See for instance Nawang Tsering (1985:157); Petech (1977:43; 49; 75; 131-132).

Tobdan discusses the inscriptions, collected by Francke, relevant to this period, and their political implications (Tobdan 1984: 47-50), also providing a reasonably detailed historical sketch. See also Charak(1979a:26, 50, 61-62, 215-256).
This, then, was the political situation which the British encountered when the region was ceded from the Sikhs after the First Sikh War. The Sikh overlordship of Kulu and Lahul was felt from about 1820. In 1840, the Sikhs subjugated Mandi state and then invaded Kulu. Thus Lahul came under the more direct control of the Sikhs, which continued until 1846, when the British gained control over what became known as British Lahul, corresponding to Tehsil Lahul (Huttenback 1961:477-488; Tobdan 1984:56-59; Charak 1979a:279). Control of passes and trade routes was probably the important consideration in the political maneuverings throughout Lahul’s history.

A broader perspective is derived from considering the entire Western Himalayan region, examining cultural influences. The mosaic which emerges is complex, as four important cultures, the Indian, Chinese, Iranian and Tibetan converge in this area (Klimburg-Salter 1982:19; Strickmann 1982:52-63; Snellgrove 1982:64-80). A substantial contribution to the study of the Western Trans-Himalaya and the cultural interchange throughout the region resulted from the exhibition of Vajrayana (Skt.) art, and the collaborative efforts of several individuals presented in the book-catalogue, *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path* (Klimburg-Salter 1982).31

Trade relations and accompanying cultural exchange require not only geographically viable routes through the Himalaya, but politically open frontiers. Klimburg evaluates the Trans-Himalayan region, indicating that from the eighth century on, the Chinese-Tibetan conflict, Arab advances and the decline of Chinese power which made the Pamir routes (farther to the west) increasingly unsafe caused a diversion in trade routes. The emergence of significant political and religious centres in Ladakh and West Tibet

| generated specific Trans-Karakoram communications between the Tarim Basin and north India... The northwest Indian foothills were reached from Ladakh either via the Zoji Pass (11,300 ft) and Kashmir, or via the Baralacha Pass (16,060 ft), Lahul, and the |

31I recommend Klimburg-Salter (et al.), whose research accompanying the exhibition of Vajrayana art from the Western Himalaya presented at the UCLA Frederick S. Wright Art Gallery, provides a most welcome depth and breadth of research and analysis. Here I touch on topics particularly pertinent to the present study, acknowledging that much iconographic and historical research for Lahul remains.
Kulu Valley in Himachal Pradesh. An eastern branch of the latter road led through the Spiti Valley to Toling in west Tibet, located on the upper course of the Sutlej. (Klimburg 1982:36)

Map 4, The Western Trans Himalaya, is adapted from Klimburg, and shows the network of routes. Klimburg has placed the route through Lahul along the barren Chandra valley, rather than through the Bhaga valley. Probably both avenues were used. An important indicator of the ancient routes used by both traders and pilgrims are the rock engravings and large Buddhist rock images, such as those recently found in the Indus valley, and in the Hunza valley by Karl Jettmar (Jettmar 1980; Jettmar and Thewalt 1987; Klimburg 1982:32).

In Lahul there are stylistically comparable figures perhaps thirty feet high carved in rock faces in Gondhla and near Khangsar, suggesting a well used path through the inhabited Bhaga valley. Lauf says there are in all 30 such stone carvings between one and three metres in height, dating from the third to the ninth century, though not all the carvings located by Lauf may still exist (see later). I anticipate a more thorough presentation and analysis of collected material in the future (Lauf 1971:364-5, and plate 1; Klimburg-Salter 1982:20, 29, plates 2 and 6).

Tibetan textual evidence from the namthar of the Drukpa yogi Gotsangpa (see above and later) confirms the traversing of Karzha in the thirteenth century, by Tibetan pilgrims *en route* to Uddiyana (Skt.), now generally located in the Swat Valley, Pakistan (Tucci 1971 reprint of 1940; Lauf 1971:368-371). More recently, the large annual trade fare in Patseo, mentioned above, confirms the use of the route through the Bhaga valley during the colonial period.

Political events and the closure of the border with Tibet in 1959 brought the trans-Himalayan trade though Lahul to a halt. Lahulis from Tinan, Punan and Tod previously operated as middle-men in trade, exchanging goods from Tibet and Central Asia with plains India. Goods exchanged included salt, tea, tobacco, silk, shawl wool (pashmina), yaks’ tails, borax, iron, sulphur and grains (wheat, rice).
Not only horses and donkeys but sheep and goats were used as pack animals (Harcourt 1972 reprint:74-76; Asboe 1937; Toscano 1980:76). The Lahulis’ role in trade across the Himalaya is relevant when considering their ambiguous identity, which as Prabhat Thakur indicated, is said to typify the Lahuli.

In order to operate effectively in trade relations with plains India, Lahulis acquired caste status,34 which they now consciously and effectively utilise in their interchange with Indians from Kulu-Manali and elsewhere. They therefore have social privileges not available to Tibetans in India, and are able to enter homes and eat with other Indians. Previously when trading in Tibet, they modified their behaviour to suit their company and situation, eating (cow-like) yak meat, for instance, which is unacceptable to Hindus, as it is now generally in Lahul.

Comparable behaviour modification and status manipulation have been documented throughout the Himalaya regions. Manzardo’s presentation of pragmatic ‘impression management’ among the trading Thakalis, Dhauligiri, central Nepal, emphasises that trading communities deal with several different social situations and must act accordingly (Manzardo 1982, 1985).

There are many areas throughout the Himalaya where there has been long-standing multi-ethnic contact. Nitzburg found among the Brahmauri (Bharmauri) in Chamba that socio-cultural emulation is an attempt to increase status by emulating the ethnic group with greater political power, the Chamialis, and does not signify increased cultural contact, in itself, for there has been contact for centuries. Another ethnic group in the same district, the Churahis, have resisted increasing interdependence despite a recent intensification of contact with Chamialis, as there appears to be no political advantage to the Churahis to modify their ethnic identity. Rather they have reinforced their socio-cultural distinctiveness (Nitzburg 1970; 1978). Although there is very little basis in terms of ethnic identity for differential administrative treatment between the different ethnic groups in Bharmaur, only the Gaddi are scheduled as Tribal (Keesing, Roger M., personal communication). As with the case of the Kumaon Bhotia mentioned in Chapter 1,

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34The Khangsar and Gondhla Thakurs manufactured family chronicles which claimed descent from Rajputs in Bir in order to further elevate their status (Francke 1926 reprint 1972:195-220; Tobdan, 1984:16-17, 48-49).
political advantage is an important determinant in socio-cultural convergence and status manipulation (Das and Raha 1981).

The possession of power in the larger political arena is an important determinant in the dynamics of social change. In Lahul, as in several other Himalayan border regions, colonial intervention followed by the Independence of India and the closure of the border with Tibet has resulted in a significant realignment of social interaction and economic focus.

The response of any particular ethnic group to a situation of multicultural contact may be:

1) to redefine their status in terms of socio-cultural characteristics of relevance to the dominant group. In post-Independence India, this process is called Indianisation. As with the case of the Kumaon Bhotia, this may involve assuming the socio-cultural characteristics of the dominant group (Hinduisation) or assuming the identity of a minority ethnic group such as Scheduled Tribe, which is politically advantaged. The contradiction inherent in this situation is that it is not only (backward) minority ethnic groups which are involved in this process of manipulation of identity. For instance, in Kinnaur District in Himachal Pradesh, many high-caste Hindus who are wealthy landlords are defined for administrative purposes as Scheduled Tribes, a political move which is clearly to their economic advantage (Keesing, personal communication).

2) to assume multiple identities depending upon social context, in a process called impression management. This manipulation of ethnic identity indicates a more balanced distribution of power, and movement between different social and political contexts; or

3) to engage in behaviour which reinforces socio-cultural distinctiveness, apparently resisting increasing integration into the broader socio-political context.

The analysis of the dynamics of change, in terms of the manipulation of ethnic identity, is dependent upon the perspective or level of analysis employed. For instance, it might be argued that the Kumaon Bhotia engaged in behaviour which reinforced their socio-cultural distinctiveness as a minority ethnic group of
Tribals (option 3 above). However, at another level of analysis this can be seen to further integrate them into the larger political framework of the Indian nation. I continue the discussion of the dynamics of social and cultural change in Lahul in the next chapter. Before doing so, I further elucidate the different cultural influences which have operated in this region.

Situated in a geographical corridor, Lahul has been open to cultural influences from both Central Asia and India. Therefore socially and culturally Lahul has been regarded as an admixture of Hindu/Indian and Tibetan/Buddhist influences with the indigenous ‘religion of the valley’ (lung pa’i chos, lung pa’i chos), sometimes identified with ancient Bon (bon) or animism, involving phallus, tree and serpent worship. I shall discuss in greater detail some of the social customs of the village, part of what has been called the ‘religion of the valley’ in the ethnography of Kardang village, presented in Chapter 4.

Certainly the several large stone carvings and talk of past human sacrifice has lead to scholarly speculation35 (Harcourt reprint 1972:65; Francke 1905 reprint 1978:187-190; Asboe 1936a; Lauf 1971:368; Tobdan 1984:73-75). There are several rock carvings stylistically different from the Buddhist figures mentioned above, some Dardic in origin (Lauf 1971:364). Francke mentions an old carving near Kyelang of a man hunting a wild sheep. He also asserts that the chiefs of the past wore ‘feather headdresses’ similar to those worn by American Indians, referring to the three-pointed crown in the iconography of the early Buddhist carvings. Thus some carvings to which Francke attributes Bon associations are early Buddhist (Francke 1905 reprint 1978:188). This incorrect identification may well be the source of the Kardangpa’s attitude, related in the following incident.

The people themselves are unfamiliar with some of the older stone carvings, and do not hold them in high regard. In Kardang village there are three large figures carved on a rock, which Lauf satisfactorily identifies as the Buddhist trinity Padmapani (Skt.), Maitreya (Skt.) and Vajrapani (Skt.), probably from the seventh or eighth century (Lauf 1971:365, plate 1). However, the villagers are reluctant to

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35Colonial administrators and missionaries focus much attention on ‘barbaric’ and ‘heathen’ practices, such as human sacrifice, in India, the British passed laws forbidding the forms of human sacrifice that came to their attention (Stutchbury 1982).
talk about them. When pressed they say that their grandparents knew little about
them, but perhaps they had something to do with human sacrifice, and in any case,
it is best not to pay them any attention. Clearly, any oral tradition associated with
these carvings and their historical Buddhist origins have been lost, and replaced by
an interpretation of their identity which derives from the Moravian missionaries.

These particular carvings are on a very large boulder, and therefore fixed. I
cleaned, stood upright and photographed some other relief carvings of human
figures in stone, also of considerable antiquity and Buddhist origins, which I found
half-buried near the village. A few months later I discovered these being broken
up and used for building material in house renovations in the village. If these
images had been perceived as Buddhist, it is most unlikely that they would have
been destroyed. Rather, they would have been placed in the village Gonpa.

At this stage of research there are many unanswered questions relating to
the prehistory of not only Lahul, but the entire Trans-Himalayan region. Currently
in the field of Tibetan studies the origins of Tibetan culture are being re-evaluated.
This involves investigations into the period prior to the coming of Buddhism to
Tibet (that is, before the eighth century) and the current reassessment of the
ancient Bon tradition and the kingdom of Zhang Zhung (zhang zhung). The
re-evaluation of these traditions by the Tibetans themselves, and the recognition
that Bon is an ancient and authentic spiritual tradition within the context of
Tibetan culture have recently resulted in the Dalai Lama's official recognition of
the modern Bon order as the fifth tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, giving the

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36This is an extensive topic. (See, for instance, Kaloyanov 1990; Kvaerne 1972; 1973:esp.
Skorupski and Bonpo Monastic Centre 1981:32-33). The origins of the Bon tradition, and its'
relationship to and its influence upon other main cultural traditions, is a matter of
considerable interest. Recently Kvaerne has suggested that the evidence for Iranian origins
of the Bon tradition is weak (1987), although, as Reynolds suggests, several scholars have
supported this claim.

Some scholars would connect the teachings of Bon with various ancient
Iranian religious systems such as Zoroastrianism, Manicheanism, Zurvanism,
and Mithraism; and more recently with certain Iranian esoteric traditions of
the middle ages such as Ismailiyyan and al-Ishraq. Certainly ancient
Zhang-zhung had many links with Central Asia and Iran and it is also true
that the Bonpo tradition itself asserts that its teachings originated in that
direction. (Reynolds 1988c:3; see also Tucci 1980:248).
Bonpos representation on the council in Dharamsala (Skorupski and Bonpo Monastic Centre 1981:40; Reynolds 1988a:1-2; 1988b:3).

Recent archeological research in the Kailash region by Professor Namkhai Norbu will increase our understanding of the Zhang Zhung kingdom.\(^{37}\) The results of this investigation promises to be of great relevance for Lahul, considering the proximity of Karzha to the Kailash region and the pre-Tibetan kingdom of Zhang Zhung (Map 4), and assertions that Karzha historically was part of the Zhang Zhung kingdom (Nawang Tsering 1985:157 footnote 1).

Mount Kailash (Kailas, Skt., Gangchen Tise gangs chen ti se, or Gangri gang ri, ‘Great Snow Mountain’) and Lake Manasarovar (Skt. = Tso Mapampa mtsho ma pham pa) are sacred places of pilgrimage not only in the Tibetan and modern Bon traditions, but also in Hinduism, as here the four sacred rivers, the Indus, the Brahmaputra, the Sutlej and the Karnali rise. Mt Kailash is particularly important among Saivites, as it is the abode of Siva (Skt.), and his consort Parvati (Skt.). In the Tibetan tradition it is the residence of Khorlo Demchog (’khor lo bde mchog/bde mchog ’khor lo sdom pa, Cakrasamvara Skt.) and consort Dorje Phagmo (rdo rje phag mo, Vajravarahi Skt.). In the Zhang Zhung tradition the mountain is known as Yungdruk gu tseg (g.yung drung dgu (b)rtsegs) ‘Nine-story Svastika (Skt.) Mountain’. In this region, religious traditions that are today generally regarded as separate coalesce.\(^{38}\)

Before discussing more sacred geography, particularly that of Karzha, I present some of Staal’s research which addresses this point. In Staal’s contribution to The Silk Route and the Diamond Path he examines the migration of the Vedic nomads from central Asia into India before 1000 BC, and the movement of

\(^{37}\)On the recent pilgrimage and expedition to Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarovar in August and September 1988, Professor Namkhai Norbu, guided by the textual research he has been conducting on the ancient civilisation of Zhang Zhung, discovered what is believed to be the ruins of the capital Khyung lung dngul mkhar ‘The Silver Palace of the Garuda Valley’ (See Tucci 1971:407). A huge complex of caves cut into the sandstone cliffs, estimated to be adequate accommodation for 5,000 to 10,000 people, was discovered, along with many rock carvings (Raschik 1989). Further research is planned.

\(^{38}\)Kvaerne (1976a:14) suggests that both Buddhist and Saivite siddhas from India established themselves in Western Tibet and the Kailash region before the seventh or eighth centuries, and from there moved to (central) Tibet. See Johnson and Moran (1989), for a recent photographic exploration of Mt Kailash.
Buddhism from India to Central Asia from the first century AD onwards. Staal suggests that "religious affiliation" to either Hindu or Buddhist traditions, or Hindu and Vedic traditions were often blurred (Staal 1982a:40-41), and concludes that the underlying reality of the last several millennia is best described as a continuous movement and exchange of people, goods and ideas between India, Central Asia and China, across the high mountain ranges of the Himalaya. (Staal 1982a:50; see also Staal 1982b:276.)

Staal’s analysis sees the continuity between traditions or ‘religions’ which academic traditions have sought to separate. After the eighth century when Tantrism or the Siddha tradition began to flourish (and political events were moving the routes further to the east, through Ladakh and Lahul), direct connections were established between Tibet and India, thus the simultaneous flowering of Indian and Tibetan (Hindu and Buddhist) forms of Tantricism. As Staal notes, "It is significant that no one knows whether the Tantra was originally Hindu or Buddhist, Indian or non-Indian" (Staal 1982a:43).

In Lahul, the apparent ambiguity in identity between Hindu and Buddhist and the ease with which individuals change identity (and appropriate behaviour) depending upon the context, and the continuing operation of pilgrimage sites which are both Hindu and Buddhist, such as Triloknath, the Markula Devi mandir and the confluence of the Chandra and Bhaga Rivers, support Staal’s proposition on the fluid nature of cultural exchange across the Himalaya, and the historical coalescence of traditions.39

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39 This could be explored further by research focussed on Triloknath and the Markula Devi Temple at Udaipur, for instance, and by a study of the Saivite Swanglas. See Tobdan’s discussion of the advent of Saivism in Lahul and early Buddhism (1984:76-84), and my discussion following. Maxwell visited these sites in 1975 and presents architectural and iconographical information exploring the apparent transformation of Hinduism to Buddhism, and their coexistence at these sites, providing material useful for such research. He suggests a seventeenth century date for the mandir/vihara (Skt.), contrary to the earlier dates, circa seventh century, given by Madanjeet Singh and others (Singh 1968:104). The site Repag (re ’phag) is mentioned in the namthar of Taksang Repa (stag tshang ras pa, early seventeenth century) and apparently not in the namthar of the earlier Tibetan yogis, Gotsangpa and Orgyanna (o rgyan pa), though the Chandrabhaga, Gandhola and Drilburi are mentioned (Maxwell 1980:37-73; Tucci 1971:376, 385-389). See also footnote 42.
Undertaking the Khora of Drilburi
The Sacred Landscape of Karzha Khandroling

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Prabhat Thakur's description of Lahul seemed to convey not only a pragmatic geography, but a mandala or sacred landscape (Map 2). I have already presented a mundane description of the valleys and rivers of Lahul, and in providing an overview of the Western Trans-Himalayan region of which Lahul is a part I have mentioned briefly Mt Kailash and a little of the sacred geography of that region.40

These two presentations of the geographical details of Lahul contrast sharply. The mundane geography which is based on observations made initially by the British, and expanded by the G.O.I., share the common tradition of scientific taxonomies, precise measurements, and information gathered both in the quest for scientific fact, and for exploitative purposes. On the other hand, the sacred geography of Karzha contains quite a different understanding of the natural landscape.

In order to further amplify the ‘voice’ of Prabhat Thakur, which speaks of this alternate perspective, I will now briefly describe some of the pilgrimage sites in Karzha, Lahul, and the practitioners whose presence has sanctified these places and further imbued them with spiritual power. As might be expected from the previous discussion, there are two traditions, one Hindu and the other Buddhist, surrounding these sites — the confluence of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers (see photograph, p.27), as well as Triloknath and Markula Devi mandir, situated in the combined Chandra-Bhaga valley.

My own familiarity is with the local Buddhist traditions. Before proceeding with this material I shall briefly indicate the importance of these sites to the Saivite Swangla of Pattanam, in the Chandrabhaga valley, quoting from Negi’s preliminary research.41

40For some discussions on Tibetan sacred geography and pilgrimage sites see, for instance, Dowman (1981:183-291; 1988); Macdonald (1975; 1985); and Wylie (1965, 1970).

41Negi has used the available written sources from the British era (1976:197-200) although he does not include referencing in his text. He supplemented this material with his own knowledge, and with assistance from a few knowledgable locals. In the case of Lahul, this was Tsering Dorje (Negi T.S. 1976:ii), who also greatly assisted Gill when the latter was District Commissioner (see Chapter 3). It is therefore difficult to trace the source of the
According to the legendary tales of the Bhats (Swangla priests), the origin of the community took place before the days of the Mahabharata. Some Brahmins, they hold, used to come to the confluence of the Chandra and the Bhaga Rivers at Tandi in Lahaul to perform the obsequies of their Yajmans (the clients of the priests) as this place was considered sacred like Hardwar. It is said that once a father and his son came to the Tandi confluence from Rishikesh to perform the death rites. The saying is that they used to fly in the air, as they had such super-human powers. Once they felt hungry and they asked some people of this area for food and were offered meat. The father refused to take meat whereas the son took it. Thereafter, the father flew back to Rishikesh, but the son lost his saintliness and flying power by taking the meat. He remained here and married a local lady. His offspring spread. The Swanglas are that offspring according to this legend. (Negi T.S. 1976:97).

The confluence of the rivers continues to be important in the funerary rites of the Swangla, who perform the cremation there if possible, and in any case immerse the ashes of the cremated there. They regard Triloknath as a temple to Siva, and call it a ‘bihara’ (vihara, Skt., usually = Buddhist temple or monastery). Each family keeps a phallus-shaped rough stone, about one and a half feet high, on top of their house, to which they offer blood sacrifices, juniper incense, food and flowers (Negi T.S. 1976:105-107).

There is a legend, most famous amongst the Swanglas that Shiva’s marriage was solemnised at a peak of 14,000 ft, just above the confluence of the Chandra and Bhaga Rivers... From this peak an orange belt of rocks stretches up to Manimahesh in Bharmaur, Chamba District. Manimahesh is also considered to be the holy seat of Shiva by the Gaddis of Bharmaur. It is believed that Shiva’s marriage party had gone along this orange belt upto Manimahesh and that this party was attended by Devas, Rakshasas, Yakshas and Asuras. (Negi T.S. 1976:107)

The Swangla also draw Svastika, which they call ‘Khogunu’ on their doors during the night of one of their important festivals, and invoke Senapati Sikander

following information on the Swangla’s, but as there is no other data available on their society this view must suffice at present.
(Alexander the Great) as an ancestor deity (Negi T.S. 1976:108). Clearly more research is warranted to complete this intriguing glimpse of the Swangla.

My description of the sacred geography of Karzha was primarily gathered orally during the course of my fieldwork, and my visits to the pilgrimage sites. There are also two Tibetan wood block-printed guide books (gnas bshad, gnas yig), one for Drilburi and Gandhola and the other for Triloknath. However neither of these texts was available when I visited the sites. There is, however, a strong oral tradition associated with all the sites, which includes material not presented in the printed guides.

In the very heart of Karzha is the confluence of the Chandra and the Bhaga Rivers, with the peak of Drilburi, abode of Khorlo Demchog (Cakrasamvara) and the lingam of Siva, towering above it. Both Cakrasamvara and Siva also reside at Mt Kailash. According to the Samvara cycle, India is considered to be the Vajra-body (Vajrakaya Skt.) of the Buddha, divided into twenty-four points which are associated with twenty-four pitha (Skt.), the mystic geographical abodes of the various manifestations of the vidam (yi dam, ‘meditational or tutelary deity’) or Heruka (Skt.), Cakrasamvara (Tucci 1971:379-380).

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42Their Tibetan titles are gnas chen dril bu ri dang gandholai gnas yig don gsal (the Drilburi-Gandhola text), and ras ‘phags ‘phags pai gnas bshad dang mdo riogs bcas (the Triloknath text, written in 1903). Schubert has published a transcription and German translation of the latter gnas bshad or ‘Mahatmya’ (Skt.) (1935:127-136), which I have consulted, as did Tucci (the Tibetan text was also unavailable in 1931 when Tucci visited, 1971:378). Francke lists both this text (no.17) and the Gandhola Mahatmya (no.16) among the books he collected from Lahul (1913 reprint 1972:120). Huber’s recent study of the pilgrimage site Labchi (La phyi), with the oral traditions and the guide books for that site, provide an excellent example of the potential for research focussed on a particular pilgrimage site (Huber 1989 and n.d.). A similar study of Triloknath would be rewarding.

43Tucci states that the Tibetan list of these twenty-four pitha in North West India differs from the earlier list of the Samvaratantra (1971:379-380). For more information on the Samvara cycle in Tibetan Buddhism see for instance Tucci (1936:42ff); Tsuda (1978:167-231); Lokesh Chandra (1987). Huber points out in his recent study of La Phy, an important pilgrimage site associated with both the Cakrasamvara cycle and Milarepa (mi la ras pa), that there is an identification of sacred sites in Tibet with the ‘originals’ of India, and thus a proliferation of sites (1989 and n.d.). Sircar notes in his study of the Sakta Pitha that hills and mountains are often regarded as the linga of Siva, and that the various classical texts show some discrepancy in the lists of deities and pitha. He finds the Chandrabhaga mentioned in the Namastotta asata (Skt.), the Brhan Nilatantra (Skt.) and the Pranatosani (Skt.) Tantra. The Visnusamhita (Skt., Ch 85) lists fifty-four places suitable for funerary rites, including the Chandrabhaga (Sircar 1950 reprint 1973:8, 28, 66, 83).
The Chandra (lit. ‘moon’) is the male. The Bhaga, the female organ itself, is the "expanse of reality that is without limits or centre" and corresponds to the sun. Both the Chandra and the Bhaga rise on the Baralacha Pass. The Bhaga River’s origin is in a small, deep lake, Suraj Tal or Sun Lake (Government of H.P. 1975:9).

In some versions of the myth of the Chandra-Bhaga the polarity is switched: the Chandra is the daughter of the moon, and the Bhaga the son of the Sun-god (Gill 1979:15). This polarity switching in tantra has been frequently commented upon: for instance, in Saivism the female Sakti (Skt.) is the active principle, and usually (though not always) in Buddhism the male is the active pole of skillful means (see Samuel 1989:206).

In either case, the union of opposites is symbolised by the confluence of the two rivers which geometrically present the yogic or tantric practices which achieve that union within the adept’s mind-body (Samuel 1989:197-210). The adept who receives the transmission of these practices locates the mandala of the twenty-four places within his or her own body in the process of achieving the integrated mind-body, non-dual realisation (yermé, dbyer med). In order to achieve this realisation the yogin (Skt. = naljorpa, mal 'byor pa) or yogini (Skt. = naljorma mal 'byor ma) may travel to each of the twenty-four geographical pitha, as did Gotsangpa, Orgvanpa (o rgyan pa) and Taksang Repa (stag tshang ras pa) (see Tucci 1971: esp.380).

Padmasambhava, the Lotus-Born, who many regard as the greatest of all Indian yogic practitioners, was active in the eighth century and is revered in the Tibetan traditions for bringing Buddhist tantra — the Vajrayana — to Tibet. It is said that Padmasambhava spent considerable time in Karzha. The confluence of these two rivers is regarded as one of the eight cremation grounds (dur khrod) associated with Padmasambhava, and as such is an important né (gnas) or ‘power

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44Long chen nyintik (klong chert snying thig), cited in Klein (1985a:131), in which she discusses the meaning of Bhaga in the Tibetan tradition. Bhaga is a synonym for yoni (Skt.; Sircar 1950 reprint 1973:8).

45See also a myth about the Chandratal, in which the male called Nvima (nyi ma, ‘sun’) is bewitched by the ‘fairy’ (dakini) of the lake (Gill 1977:29-33).
place’ of pilgrimage. Tibetans on pilgrimage to Uddiyana, Padmasambhava’s birth place, have frequently traversed through Karzha, remaining there for some time in order to develop their yogic and meditational powers.

Guru Ghantal, as the Gandhola temple is called in Karzha, is said to have been established by Padmasambhava, or as he is frequently called in the Tibetan tradition, Guru Rinpoche (gu ru rin po che), ‘Precious Teacher’. It is situated some distance below the Drilburi peak. Certainly Guru Ghantal is of considerable antiquity, and may well have been established in the eighth century. At present the remaining wooden statues from Guru Ghantal which has been recently restored with a tin roof, are kept at the newer Tupcheling (thub kyi gling) gonpa which is only a short distance above the confluence.

Without historical records, precise dating of such sites is difficult. Art historians have attempted to establish the chronicity of different sites on stylistic grounds, which is problematic. Indeed, as mentioned previously, a precise history for the region will probably remain elusive, and conclusive historical evidence

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46 For discussions of the eight cremation grounds of Padmasambhava see Tucci (1949, Vol.2:542-543,615); Martin (1985, footnote 11:6,30); Wylie (1970:21-22); Meisezahl (1980). Tobdan gives the list of Tirthas associated with Padmasambhava from the bLon po bka’ yi than yig (f46a) which includes Gandhola (Gan dha la) (1984:82-83). Tucci points out that the list of cemeteries usually given in the Tibetan tradition differs from the cycle of eight cemeteries given in the Indian tantric literature, though both are symbolically arranged to form a lotus (Tucci 1949 Vol. 2:615 footnote 237). See also Sircar, footnote 43.

47 Tobdan asserts that this is an incorrect association, Guru Ghantal referring to the siddha Ghandhapa, (and thus to Drilburi), rather than to the Gandhola construction associated with Padmasambhava and named after Bodh Gaya (1984:84). Whatever the case, it is apparent that different traditions have been overlaid on top of each other, thus increasing the sanctity of the sites.

48 See Lauf (1971:366-367). Klimburg-Salter publishes a photograph of a wooden statue of Amitabha (1982:plate 85, 173), said to be collected from Kyelang monastery (perhaps from Shashur gonpa; there is no gonpa at Kyelang itself). It was originally part of the architectural decoration of a Buddhist structure, perhaps now in ruins, and shows both Kashmiri and Central Asian influence. She assigns it to the tenth century. It is likely that this statue was originally from Guru Ghantal, which has been restored many times throughout its history. Wooden images are unknown in the more recent gonpa (seventeenth century onwards). In Ladakh, a recent discovery of ruins and wooden statues has been dated at c 750 A.D. by Denwood (Malyon and Denwood 1986). In the past thirty or so years, several statues, including the marble head of Avalokitesvara attributed to the eighth century and stylistically related to the image at Triloknath (see Singh 1968:108-117), and other wooden statues have disappeared from Guru Ghantal. Other Gonpa have also experienced theft of statues, and thangka. It is now prohibited by police order to take photographs inside any religious establishment without permission from the government and the particular religious establishment (see Chapter 7).
about claims made in the local traditions about the different pilgrimage sites may never be established.

However, the quest for historical veracity with regard to Padmasambhava's sojourn in Karzha, or indeed that of any other siddha, is largely irrelevant when considering the spiritual power attributed to such sites in the local and broader Tibetan traditions.\(^4^9\) Whether we are dealing with myth, or historical events, the sanctity of sites is created by their conversion from a mundane geographical feature to a symbolically meaningful one. This is said to occur through the physical presence of an accomplished yogic practitioner or siddha, who is thought to leave a mystical imprint of spiritual accomplishment at a site. It is claimed that by engaging in spiritual pursuits at sites which have been transformed in the past, successive generations of spiritual practitioners will themselves be transformed. Each spiritual accomplishment in turn further sanctifies a site.

It is claimed in the local oral tradition that the siddha Ghandhapa, one of the eighty-four Great Siddhas (mahasiddha Skt.) converted the peak, Drilburi, into the Cakrasamvara mandala (Tobdan 1984:84; Lauf 1971:366-367). There are two similar translated accounts, in English, of the life story of this siddha, who probably lived early in the ninth century. Both accounts place his activity in the east (Nalanda, Orissa, Bengal), though in a variant version offered by Dowman he was instructed to go to Uddiyana for initiation into the Samvara mandala (Robinson 1979:174-179;\(^5^0\) Dowman 1985:267-275).

The local practice tradition holds that Karzha is the last stop \textit{en route} to Uddiyana. In the biographies of Tibetans on pilgrimage it seems that although Karzha is some distance from Uddiyana, it is one of the last main pilgrimage places where a practitioner might remain for some time, before travelling on to Uddiyana.

\(^4^9\)Macdonald discusses this issue with regard to Gesar and Padmasambhava in the Sherpa tradition (1980a:127).

\(^5^0\)Robinson's translation is based on the Caturasiti-siddha-pravrtti (Skt.) by Abhayadatta (Skt., eleventh or twelfth century), translated into Tibetan as \textit{grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyus} by \textit{smon grub shes rab}. Lauf suggests an earlier date for Ghandhapa, seventh or eighth century (Lauf 1971:368). Ghandhapa is recognised in Tibet for his inception of the Pancakrama (Skt.) Samvara lineage, which seals with the five limbs of fulfillment yoga (Dzogrim, \textit{rdzogs rim}). He received his Samvara revelations from Vajrayogini (Skt.). The Kalacakra (Skt.) lineage includes Ghandhapa, making him one of the earliest Indian initiates of that tantra (Dowman 1985:274-275; Robinson 1979:303). Clearly more research on this siddha and the tradition in Karzha is warranted.
The story I was told, and recount here, generally matches these published accounts, though it is shorter. Ghandhapa, 'the One with the bell,' (ghanha, Skt., 'bell') is called Drilbupa (dril bu pa) in Tibetan:

Drilbupa was living down the Pattanam valley. Before he had done a lot of study and had taken vows but he was now just living simply and practising in order to get some realisation. This wasn't really going too well, until a beautiful young girl from these parts came to him. She was a khandro, a dakini, which he understood, so he took her for his wife, and they continued living there, and had a son. His practice became really strong.

Then after some time some people who knew him when he was studying and had vows came to these parts, and they started gossiping unkindly about him because he had a wife and a child. He became really angry, and threw down his child and milk-water started coming out of the ground, where he hit the ground, in torrents. He threw his wife into the air and because she was a real dakini she turned into a bell and landed there above the confluence, turning into the mountain. That is why that mountain is bell shaped and is called Drilburi — the bell mountain. There is a gold band of rock around that mountain, which is the colour of the bell metal. Drilbupa turned into Cakrasamvara and flew after her, and he lives there now, with her. From just about wherever you are in Karzha you can see that bell mountain. This milk water was still coming in torrents and everyone was drowning, but Chenrezig (spyan ras gzigs, Avalokitesvara, Skt.) came, and out of his compassion stopped it, and became this milky statue that you see there at Triloknath. (Lama Paljor Lharje (dpal 'byor lha rje), Transcript, 1983).

This oral version has two major differences from the textual accounts now in English translation. In the latter, Ghandhapa was tempted and seduced by the girl in a plot laid by a king whom Ghandhapa would not serve. Significantly, in the oral version from Karzha Khandroling, which is said to be the land of the dakini, this element is missing. Rather than being tricked by the female, Ghandhapa's

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51This marble statue as also identified as Trilokinath (Lokesvara Skt.) - Lord of the Three Worlds, one of Siva’s epithets (Kohn 1988:18; Maxwell 1980:64-68; Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977:104). Triloknath is mentioned in the section of the Tibetan religious geography 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad which deals with Nepal. In discussing Siva images which are associated with Avalokitesvara, this text mentions that such an image is at Triloknath, as well as several places in Nepal (Wylie 1970:27-28).
restricted and unsuccessful spiritual practice is revived and brought to fulfilment by the intervention of the beautiful young girl from Karzha. Ghandhapa recognised the potential for spiritual practice offered to him by this dakini, and despite his vows of celibacy, chose the path which led to accomplishment, and the completion of his practice.

As explained above, in the tantric yogic practice tradition, the union of opposites (of female and male; sun and moon; right and left; bell and vajra (Skt.); and so on) results in total mind-body integration, and the success and completion of spiritual practice. Both polarities in these symbolic dualities or oppositions are regarded as equally important. Consequently, the feminine principle is valued highly, on a par with the masculine principle.

The ideal of the feminine principle in spiritual practice, and the symbolic significance of such encounters with the feminine, is discussed in context and in greater detail in Chapter 8, when I explore the Tibetan hagiographies, the namthar genre. As mentioned previously, the dakini is the feminine aspect of enlightened Buddha-energy. In the Cakrasamvara tradition they are particularly connected to the twenty-four pitha, manifesting in the form of Vajravarahi (Dorje Phagmo), with whom the Markula Devi mandir is associated (Kalff 1978:149-162).

Secondly, in the texts, Ghandhapa and his consort rose into the sky, manifesting and appearing to all as the vab-yum (yab-yum, 'father-mother', the union of opposites) of Cakrasmavara and Vajravarahi. After Avalokitesvara stopped the flood, they taught the people. In the version from Karzha, this episode is altered to account for and sanctify significant geographical features of the landscape. The peak, Drilburi, thereby becomes the mandala of Cakrasamvara, with consort.

In the Triloknath guide book it is explained that Drilburi (Gandhola) is the place of the Buddha’s Body (sku yi gnas or sku'i gnas) associated with Cakrasamvara, while Triloknath is the place of Speech (gsung gi gnas) associated with Avalokitesvara, who is locally called Pagpa Rinpoche (’phags pa rin po che) or Pagpa Chenrezig (’phags pa spyan ras gzigs, see Lauf 1971:367-368), and Markula is the place of Mind/heart (thugs kyi gnas) of Vajravarahi or Dorje Phagmo.52

52 More discussion of the levels of meaning associated with such trinities occurs in Chapter 8.
The legend associated with the Triloknath site (see Schubert 1935:78; 135) is quite different from the oral version I collected, which focusses on the self-manifestation of the statue. Within the tradition, this is not necessarily a contradiction. As discussed later in relation to the namthar genre, there are levels of meaning (outer, inner and secret), and the different stories contain different levels of meaning. Progressively more esoteric levels of elucidation of the spiritual path may be revealed in oral teachings, and coded into written accounts which generally contain the more widely available ‘outer’ meanings.

Karzha Khandroling is a pilgrimage place of considerable importance, by reason of its sanctification by both Padmasambhava’s practice at the cremation ground at the confluence of the Chandra and the Bhaga rivers, and by the siddha Ghandhapa, who transformed Drilburi into the mandala of Cakrasamvara. As is the case with Ghandhapa, the local tradition upholds that Padmasambhava actually transformed the mundane geography into a mandala which symbolically encodes the practice. Consequently, Karzha Khandroling may be seen as a hidden teaching, a terma (gter ma), in the tradition of hidden or revealed teachings associated with Padmasambhava.53

The historical veracity of the presence of these two siddhas in Karzha may be an interesting puzzle for the academic, but for the practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism this is not an issue. The geographical landscape is perceived to have been empowered for spiritual practice, particularly practice within the lineages derived from the two Indian yogis: Padmasambhava and Ghandhapa.

Karzha Khandroling is therefore one of the stations in the journey for practitioners following either the teachings of Padmasambhava, or the Cakrasamvara tantra. The Nyingma follows the teachings of Padmasambhava, as

53The tradition of revealed treasures continues to be active in Karzha (see discussion of Apo Rinpoche in Chapter 6), and in Miyah Nallah, a tributary valley adjoining the Chandrabhaga, in Pattanam, where Terton Dulzhug Lingpa (gter ston 'dul bzhugs gling pa, d.1960s) practised (Mullin 1986:99–125). These treasures originate and are hidden by Padmasambhava and are integral to the Nyingma and Drukpa lineages (Tulku Thondup 1986). Ter associated with Gyalwa Gotsangpa have also been found in Karzha (see discussion on Kunga Rinpoche in Chapter 9).
do the practitioners of all the Buddhist Dzogchen (rdzogs chen) lineages. Within the Drukpa Kargyu lineage which was established in the latter part of the twelfth century (see Appendix), the main yidam or meditational deity is Cakrasamvara. Many wandering yogins and yoginis seeking realisation within these traditions have passed through Karzha Khandroling.

The thirteenth century Drukpa yogi, Gyalwa (rgyal ba, ‘Victorious’) Gotsangpa (1189-1258), as he is called in Karzha, was such a pilgrim. There are many local traditions associated with Gyalwa Gotsangpa whose historical presence in Karzha is verifiable from his namthar (Tucci 1971:377-378). This appears to be the first Drukpa contact in the region, though the stage had been set by Ghandhapa’s realisation of the Cakrasamvara mandala. The caves in which Gyalwa Gotsangpa stayed and the rock imprints he left further imbue the landscape of Karzha with yogic power and its social manifestation — pilgrimage sites (see Map 3).

At the beginning of Section IV I recount one of the Gotsangpa stories involving an encounter with a dakini through which a rock in the middle of Kardang village is transformed into a pilgrimage site, around which the village gonpa known as Jabjez was built. Local tradition maintains that Gyalwa Gotsangpa’s preferred hermitages were the Gotsang Ritro (ri khrod) or Gotsangpa Drupde (sgrub sde), the cave now known as Lama Gonpa; and Sila Gonpa on the path to the larger Cave of the Diamond Clear Light, also associated with Ghandhapa, in which he also practised. He spent some time meditating in the cave in the rock face above Biling, which experiences more sunshine and is thus warmer in winter, than the two caves just mentioned which are on the other side of the valley. There a small hermitage called Yurdzong (g.yu rdzong ‘turquoise fort, stronghold’) was established. At both Sila Gonpa and Yurdzong there are rocks bearing imprints of Gotsangpa’s body, similar to those at Kardang Jabjez Gonpa.

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54 For background information on the Nyingmapa see, for instance, Tarthang Tulku (1977); Tulu Thondup (1984, 1986, 1987); Sangye Khandro (1988); Smith (1969a).

55 Lauf (1971:368) identifies the large cave near Sila gonpa, above Gondhla village, as ‘od gsal bodzra phug, the Cave of the Diamond (Vajra) Clear Light, the name of the cave associated with Ghandhapa. I am not sure of this identification and believe that this is another much higher cave. In any case, this large cave near Sila Gonpa, in which there are several chortens, is associated with Gotsangpa (see below). A photograph of this cave appears at the beginning of Chapter 3.
As with Drilburi, geographical features have been sanctified through the meditational powers of the yogi, evidenced by the imprint of the body left in the rock.\textsuperscript{56} These transformed sites have become the focus of the pilgrimage circuit through Karzha (see Map 3).

Gotsangpa's disciple Orgyanpa (1230-1293)\textsuperscript{57} followed his master's footsteps making the pilgrimage to Uddiyana via Karzha (circa 1260).\textsuperscript{58} Orgyanpa's \textit{Lam yig} — his itinerary, the account of the path he took — was used by Taksang Repa, when he undertook his pilgrimage, probably early in the seventeenth century. Tucci has compared the travel routes of Orgyanpa and Taksang Repa in his "Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley" (1971 reprint of 1940). Taksang Repa was the founder of the Drukpa Hemis Gonpa in Ladakh under the royal patronage of Senge Namgyal (c1570-1642) in the early seventeenth century (c1604) (Tucci 1971; Lauf 1971:371-372; Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977:86, 126-130).

From Taksang Repa's pilgrimage itinerary we learn that he spent some time with Dev Gyatso (bde ba rgya mtsho, see Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980:43, 57), the Abbot of Shashur Gonpa (or Tashi Shuling gonpa, bkra shis shugs gling), and his disciples. He then stayed at Tinan with the Thakur of Gondhla for three months; and at Khangsar, where the younger sister of the Thakur and her son attended him, and where he taught Mahamudra (Skt., Chagchen phyag chen), and the Six Yogas of Naropa (Naro Chödrug naro'i chos drug), important teachings in the Drukpa lineage, and indeed in all Kargyu lineages. He undertook the pilgrimage route through Karzha, visiting Guru Ghantal, Drilburi, Triloknath and Markula Devi Mandir. Then Taksang Repa spent six months of winter in retreat at Yurdzong, the hermitage empowered by Gotsangpa (Tucci 1971:410-411; Lauf 1971:372).

\textsuperscript{56}This phenomenon is common in the Tibetan tradition. There are footprints and other bodily imprints of Padmasambhava at Tso Pema, and other pilgrimage sites associated with him. See also, for instance, Huber (1989:13); Mullin (1986:106-125); Ramble (1983:276, 279, 287) and Wylie 1970:31.

\textsuperscript{57}Lauf's dates for Orgyanpa are 1230-1309 (1971:371). The dates I have given are from Tucci (1971).

\textsuperscript{58}As Tucci notes, Uddiyana is also known as Urgyan, or Orgyan. So great was Gotsangpa's disciple's association with the birthplace of Padmasambhava that he is known as the man from Orgyan (or who has been to Orgyan) — 'Orgyanpa' (Tucci 1971:371-372).
Trulzhi Ngawang Tsering (‘khrul zhig ngag dbang tshe ring, 1717 - 1794)\(^5^9\) of the Drukpa Kargyu tradition and Lama Tsultrim Nyima (whose reincarnation, Prabhat Thakur, described the geography of Lahul) of the Gelugpa order are two prominent figures in the history of Ladakh and Zangsar in the eighteenth century. Ngawang Tsering went on pilgrimage to Triloknath and through Karzha on three occasions, practising at the sites associated with Gyalwa Gotsangpa, and completing the pilgrimage route around Drilburi (Nawang Tsering 1979:3-4, 33-35).

Several of the gonpa in Karzha date from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, including Shashur Gonpa (above Kyelang), Tavul (ltu yul) Gonpa and Gemur Gonpa (near Khangsar). Shashur Gonpa was revived by Dev Gyatso early in the seventeenth century, and became the most important gonpa in Lahul in the nineteenth century. In Karzha it was held that Shashur was founded by Dev Gyatso. There are many centuries for which we have scanty information. It is clear that in the thirteenth century, and later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Karzha was an important place of pilgrimage for Drukpa yogis who went there for the transmission of the meditation and yogic practices of this lineage (Lauf 1971:372-376).

Cakrasamvara, the central yidam for the Drukpa Kargyu, resident at Drilburi, empowers the landscape of Karzha for such spiritual pursuit, and the mundane geography, initially transformed through the yogic practice and realisation of both the siddha Ghandhapa, and Padmasambhava, is further spiritually energised by those adepts who seek to perfect their practice in this environment.

Gyalwa Gotsangpa describes Drilburi, saying that he saw at the top of the peak the self-born stupa, the essence of Dharma, which is surrounded on its four sides by miraculous rivers and trees, and blessed by all the pawo (dpa’ bo, viras Skt.) and Khandro or dakini (of the Cakrasamvara transmission), and the residence of yogins and yoginis who have attained to perfection — a place absolutely superior to all others (Tucci 1971:738). It is clear that Drilburi is the centre of the mandala of Karzha Khandroling, which may be symbolically represented as follows (Diagram 1).

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\(^5^9\)These dates are from Nawang Tsering (1979:3). Snellgrove and Skorupski place him one sixty-year cycle earlier and suggest 1657-1732 (1980:11).
THE MANDALA OF KARZHA

Diagram 1
Although, as I indicate above, it had seemed to me that Prabhat Thakur’s geographical description of Lahul was in some way a presentation of a mandala of some sort, it was not until two years later, when I was able to undertake the day-long pilgrimage (khora, khor ba or nékor, gnas skor) around and to the very heart of Karzha, to Drilburi, that I began to really understand what Prabhat had been describing to me.

During the course of this day, several of the stories in the local oral tradition—about Ghandhapa; Padmasambhava; Gyalwa Gotsangpa; and Kunga Rinpoche, one of the more recent teachers from Kardang who died in 1967—were retold to me, and at times, amplified with more detail. Some of the stories I heard that day had not been told to me previously. It is from the understanding which grew from the experiences of undertaking the khora, particularly, that the above symbolic representation of Karzha is derived (see photograph, p.57).

I was told that I should not repeat some of the stories that I was told to anyone, and particularly that such things were not suitable for any ‘book’ that I might be intending to write. This condition was placed upon my activity as an anthropologist on several occasions during the course of my fieldwork, not only at Kardang gonpa with the Karzhapa, but also at Rangri, discussing the Thakur family history. Throughout the thesis, I maintain respect for the wishes of those who assisted me in my fieldwork. The following account of that day, and the route around Karzha describes the outer journey.60

The Khora of Drilburi

In 1983, I accompanied all the residents of Kardang Gonpa and Lama Gonpa, and some of the villagers on the day-long circumambulation (khora, nékor). This begins with a visit to Jabjez Gonpa, in Kardang village, before sunrise, though those of us at the gonpa left this visit for our return journey. As the sun was rising, after we had been joined by those villagers accompanying us, we climbed slowly up

60Within the Tibetan tradition, pilgrimage (nékor) includes not only the notion of travelling to a sacred place, but going around it. For other treatments of pilgrimage, particularly in the Tibetan and Indian traditions see (Aziz 1982; 1987); Bowman (1985); Jha (1985); Macdonald (1985). See also footnote 40.
the mountain side behind Kardang, towards NyimaFed Latse (nyi ma phyed la rtse, ‘mid-day peak’), and the pass which leads across to the Chandra valley. In the past, this triangular peak was used for measuring the passage of time in the valley. It is associated with a local guardian spirit, who received a brief acknowledgement as we crossed the pass.61

After some hours, during which people either said mantras under their breath as they slowly climbed up the mountain-side following the zig-zag path, or talked quietly with their companions where the path was wider and even or when they stopped to rest, we traversed a narrow ridge. Then, finally, we came to face Drilburi for the first time. In full view of the bell-shaped peak, incense was burnt, and offerings made at the stone shrine. Many prayer-flags flapped in the wind and stones carved with mantras are piled high. Some people had brought freshly printed prayer-flags which they erected. Each person went about his or her own devotions, facing Drilburi and making full-length prostrations on the stony earth, and offering prayers.

We had intended to make only the outer khora, descending from this ridge, without approaching the inner sanctum, which requires traversing some very unstable slopes where no path is marked. While the majority of the party began their descent, Lama Paljor Lharje asked me if I was prepared to continue, and negotiated with the Nyerpa (gnyer pa, ‘manager’) of Kardang Gonpa for permission to do so. This inner khora is not only physically dangerous, but is regarded as a powerful and possibly dangerous spiritual encounter. The majority of practitioners are satisfied with the outer khora which leads to Gondhla and a good view of the large cave above Sila Gonpa which is associated with Gotsangpa.62

I was duly warned of these things and told of another Westerner who had ventured this way. Some years ago, about 1970, a young Englishwoman who was interested in Tibetan Buddhism came to Kardang Gonpa, and against the advice of the practitioners, set out alone towards Drilburi. She didn’t return. Finally the next summer, after an extensive search over several months, her remains were found, where it is assumed she fell to her death after losing her way in the storm

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61 For further discussion see Chapter 4.

62 See footnote 55.
that had gathered that afternoon. This episode had caused a lot of trouble for the gonpa, and the Indian administrators in Kyelang, and there were to be no repeats.

Although it was a little misty, I was permitted to proceed, accompanied by Lama Paljor and six other men, four of them lay practitioners.

When we had finished many rounds of Drilburi, where we met a group of young girls from Kyelang, we began our descent which brought us to Guru Ghantal, and magnificent views of the Chandra Bhaga confluence below, and the Chandrabhaga valley.

Guru Ghantal is now protected by a gleaming, sloping corrugated iron roof, which although unsightly, prevents moisture from entering the building during the winter. The ceiling is painted with the mandala of Cakrasamvara, but most of the statues are now kept in Tupcheling Gonpa, further down the path which leads to the confluence. After visiting Tupcheling, we went down to the confluence, and sat beside the chorten for a while, then began the walk back to Kardang on the track on the left bank, arriving at sunset. Before proceeding up to the gonpa, we visited Jabjez, the imprints Gotsangpa had left in the rock.

Most of the company had finished their khora earlier in the afternoon. As we approached the gonpa we heard the sounds of bells and drums, as the practitioners chanted the chöd (gcod), each in their own small house.

This view of the spiritual ground of practice in Karzha Khandroling, the sacred geography, provides the foundation for the study of the activity of the practitioners from Kardang Gonpa, adherents of the Drukpa Kargyu. It is within this perspective of the sacred geography of Karzha, rather than the Indian administrators’ concerns with development and resource management, that I have endeavoured to situate my narrative, since it is within this perspective that the Karzhapa, for the most part, make sense of their own lives. Yet this whole question of contrasting and interweaving perspectives, carrying with it issues of concern to much contemporary ethnography, needs more discussion before I proceed with my account of the Karzhapas and their world. Chapter 3 provides that discussion.

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63 Each of the eight cremation grounds is marked by a stupa, a tree, a naga (in a lake or spring), and a mountain. See Tucci (1949: Vol II:542) and footnote 46.
ABOVE: The cave of Gahsangpa above Sila Gonpa with char-ten and a now unused meditator's house.

Evidence of the Moravians in this rock carving at Zingzingbar, a remote, uninhabited place near the source of the Bhaga River:

"Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet he shall live. (St John 11, xxv)"

Tandi village at the confluence of the Chandrabhaga. Note the flat roofs with grass drying, and the new corrugated iron roofs of several houses.
The geographical and historical sketch given in Chapters 1 and 2 reveals something of the character of the field area. In this chapter I discuss twentieth century Lahul, and provide the framework within which this material is ordered. In so doing I indicate my research interests and discuss theoretical issues pertinent to the discipline of anthropology.

The first quarter of the twentieth century was a period of religious revival, with at least three small village gonpas or hermitages being built in Karzha, all affiliated with the Drukpa Kargyu. One of these, Kardang Gonpa, is now the biggest and most active gonpa in Lahul.

The dynamic relationship between this religious revival, and the social, political and economic changes which have taken place in Lahul simultaneously, are conceived of within this thesis, for heuristic purposes, as two opposing directions or 'impulses' of change. The structure of the thesis arises out of this framework used for describing and analysing social and cultural change, which is developed in this chapter.

Thus, in Section II of the thesis, after presenting an ethnography of the village in Chapter 4, I trace the foundation and growth of Kardang Gonpa in detail in Chapter 5, assessing the social conditions which led to its establishment. The relationship between village and gonpa, and lay person and spiritual practitioner, is explored. In Section III (Chapters 6 and 7), the continuity of the Drukpa practice lineage in Karzha is examined against the changing political and economic conditions. Within this context I consider the simultaneous demise or deterioration of other gonpa in Lahul.

This leads me to conclude that the resurgence in the Drukpa practice lineage in Karzha, and its continuation today is primarily attributable to the activities of the teachers and practitioners within the tradition, who both support and are supported by the lay community. Although founding gonpa and building chorten, both religious acts or performances which occur relatively infrequently, as
well as the sponsoring of ritual performances, which occurs on a more or less continual basis, are dependant upon some disposable wealth and thus the support of the lay community, the continuity of Buddhist cultural practice is found to derive principally from the spiritual practitioners themselves, supported by the villagers, who are involved in a process of culturally establishing and creating the ethnic identity of the entire community, in their practice of Tibetan Buddhism. This cultural transmission is not simply a replication of the past, but is context-sensitive and emergent (Bruner 1986b).

The revitalisation of spiritual practice in Karzha is directly related to the efflorescence of Tibetan Buddhism which took place in Kham (khams, East Tibet) in the nineteenth century, in what has come to be called the Rime (ris med) movement.¹ The Khampa spiritual teacher, Togdan Shakya Shri (rtogs ldan sha kya shri 1853-1919), a holder of both Dzogchen and Chagchen lineages and an accomplished practitioner of the Naro Chödrug, the Six Yogas of Naropa, is the principal figure through whom this connection with East Tibet was made. Both Shakya Shri's disciples and his descendants have played an important role in the continuity of spiritual practice in Karzha.

In order to further elucidate the significance of the teachers and spiritual practitioners in the revitalisation of the Drukpa practice lineage in Karzha, in Section IV (Chapters 8 and 9) of the thesis I examine the stories and oral biographies that I collected about the small group of Karzhapa who travelled to Kham and studied under the guidance of Togdan Shakya Shri early this century.

One of these men, Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche, was to return to Karzha with instructions to establish the present Kardang Gonpa, which he did in 1912. Norbu Rinpoche was one of the three lineage holders or 'heart sons' (thuksé, thugs sras) of Shakya Shri, the others being the Ladakhpa Tripon Pema Chögyal (khrid dpon padma chos rgyal) who later settled in Dingri, and the Drukpa (Bhutanese) Lopon Sonam Zangpo (slob dpon bsod nams bzang po). Norbu Rinpoche received relative fame throughout parts of Tibet and Zangskar as well as in his homeland Karzha.

¹For information about Kham in the nineteenth century see Smith, E.G. (1969a; 1970a; 1971a; 1971b); Tashi Tsering (1985); Samuel (n.d. 1). On the Rime movement see also the Appendix to this thesis.
I precede the examination of the oral biographies with an examination of the genre of namthar (nam thar), the hagiographies of the Tibetan tradition. This allows me to assess the dominant narratives in the biographies of spiritual practitioners, which enables me to develop and amplify the 'voice' of the Karzhapa with regard to these historical events. In my conclusion, I evaluate what the material and arguments presented in the thesis contribute to our general understanding of religious processes in Tibetan society.

Narratives of Anthropologists and Their Subjects

A key issue that the recent analysis of the ethnographic process has brought to the surface, evidence of the relexivity of the 'new ethnography', is a greater awareness of the extent to which the framework used by the ethnographer shapes the interpretation of the field data. Furthermore, the collection of research material is a selective process, dependent upon the theoretical interests of the ethnographer. Presumably, ethnographers have been aware of this all along, but as the twentieth century draws to a close, it is possible to examine in hindsight significant trends in the framing of ethnography.

In the study of cultural change there has been a dramatic shift in the framing of ethnographic narrative. Edward Bruner (1986a) describes this reframing in the ethnographic studies of North American Indian culture change, finding a dramatic transition from one narrative structure to another within the course of the decade after WWII, with little historical continuity between the two dominant stories:

In the 1930s and 1940s the dominant story constructed about Native American culture change saw the present as disorganization, the past as glorious, and the future as assimilation. Now, however, we have a new narrative: the present is viewed as a resistance movement, the past as exploitation, and the future as ethnic resurgence... The theoretical concepts associated with the outmoded story, such as acculturation and assimilation, are used less frequently and another set of terms has become prominent: exploitation,
oppression, colonialism, resistance, liberation, independence, nationalism, tribalism, identity, tradition and ethnicity — the code words of the 1970s. (Bruner 1986a:139-140)

Bruner points out that an adequate understanding of this shift in structuring narrative requires a consideration of how the present shapes, and is shaped by the past, and the future; and of the larger political system within which the cultural change occurs.

In the 1930's and 1940's, it was assumed that Native Indian culture would disintegrate and disappear. Further, this was not seen as problematical, and the 'present' which was under anthropological investigation was interpreted with this outcome projected into the future. Native American Indian culture belonged in the past. In the 1970's the future of Native American culture is framed in terms of resurgence, and the preservation of culture and ethnic identity. Now, Native American Indian culture belongs in the future. Thus ethnographic narrative is framed, and meaning given to social and cultural events, in terms of social change.

These ethnographic narratives are not only structures of meaning, but are structures of power:

The assimilation story has been a mask for oppression; the resistance story is a justification for claims of redress for past exploitation. Both carry policy and political implications. The reasoning in the assimilation narrative is that if Indians are going to disappear anyway, then their land can be leased or sold to whites; in the ethnic resurgence narrative we are told that if Indians are here to stay, tribal resources must be built up... The two narratives... are dual aspects of the same phenomena; one is a counterpoint to the other... each contains a basic contradiction. The assimilation story leads to outside pressures for change, which thereby generate resistance. The resistance story, in time will lead to a greater security in the people's own culture and identity, making it easier to change more rapidly and thereby facilitate assimilation. In any case, there also was resistance in the 1930s and acculturation in the 1970s, for the dual processes of change and persistence, of acculturation and nationalism, have occurred simultaneously throughout Indian history. (Bruner 1986a:144-145)

Bruner's argument deals with Native American Indian culture, about which a considerable body of ethnographic research has been created during the course
of this century, allowing Bruner retrospectively to assess the changes in the structuring narrative of ethnography. As indicated in the preceding chapters, there has been comparatively little research among the ethnic minorities of the Indian sub-continent, and particularly of the Himalaya. However, as I have suggested, the concerns of the different groups who have investigated Lahuli culture and society: particularly the British, the Moravians, and the Indian administrators; are evident in the respective content of information and in the implicit structural framing of social change.

The story of exploitation, resistance and resurgence can be regarded as one of the dominant structures of social change employed by the social analyst in the post-colonial era not only in Native American culture, but internationally. In the fifties, this structure was framed in terms of disrupted equilibriums, derived from the cybernetic model. Currently, the view that time awareness is of paramount importance to human existence is being incorporated into the social analysts' understanding of social change.

Moreover, the historical dimension to ethnography is now generally understood to require the consideration of two questions: "How did the past create the present?"; and its reflex, "How does the present create the past?" The present has become the hinge or pivot between past and future. (Chapman et al. 1989:1).

In such approaches to the anthropological understanding of social change, causal explanations are still sought, but their terms are historically emerging. This results in an interpretive understanding of the process of change which detects influences whilst recognising unpredictability. The social analyst cannot predict the future, and in development policy, when this is often an aim of the administrator, surprises, failures and the unexpected prevail.

An External Perspective on Lahul: The Administrators' Narrative

A theme central to my discussion of social change during the twentieth century in Lahul is that of ethnic identity, and its maintenance through the practice and transmission of culture, particularly the spiritual practices of Tibetan

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3See discussion of Wallace, below, for instance.
Buddhism. This concern with ethnic identity is derived from the Karzhapa's frequently expressed concern about how they are perceived by the politically dominant — the administrators, and the representatives of Hindu plains-India with whom they increasingly interact. Here I shall look in some detail at the ways in which Lahul is perceived by its administrators and by other non-Lahuli Indians who come there.

Since Independence in 1947, India has been striving for political unity in the face of the diversity of many different ethnic groups. Today, in the north west, she faces the intent of secession by the Sikh inhabitants of the state of Punjab, and attempts by the Moslems of Kashmir to realign their political affiliation in accordance with their religious ties, as part of Pakistan. The mountainous border with Tibet — politically The Peoples Republic of China — remains contested, open to incursion, and extremely difficult to defend. In this political environment the Government of India (G.O.I.) is extremely sensitive about the small pockets of ethnic minorities inhabiting these isolated Himalayan valleys near the border, and is anxious to integrate them into the fabric of Indian society (see Map 1). Some of the social and developmental concerns upon which the G.O.I. places emphasis have been discussed in Chapter 1. The political agenda which comes with the development policy of the G.O.I. must be seen to significantly influence the way in which ethnic minorities, 'Scheduled Tribes', are perceived, and administered.

Lahul has undergone rapid economic change since the road was built over the Rohtang Pass, allowing the introduction of potato as a cash crop in the 1970's. With the road and the many buses which travel into Lahul each summer, there has been a growing number of Indian and foreign visitors to the region, and to Kardang Gonpa. Several of these visitors are confused by the situation that confronts them at the gonpa and harbour strong misconceptions about the nature of Tibetan Buddhism, and the lives of the spiritual practitioners. Throughout the ensuing chapters I unravel some of these issues.

It is worthwhile to examine briefly some of the popular publications about Lahuli society available in India, since Lahuli people are quite concerned about how they are presented in these writings. Apart from Tobdan, who is atypical in

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*It is not only in the north-west that India faces difficulties. Attention is focussed on the field area in this discussion.*
that he has explored the majority of source material available on Lahuli culture in the process of writing his book (1984), most Lahuli people are aware only of these popular publications, and the census and administrative Gazetteers. On several occasions I was asked if I had seen these publications. I was also asked to assist in redressing some of the misconceptions about Lahuli society, and more generally about their practice of Buddhism, and the perpetuation of these matters in print, which has fanned the fantasies of some who come to Kardang Gonpa as ‘tourists with intent’. I shall cite one example, which is not atypical, although the majority of tourists are trekkers who come to Lahul with the different intention of experiencing the wild and uninhabited mountains. They tend to pass quickly through Lahul, to the end of the bus route at Darcha, and on to Zangskar and Ladakh, and do not take the time to visit the local gonpa.5

During the summer of 1982, a well-educated Indian family from Bombay holidaying in the mountains came to visit the gonpa. As they had heard about me, they sought me out, and assaulted me with a barrage of questions about the use of bhang and hashish, and the sexual orgies and tantric practices they were sure took place within the confines of this Tibetan gonpa. They simply did not believe that their view was wrong, excitedly maintaining that I was obviously hiding the truth as these things were secret. They indicated that they were somewhat experienced tantrically, and would like to be initiated into these Tibetan practices. I was at a loss as to how to discourage these people, much less untangle their misunderstandings. A brief tour of the lhakhang (lha khang, ‘shrine rooms’) and an inspection of the wall thangka (thang ka, ‘paintings’)6 featuring the strong sexual symbolism of the yab-yum (father-mother) deities only added fuel to their fire.

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5Crook describes these tourists and trekkers in Zangskar:
...large trekking parties of often rather exhausted Europeans, making their way either irritably or enthusiastically from one Gonpa to another and attended by a retinue of mules and servants (often sherpas) arranged by a trekking company. These visitors passed quickly along the main track from Manali in a well-meant but rather incomprehending manner (Crook 1980:143).

6The wall paintings in Kardang Gonpa, unlike those in many of the gonpa in the Western Himalaya, are painted on canvas and fixed in frames to the wall, rather than painted directly onto the earthen walls. Consequently, they are regarded as thangka. See discussion in Chapter 5.
The people at the gonpa were nonplussed by the assumptions and accusations, and relieved that I was there to deal with these particular visitors. Previous encounters with this type of tourist had been difficult, and a source of acute embarrassment and aggravation for the Kardangpa, although I was told that tourists are rarely as insistent as was this particular group. Most are simply curious, although ignorant of polite dress and behaviour in the precincts of a gonpa, and thoughtless about leaving a donation to cover the cost of the tea and biscuits they are invariably offered out of the personal food supply of one or other of the practitioners.7

Popular information about Lahul is available in the District Gazetteers and in the publications of the Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) Tourist Bureau. While not totally reliable in the presentation of 'facts' these publications are well-intentioned and relatively benign.8 There are also a few travelogue-style accounts of the area

7Although Moslems and Hindus employ strict codes of conduct in relation to their own religious temples, applying the same respect to Buddhist temples does not necessarily follow. For instance a cigarette may be just the thing after the long walk from Kyelang, but foul smoke is regarded as very offensive (unlike incense). Jeans or shorts may be regarded as ideal trekking clothes by western women (particularly), but revealing the shape of the female body in this manner is thought to be extremely suggestive and 'loose'. There are no tea shops or restaurants in Kardang Gonpa nor the village so all visitors enter into the private arena of the people's lives, and all supplies are carried from Kyelang, the closest bazaar. Crook comments on the behaviour of trekkers in a gonpa in Zangskar:

In general most behaved with appropriate decorum but a feminine attire reminiscent of the Riviera, the firing of flash bulbs, intrusive photography during ceremonies and a tendency to pry into every corner often tactlessly were sources of growing concern to the monks (Crook 1980:145).

8The officers of the Indian Civil Service and other Government departments compiling literature on these remote regions are frequently unable to carry out first hand extensive research on the minority peoples they govern, nor are they trained to do so. Consequently they rely on information gathered by officers of the British Raj, and to a lesser extent, by the Moravians. This data is not infrequently limited or simply incorrect. Some 'facts', by virtue of their repeated publication, are accepted at face value despite the relative ease with which correction could take place. For instance, Kardang Gonpa is said to be very old (twelfth century) and to have been renovated in 1912 by Lama Norbu (Government of Himachal Pradesh 1975:55, 275; Handa 1987:67). There are, in fact, two different gonpa, the older one in the village, and another built in 1912 about half an hour's walk above Kardang village (see Chapter 5). Also see, for instance, the historian S.S. Charak's many volumed work, th History and Culture of Himalayan States (1978, 1979a, 1979b, 1980 etc), which is essentially a recompilation of all the older studies. Its value lies in making available information in these earlier publications now difficult to obtain, but it lacks new information, at least about the people of Lahul. Also, there have been shortcomings in the methods of collecting more recent information. One Lahuli man in particular has become 'the expert' on his own culture and has been frequently employed by Government Officials. As is well known, the results of such 'colonial armchair anthropology' are often unreliable. Some people in Lahul hold this man in poor regard, at least in part because of the (mis)information he has put about in official circles.
written by respected Indian officials, notably G.D. Khosla, a High Court Judge stationed in Simla who retired in Manali, and who toured the region on several occasions, visiting Kardang Gonpa in 1950 and 1953 (see Khosla, G.D. 1956 and 1980); M.S. Gill, the Deputy Commissioner stationed in Kyelang in 1962 (Gill 1977 and 1979); and M.S. Randhawa, post-partition Deputy Commissioner of Delhi whose hobby was collecting paintings, especially of the Kangra school, which led him on several tours through the Himalayan foothills, and a visit to Kardang Gonpa in 1952 (Randhawa 1974).

It is particularly from these works that the majority of educated Indians (including Government officials) interested in the minority populations of their country, or in adventurous travel in the Himalaya, learn about Lahul and Spiti. Gill is the main authority, with his two books devoted to the region, *Himalayan Wonderland — Travels in Lahaul-Spiti* (1979), and *Folk Tales of Lahaul* (1977). He lived there for nearly a year as Deputy Commissioner, the second officer to be posted since the creation of the district in 1960-61, and among the first to spend winter there. Advised by the Chief Secretary in Chandigarh to be an "amateur anthropologist" (1979:1-3), and sensitive to the effects of the new era Gill "took part in their festivals and fairs, and tried to identify [himself] with their lives and longings."(1979:vii) His books are of considerable interest and written to captivate his audience. As he says:

> The setting up of a district administration with concentrated work on community development, health and education, was bound to have an impact on the people very soon. Apart from raising the standard of living and reducing the harshness of existence, such contact was likely to change and modify the social values and customs of the people. Time-honoured traditions and values would soon crumble under the bulldozer effect of new cultural influences. I wanted to record something of the life and values of the people of Lahaul before this finally happened. (1979:vii)

In the light of Bruner's argument presented above, a few generalisations may be made about these publications, and their effects. Throughout most of the recent material available about Lahul the view of the inevitability (and often desirability) of social and cultural 'improvement' accompanied by economic 'development' pervades. As discussed in the previous chapter, Government policy, while
respecting cultural differences (to a greater or lesser extent), has clearly sought to
minimise aspects of cultural individuality among its ethnic minorities in order to
create a stronger political unity - the process of Pan-Indianisation. Gill and the
others present Lahuli social customs as quaint, unusual, perhaps fascinating, but
also as backward and inferior. There is little room here for a positive conception
of the individuality of Lahuli society, or for a recognition that it might be
appropriate for its distinctive aspects to be maintained and strengthened as Lahul
becomes part of modern India.

Thus, through focussing attention, often in an unnecessarily dramatic and
poorly informed way, on the bizarre and 'backward' aspects of Lahul, these
writings have created obstacles to a proper understanding of Lahuli society, and so
hampered the Lahuli people's integration into the broader Indian economic and
political context. Moreover, the Lahuli people feel the integrity of their identity has
been unreasonably damaged. They are familiar with these publications, and
attribute the attitude of the Bombay tourists, and others like them, to Gill and
Khosla.

Of particular concern to the Karzhapa are comments about Kunga Rinpoche
and Apo Rinpoche, two religious teachers of the Drukpa tradition who are greatly
revered by the Karzhapa. Khosla describes Kunga Rinpoche as lecherous,
imagining orgies of self-indulgence with provocative and attractive young nuns
(Khosla, G.D. 1956:208). The practitioners at Kardang Gonpa were rather curt with
Khosla's enquiries about tantric practices, and his desire to see tantric feats

9Please refer to previous chapter. From the Indian viewpoint there is no distinction
made between the Karzhapa and the other ethnic groups within Lahul. This discussion has
been generalised to refer to all of Lahul, as few of the readers of these publications would
differentiate between groups in Lahul. Bear in mind, however, that Lahulis from Tod
Valley, for instance, might not feel as much concern about misrepresentations involving the
Karzhapa, and Kardang Gonpa.

10In this chapter I am focussing on misconceptions. Other issues, such as polyandrous
marriage practices are discussed in the next chapter. The Lahuli people are well aware of
the significance of such issues, and are skilled at the art of 'impression management' (see
Chapter 2). For instance, they now maintain that polyandry does not occur, for they have
learnt that from an Indian perspective, the only form of multiple marriage that would be
condoned is polygyny. So they certainly didn't want me writing about Lahuli women
marrying several brothers, and were initially reluctant to discuss this topic. They told me
that although this happened in the past, they now married one to one. Their understanding
of my activity (at one level) was that I was writing a book. As the only books written about
them recently are those currently under discussion they were, with reason, very sensitive
as to my impressions. With time confidence was gained, leaving me with the task in hand.
demonstrated, and he finds then unfriendly and uncommunicative about these matters (1956:208). Gill quotes Khosla in a footnote saying that the charge of lechery is unfair and that Kunga Rinpoche is respected in Lahul.\footnote{Khosla's language is geared to grasp the attention of his reader. Gill's presentation of the quotation in full in his footnote has the same effect. I was particularly requested by the Karzhapa to address this issue, and rectify the misconceptions in my 'book', but not to again repeat what Khosla had said, as Gill had done.}

However, in the text of Gill's book, he refers to Apo Rinpoche ("Hishe Rangdol" — \textit{sic}) as "Parson Adams" and to Kunga Rinpoche as "Jimmy Durant" (\textit{sic}; Gill 1979:60-62). The Lahulis (not only Karzhapa) who spoke to me about Gill's book did not know that much about Jimmy Durante nor Parson Adams, but they certainly did not like the style nor tone which Gill used to describe his meeting with these two revered teachers at Kardang Gonpa.

Khosla's \textit{Himalayan Circuit} (1956), given authority with its Foreword by the then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, is largely responsible for the view of Tantric Buddhism as debauched. \textit{Kye} (\textit{dkyil} or \textit{skyid}) Gonpa in Spiti, and the imagined lives of its inhabitants, form the basis of Khosla's description of the practice of Tibetan Buddhism or Lamaism, "perhaps the most utterly corrupt form of religion of the Gautam," and (we are told) contaminated and debased in Spiti and Lahul by local superstition, keeping its hold on the people through terrorism (Khosla, G.D. 1956:112). Khosla likens the existence of the monks from Kye to that of pigs in a styne, with charges of washing only at birth and after death, and not after defecating (to the horror of the purity conscious Hindu/Sikh reader) not to mention alcoholism, fornication, sexual excesses and homosexuality, and being ignorant of what the teaching of the Buddha meant (Khosla, G.D. 1956:77, 108).

Understandably, given such adverse publicity, Lahulis feel that Indian/Hindu people denigrate them. Rather than informing the reader about the lives and culture of these ethnic minorities in India, \textit{Himalayan Circuit} reflects poorly upon this Supreme Court Judge's assessment of cultures other than his own.

Such a perception of the lives and culture of minority groups in India not only excites unwanted interest (such as that of the above-mentioned Bombay tourists), but also encourages an administrative desire to Indianise such minorities. Moreover, it creates mistrust among the people of any interest from outsiders, especially plains Indians and administrators. In recent years, the H.P. Government
has trained a new breed of civil servant, including intelligent and motivated people from the hill regions and ethnic minorities, who are working to smooth the way through understanding.\footnote{Subhash Negi, a Kinnauri, and D.C. of Lahul Spiti during part of my field work, is a good example of the younger breed of administrator. He is from a poorer, rural family, and through his application to his studies has successfully trained within the Indian Civil Service and gained a position with relatively high status.}

Obtaining research permission for Lahul from the G.O.I. was a difficult and lengthy process, due to the proximity to several international borders. I agreed that the results of this research would be made available to both the H.P. Government, and the G.O.I. I intend to generate understanding of the society and culture of Lahul, and the dynamics of social change. My field research was conducted twenty years after Gill began to record something of the way of life in these isolated valleys. There have been many changes, yet the resilience of these people and their lifestyle is clear. This becomes apparent if we turn to view Lahul from an internal perspective, that of the Karzhapa themselves. This internal perspective is the main focus within my thesis.

An Internal Perspective on Lahul: The Karzhapas’ Narrative

Certainly, an increasing number of outside influences affect the lives of the people of Karzha. The summer of 1983 saw a video machine run by a generator operating at one of the enterprising restaurants in Kyelang, the administrative capital of Lahul, showing such delights as Octopussy. This entertained not only a large number of itinerant workers who now enter Lahul for the potato season, but also many of the villagers, and certainly some of the younger gonpa members. Such change certainly affects the traditional art of story telling, which is discussed later in relation to the oral biographies of spiritual practitioners (Section IV).

However, it was also during the summer of 1983 that two of the older men from Kardang village decided that they should seek the cooperation of some of the Lamas at Kardang Gonpa, and build a new chorten in the village. This event is described in detail in Chapter 7. As mentioned in the Introduction, a chorten (mchod rten, stupa Skt.) may be simply conceived of as a symbol of the enlightened
mind of the Buddha, and is the symbol *par excellence* of Buddhism. It can also be considered to be a symbolic representation of balance, relatedness and integration between all things, a microcosm which is reflected in the macrocosm of the universe.

At present, I consider the reasons given by these two men for building this chorten. Their intentions were clear, and their reasons pressing. They felt that outside influences were becoming too great, and eroding their (Tibetan) Buddhist identity. Some of the young men were leaving to study in Chandigarh, Simla and even Delhi, and were forgetting the ways of Karzha. Many families now had apple orchards or small hotels in the Kulu-Manali Valley, such enterprises being made possible from the profits of the potato harvests. Family members were now permanently residing at these new properties, becoming less and less involved in the life of the village. A few young men from Lahul were squandering their families’ newly-found wealth and ruining their health, using the drugs freely available in Manali. These outside influences were becoming greater and greater, and closer — witness the video in the restaurant in Kyelang.

These two men decided that building a large chorten in the village would reaffirm the villagers’ adherence to Buddhism, and that it would ‘wake up’ the younger people, before they had completely forgotten the ways of their fathers. The people of Kardang decided that being Buddhist; Drukpa Kargyu; Tibetan; Mahayana (Skt.); Vajrayana; depending upon the perspective, is important — and that building a chorten, the symbol *par excellence* of Buddhism, struck close to the core of their identity. I take up this point of identity later.

This quite clear statement of intention, and the co-operation between the community members in this activity, recalls Wallace’s work on revitalization

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13See the text which introduces Section III.

14In 1980–81 when I commenced fieldwork, hashish was readily available in Manali, and used by both locals and some tourists (Indian and Westerners). During 1982 a number of Afghani refugees moved into the valley, introducing a trade in heroin, which was both freely available and cheap. All sorts of economic and social disruptions resulted, including murder. The people of Manali rallied together and forced the Afghans to leave town.

15In this instance it was enterprising Lahulis from Kyelang who introduced the video shows, true to their reputation as shrewd business people.
movements, which he defines as "deliberate, organized, conscious effort[s] by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture" (Wallace 1956:265). Implicit in Wallace's structure of social change is the notion that the people perceive aspects of their situation to be unsatisfactory and that they interpret this dissatisfaction and the associated stress as the result of acculturation, characteristically the contact between a 'traditional' society and Western or European society.

Wallace asserts that 'revitalization movements' are often sectarian or religious in nature, centring around a prophet or charismatic figure who provides the impetus for the movement, which may become political rather than religious (Wallace 1956).

It is reasonable to characterize the revival of the Drukpa tradition of Buddhism in Karzha as a revitalisation movement, but other aspects of Wallace's work are more problematic for my purposes. Like the slightly later writers on Melanesian 'cargo-cults' such as Peter Worsley (1970) or Kenelm Burridge (1971), Wallace's work, which focussed on Native American movements, was part of the transition from Bruner's 'assimilation' story to his 'resistance' story. While Wallace gives the Native Americans a more active role within the narrative, he still operates on the assumption, familiar also from British structural-functionalism, that the traditional society is normally in a 'steady state' — the principle of homeostasis which Wallace finds analogous to the organic (Wallace 1956:265). This 'frozen moment' view is used to isolate a 'significant change' in the process of change, but it has come to seem increasingly unrealistic since Wallace's time. The process of change is better understood within a conceptual framework which acknowledges that all things are in constant flux. Neither 'culture' nor 'society' is fixed. The reifications by the analyst warp understanding of the process of change, and indeed of what, precisely, is changing.

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16 The dialogue between physics, especially quantum mechanics and other scientific disciplines could be examined in order to incorporate concepts pertaining to the 1990's, rather than the cybernetics model current in the 1950's (Mansfield 1990, Samuel 1990). Suffice in this context to limit discussion to the realm of social change. Gill's view of the change being wrought upon Lahuli society (quoted above) is one example of the ossification of "time-honoured traditions and values" emphasising the "bulldozer effect of new cultural influences." (1979:vii)
Certainly there is little reason to assume that Lahul was in a steady state prior to the early years of this century. As discussed in the previous chapter, the route across the Inner Himalaya, through Lahul, has been frequently travelled through the centuries. The information available from the Tibetan textual sources, supported by iconographic evidence, highlights certain periods of interest, notably the seventh to eleventh centuries and the Siddha tradition, the thirteenth-century pilgrimages of the Drukpa lamas Gotsangpa and Orgyanpa, and the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries during which time several gonpa were built. This suggests that there have periods of greater religious activity interspersed with periods of relatively less. However, we should not assume that Lahuli culture was in any way static in these intervening periods. Rather, we must acknowledge that there are considerable gaps in our knowledge of the history of the region, and develop an analytical framework which accommodates these historical biases.

A less cumbersome analysis of the processes involved requires a more sophisticated understanding of diachronic change, combined with an acknowledgement of the perspective of analysis as well as biases of history.

Threads Within the Fabric of Time

A useful image here is that of a fabric, stretching through time, which is made up of many interwoven threads. In consciously isolating interweaving threads, we acknowledge that each gives only a partial perspective, and each is defined in part by its significance for us, the observer and analyst. A more radical or revolutionary change occurs when a new thread is introduced to the 'fabric' of a society. In Lahul, the potato and the road over the Rohtang combined to form such a component, that of 'cash crop'. I use this image of interweaving threads as a basis for understanding the continuing processes of change in Lahuli society.

Analytically, the reduction of the interweaving strands to two can be useful, emphasising on the one hand the 'external' forces with which the object of study (a particular society, village etc.) comes into contact, and on the other those 'internal' forces which provide cohesion and identity for the same. From this
perspective, then, the forces of Pan-Indianisation may be regarded as 'external', and Drukpa revitalisation as 'internal'.

Implicit in this analytic reduction is the possibility of examining the interaction between the two (external and internal) in terms of cause and effect. This is critical for the sophistication of the conceptual framework. To regard 'traditional' society as static in time is limited, despite its apparent resilience and stability.

Staal similarly uses the conceptual opposition between internal and external in his analysis of the Vedic ritual tradition:

*External* chance developments arise when different cultures or features of different cultures come together by change (sic chance) and combine into new structures. We have seen such elements — 'Hindu,' 'Buddhist,' 'Muslim,' 'animist' — come together and form 'mixtures,' 'amalgams,' 'totalities,' 'syncretisms' - whatever scholars have called them... *Internal* chance developments arise within a ritual tradition... (Staal 1986:214-215).

The object of my analysis is not limited to ritual, nor is it my concern to focus on 'chance' *per se*, which is Staal's concern. Yet the methodology is useful for my purposes. By differentiating between that which is taken to be 'internal' and that which is regarded as 'external' in a particular culture I reveal my vantage point: the perspective from which I am ordering fieldwork phenomena.

Internal forces which contribute to group cohesiveness, such as the social and cultural acts through which ethnic identity is established and maintained, may be instrumental in the process of change. As a consequence of external stimulus the cultural transmission of these social and cultural acts may be energised. This is the concept of 'revitalisation': to stimulate again or to bring alive that which is seen to exist 'internally' as part of a society. The continuation of any societal form depends upon continual re-enactment, and simply *in the act* there is scope for change, whether by chance, as concerns Staal, or with intent, or as an unanticipated effect of an act intended to have another effect. This attention on the acts, the doing or
practice of culture brings an immediacy to analysis, and has become a central issue in theorising.\(^{17}\) Furthermore, causality may be imputed on the basis of linear correlation in time between external and internal, and some sense as to the relative importance of possible causes suggested, whether primary or secondary, for any cultural or social configuration. This interpretive process is necessarily a retrospective one, in so far as results are often unexpected or unanticipated.

In Lahul, and specifically Karzha, one of the main (if not the main) indicators of identity is the people’s adherence to Tibetan Buddhism (see above). This they share with several ethnic groups throughout the Himalayas. In her examination of changing ethnic identity in the Humla District, in Nepal’s far northwest Karnali zone, Nancy Levine concludes

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\text{that Tibetan speakers, for example, remain Tibetans or Bhotiya, not because they come from Tibet, but because they act like Tibetans do, supported by specific ecological, economic, and cultural adaptations. (Levine 1987:86, my emphasis).}
\]

From the discussion in the previous chapter, it is apparent that the input from Tibetan regions has occurred over many centuries, increasing and regenerating the practices (the acts) of Tibetan Buddhism. We can trace much of the process of change and revitalisation through following a particular practice lineage, that of the Drukpa Kargyu order, a tradition with a lengthy history in the area.\(^{18}\) The episodes of spiritual awakening in Karzha Khandroling pivot around and are grounded in the pilgrimage sites associated with the Siddha Ghandhapā,

\(^{17}\)The growth of a ‘practice orientation’ in anthropology has been a major theme from the late 1960’s onwards, with Marxist theory, the modified functionalism of the Manchester School, and the work of Pierre Bourdieu among the significant contributors. Sherry Ortner has provided a general survey of these developments (1984), and her own more recent work on the Sherpas, while problematic in several respects (see Chapter 9), attempts to exemplify such an approach (1989a:11-18; 1989b).

\(^{18}\)The understanding of lineage and oral transmission (which is discussed in Section III) is critical to the understanding of the formation and interweavings of the different orders or traditions of Tibetan Buddhism: Nyingmapa, Kargyudpa, Sakya, Gelugpa and Bon (see Samuel, n.d. 1). Such matters are also crucial to understanding the development of the Rime movement, see footnote 1. It is impossible to address these issues adequately in this thesis. Suffice it to note at present that adherence to a particular tradition or lineage of Tibetan Buddhism may be seen as an indicator of ethnic identity within the Tibetan social milieu.
Padmasambhava, Gotsangpa; and with the meditational deity Cakrasamvara; and with the ubiquitous presence of the dakini.19

More detailed information is available about the region after 1857 when the Moravians established their mission initially in Kardang and later in Kyelang. This historical bias enables me to develop a more precise reconstruction of the process of change in Karzha from that time. By focussing on the building of Kardang Gonpa (an event in any case within living memory) I am able to identify the most recent resurgence of Drukpa Kargyu activity which began around the turn of the century and continues to the present time, as is indicated by the construction of the new village chorten in Kardang village in 1983.

While the Karzhapa find their identity in the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, they do not regard themselves as Tibetans. Neither are they regarded as such by Tibetans. They are Karzhapa, or they are Lahuli, depending on the context. They are also Indians, whose lingua franca is now Hindi. Their own language, while related to Tibetan, can not be understood by other Tibetan speakers, nor can the majority of Lahuli people understand Tibetan.

In examining the material from the perspective of ‘Drukpa revitalisation’ I am skewing the data in order to present a particular line or thread of analysis. This is a thoroughly reasonable perspective for data collected from the Karzhapa, particularly from Kardang Gonpa. However, if my chosen field site had been at the pilgrimage site and temple complex of Triloknath, in Pattanam — the Chenab or Chandrabhaga valley, for instance — no doubt the data collected, and hence my perspective on it, would have been quite different. Both would probably have been skewed towards ‘Indianisation,’ because of Hindu religious practices and influences from Chamba.

Considering all the data available on what is now known as Lahul, it is clear that political borders have changed from time to time, and the unity of the present administrative district is at variance with the ethnic fragmentation. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the identity ‘Lahuli’ has been ambiguous, and manipulable, as inhabitants from this region have operated as ‘go-betweens’

19That is, the Three Roots (*rtsa ba gsum*): Lama, Yidam and Khandro. See Chapters 7 and 8 for discussion.
through the trade and pilgrimage corridor of these narrow valleys for centuries. In accordance with this geographical reality the Lahuli experience two directions of 'external' influence — one from Tibet and Central Asia, and the other from India and South Asia.20

When Staal described 'external chance developments' resulting in a mixture or amalgam, a syncretism or totality of Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and animist (see above), he unintentionally described Lahul. More recently, this totality has incorporated 'Moravian', and is now incorporating 'modern Indian'. We know little of past historical vicissitudes. Internal changes are simply the crystallising of the external in that place, continually. Identity realigns over and over again depending upon the circumstances of the present.21

The resultant changes within the society include both the incorporation of outside elements and the more or less conscious reaction, to such outside elements. Examples of elements which have been incorporated are the potato, which has dramatically altered the people's diet and agricultural methods; the use of the tandoor, the tin stove; jaquard knitting of socks, along with other distinctive changes to clothing styles, now a mark of ethnic identity. Reaction has taken place primarily through activity associated with the people's identity as Tibetan Buddhists, such as the building of gonpas, chortens and the like.

In this process of change some external elements have not been fully integrated. For instance, there now remains only one Christian family living near Kyelang. However, while the Moravians were active in Lahul, the majority of the people, including those practitioners from the gonpa, involved themselves in Christian activities, especially church services and the singing of hymns, which it seems for the sake of expediency and cooperation with the Moravians, they were able to incorporate quite happily into their lives.

Due to the written records available there is a wealth of data from which we can detail these events. However, it is erroneous to assume that such significant

20In geographical terms, the 'external' enters Lahul primarily through the northern or southern routes (though to the west lies Spiti, and farther afield, Kailash, the ancient Zhang Zhung; and to the east Chamba, and farther afield Afghanistan, Pakistan, the ancient Gandhara, Oddiyana). See Map 4 and Chapter 2.

21The uncertainty of the details (peoples and cultures, from where and when) makes the search for 'the original' inhabitants fruitless and meaningless.
external influences have occurred only since contact with the Moravians. Karzha (and Lahul generally) has a very extensive history of contact with different peoples of vastly different worlds, although the details have generally not been recorded in written form. The past century and a half for which we have more historical details must be placed within this overall context.\textsuperscript{22}

The concepts and imagery developed above are useful in this context, as the threads which interweave to form the fabric of the situation encountered in the field suggest continuity which could be extrapolated into the past, with extensive research (and if ecological and political events permit, into the future). Further, a method of describing and analysing ‘patterns’ — the flow of and strands within the process of change — is possible.

This discussion of external influences and internal reactions provides only one of the dimensions to the dynamics of change. Another dimension is apparent when we examine the same events from the perspective of the developments occurring within Tibet during the period under examination, and the influence these have had upon Karzha. The diagram on the following page will elucidate.

This diagram represents in a very simple manner the two primary strands of influence experienced in Lahul, and Karzha, over the past one and a half centuries. This representation is symbolic and I have not given greater amplitude to any of the ‘wave’ formations. The central axis which serves to depict linear time is approximate rather than strictly proportional. Rather than viewing this model as two-dimensional, in which case the point where the two different strands intersect with each other and the time axis should have meaning, the strands should be viewed as spirals or helices, moving in three dimensions so that their ‘intersection’ is somewhat amorphous, occurring continuously.

It follows that as events ‘line up’ in probable and perceived time/space continua, the analyst can search for and propose causal relationships. With reference to the diagram as presented, we might suggest for instance that the presence of the Moravians resulted in significant dietary and other life-style

\textsuperscript{22}Connections can be traced between some previous periods of religious revitalisation in Lahul and external political and religious forces. Thus, Nawang Tsering (1979:12) and Nawang Tsering Shakspo (1988:439-40) regard the activity of the Ladakhi lama Trashi Dampel (bkra shis dam 'phel) in the mid-nineteenth century, which extended into Lahul, as a response to the effects of the Dogra invasion on Ladakhi Buddhism.
INTERWEAVING STRANDS OF HISTORY

Rimé in kham, Tögyal Rinpoche (Dr. Togdan Shakya Shri) gains disciples from Karzha.

1850's

The Moravians establish Christian mission originally in Kardang and later at Kyelang.

1900's

Kardangopa Norbu Rinpoche builds Abhi Gonpa (now known as Kardang gonpa) above Kardang village.

Jacquard socks and dress styles change. Potato becomes important to diet.

1950's to 1970's

Road over Rohtang pass and the development of seed potato as a cash crop.

Tulku of son of Shakya Shri and member of his ngagpa lineage, Apo Rinpoche including the infant Se Rinpoche and his family reside at Kardang Gonpa.

1980's

Gegom (Khyantse) begins teaching in Karzha and Se Rinpoche, the tulku of Tripa Pema Chögyal and a member of Shakya Shri's ngagpa lineage returns to Kardang gonpa. Chorten built in Kardang village.

Cash income allows Lahulis to renovate houses. Lahulis establish apple orchards in Manali and build hotels—expand business activities in Kyelang with video shows.
changes in Lahul. Furthermore we might suggest that there were repercussions or
effects which the Moravians did not intend, such as the people’s strengthening their
identity in the sphere in which it was under threat, through building a new gonpa.
We might then extrapolate further, suggesting that the dietary and life-style changes
contributed to the development of a cash crop (though in the case of the potato it
is necessary to introduce other factors to account for the road over the Rohtang,
for instance). And continuing to trace repercussions, we might suggest that the
mission activities of the Moravians, having caused the people to build a new gonpa
(with the appropriate lineage connections) actually resulted in a Tibetan refugee
reincarnate lama residing in Lahul... and so on.

Certainly such ordering of events is ethnographic history, and the analytic
acceptability of the propositions and suggestions of cause and effect that are
offered depends upon how convincing a story or reconstruction can be told. The
depth of the analysis depends upon how far below surface events the analyst can
probe, upon how much situational (ethnographic) data is available and what
perceived connections, relationships and structural patterning can be convincingly
postulated.

I have used two strands corresponding to the two major ‘directions’ or
polarities of influence into Lahul. However, the model could be expanded with as
many other strands as might be found meaningful, for instance, a ‘thread’
representing ‘Hindu’ influence, another ‘Islamic’, another ‘Western’ or ‘European’,
another ‘ancient Bon’, another ‘Tibetan’, and so on. In this manner the depth and
complexity of the analysis is increased. Alternatively, it is possible to delineate
strands called ‘economic’, ‘religious’, ‘political’ and so on.

Rephrasing my position, I am suggesting that in the process of analysing
ethnographic data, events are ordered according to categories of interest, and with
the benefit of hindsight. Once the material has been ordered, analysis involves
perceiving causal relationships and structural patterning which convincingly explain
that which the analyst seeks to explain. At the surface level the outcome is little
more than coherent description; in depth, theorising upon the nature of reality.

In the case of Karzha and Lahul it is meaningful to maintain the polarity of
the direction of influence for my present purpose, that is, to differentiate between
Central Asia and the Indian sub-continent, as this corresponds to the situation 'on the ground'. It should be remembered that there is a significant lack of ethnographic data available on the region, thus some priority is given to coherent ethnographic description.

As is apparent from the above discussion of external influences and internal reactions, I have been speaking from the perspective which begins with the 'black' side of the diagram, as drawn. An equally valid perspective begins with the 'white', that is from the Tibetan side. However, a combination of both perspectives incorporating their interaction provides a more complete understanding, a process is implicit in this diagram.

As I discuss the establishment of Kardang Gonpa and the associated spiritual resurgence against the backdrop of Lahul's increasing integration into a broader Indian context, I therefore explore in greater detail what is in this diagram presented as the 'white' side, a perspective with limitations of which I am well aware.

During my fieldwork I intentionally focussed upon the Drukpa Kargyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and life at Kardang Gonpa, and to a large extent experienced village life in Kardang from the perspective of the gonpa. If I had chosen instead to base my work in the village I may well have found a greater emphasis on the other 'thread' — for instance, the agricultural and dietary changes associated with the potato, the impact of the tandoor stove in house design, wood consumption and cooking methods, the significance of a cash crop, the consequent ability to purchase apple orchards, hotels and other businesses in Manali, and the resultant splitting of the extended family.

It is well to be aware of the concurrent events from this 'thread'. Thus, while the version of the story of the foundation of Kardang gonpa which was told to me gave credit to the inspiration of Togdan Shakya Shri, and I have no reason to doubt the effect of his intervention, the building of a new gonpa may also have been quite

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It is of course a limitation of the two-dimensional representation that causes the model to appear to have a 'right' and a 'left', a 'front' (our viewpoint) and a 'back'. There is no intrinsic reason why we could not view the model from the rear, or from either side, or from any other position, including 'top' and 'bottom'. Further, the diagram could be drawn with the axis running horizontally. It is a matter of convention to assign polarity.
consciously an affirmation of the peoples’ identity in response to the proselytising of the Moravians, as suggested above. It is a matter of how people choose to tell their story, and who is telling it. In this case it is the Karzhapa who feel their identity lies with those things Buddhist and thus their emphasis. Further I quite intentionally attempt to cast their story from a perspective which is meaningful within that culture as well as from a western academic tradition.

The people themselves spoke of the awakening and strengthening of their identity as Buddhists and the importance of the Drukpa practice lineage in that process. Thus I have applied a concept of ‘revitalisation’ which fits the material as it was presented to me by the Karzhapa themselves, and which makes sense to them.

The perspective then is in resonance with the ‘voice’ of the Buddhist Karzhapa, but it is not simply the view of the specialist practitioners. It pervades gonpa and village alike. People spoke to me about ‘waking up’ the Buddhist heart or thinking (Bodhicitta Skt.) especially of the younger generation, by building the chorten in Kardang village, in response to the distractions mentioned above. However, they did not talk about the Moravians much at all, nor did they suggest that the building of Kardang Gonpa was in any way a response to their presence in Kyelang.

The story about the founding of Kardang Gonpa (whatever the ‘facts’) had been cast into a culturally appropriate form: an oral namthar about the spiritual founder. The Kardangpa maintained that the impetus came from Togdan Shakya Shri and was a Drukpa awakening of their Buddhist tradition, a revitalisation inspired from within that tradition.

I have respected these perspectives, supplementing them with additional information as available and appropriate. Sometimes my questioning elicited useful and informative responses, and the material available in the scholarly works of the Moravians has also been used, filling out the data. One wonders if in fifty years there may be a tradition surrounding the now new village chorten.

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\(^{24}\text{Bodhicitta is sometimes translated as ‘Attitude of Enlightenment’. See Hanson, J. (1977:60-61) for a doctrinal explanation of Bodhicitta in Tibetan Buddhist practice. For a discussion on the concept of Bodhicitta in Vajrayana Buddhism, see Samuel (1989).}\)
A Continuing Revitalisation or Pan-Indian Integration?

Significantly, today, although the people’s spiritual and religious practices are under threat as Lahul becomes politically and economically more integrated into the broader Indian context, it is also these very cultural traditions which are being used by the people to increase their sense of ethnic identity and cultural and social cohesiveness. The last thirty years have seen rapid economic change in Lahul, part of the process of change developing throughout the twentieth century. Presently, it is not only the cultural traditions which are threatened by this rapid change, but also the environmental stability and viability of this small high-altitude Himalayan valley. Despite the possible gloom resulting from future projections relating to environmental factors, there is an apparent cultural resilience which seems attributable to the integrative capacity of the people and their vital practice of Tibetan Buddhism.

It is important to keep in mind that the events witnessed during my field work, and the details collected of events occurring this century, are simply fragments in an ongoing process which has been taking place since beginningless time. That this region has been subject to differing cultural influences is evidenced by the historical records. The perspective used, of revitalisation and the Drukpa Kargyu lineage, is a means of making meaningful the situation encountered in the field, and further is an understanding of the Karzhapa situation expressed by the Karzhapa themselves.

We now enter Kardang village, and the lives of the people therein.
[Sitting and talking on the roof of the Tholakpa house which provided a good view of the entire village, Norbu Tholakpa, a college-educated man now in his early forties, described the village:]

In the good old days, the households of Kardang were built in order and were joined together, so that by walking from roof to roof you could go from one end of the village to the other. This was protection against avalanche. At that time, all building materials were natural: timber for the pillars, and stone of which we have plenty, covered with that sticky mud mixed with pine needles, and of course, the roof is always flat [as it still is], for drying the grass and vegetables for winter, and so on. The houses are at least two storeys high, but usually three, as the ground floor is used for storage.\(^1\) Also animals live in the lower floor during winter. This flat roof means a lot of work during winter as the snow must be shovelled off, in order to prevent leakage and collapse through the mud. Of course, you cannot pile snow at the front of the house, where the entrance is. It always means the bottom storey is covered, and the snow sometimes reaches right to the roof.

\(^1\)The Domba households are peripheral to this village structure, and their houses are smaller.
That was thirty years back [i.e. early 1950s]. Now everybody has made a new house and separated. Miyas is still number one house, but Tachiji has moved, and many others. Now some people are saying that some houses are not safe from avalanche any more, especially those on the edge of the village. Lharje’s house was built twenty-five years ago. Before their house was two storeys, now three. This house [Tholakpa] was built about twenty years ago, also Thowas, and Khyemches; Kyelapa about seventeen or eighteen years ago; the two Manepa about fifteen... Then the Dombas built that house which is not sealed, without mud and no paint around the windows, about ten years ago, and two Domba families live there. There is another Domba family in that house built eight years back. This big old house is Karpa. Two families live in it. There used to be one family only, but long back there was a division, and now they live separately, one family on one side and the other on the other side. That cemented house is also Karpa. They were part of this Karpa until thirty-five years back. They split and now they have built this house. Cement is better than mud with the snow. It is much less work, and if people can afford it they will use when rebuilding these days. This new building with the corrugated roof is the Co-operative store which was built last year, and behind that a special house for the Yak bull and the Jersey bull - two separate apartments as they will not be happy together! Before we only had one bull, the yak, but now Kardang village has this Jersey for better milk breeding.

There are very few houses where there have not been divisions. One is ours, also Miyas, Thowas and Dangrapa. These houses are Tsangkupa and that means they have about twenty-four biggas of land, up to twenty-six, in small plots around the village, for growing crops. Of course, dang land is extra. It is always sloping and not suitable for digging and growing. Dombas don’t have this much land, just small pieces that are not so good, around the edge. Where there is a division the households are Fekupa (fe means half, Tibetan phyed) and so they have exactly half that in land, and are also entitled to only 50% of water for irrigation. For all things, including contributions for Puna, they take half responsibility. Timorpa and Deskyizhi are Fekupa, as before they were one household, but when Dekyizhi made their partition they also changed name which is not common practice. Then also Yankapa once had a house near this one, but they moved completely to Gozzang, and Abiji have the house here, but no fields as they have both in Gozzang. So now in all there are twenty-six households, including Domba.
Long back, until about fifteen years ago [1970], everyone grew kuth and from this cash had the possibility to build new houses. Of course, now it is potato, and only about two households still grow kuth, as seed is no longer available. Now kuth has gone up again and is very profitable, but most seeds are old and will not grow because no one protected them. With profit from potato more houses were built, and also businesses and orchards in Manali were bought. For instance in our house, the family has split so that we can operate the orchard we have near Sarsai. Now we have this big house which is only twenty years old, but we no longer have a family of twenty or so, but much smaller, as my father's brother has made a separate family. Some rooms we never use, and it is cold in winter, difficult to heat. [Transcript, Norbu Tholakpa, August 1983.]
Kardang Village
Note stone wall and wood construction techniques in animal sheds and piles of old timber.
The three storeyed houses are cement rendered.
KARDANG VILLAGE

Looking down from above. Note Biling River, a tributary of the Bhaga, and the new chorten (left mid-ground) before it was painted.

Tholakpa house with animal quarters in foreground.

Houses in Kardang Village. Note stores of wood.
VILLAGE PEOPLE

ABOVE: Note zi beads, coral, turquoise, and pearl necklaces, amber hair-pieces and gau' or relic box pendant.

Loss of hair from carrying loads with rope across forehead.

RIGHT: Grandfather & Granddaughter from Gunrung village.

Grandmother and granddaughter from Gozzang village - below.

ABOVE: Kunzam before she decided to become a chötsa. Note lace on dress.
Chapter Four
Kardang Village and the Kardangpa

In this chapter I describe life in Kardang village. Although my research focused on Kardang Gonpa, where I lived, it was immediately apparent that there was a symbiosis between village and gonpa, and that life in the gonpa could not be considered in isolation from life in the village. One of my intentions in this thesis is to explore that relationship, for which this ethnographic material on the village provides context. The social manifestation of the activities of the spiritual practitioners in the construction of gonpa and chorten, their renovations, and the performance of rituals, relies upon the support of the villagers, and their willingness to invest labour, materials and money in the project.

Kardang Gonpa was established in 1912, and the village chorten was built in 1983. The economic situation within the society at these times is thus a consideration in this chapter. The construction of the chorten in the village, which is discussed in Chapter 7, is a particular example of the social interaction and collaboration between village and gonpa which occurs on a regular basis, although the building of a chorten is a relatively infrequent undertaking.

In the previous chapter I indicated that the construction of the new village chorten resulted from a perceived cultural crisis, associated with rapid economic change and increasing integration into Indian society, and an associated loss of ethnic identity. In examining changes within Kardang village over the past forty years, since Independence, some of the information presented in the Chapters 1 and 2 is expanded.

As Kardang Gonpa does not provide for its members, the practitioners at the gonpa rely on their kinsfolk in the village for their day-to-day support — food, clothing, shelter and fire wood — as they have minimal independent income from their ritual services.

The villagers, in turn, call upon the practitioners to perform rituals within the village on a regular basis. They also sponsor rituals at the gonpa, which may occur annually, on a death anniversary, for instance, or when circumstances require. There is one main ritual related to agricultural activities, and also short periods during the early spring, and autumn, when the village folk are not engaged in field
work and can thus sponsor ritual performances in their homes before the onset of winter and relative isolation. The spiritual practitioners are also required to attend to the needs of the deceased, as well as any crises within the village for which their spiritual training equips them. For instance, certain illnesses may require ritual intervention, as well as herbs supplied by the village doctor from the Lharje family, though the biomedical treatments now offered in Kyelang are also gaining acceptance. These matters are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

These rituals performed by the spiritual practitioners are not the only rituals which are performed in the village: there is also a cycle of ritual performance which is quite unrelated to the gonpa. The discussion in this chapter is based upon accounts collected from a few of the villagers, as I was unable to witness this ritual cycle myself. Being present at these rituals which focus on the New Year and thus occur in the winter months would have entailed spending a winter within the village. As I was pursuing other avenues of research at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa in Manali, this was not possible.1

These rituals are integral to village life, and relevant to the structure of the village. They also form part of what has been called ‘the religion of the valley’ (lung pa'i chos, see Chapter 2) and thus of considerable ethnographic interest. To my knowledge, data on these village rituals is not available elsewhere. As mentioned in Chapter 2, several issues are involved in the understanding of Lahuli and Tibetan culture and history which are the focus of current research, although problematical. A clearer picture of the interweaving of gonpa activity with life in the village, in a network creating a cohesive social unit contributes to this endeavour.

The Calendar and the Agricultural Cycle

I begin this discussion with a summary of the calendrical systems. It is well known within the literature on Tibetan societies that Losar (Lo gsar), the New

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1This data is also valuable for trans-Himalayan cross-cultural research, an avenue of focus beyond the scope of this thesis. It would be preferable if detailed research during the winter months was undertaken. Apart from the obvious physical rigours, this may not be an easy undertaking, as I discuss later.
Year, occurs sometime in early spring, at the New Moon between January and March, depending upon the intercalary month. Age is reckoned to advance at Losar, and frequently the actual date of birth forgotten. Babies are said to be a year old at birth (that is, in their first year). When they celebrate their first Losar they also advance by a year and are reckoned to be two years old (in their second year), whether they have been alive for just a few days, or nearly twelve months. Adjustments for this system of reckoning are required in the translation of age and dates into the Gregorian calendrical system, as in Chapters 6 and 9 when considering biographical data.

In Kardang, the Tibetan calendar is used in the gonpa. It may also be used on some occasions in the village when reckoning one's age, although the village New Year occurs in mid-winter (December 21/22), at the solstice when the sun turns. The performance of the Gotsi ritual, in the first month, marks the end of the child's first year. This method of calendrical reckoning based on the solstice is reported to be used by people inhabiting the regions from Mt Kailash south towards the Indus and Sutlej valleys, and associated with the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung, whereas Tibetan nomads living to the north of Mt Kailash and the inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley observe Losar in February/March (Gergan 1978:41-42).

Throughout Tibetan societies there is a widespread distinction between the 'farmer's New Year' (*so nam lo gsar*), in the twelfth month, and the 'royal New Year' (*rgyal po'i lo gsar*), in early spring (February or March), which commences the first month. There is little comparative ethnographic data available on calendrical systems from other Tibetan societies.

Time and the solstice are calculated from Nyimafed Latse, the peak which rises behind Kardang Gonpa in Kardang, and nearby villages within Karzha. In the local dialect (as in Tibetan) 'Nyima' means sun, and Nyimafed (*nyi ma phyed*)

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²Prince Peter suggests the Tibetan might be *mgo 'dzug*, 'beginning' (1963:328), though he points out that at the time he collected this data his Tibetan was poor. However, *mgo rtse* 'crown of the head' (Roerich 1934:91, not listed in Jäschke) seems a better fit, and much closer to the pronunciation, Gotsi. As is the case with several words from the village ritual cycle, Gotsi may be Karzha, with no Tibetan equivalent.

³In some maps this peak is called Rangcha peak (see also Gill 1979:55), and the pass that one crosses to begin the Khora of Drilburi is called the Rangcha pass. The people of Kardang had not heard of this name and suggested it must be Hindi.
noon or mid-day. Latse (la rtse) means the tip of the peak. When the sun passes over the peak each day it is regarded as mid-day. Nowadays, several people have wrist watches, and these mechanical or quartz timing devices have at least partially replaced the sun-dial peak.

The calendar and system of timing used are contextual. For instance, when working in the fields the members of the family may agree to break for lunch at mid-day, according to Nyimafed Latse, but attend village Panchayat meetings, or meet with friends or business associates in Kyelang according to the clock. Attendance at the Primary School in Kardang, for children of six years of age to Grade 5, and then the High School in Kyelang, for five and a half days a week, Monday to Saturday, and the Nursery for three to six year olds in the village, are all run to clock time.

Depending upon one’s location in the valley, the sun falls below the tip of the peak of Nyimafed Latse during mid-winter. Shadows are not cast on the opposite side of the Bhaga river, in Kyelang. Kardang village itself is not cast into shadow, though the top house in the gonpa looses sun at about 1 or 2 pm for an hour or two, for a week or two in late December, and similarly Barbog, Pasparag and Gozzang villages are cast into shadows. Thus the solstice can be precisely determined from Nyimafed Latse.

Along with the importation of watches, the people of Kardang and Lahul are now familiar with the Hindi calendar, and have modified their calendrical reckoning accordingly, or so they claimed in response to my enquiries about their calendar. The New Year ceremony in the village is called Halda, which commences the month ‘Kunskizla’, roughly January. The appropriate date is communicated to the people from the gonpa, as the study of astrology is usually undertaken in association with spiritual practices. However, the first month of the local calendar as given to me was Punazla which falls around February, similar to the Hindi first month of Chaitra, and Kunskizla was given as the last month.

I am unclear as to how moon cycles are related to the village calendar of twelve months, but it seems that the Tibetan calendar employed at the gonpa may be used in preference to the village calendar, depending on context, as the Tibetan Losar, like the first month of the Hindi calendar falls in spring, on the New Moon.
Of course, periodically, a twelve month lunar cycle is adjusted to include an extra month.

The Karzha names of the months are partially indicative of the agriculatural cycle and seasons, though the meanings of some names are uncertain. Ethnographic details are lacking, but Gergan's summary of calendrical reckoning among agriculturalists in the Indus valley, and nomads in the Changthang suggest comparability:

The nomads of Tibet and Jang-t'ang (byang-thang) are guided [in their nomadic movement of herds] by twenty-eight constellations, the principal stars, the months in which they are visible in the northern horizon, their course, and time of disappearance. They change their grazing areas and community camps according to the calendar indicated by the constellations. The agriculturalists in the Indus valley also have an accurate knowledge of the movements of the stars. Their agricultural calendar includes the irrigation of fallow lands, soil working, clog breaking, sowing, harvesting, alpine grass for hay, barley and wheat. Each nomad camp has its own local indicator, a peak or peaks used as a kind of sundial to denote the movement of stars, moon and the sun at a particular time of the year.

In the Kailash Manasarovar area, the majestic peak of Kailash is the indicator defining the change of the sun's and moon's course, from the winter solstice to the vernal equinox, and to the summer solstice. (Gergan 1978:42).

The agricultural calendar for Karzha includes reference to the agricultural cycle, the village rituals, and star formations, although the meaning of several month names is unknown. The month names in the following table are listed

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4These Karzha words may seem difficult to pronounce, but they are the best phonetic approximations I can make. Roerich's analysis of the relationship between Lahuli dialects and Tibetan concentrates on the dialect from Tod valley, which he says is closely related to the Punan or Gar dialect (Roerich 1934:2-3). However, his vocabulary includes none of these month names, nor the names of village rituals that I describe in this chapter. My research into the language used in Karzha, and elsewhere in Lahul suggests that there is considerable difference between Tod valley dialect and Karzha. 'zla' indicates 'month', and is probably related to the Tibetan word zla, which is, however, pronounced 'da'. The Mahavyutpatti, the Sanskrit-Tibetan vocabulary compiled by the early translators, gives Tibetan equivalents of all the Sanskrit month-names. The list is gre can, nag pa (= Chaitra), sa ga, snron, chu stod, gro bshin, khrum smod, tha skar, smin drug (= Karttika), mgo rgyal, mchu. I understand that they all derive from lunar asterism names. Minduzla appears to
according to the Hindi calendar (Hi, column 2), and begin with the second Karzha month (Ka, column 3), corresponding to February.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of month</th>
<th>Hi</th>
<th>Ka</th>
<th>Eur</th>
<th>Meaning of name</th>
<th>Village activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punazla</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>See next column</td>
<td>Village ritual of Puna is celebrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsuskizla</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Gonpa practitioners perform ritual of Dambarava (dam pa rigs brgya) in village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngyengazla</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Villagers begin work in fields, clearing, setting dirt on the snow to help with the melting, repairing terrace walls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myoskizla</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>See next column</td>
<td>Ploughing (myos) begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browmyozla</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>See next column</td>
<td>Ploughing for buckwheat (brow myos), see below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubreyla</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentogzla</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>See next column</td>
<td>Flowers (mentog, me tog) are opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twaesklizla</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>from 'to cut grass'</td>
<td>Grass is cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khuizla</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>The crops (wheat, barley and corn) are separately harvested and threshed by the hooves of the dzopo (mdzo pho, yak-cow crossbreeds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minduzla</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>From Minduz, n. of 'star' (= Pleiades, see footnote 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsanizla</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunskizla</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 The Agricultural Calendar in Karzha

correspond to smin drug, although the numerical position is not synchronised. However, this may be because of the use of a lunar calendar. The Tibetans usually do not use these month names. Instead they simply number the months.
No mention is made in this village calendar of potato growing, an innovation in the agricultural cycle.\textsuperscript{5} Since the advent of this cash crop in the lives of the villagers, there has been a shift in agricultural activities away from subsistence farming, with the majority of arable land now devoted to the potato.

Agricultural methods are still labour intensive, and the wooden plough pulled by two churus or dzo (yak-cow crossbreeds) is similar to that used in the past. Two men alternating hourly operate the plough, and about eight women assist, smashing the clods of earth with a metal implement, also used for digging. If the plot is to grow barley or wheat, the seed is distributed before ploughing. Potato is planted after, and carefully spaced in rows. The chemical fertilisers CAN (Calcium, Ammonium and Nitrate) have been introduced by the government, and are applied with the ploughing, in conjunction with the natural fertilisers from animals and ‘night soil’ collected in drop latrines over winter.

The ploughing and planting of potato are finished by the first week of June, along with barley planting in Myoskizla. Nowadays there is little buckwheat planted. Weeding of the fields by the women, and irrigation about a month after sowing, are the most important activities through the growing season. Irrigation is taken by turn following the traditional layout of households in the village. Water for irrigation comes from two sources, the spring beyond Kardang Gonpa and the channel from the ravine between Kardang and Gozzang. Two households use the water for twenty-four hours, and then the next two use it, and so on.

The potato harvest follows the harvest of the barley and wheat, in October, Khuizla. Firstly the upper part of the plant is cut, dried and stored for winter feed for the animals. Then a few days later, both men and women begin to dig out the potatoes, packing them into sacks of forty kilos and transporting them, two sacks at a time, into Kyelang on mules, donkeys and small horses hired from Nepalis, at six rupees a load. Before the road over the Rohtang was built, nearly half the households in Kardang owned mules for transportation. Now very few do, preferring to hire them for the few weeks that they are necessary.

It takes about fifteen days to complete the potato harvest, which is urgent as the weather during late September and early October is uncertain, and it is

\textsuperscript{5}For information on the agricultural methods in Lahul before potato as a cash crop see Asboe (1937:74-77).
necessary to transport the harvest over the Rohtang La in trucks for sorting and
distribution before snow closes the pass. The agricultural cycle of Kyelang (and the
right side of the Bhaga) is a little earlier than that of Kardang, as the snow melts
more quickly there.

Once the potato harvest is complete, by mid-October at the latest, attention
is directed to drying and storing vegetables grown in the kitchen plots, such as
turnips, and peas for winter, grinding flour at the water-driven mills, and ensuring
good wood supplies for the coming winter, though wood is gathered throughout the
entire summer. The dried grass is stored for the animals. Cleaning out the drop
latrines and distributing the contents on the fields is again undertaken before
winter.

Both dzopo and dzomo, (mdzo pho, mdzo mo, male and female yak-cow
crossbreeds) are preferred for ploughing. A pair are required, and so village
households will co-operate if they do not have a pair. It is thought that the best
milk-producing dzomo are crossbreeds between the yak and Jersey cows. Each
household in Kardang owns at least one animal, and the number is indicative of
comparative wealth. The total number of animals in the village in 1983 was 85
animals (47 cows, 23 dzomo and 15 dzopo), with an average of 3.5 per household.
One household had seven.

The village co-operatively owns one yak bull and one Jersey bull, each
costing about Rs.4,000. The Jersey bull was obtained from Kangra, to improve
breeding of milch cows, and the yak bought from Zangskar in about 1980, after the
previous village yak fell and was injured up in the mountains. Young Jersey bulls
are of no use to the village and are sold; and, as elsewhere in Hindu India, beef
is not eaten. A cowherd is employed by the village during summer, and the herd
is kept high in the pastures above the village. Each day, one woman walks up to
the pastures to milk, returning to the village with the fresh milk. This task is
rotated between households. During winter, each household cares for its animals
in the lower floor of their house, feeding them grass stored for that purpose.

Sheep and goats are also kept by the villagers, and pastured during the
summer. The flock is kept in a special shed during winter, and brought onto the
roof on fine days. In addition to the grass, bark from the willow trees is used as
feed. The flocks provide milk, meat and wool. Not all the villagers' wool
requirements are met by these flocks. High quality pashmina$^6$ is obtained from Rubshu (*ru bcu, ru shod*) and the Changthang (*byang thang*) by some villagers who continue trading activities, selling fleeces to the weaving co-operatives in Lahul, and to buyers in the Kulu valley. In the past, before the closure of the border with Tibet, when there were more trading opportunities, more sheep and goats were kept and used as pack animals, carrying grain and other traded commodities in woven saddle bags. As recently as the mid-seventies, some families still kept flocks of four or five hundred sheep and goats, which would be taken down to Mandi district during winter. As mentioned above, most households also kept donkeys and mules as pack animals, but these days people consider it more economical to hire them as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KARDANG (in biggas = 0.2 acre)</th>
<th>GOZZANG (in biggas)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL AREA</td>
<td>922.18</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTIVATED (Irrigated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Barley</td>
<td>268.7</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Wheat</td>
<td>65.14</td>
<td>37.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pea</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Vegetables</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pulses</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Potato</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Buckwheat</td>
<td>175.7</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Rajma</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hops</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCULTIVABLE:</td>
<td>654.11</td>
<td>163.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Dang and trees</td>
<td>555.16</td>
<td>149.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Waste</td>
<td>98.15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Houses</td>
<td>12.12</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Fallow</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2. Land Usage in Kardang and Gozzang Village (Official Figures)

$^6$See Chapter 2, footnote 33.
Kardang is the largest village in Gar, and in Lahul. It was suggested that the name may mean Kar (dkar, ‘white’) and dang (dang, ‘grassland’), as there are ample pasture and many flowers in spring, though this suggestion was made in response to my query, and does not seem to be a local tradition. The adjoining village of Gozzang is medium-sized.

The 1982 (official) figures on land usage for both Kardang and Gozzang are given in Table 2.2, above.

In the past fifteen years (from about 1975) increased attention has been given to the replanting and maintenance of trees, consequent to massive deforestation. Until about 1930, there was still thick forest on the slopes above Kardang, and the old people remember searching for sunlight to sit and warm themselves where now only a few gnarled trees stand. In 1870, Harcourt reported that there were two large kail or blue pine forests (Pinus excelsa or wallichiana, lim bhuta), one on the left bank of the Chandra near Muling, and the other above Kardang (1972 reprint:56-57). There are large stockpiles of timber outside all houses, some slowly rotting (see photograph, p.102). I was told that in the past a good supply of wood was regarded as indicative of wealth and well-being. Certainly, heating in winter is necessary. Fire is also used for all cooking.

Now, the only new timber used for fuel is purchased in Kyelang, and comes from trees felled by the Forestry Department at Gulaba on the other side of the Rohtang. The women walk for two to three hours to collect the woody roots of a shrub (pilshing) used for fuel, and appreciate the benefits of the branches of the cultivated willow (changma bhuta) growing in close proximity to the village, which has become increasingly important to the village economy. However, the willow does not meet all the fuel requirements of the villagers.

The relatively fast-growing willow is the preferred tree for cultivation, as its branches provide fuel after about six years and the bark provides feed for the goats,

7It was not possible to collect this information independently, both because the villagers were far too busy, and because they regarded my enquiries as an intrusion. The Government collects data for tax purposes, and apart from not seeing why I should be interested in details of their private business, they asserted that the official records should suffice for any interest I might have. Thus the form and content of this data is as I was given.

8In the nineteenth century this species was named pinus excelsa, a usage which persists in the Government publications. Pinus wallichiana is the more recently adopted species name (Tucker 1983:149, 199 footnote 5). See Chapter 1, footnote 9.
sheep and cattle during winter. The willow was introduced by the Moravians, who encouraged its cultivation for these purposes. Young trees are planted in April-May, Ngyengazla, after the fields have been cleared, and the bottom few feet are bound with cloth as protection, especially from goats.

Using government funds available for this project, a Nepali caretaker was employed to mind the saplings in 1982 and 1983. The man employed in 1983 was a Tamang from the Lama clan, who received Rs.250 a month, plus food and board, for four months. He also watched over the irrigation channel for leaks or breaks in the wall, notifying the villagers of the same in order that they could be quickly repaired, with minimal loss of irrigation water or damage to the saplings and fields from landslides. In order to prevent damage occurring unnoticed, the water is diverted from the channels each night. Under this government scheme, each household was required to plant trees provided through government assistance, and between thirty to three hundred per household were planted each year. By the summer of 1983 there was little space near the village and safe from avalanche available, and some saplings had been uprooted by landslides.

In 1983 the village Panchayat introduced fines imposed upon any household that allows their animals to graze in the forest (Rs.100), or is found stealing wood (Rs.500). The villagers from Kardang are greatly concerned by the deforestation above their village, and the increasing frequency of landslides which occur in spring as the snow melts. However, these preventative measures can do little to rectify the severe environmental degradation.

A cursory glance at this overall situation may lead to the conclusion that an increase in population has resulted in the increased use of timber as fuel, and thus to deforestation over the past sixty years. As mentioned in Chapter 1, comparable figures on population are problematic, although population increase, if only of an itinerant population near Kyelang in summer, has no doubt contributed to an increase in fuel consumption.

In my evaluation an equally significant factor is the introduction of the stove with chimney, used by the Moravians. Walter Asboe is credited with encouraging the widespread adoption of the stove through an illustrated article he published in the ‘Kyelang News’, Keylang kyi Akhbar, with a circulation of forty copies. Asboe reported considerable response to this particular article, "on the manufacture of a
combustion stove which was calculated to effect considerable economy in the use of fuel" (Bray 1988:61, quoting Asboe). Asboe's article was circulated in Lahul about 1930, and although the timing may be simply coincidental rather than causal with respect to the deforestation occurring since that time, the stove with chimney now in use is not a slow combustion stove, and uses more fuel than the previous small open-fire system. Its main benefit is that it keeps the houses cleaner and warmer than is possible burning dung in an open hearth with a hole in the roof, but the cost in timber and environmental degradation is enormous.

At least two other factors are significant in deforestation over the past sixty years. One is dietary change, and the other is the use of timber in rebuilding and renovations to houses, which I discuss later. The people's diet has changed from a high altitude diet, typical of Tibetan peoples, to a more Indian one, a result of the integration into the Indian cultural and political context, with a change to cash crops, altered availability of foods, and changing cultural preferences. The replacement of barley and buckwheat as the staple food by rice and potato has had its effect in preparation and cooking of food. Barley is roasted and ground, and eaten as a doughy porridge, called tsampa (tsam pa), when mixed with chang (chang, fermented liquor), water or salt tea. It therefore requires no further cooking. Buckwheat may be eaten in a similar manner; or boiled and eaten as a porridge; or ground and made into pancakes (cf. Harcourt 1972 reprint:82-83).

Although pressure cookers are now used by all, and are necessary at these altitudes where water boils at a lower temperature and a longer cooking time is required, considerably more fuel is consumed in cooking rice and preparing potato
curry than in preparing barley or buckwheat for consumption. The problem is compounded by an increased population. Sheep and goats' flesh is dried and can then be kept throughout winter as an important part of the diet. The animal bones are used for making soup, called thugpa (thug pa), with flour noodles. Yak and cow meat are not eaten, as a consequence of Hindu influence, although apparently they were eaten in secrecy in the past.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the British extracted Himalayan hardwoods for constructing the Indian rail system. Archival evidence suggests that the Kulu-Manali and Parvati valleys were heavily felled, as was the Chandrabhaga valley, both in Chamba and Pangi. However, it seems that commercial exploitation of forests in Lahul was probably limited to the Chandrabhaga valley. Kail or blue pine, which used to grow profusely on the slopes above Kardang, is a softwood and the British found it was not suitable for the construction of the railway line. Further, the Chandra and the Bhaga valleys may have been too steep for large scale commercial exploitation. Although some deodar grows in Lahul, there were never extensive tracts. Elsewhere, this timber was exploited in great quantities by the British (Harcourt 1972 reprint:56-57; Tucker 1983:158, 160-161).

It is likely that there is a critical level of deforestation in this steep terrain. Tracts of the mountain sides near villages have been denuded by avalanche, the uprooted and shattered trees providing the bulk of the stockpiled wood. When forest was thick, the steep slopes were more stable and avalanches less devastating. This degree of deforestation may have been reached about 1930, and thus the increase in deforestation is in part the result of destruction by avalanche. These factors have combined to create the environmental and ecological crisis the people face today.

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11 Norberg-Hodge (1981:279-280) presents material on the ecological considerations of diet, cooking methods and development for Ladakh which is pertinent to this discussion, and comparable to Lahul prior to the changes outlined above.

12 In the spring of 1979, several avalanches occurred throughout the region, sweeping away houses in villages that were previously thought to be safe and killing over two hundred people. The path of the avalanche that passed by the side of Gumrang to Yurnath and Guskiar was quite apparent, as it felled all the trees in the thinned forest.
The slope behind Kardang Gonpa is stabilised by terraced walls, and the avalanches pass down the valley beside Kardang village near the spring, limiting the area of the village (see Plan of Village, p.132). The uprooting of shrubs for fuel further destabilises the soil, and landslides in spring with the snow-melt have become a problem, whereas previously they did not occur, or were infrequent. Willow trees are not cultivated in areas where these landslides occur, as it is considered uneconomical to replant where saplings have been uprooted, thus some immediate problems of erosion are still largely unchecked. Alternative methods of heating, even very simple solar techniques, were not employed up to 1983, although the District administration was interested in research being conducted in Ladakh.

These matters are of vital importance, not only for the people of Lahul, but for the rest of India who are increasingly affected by floods by the major rivers, silted with Himalayan topsoil. The administrators of Lahul and Spiti are faced with a difficult task and in all development projects must weigh the long term effects against short-lived gain and prosperity. Immediate and drastic measures may be necessary to halt or at least slow down the rate of environmental degradation, before the quality of the people’s lives and indeed the viability of human habitation in these valleys are irreversibly threatened (see Rizvi 1981:173-182; Lall and Moddie 1981, esp. Norberg-Hodge 1981, Jest and Stein 1981, Fürer Haimendorf 1981; Chopra and the Centre For Science and the Environment 1982).

The Village Ritual Cycle

Following this brief discussion of the agricultural cycle and recent innovations, I return to the celebration of Halda, the New Year in mid-winter, which marks the turning of the sun and the beginning and end of each year’s cycle. As mentioned, the people at the gonpa decide when the New Year will occur. That night, the entire village population assembles with lighted torches at the howa, the open ground in the village, and races through the snow to the ravine at the far side.

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13See photograph at beginning of Chapter 1.

14Comparative data on village rituals in Ladakh may be found in Brauen (1980); Day (1989); Dollfus (1989); and Kaplanian (1981).
of the village, about a furlong away, on the path to Gozzang village. It is said that the first to arrive will complete all tasks before anyone else during the following year. This person keeps hold of his torch (for young men are faster than anyone else), while everyone else throws their torches together to make a big bonfire. The one still holding his torch begins to curse the Thakurs of Gar valley (the Gumrang and Barbog Thakurs) saying things like "Kardang rani shusha Ho ho ho ho", and everyone joins in. He then throws his torch with all his might down the valley.

It was suggested to me that the cursing of the Thakurs may have originated when they lost their hold over the people, but this was an educated guess as no one remembered. People still remember particularly the Khangsar and Gemur Thakurs, who assumed control through their association with the British, and were relieved that this system no longer prevailed.

Once this race with the torches has occurred, the village is closed for the following week, even to those who normally reside there if they happened to be elsewhere on that particular night. None can enter, nor can anyone leave. If a gonpa member happens to be in the village on that night, then that person must remain there for the following week.

The response to my suggestion that I remain in the village for one winter varied. Firstly, I was an outsider, and although accepted in the gonpa, I did not belong to any household. Some thought that this could be arranged, but warned me that outsiders, such as the Sikh Government official who had been in the village a few years back, were targets in the revelry of New Year, and would most likely end up buried in the snow.

Each night of the following week a dance called Bagh (‘bag, ‘mask’) is performed. It is said that in times long past, two bronze masks were used, one male

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15I was told that this was a standard curse, which however was not translated for me. The Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteer suggests: "Let the...Rana have it in his heart...(or) goitre" (Government of H.P. 1975:92).

16Refer to Chapter 2. Historical studies suggest that the Barbog Thakurs lost their privileges during the late seventeenth century due to their allegiance to Ladakh. The guess was educated in that it came from someone who had read about the history of the region in the Gazetteer. It may be that the Thakurs were cursed even when they held authority.

17In effect, first-hand experience of these village rituals is not possible unless a village household invites one to stay over winter. Although I enquired about this possibility, I received no firm invitations.
and one female, representing the local gods who required human sacrifice. The people fought against this custom and buried the bronze masks under a large boulder in the village, replacing them with wooden masks which do not require human sacrifice. However, it is said that if not propitiated in the manner described below, these gods will create havoc and cause serious problems for the villagers, such as illness, accidents, natural calamities, and death of livestock.

Whatever the history or origins of this Bagh, it is unique to Kardang, although the torch race of Halda occurs in the other villages. Possibly the Bagh is held in Kardang because of the village's proximity to Nyimafed Latse or because it is the biggest village. The Kardangpa had no explanation but simply emphasised that the roles of the male and female are performed with respect to the traditional village division into two sections, upper and lower, Logtok and Gatok (see Old Village Plan, p.122), and is therefore very old. These divisions, apparently based on the 'original' physical layout of the village, organise the households for all village ritual and social activity, as well as in some agricultural matters, such as the use of irrigation water, mentioned previously. The principle by which these matters are organised in other villages is an open question.

The two wooden masks are only taken out of their place at the rear of the Tholakpa house for the Bagh and are kept for the week on a special stone, and 'house' on the roof of the Tholakpa house. After the completion of the Bagh during this week of isolation, the masks are returned to their resting place. These wooden masks are in pieces, held together by strings. I was told that this is because one Kyelangpa, about eighty or ninety years back, was very annoyed at the racket the Kardangpa made during the performance of the Bagh, so he came one night and threw the masks from the roof of the house, breaking them. Later that night on his

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18My enquiries about this aroused suspicion that I was perhaps interested in digging up these masks, and people said that it was not at all good to talk about these things. See Chapter 2 and the discussion on human sacrifice, and Asboe (1936a:75-76) on human and animal sacrifice.

19Levine notes that the Nyinba households are organised into lower and upper sections (Levine 1988:99).
way back to Kyelang he died, and so the masks were repaired, and the performance of the Bagh continued.  

The part of the male god and the wearing of that mask can be undertaken only by the house of Manepa, of which there are now two in Kardang, due to a split some time ago. If it should ever occur that there is no male person from either of these families which normally alternate the responsibility, then the Tholakpa house, the only other household in the village belonging to the same Rus (rus, 'bone' or lineage) of Mirupa, could play that part, though I was told that so far this had not happened.

The role of the female god is taken by every household in the village, turn by turn, back and forth between lower and upper, according to the traditional village layout, even though that physical structure of the village has been lost. As there are fewer houses in the lower part of the village, the Gatokpa households perform this role more frequently than do the upper Logtokpa households. Among the village households that of Lharje (lha rje, 'doctor') is exempted, perhaps indicating that they joined the village at some later time. Also Abizhi household is exempt, as their land is in Gozzang, not in Kardang, although they have a house in Kardang village, as well as their Gozzang house. The two Manepa households who always play the male also do not perform the role of the female. The Domba families, the musicians and blacksmiths who are regarded as low-caste with relatively low social status in the village, are not permitted to wear the masks, and do not perform the Bagh. There are thus eight Logtokpa and four Gatokpa households rotating the role of the female. The one Gatokpa and four Logtokpa households which have split take only one turn each, but rotate the role between the divided household (refer to Old Village Plan, p.122).

There are seven additional masks, made of goat skins stretched over crossed sticks, the wearing of which is similarly rotated through the village. Several families own such a mask and they are not kept with the wooden masks. Each year the patterns painted on them in white are renewed, as are those on the wooden masks. Only men can wear any of these masks and dance the Bagh, for which they wear

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20 It is possible that this event was connected with the Moravians in Kyelang, who presumably would not encourage these village rituals. However, nothing is said by the people to indicate that this was so. That the person died is a clear indication of the power of the gods associated with the masks.
Old Village Plan
— KARDANG

HOUSE NAMES
1 Miyas
2 Tachi
3 Deskyizhi
4 Timorpa
5 Dangrapa
6 Thogmes
6 Kyelapa
6 Kyelapa
7 Khyemches
7 Khyemches
8 Ang Kyangtse
9 Tholakpa
10 Thowas

11 Yuwas Miyong
11 Yuwas Yorak
12 Manepa
12 Manepa
13 Karpa
13 Karpa
13 Karpa
14 Lharje
15 Domba An Tsering
16 Doma Gopi
17 Domba Thosu
18 Domba Drolma
19 Abizhi

Houses not included

GATOK

LOGTOK

CHORTEN & "HOWA" GROUND
sheepskin coats, wool-outer, to the knees, and long sleeves, so the total effect is quite terrifying, I was told, especially in the dark. Before the masks and clothes are donned, the performers must bathe outside in icy temperatures at the spring in the freezing water. They prepare themselves in the small house at the rear of the Tholakpa house, and proceed to the howa where the dance always takes place.

During the dance the male leads, followed by the seven children, and then the female. The players hold hands in this line and dance around the howa (the village square) singing the old songs and prayers which the players must learn from the older people who know the words. I was told that the language is unusual and very old, so that the people don’t understand it any more, as with the songs for all of these village rituals.

The songs and prayers are directed to the two gods, male and female. This continues for two or three hours. The young girls and boys of the village in particular will taunt the players by calling them names and so on, and will try to break their hand-holds, or pass between two players, and thus break the chain. If this is done then the whole performance must begin again, but firstly the players will chase the culprit and bury him in the snow or do anything they wish, so one must be able to run fast if one challenges the players. After this week of the Bagh, the village is open again and the New Year has begun.

The next village festival, Gotsi, occurs seven to ten days later, on either a Monday or Friday, both of which are considered auspicious days. Gotsi is performed for all the male children born in the village during the year. On the evening preceding the Gotsi, the families with sons completing their first year assemble and decide amongst themselves upon the order, then visit each house celebrating for a couple of hours, drinking chang and arak (distilled liquor), continuing through the night, finally reaching the house where the first male child of the year was born. At each household the male representative from Kyelapa house, who will be shooting arrows the next day to ensure sons for the village, sits and draws a bit of the yak on the birch bark paper, finishing it at the house of the

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21This ‘game’ is the pretext for targeting newcomers, such as the Sikh government official I was told about.

22See footnote 2.
first male born for the year. They must be finished with this drawing, drinking and celebration by mid-day on the following day, as then they proceed to the howa.

Each household with a new male child makes a big conical cake (*torma, gtor ma*) out of barley flour, called *brangvis* (*brang rgyas*). For the Gotsi this brangvis is large, about two feet in diameter and about three feet tall. They also make a goat out of butter which is placed on the top. All such animals whether from butter or dough are called *fotsi*. The brangvis is carried by four to seven men from the house outside to the howa where the Bagh was performed. Those carrying the brangvis call names and curse, saying all sorts of things as they are usually rather drunk. The mother carrying the son on her back goes with them accompanied by a woman in full dress, with turquoise headdress and silver earrings and so on, carrying a kettle of chang for offerings. The chang is gently splashed about, sometimes by a flower which is dipped into the kettle, or by the fourth finger, and small amounts may be poured for people to drink.

Then a man from either of the two Kyelapa households (before there was one house, but as they have divided they take it in turns) comes out with the bow and arrow, and shoots one arrow behind him, wild, a long way down the ravine, to drive out the negative influences. Nobody collects this arrow. He has three arrows left and he shoots three times, over a distance of about twenty feet towards the small chorten, where on the snow he has placed this drawing of the yak made with charcoal on birch bark paper. His target is about two feet square.

With regard to the yak drawing: if he does not score a hit then it is said that no male child will be born in the village during the coming year; if the head is hit then the upper part of the village will be blessed with a son; if the middle body of the yak is hit, the middle of the village will have a son; and if the rear or legs is hit, then the lower village will be blessed. There has only been one occasion in memory, about 1980, when the yak was not hit. Neither were there male children born in the village that year. When there are no sons born to the village, instead of celebrating Gotsi the following year, the man who shot the arrows must supply drink for all the villagers. It is said that mostly sons are born in accordance with the way the yak is hit.

After the arrows have been fired, the villagers return to the howa where the brangvis is set down on the ground. The man who has shot the arrows takes the top
six to ten inches from the first male child's brangyis which has been cut off, on a stick. He carries this around leading the other men who were carrying the brangyis, and they sing some special songs and prayers. The particular song they sing in Kardang is about two lovers, the male and the female. The male is praising the female and so on. In Kyelang a different song is sung at Gotsi. The men circle the Bagh ground three times, clockwise, and then the brangyis is cut into small pieces and distributed to everyone. The villagers disperse and they continue drinking and dancing in the houses.

If the male child born to a particular family is also the first son, there is another ritual called Raldax, which is performed over four days. It may take place immediately after Gotsi, or later in the summer, some time in June or July. As it is now common during winter for about half of the village to be away running businesses or orchards in Kulu-Manali, Raldax is frequently performed in summer to enable all relatives to attend. It is easier to hold this celebration in summer as all the guests, maybe three hundred people, must be accommodated and entertained for the entire four days. During winter when it is very cold this requires a lot of bedding and work. Also it is thought that people tend to drink less in the summer, another advantage. At the Raldax the boy's hair is completely shaved by the mother's brother (ajang, a zhang).

The child can be named at any time. In order to ensure a good future for a child, an important Lama may be asked to give the name, but there is no special rule about this, and no particular ritual. The parents may also give the name. In both cases, it is likely that these names will be Tibetan. However, nowadays, children often take another Hindi name at school. I was told that this was partly because the teachers have trouble with the Tibetan names. It seems that names such as Ram Singh, Prem Lal, Ashok and the like are popular, and frequently used in preference to the Tibetan names, especially in interactions with Hindi-speaking Indians.

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22Prince Peter suggests Raldax (ral ltag, 'long hair, neck hair'), but see comment on footnote 2 (Prince Peter 1963:329).

24In Karzha, housename precedes personal name, e.g. Tholakpa'i Norbu ('Norbu from Tholakpa [house]'). In keeping with Indian traditions, it is now customary to place one's family name after one's personal name, although this usage is contextual.
There is a very small ritual called Tsemed Gotsi, after the main Gotsi, for female children (Tsemed is ‘daughter’). A woman accompanies the mother with a kettle of chang for offerings, but that is all the ritual involved. There are no celebrations, dancing or drinking.

Puna is the other village festival occurring in this first month, and the name of the month (Punazla) is derived from it. Puna occurs fifteen days after Gotsi and during it chang and other foods for consumption by the villagers in communal festivities are prepared. One household collects about three kilograms of barley from each household for making the chang and half the amount if the house has divided. Another household actually makes the chang. Turns are taken year by year, again according to the village structure. These two houses are then the laspa (las pa, ‘worker’) for the year. The laspa are responsible for notifying all households when there is a village meeting, and also for caring for the yak bull and Jersey bull for the ensuing year.25

During Puna all the young boys aged between about seven and sixteen collect food from everyone in the village. On the second day they make fotsi, the little sheep and goats, out of dough. For any household who had a male child born that year they also make a larger ram. These are baked in the fire. On the following day the boys go onto the roof of each house, accompanied by music and the beating of drums, and throw these dough animals down the fireplace chimney, singing some of the traditional songs. They are offered more food. I was told that probably this is a good omen for the village, each household, and their herds. The young boys spend these four days together, eating the food they have collected. Meanwhile the older people are involved in their usual winter drinking and socialising.

Throughout the rest of the month, the drinking and celebrations continue, usually at night. The entire village gathers, turn by turn, in every house of the village. Every two or three days the practitioners from the gonpa are invited to come and perform rituals, such as Dambargva (dam pa rigs brgya) in people’s houses.26

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25Asboe reports that the laspa supervise the use of irrigation water (1937:75).

26For more information see Chapters 6 and 7.
Every household has its own god. I was told that there are no images although sometimes there is a small pile of stones (lhato, tha tho) on the roof, with a piece of juniper branch. There offerings are made whenever there is any kind of ritual or celebration in that household. When offerings are made a bit of juniper branch is burnt as offering (sung, bsangs) and some chang is splashed, and also some small brangyis are made. Food or flowers may also be offered.

There are some other ‘local gods’ called sat bhuta meaning ‘god’s tree’. From these trees branches may not be taken for offerings, or anything else, as they are thought to be inhabited by these gods. There is one sat bhuta near the spring beyond the gonpa, another in a large tree below the village and another resides below the big maroon coloured rock near where the bonfire is made at Halda.

There is a small village festival, Choksikris when the young crops are about six inches high - that is about twenty-five days to a month after ploughing. This occurs before weeding and irrigation. Offerings of juniper incense, chang and small brangyis are made to the local gods.

Bumskor (bum skor) is the next ritual, performed at about the same time as Choksikris, by the gonpa practitioners. The gonpa members with all their musical instruments, and the villagers carrying the volumes of the Bum (bum), the longest Prajnaparamita sutra, on their backs form a procession, and walk through all the fields carrying them. As Kardang and Gozzang are really ‘like one village’, the entire procession encircles all the fields of both places. Although Kardang village operates as an entity on some occasions, such as for the performance of the Bagh, it has close social relationships with other villages on the left side of the Bhaga River, especially Gozzang, particularly when the practitioners from the gonpa are involved. I return to this point later. Administratively, Kardang and Gozzang form a single Kothi.

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27'Bhuta' is tree (see above). Roerich gives 'butsa' meaning shrub or tree as a loan word from Hindi (Roerich 1934:107). Compare sa bdag, ‘lord/god of the soil’ (Tobdan 1984:73–75). The Sanskrit/Hindi word for ‘demon’ is ‘bhuta’, and a possible rendering of ‘sa bhuta’ would therefore be ‘earth demon’, as sa is ‘earth’, in Tibetan. This reading, however, does not explain the connection with trees, unless we postulate that the ‘earth demon’ lives underneath the tree.

28Similar rituals are described in the ethnographic literature for many Tibetan Buddhist areas. See, for instance, Mumford (1989:98).
A meeting attended by a representative from each household is held to decide when grass cutting should begin each year, usually some time after the 20th August, in Twaeskiizla. Namsis, a small ceremony, is performed for the gods by burning juniper and offering chang and small brangyis. Drums and flutes are played. Once the local gods are thus appeased, the grass cutting can begin.

Each household owns its own grassland, called dang, and the grass is piled on the roof to dry and is then stored for winter. The gonpa owns a small dang field. The villagers purchase that grass for the yak and Jersey bulls, thus providing a little income for the gonpa. If people have more grass than they need they sell it to others who require it. People from Kyelang are especially keen to buy grass, as because of the expansion of particularly upper Kyelang with administrative and commercial buildings since the sixties, many households have lost their fields.

This completes the description of the main annual village festivals and rituals, although there are some other minor occasions when offerings of juniper incense, chang and brangyis are made to the local/earth gods, particularly the one at Peukar.

The main celebration in relation to this local god (cf. gzhi bdag, see Tobdan 1984:74-75) is not an annual event. Every three years the male god residing at Peukar village is brought, if willing, to Kardang and Gozzang. This god, whose name should not be said aloud, chooses one person, who becomes possessed and starts to tremble and then speaks whenever in the presence of that god. The man Tsering Ngodrup from Yurnath Domba used to become possessed, but he died and the god had not chosen anyone to take his place in 1983. The god is carried on a kind of chair carriage by two people, one at the head and the other at the rear. This sways and rocks about and the god directs its carriers where it will go. So if unwilling, the god does not visit the villages. If it knocks into anyone's house then the householders make offerings of food and chang, and it is thought that some blessing is received.

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29This god is mentioned by Prince Peter, in a description of a marriage ceremony (1963:321). This was the only case of possession by a god that I was told about. There was some reluctance to talk about this Peukor god, perhaps as this was thought to encourage the god to possess the speaker. I do not know if this type of possession is always associated with the low-caste Domba.
As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the other occasion when particular rituals are performed is when somebody dies.\textsuperscript{30} The Dombas are called and they begin to play their music at the deceased person's house, which they continue for three days. The practitioners from the gonpa also come and perform the appropriate rituals for the deceased who is said to be in the Bardo (bar do), in transition before rebirth into one of the six realms (including human).\textsuperscript{31} The body is cremated the day after death, while the Dombas continue with their music at the cremation ground and the gonpa members perform rituals. In Kardang there are two cremation grounds: one down by the ravine where they make the bonfire at the New Year, and the other before the village beside the path from Kyelang. An outsider cannot be cremated at either of these, but must be taken down to the rock beside the bridge over the Bhaga River, which is the cremation ground used by the Kyelangpa. The ashes are collected and if possible taken to the confluence of the Chandra Bhaga and thrown in. In winter this may be difficult, but the cremation will be performed in any case. When a young child, only a year or two old dies, the body is simply buried, and there may not be any rituals performed.

The Structure of Kardang Village Today

As the above description reveals, the structure of the village into its two parts, upper and lower (Logtok and Gatok), and the order of households, is important for organising village rituals, social activites and some agricultural matters. The ‘Old Village Plan’ (p.122) was drawn for me by one of the villagers, and is a shared cognitive map governing several aspects of village life, which people said originated when Kardang village was first settled. This occurred an indeterminable time ago, when each household received an equal-sized piece of land. I was not told of any particular myths about these events.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{30}See Asboe for comparative material on disposal of the dead (1932:66-67).

\textsuperscript{31}For a discussion of Bardo, and the six realms, see Fremantle and Trungpa (1975:3-12).

\textsuperscript{32}Possibly this may be associated with the Barbog Thakurs losing control of the land in the late seventeenth century (see footnote 16), but this is highly speculative.
Only in relation to the shooting of the arrow in the Gotsi celebration was the village divided into three portions: upper, middle and lower. In this arrangement the upper section is unchanged, and the lower section divided into middle and lower. This division into upper and lower (or upper, middle and lower) is related to the incline of the land and seems to have no status implications. Neither is there any clear association with the Rus or clan affiliation of households (see below).

The order of houses and the division of the village into two parts is adhered to these days, although the actual village layout no longer resembles that map (compare Plans on pp.122 and 132), as mentioned in the discussion of village rituals. Some Kardang households divided a few generations ago, without significantly altering the physical layout of the village. I was told that since the 1950's considerable rebuilding in the village has occurred, resulting in a different appearance to the village and accompanied by changes in households and family size. Randhawa's brief description of his visit through Kardang village in 1952 supports the description of changes in the village layout since the 1950's:

Kardong (sic) with its congested houses looked like a beehive. The flat roofed three-storeyed houses are massed together in two blocks... The clumps of willows on the green turf, and the terraced crops of barley and kuth were a pleasant site. The fields were heavily fenced to keep out flocks of goats and sheep. After passing through the fields we made our way through pastures covered with alpine flowers like blue gentians, pink androsace and white edelweiss (on the way to the gonpa). (Randhawa 1974:208).33

The rebuilding of several houses in Kardang village may be associated with the political and administrative changes wrought during the 1940's, particularly

33The only other description of Kardang village at a comparable time known to me is G.D. Khosla's description of his journey to Kardang gonpa in 1953. With his attention-grabbing style, Khosla describes that path he took through the village (which I assume was a back alley rather than the main path, seen not long before the drop latrines were due to be cleaned out and the fertile night soil spread on the fields):

We came to the Kardung [sic] village which was easily the most filthiest [sic] human habitation I had ever been near. The lanes were narrow, and the confined air was heavy with a nauseating, fetid stink. Its entire length was used as a public convenience, and deposits of human and animal faeces and heaps of dust thrown out of houses lay along one side... (Khosla, G.D. 1980:71.)
after 1947 (see Chapter 2). In Kyelang, which has grown into a small town losing its village structure, administrative buildings were made, and businesses established. New building materials were used, particularly concrete, which created a precedent for the villagers. As noted above, stoves with chimneys had been introduced around 1930, and glass in windows had also become common. In some cases, double glazing was used for insulation.

Asboe reports in the thirties that there was a slight increase in cultivated land, possible only if the community agreed that this was not an encroachment upon their pastures (1937:75, 77). Presumably dang land was converted to the plough. This may well indicate the pressures of population, and the devotion of some land to the cultivation of kuth.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the British had encouraged trade between India and Tibet and China during the nineteenth century which brought extra income to those households involved in trading activities, as several in Kardang were. Both Randhawa and Khosla mention that kuth became an important cash crop during the first half of the twentieth century, providing wealth which enabled villagers to improve their living conditions (Randhawa 1974:196-199, 207-208; Khosla, G.D. 1956:11, 203).

Harcourt reports in 1870 that most houses in Lahul were two storeyed and but a collection of rude huts of mud stone and timber... The most striking and probably the largest, village in Lahoul is Kardung, situated on a spur of the range to the left of the river Bagha (sic), the houses here being more carefully built than they are elsewhere. (Harcourt 1972 reprint:48)

By about 1950, an extra storey had been added to most houses so that all houses in Kardang were three-storeyed. Then households began to rebuild houses with larger rooms. These new houses no longer had common walls with other

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34For a description of building techniques which include random rubble outer walls and willow and daub inner walls, and of a house in Kyelang, see Khosla, R. (1979:111-122). It is easy to appreciate the desire of the people to lessen their work loads with new materials. However, in this region which frequently experiences earthquakes (see Chapter 1), any changes in construction techniques and materials must be carefully considered. See also Chime Wongmo (1985); Jest and Stein (1981).

35In 1937 Asboe reports that rusta (Inula Helenium) or kuth (see Chapter 1) was smuggled into Lahul from Kashmir, which had the monopoly, and it had become a profitable cash crop in recent years (1937:76).
PLAN OF KARDANG VILLAGE

To fields

KEY

△ Chorten

Spring

To Kardang gompa

To Kyelang

To Gozzang→
houses, and a considerable amount of timber, especially the kail pine, was required for the vertical columns and roof beams. For each house built several trees were felled, contributing significantly to deforestation. At this time there were no replanting programmes, although there was some willow cultivation. The Plan (p.132) represents Kardang village in 1983 (see also photographs, pp.102-3).

1. Thachiji 14. Abizhi
2. Khyemches 15. Domba — An Tsering
3. Kyelapa 16. Lharje
4. Timorpa 17. Domba Gopi
5. Dangrapa 18. Kyelapa
7. Deskyizhi 20. Khyemches
8. Thogmes 21. Manepa
9. Yuwas Miyong 22. Manepa
10. Yuwas Yorak 23. Ang Kyangtse
11. Karpa 24. Domba Thusu

Table 2.3. Households in Kardang Village, 1983

Several issues pertaining to social structure arise from the description of Kardang village which was given by Norbu Tholakpa and which introduces Section II. As Norbu Tholakpa’s comments and the description of the village rituals indicate, the Domba households are in many ways peripheral in the social activities of the village, yet their role in playing music at the time of death is important. They also play music on other occasions, such as for dancing, though this is not exclusively their prerogative. As indicated in Chapter 2, the Dombas speak their own dialect which is related to Hindi, and are regarded as lower-caste, undertaking blacksmith work. Some Domba families, such as one in Cheling, are goldsmiths. In a few villages such as Kardang, and in Kyelang there are three or four Domba families, and in other villages none. They do not reside in separate villages, and
they marry between themselves. They are generally poorer than the average Lahuli, as is the case in Kardang, with smaller houses, landholdings, and family size.

The villagers of Kardang regard the majority of the Lahuli population as being of equal social status, the Domba and associated caste groups, and the Thakurs being the exceptions. There are no Thakurs in Kardang, and although it is said that the people from Barbog once were Thakurs, and it is thought that this is why they own more land than most people, with plots in every village from Barbog to Peukar, they no longer hold higher status, particularly as cash crops have enabled most people to accumulate wealth, build larger houses, and purchase orchards. Although some households were economically better off than others, particularly if they had not divided, owning more animals and better business operations in Kulu-Manali, they were not considered to be of superior social status.

The most important unit in the social organisation is that of the household within the village which is generally quite discrete from other villages, although there are situations in which Kardang village interacts closely with other villages, particularly Gozzang, as during Bumskor (see above). A person is known by housename, preceded by village name in the broader social context. Housename is normally that of one's father, as in general residence is patrilocal. When one changes residence, for instance at marriage, whether male or female, one acquires the new housename. In certain circumstances, for instance when a household has no males in one generation, a man (magpa, mag pa) will marry into a household and adopt that household's name, and children from that union similarly inherit their mother's household name.

Within the village social standing increases with age, which is reflected in the usage of kin terminology. Generally, for anyone senior to oneself, even if only by a year, one uses the appropriate kin term. They, in turn, can call one by name. This applies not only to those in one's household, but to all in the village. For instance, within one's own generation, the eldest son of any family is addressed as ajo (a jo), and younger sons chojo if they are older then oneself. Thus respect is given to all senior to oneself, even if only by a year, as reckoned through the

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3See also Tobdan (1984:16-18). Itinerant workers and other newcomers are regarded as outsiders, whose relative status is generally considered to be low, although some deference may be shown towards some Government officials.
celebration of Gotsi. However, close friends are called by name. Similarly females
are called either achi (a che) or apu.

Religious practitioners if female are called ami (a ne, lit. ‘father’s sister’) unless
two generations or more senior, when they are called abhi (a phyi). For male
religious practitioners ajo and memé (mes mes) are used, respectively. The
following list of kin terms is as was usually given to me.37 Note that in the case
of father’s parents there is an alternate kin term used if they are not practitioners.

The Thakurs use different kin terms which they say indicates their superior
social status.38 It will be recalled that I had first discussed marriages with the
Thakur family, before crossing the Rohtang Pass into Lahul for the first time.
Colonel Prithi Chand, Prabhat’s father’s brother had told me:

In Lahul you will find every damn thing, monogamy,
bigamy, polygamy, polyandry — every sort of set-up.
That is how our system works. These days there is
more monogamy and less multiple marriages. That is
how things are changing. (Transcript, May 1981)

Later, in Kardang village, I was told that in the past fraternal polyandry was
the norm, but that now most marriages are monogamous. Collecting information
on the number of polyandrous households is difficult. In 1938 when Prince Peter
collected details on polyandry in Lahul, the Thakur from Khangsar (the Colonel’s
father’s brother) reported that two-thirds of the marriages in Kyelang were
polyandrous (Prince Peter 1963:314).39

37Comparison of kinship terminology, descent systems, inheritance and marriage patterns
within different Tibetan communities is a large project beyond the scope of this thesis. For
ethnographic data for such cross-cultural comparisons see Allen, N.J. (1975, 1976); Aziz
(1974, 1978); Davids and Van Drim (1985); Doherty (1974); Levine (1988); Oppitz (1982);

38The kin terms given by Prince Peter were supplied to him by the Thakur
(1963:326–327), and compare reasonably with the kin terms I collected from the Thakurs.
Roerich’s vocabulary includes some of these terms, omits some, and includes others not
given in this list (Roerich 1934).

39Prince Peter reports that the Thakur told him that forty out of sixty houses in Kyelang
were polyandrous. This figure must apply to all villages on the right side of the Bhaga,
rather than to Kyelang alone. It seems that most of Prince Peter’s data was collected through
the Thakur, who at this time was the administrator for the British, or with his introduction
to other households. Consequently, some caution should be shown towards his findings.
The household structure was described to me as follows:

In the past most households consisted of three generations: the grandparents; their sons and wife, with any unmarried daughters; and their (grand)children. Nowadays, the household is much the same, although probably one brother will have taken his wife and children to care for the household’s business interests in the Kulu-Manali valley, or is absent, perhaps serving in the army, or police force. Quite often the wife is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>awa</em> <em>(a ha)</em> father(s)</td>
<td><em>ama</em> <em>(a ma)</em> mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ajo</em> <em>(a jo)</em> eldest son, brother (used only by people junior to him)</td>
<td><em>achi</em> <em>(a che)</em> elder sister (used only by people junior to her)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>chojo</em> brother other than eldest</td>
<td><em>apu</em> sister other than eldest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>awatsi</em> father’s brother</td>
<td><em>ani</em> <em>(a ne)</em> father’s sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ajang</em> <em>(a zhang)</em> mother’s brother, and affines in general (see below)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tete</em> father’s father</td>
<td><em>apa</em> father’s mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>memé</em> <em>(mes mes)</em> grandfather where chospa, any male practitioner two or more generations senior to oneself</td>
<td><em>abhí</em> grandmother where chosma, any female practitioner two or more generations senior to oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dakpo</em> <em>(bdag po)</em> husband</td>
<td><em>byanmo</em> wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>shakpo</em> <em>(sha pho)</em> wife’s brother <em>(ajang if senior)</em></td>
<td><em>digs</em> brother’s wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tsaow</em> sister’s husband, if senior to speaker. If junior he is called by name, or <em>shakpo</em>. If he is too senior, he is called <em>ajang</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>butsa</em> <em>(bu tsha)</em> son (or <em>beti</em> child)</td>
<td><em>tsemed</em> daughter (or <em>beti</em> child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pechung</em> father’s sister’s husband</td>
<td><em>mechung</em> <em>(me cung)</em> wife of mother’s brother <em>(ajang)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ajang</em>(ji) <em>tete</em> mother’s father <em>(ji is added for respect, as in Hindi)</em></td>
<td><em>ajang</em>(ji) <em>apa</em> mother’s mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ajang</em> father-in-law</td>
<td><em>ani</em> mother-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>nam</em> <em>(mna’ ma)</em> daughter-in-law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4 Kinship Terminology (Kardang and Gar)
local, from within the village, or from Gozzang, but she could be from any village in Gar, as long as she is not of the same Rus. (Transcript, Norbu Tholakpa, September 1983)

The operation of polyandrous households in the past was described by most as being unproblematical. Usually the eldest son decided to get married, and chose the wife (bag ma), ‘kidnapping’ her and (naturally) the first child was his. As the family was involved in trading as well as agricultural activities, often some of the brothers were away for months at a time, and there was rarely friction with this arrangement, and the woman knew which brother was the father of which children. With this system of fraternal polyandry, land was inherited by the sons without partitioning, and the population remained reasonably stable. It didn’t happen often, but when some problem did develop between brothers, the household divided, becoming Fekupa, taking half the land each, and half all social obligations.

In Karzha, each son inherits equally, which is seen to reduce friction in a polyandrous household. In response to my questions about this system of inheritance, one case was mentioned to me in which a very difficult household division had occurred. The elder brother in Kyelang had kept all the property, and the younger brother had moved to Peukor. This household was very poor, and the case was cited in support of the custom of equal inheritance between brothers.

This system of inheritance contrasts with Spiti, Zangskar, Ladakh, and other areas where the eldest brother inherits all the estate (Crook 1980:148; Goldstein 1977; 1981:12-14; Government of Himachal Pradesh 1975:68-69; Khosla, R. 1979:101).40

If there were no sons in the family, the eldest daughter inherited the property, and a husband (magpa) was brought in from another family, eventually becoming the head of his wife’s household, adopting that household name.

As Levine succinctly puts it in her study of the Nyinba, a culturally Tibetan people in Humla, North West Nepal:

40The Sherpa practise equal inheritance between all sons. However, polyandrous households are now rare, thus each son is given his share of the land and builds a separate house at marriage (Ortner 1978:15-16, 20-21). Goldstein contrasts the situation in Ladakh, where primogeniture is practised, with that in Limi in North West Nepal, a society of traders, where equal inheritance between brothers is the norm, and suggests that the latter depends upon alternate sources of income for brothers to co-operatively engage in (Goldstein 1981).
There are three bases of support for fraternal polyandry which explain its persistence in a majority of culturally Tibetan areas. The first derives from cultural notions and concepts of kinship. The second relates to household rules of succession and inheritance, which are tied to the goal of maintaining or improving political position in the village. The third concern is the calculus of economic viability. (Levine 1988:158)

Levine’s analysis of the dynamics of polyandry\textsuperscript{41} and the process of divisions within households demonstrates how the ideal system described to me in Kardang manifests as "every damn thing" as the Colonel put it. A thorough analysis of these matters in Kardang is impossible within the confines of the present discussion, but Levine’s work provides useful cross-cultural material, particularly as the Nyinba, like the Lahulis, were involved in a system of economic obligation with the Jo and Jo gzkon, the ‘lord and lady’ (Levine 1988:77, cf. Jos = Thakur) in a region where land usage had reached its limits, and thus village size and land under the plough could not be increased, and trade was a necessary and important source of income. This is in marked contrast to the situation described by Ortner for the Sherpa, who settled a previously uninhabited region and were able to expand population, village size, and area under cultivation, and did not practice fraternal polyandry as the general form of marriage arrangement (Ortner 1989a).\textsuperscript{42}

Until about 1950 in Kardang, economic and cultural conditions prevented the proliferation of households within the village\textsuperscript{43}. It is clear from the description of village ritual that the household unit, and indeed the number of households within Kardang village and the birth of the first son and his brothers who continue the household, have remained important to the social structure. New economic

\textsuperscript{41}Levine's analysis of polyandry (1988) is the most useful I have encountered. The Nyinba, like the Kazhapa (at least until recently), inherit equally between all brothers, maintaining polyandrous households. Some information is available on polyandry with mention of Lahul in Prince Peter (1963); Sharma, R.C. (1965); Brar (n.d.); and Parmar (1975).

\textsuperscript{42}Polyandry seems to be more widespread in North West Nepal (Levine 1988) and in Lahul than it is among the Sherpa in Solo Khumbu, in the Eastern Himalaya (see footnote 41).

\textsuperscript{43}As mentioned in Chapter 1, comparative figures on population for the region are problematical, due to political and administrative changes. Thus the real rate of population growth in Kardang is difficult to establish.
opportunities, particularly cash crops, business enterprises and the acquisition of land in Kulu-Manali, have dramatically altered not only the appearance of the village and its physical structure which no longer maps the structure of social, agricultural and ritual co-operation, but also caused households to divide and live elsewhere in order to sustain their new enterprises. In effect there has been a reduction of polyandrous marriages.

Over time, as I was introduced to a succession of men, all of them as husbands of one particular young woman, I realised that polyandrous marriages were still made, albeit less frequently than in the past. The new economic possibilities, and positions in the all-Indian Services such as the Indian Police Service, the Indian Revenue Service and the Indian Civil Service, as well as the Indian Army, provide the brothers in a family with alternative forms of employment, so that many months pass between visits to the village. Consequently polyandrous households are sometimes difficult to detect. As my friendship with some individuals grew, we discussed this topic. It was clear that they regarded the Hindu practices of polygyny and dowry as unacceptable, especially the latter, which, although firmly entrenched throughout India, has received adverse publicity and is illegal. They were sensible to the benefits of polyandrous unions in their social context, but also to the adverse reactions of most Indians, Hindu and Muslim. Generally they preferred simply not to talk about such things with outsiders.

In Himachal Pradesh there has been a strong movement against polyandry, which is also practised quite independently in many Hindu Pahari (of the mountains) societies. The need for reform in marriage practices was perceived by administrators, people from the plains and other outsiders, such as missionaries. This ‘reform movement’ began as early as 1911 and in 1925 gained considerable impetus and was voiced in parliament. Dr Y.S. Parmar, himself a member of a Pahari society, in *Polyandry in the Himalayas*, published in his fourth office as Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, attempted to engender understanding of this form of marriage, in the face of strong prejudice from the plains:

> Although polygynous marriages may be made within a polyandrous household, as suggested by the Colonel, and discussed by Levine (1988) focussing on the dynamics of the Nyinba household (for instance when it is thought that the wife is infertile), there was a definite appreciation among the Karzhapa that polygyny was the type of multiple marriage accepted and practised by both Hindu and Moslems alike. In Lahul, polygyny was seen as a pragmatic solution to certain situations, but not regarded as a preferred practice.
... the existence of polyandry in a society which consists practically purely of Hindus, and in a country considered sacred by the Hindus, has created a great resentment among them and serious efforts have been made for the eradication of this custom from the Himalayas...the speeches from the platform [of parliament] and the articles in papers reached them directly or indirectly. As a result the whole social outlook has been changed and people who practise polyandry feel ashamed of it and want to raise their status by giving it up. Their contact with other people has convinced them of their own degraded condition...

(Parmar 1975:148)

Gerald Berreman who has conducted fieldwork among Pahari people has reported on the response to Parmar's book, which was so strong that Parmar was forced to retire from politics:

...he [Parmar] became the subject of a legislative furor in his home state. As reported in the Indian newspapers, ‘Four women legislators walked out of the Assembly, when their call-attention motion... was disallowed alleging that the book portrayed hill women in a vulgar and distorted fashion. A poster war has since been launched calling for the banning of the book’ (News INDLA, July 1975:10). The legislators ‘said the books should be banned and copies already in circulation confiscated’ (Overseas Hindustan Times, May 22, 1975:3). The result was that a section was inserted at the end of the book, announcing that this marriage system had largely disappeared (Parmar, 1975:189-92) — although it had not. This is not only an example of perverse political pressure on scholarship, but also an ethnocentric derogation of the way of life of a Himalayan people, an uninformed denigration specifically of their women (perpetuated by women legislators, I might note). It is likely to be followed over the next few years by increased intrusion on their lifeways in an attempt to bring them around to alien ways of life adjudged superior by outsiders. (Berreman 1986:97)

Parmar’s research focuses primarily on the Hindu peoples of Himachal who practise polyandry, with only a brief mention of the Buddhists of Lahul, Spiti and Ladakh who have been equally affected by this extreme attitude of the majority of plains Indians (Parmar 1975:x, 51, 64-65, 84-87, 162-163). In Lahul itself, there had been strong opposition to polyandrous marriages, as the Moravians discouraged polyandry, and the few converts that were made had to make monogamous
marriages, which was one factor contributing to the marked lack of success of the Christian proselytising (see Chapter 2).

The publication of Parmar’s book, and the associated publicity against polyandry occurred within a few years of the opening of the Rohtang Pass and the influx of itinerant workers into Lahul from the plains. The reluctance of the Lahuli people to talk with outsiders about the polyandrous structure of their households is understandable, as are their claims that they no longer marry polyandrously. Alternative economic strategies which have become possible with the development of the potato as a cash crop have allowed households to divide, and brothers to marry monogamously if they wish.

Within Kardang village these changes have resulted in a reduction in the number of people normally residing together in the one household. Although I did not specifically investigate family histories in other villages, comparative data on current household size in other villages indicates that similar changes have been taking place, as one would expect.

As previously mentioned, and as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, Kardang Gonpa cuts across village boundaries. I thus provide details on household size and village population for all villages and gonpas on the left side of the Bhaga River, from Gozzang to Peukar, in the following table (information from 1981 census data). Administratively, this covers two Kothis: Kardang Kothi, comprising of Gozzang and Kardang villages; and Barbog Kothi, which contains all the villages from Barbog to Peukar. Gonpa households are not included in Kothi figures. It should be remembered that gonpa members are not necessarily from the same village, though the majority are, and that Domba households which are not polyandrous are not indicated separately. These two factors have probably contributed to the lowering of average household size in these census figures. It is also important to realise that the census data refers to individuals actually residing in the villages at the time of the census, rather than all individuals which are

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45 This information is not published in the census report, but was made available to me from the records. Note that in the census ‘Households’ are generally buildings – thus for Kardang there are 25 census households, as the two Domba households residing together have been counted as one, although the two Karpa residing together are differentiated.
considered members of a household, although residing elsewhere.\textsuperscript{46} I expand upon this point subsequently with my own data from Kardang village, collected in 1983.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village or kothi</th>
<th>No. of household s</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average household size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gozzang</td>
<td>17 5</td>
<td>60 4</td>
<td>54 4</td>
<td>114 8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lama Gonpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kardang</td>
<td>25 19</td>
<td>92 13</td>
<td>96 13</td>
<td>188 26</td>
<td>7.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kardang Gonpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KARDANG KOTHI</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbog</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labchang</td>
<td>9 4</td>
<td>33 3</td>
<td>39 4</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Labchang Gonpa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasparag</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheling</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yala Piaso</td>
<td>1 8</td>
<td>1 24</td>
<td>- 50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thola Piaso</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charze (uninhabited)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peukor</td>
<td>21 10</td>
<td>93 6</td>
<td>86 7</td>
<td>179 13</td>
<td>8.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peukor Gonpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARBOG KOTHI</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>7.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.5. Household Sizes in Kardang and Barbog Kothis

Kardang is the largest village not only on the left bank of the Bhaga, but in Lahul. When the population from the gonpa is added to the total Kothi population (without regard for the few from Kardang Gonpa whose families reside in Barbog Kothi), the average family size for Kardang Kothi becomes 8, and for Barbog Kothi 8.23. Village size is limited by the amount of arable land available, and sites that

\textsuperscript{46}No mention is made in the census abstracts on the date of the census. I understand that it occurs in Lahul and Spiti later than it does in the rest of India as it cannot be conducted in mid-winter and it allows those Lahulis who normally return to their villages for the spring and summer to be present.
are relatively safe from the dangers of avalanche — hence the smaller villages between Kardang and Peukor.

The figures for the villages on the right side of the Bhaga river are comparable, except for Kyelang, the administrative capital, where there is an increase in population, though this is of itinerant workers, mostly male. Since the 1960’s, Kyelang has grown considerably, resulting in the loss of arable land and dang fields, and in many ways now resembles a small town, having lost much of its village structure. Kardang, like the other villages less affected by the administrative changes, has not increased so dramatically in population.

On the basis of discussions and my survey of households in Kardang village the average number of people included in the household is higher than indicated in the census, about eleven compared with eight for the census figures, although some households did not disclose details about household members not in Kardang and thus I expect that this figure is a little low. The largest family had seventeen members. This contrasts with the four Domba households with between four and six members each.

Some of the teenage boys were absent at schools and colleges in Kulu, Dharamsala, and Chandigarh, while several of the young men were employed elsewhere, returning to the village for holidays. These men left wives and children in the care of their families in the village, and clearly were contributing significantly to the income of the household. Some households listed the members of the family residing permanently in Kulu-Manali as part of their household, which indicates that this economic strategy may not necessarily be as divisive as might be supposed, but rather another adaptive variation to combining several sources of income for the overall benefit of the household.

There is certainly a tendency among the villagers to spend less rigorous winters in Kulu-Manali, with a consequent decrease in population by about half. This has been an established practice for well over a century, and possibly for much longer, and was noted by the British administrator Harcourt, in 1870 (1972:

Perhaps because they did not want to reveal polyandrous marriages. With some households I had minimal contact and thus my enquiries seemed more invasive. Also, during summer many people were simply too busy to spend much time elaborating upon details of their existence.
Frequently some women and children accompany the menfolk engaged in business and trading for those winters spent over the Rohtang Pass.

As Norbu Tholakpa's comments about his thirty-year-old house which is now rather empty (see above), indicate, there is a change within the village as segments of families have left to reside permanently in the Kulu-Manali valley, although they are still regarded as part of the household to some extent. This segmentation of the household is unprecedented. The extent to which the next generation now growing up in Kulu-Manali will maintain ties with their village of origin remains to be seen. There are a few men who have made marriages in Kulu-Manali, for instance.

Full details of the economic arrangements in households segmented between Lahul and Kulu-Manali are not known. Division and equitable partition of all property between brothers when a household divides within the village is a different process. This segmentation within the Tholokpa household has not resulted in a reduction of land holdings in Kardang village as is normally the case when a household divides, and so they remain Tsangkupa, an undivided household, rather then Fekupa, a half-household.

As there are five biggas to the acre, the average Tsangkupa household in Kardang holding twenty-four to twenty-six biggas owns about five acres of arable land. Kardang village, with about 275 biggas of cultivable land (including fallow), should therefore have only ten or eleven Tsangkupa households, if each indeed has twenty-four to twenty-six biggas. As the Old Village Plan (as explained to me) indicates (p.122), there seem to be more households, perhaps indicating that some households have rather less than twenty-four biggas and may be relatively recent immigrants to the village.48

Certainly more research is required to establish how the ideal of the village as described in the discussion on village festivals fits with the reality today. Some current households, such as Deskyizhi which used to be part of Timorpa, have also changed their names, though both are Fekupa households. Further confusion arises when considering the Rus, patrilineal descent group, as divided households should still belong to the same Rus, but in several cases the Rus given contradicts this

48Asboe reports that the extent of a villager's fields was popularly computed by how much seed was needed to sow it, or by the number of oxen (one or two yoke) and time needed to plough it (Asboe 1937:75). Neither method was mentioned to me, and all holdings have now been surveyed for taxation purposes. See footnote 9.
principle. Such cases may indicate that a husband had married in, or that a household has lost its Rus because it has broken the rules of exogamy, although neither explanation was offered to me by the villagers.

The Rus affiliation of households was generally not known by members of other households, except if from the same Rus, although my questions on this topic elicited responses pertaining to the general concept of descent through the male line, and folk theories of human reproduction whereby Rus, the male substance or ‘bone’, is passed from one generation to the next. The female passes on sha (sha, ‘meat, flesh’), or trag (ktrag, ‘blood’) to the child.49

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSEHOLD</th>
<th>RUS</th>
<th>HOUSEHOLD</th>
<th>RUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Miyas</td>
<td>Longchenpa</td>
<td>11. Yuwas Miyong</td>
<td>Chepapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thachiji</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>11. Yuwas Yorak</td>
<td>Chepapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Deskyizhi</td>
<td>Khyung</td>
<td>12. Manepa</td>
<td>Merupa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Timorpa</td>
<td>Khyung</td>
<td>12. Manepa</td>
<td>Merupa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Thogmes</td>
<td>Khyung</td>
<td>13. Karpa</td>
<td>Yigepa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ang Kyangse</td>
<td>Kotok</td>
<td>17. Domba Thusu</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Thowas</td>
<td>Yigepa</td>
<td>19. Abizhi</td>
<td>Khyung</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.6 Household Rus Affiliations in Kardang Village

The names of several of the Rus, and a generally held view that there was clearly a connection with other Tibetan peoples who shared the same system of

49For comparison see Levine's detailed discussion of folk theories of conception and physical inheritance among the Nyinba, and the implications of these in the concept of rus, for which she provides a critical appraisal, along with comparative data on the concept of rus in other Tibetan societies (Levine 1981).
Rus were frequently mentioned in response to my queries. Table 2.6, above, gives Rus affiliations for households in Kardang Village as far as I was able to establish them.

As marriage is exogamous, most people only know the Rus affiliation of households belonging to the same Rus as their own within the village, as they may not marry with people from these households. Unless a marriage had occurred relatively recently in a household, others did not know the Rus affiliation, and even if there had been a recent marriage, little discussion about Rus took place except in the rare cases of transgression of the principle of exogamy. Otherwise, Rus was regarded as being a private matter which parents would discuss with their children as they grew up, in order to ensure that they did not develop an attraction for someone from the same Rus. The relationship between households belonging to the same Rus is one of formality and social distancing. Unless an invitation is formally extended, visits and commensality do not occur, and assistance in otherwise communal work activities is not expected, whereas between other households in the village, informal visits are frequent, and food is always offered.

Apart from when talking about marriage, the only other time Rus was mentioned, without my soliciting information on the topic, was in the discussion of the Bagh, recounted above. Should it ever arise that no male member from either of the two Manepa households was available for wearing the male mask for the Bagh dance, the Tholakpa household, belonging to the same Rus, could substitute.

My questions about Rus affiliation for various households elicited some contradictory responses, the reasons for which I could not clearly establish (see Table 2.6, above). It may be that Rus affiliation has been relatively recently adopted by some households and used as an index of Lahuli (Tibetan) ethnicity. Levine suggests that among the Nyinba, Rus is not as important among the lower

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50 Prince Peter similarly elicited a list of 16 Rus names and their implication of Tibetan cultural affinity from the Thakur (1963:327-328). Prince Peter does not mention Rus in any other context. I was given a list of nine names, five of which are also given by Prince Peter. The Rus of ‘Kotok’ (see chart), given as the Rus by the household concerned, was not included in this list of nine, nor is it included in Prince Peter’s list. The meaning of the word is unclear, though I wonder if it is ‘Gatok’, indicating the lower part of the village, rather than a Rus name.

51 The household numbers here refer to households in the Old Village Plan, so that where several households share the same number, these are Fekupa households derived from a single household.
class of people recently freed from their obligation to the landowners, and more important in establishing relative status among the majority of people who made up this landowning class (Levine 1981:54). In Lahul, there are only a few families, the Thakurs, who have traditionally owned large parcels of land. Although this situation has altered since Independence, the majority of people, many of whom own smaller properties, have only recently attempted to break their labour obligations with the Thakurs. The situation in Kardang is in contrast with this, as the Barbog Thakurs apparently lost their powers about three hundred years ago.52

However, in general, my findings support Aziz's assessment of the Dingri material on kinship and descent. Residence, rather than descent, determines social relations, with household affiliation providing the key to any individual's identity within the community (Aziz, 1974).

There are no particular myths, rituals or social relationships between different households belonging to the same Rus, which suggests that these patrilineages are not of great importance in the social structure of Karzha. This situation contrasts with that found among the Sherpa, particularly from Solu, for whom clan membership has greater social significance (Oppitz 1974; Ortner 1978:18-21; Führer-Haimendorf 1964:18-37). Levine discusses the importance of founding clans for the Nyinba and collective worship of ancestors (1981:64-65; 1988:38-49), and provides comparative material on Rus for other Tibetan and related societies (Levine 1981:68-74). This lack of social activity surrounding the clan, or patrilineal ancestors, in Karzha society is comparable with the situation reported by Aziz among the people from Dingri. Aziz suggests that the increased importance of patrilineages (rus) in societies such as the Sherpa, compared with the more household-focussed society she found among the Dingriwa and other Tibetans, may be connected with their relatively recent migration into their present locations (1974:23-39, esp.35):

Lineages and ideas about descent through males exist among Tibetans, and are explicit in genealogical records from ancient and recent Tibet. They are

52See discussion of historical details in Chapter 2, and above. Research into the Thakur families, and the more recent changes in social structure and of obligations between the Thakurs, particularly of Kolong (Khangsar and Gemur), Gumrang and Gondhla, and villagers, is an interesting topic beyond the scope of the present discussion. A brief summary of this social structure can be found in Prince Peter (1963:309-310).
mainly confined, however (as might be expected), to the Tibetan aristocracy and the class of hereditary priests (sngags-pa). However, these two groups comprise a minor and elite sector of Tibetan society, and we cannot apply the rules of descent practised among them to the mi-ser (commoners) Tibetans who constitute the vast majority of society. (Aziz 1974:24).

In Karzha, Rus is not the only factor considered in marriage, as one cannot marry one's mother's sister's child (who belongs to MZH's Rus). I was told that such arrangements were incestuous, and that marriage within one's Rus caused loss of Rus. I was told this rarely happens. It was also explained to me that a man could not be stopped from marrying his mother's brother's daughter (MBD) belonging to his mother's Rus (or a woman from marrying father's sister's son, FZS), although this is barely acceptable, as it is thought that the relationship is close. Adequate reasons for these marriage rules were not provided by the villagers, whose notions on human reproduction and incest were seen to be adequate in themselves.53

However, in polyandrous households, the wife's sister may be taken as a second wife in some circumstances,54 as it is thought that should a second wife be required in the household sisters will co-operate better than will two unrelated women. The introduction of a second wife into a household is thought to possibly lead to friction between brothers and the division of the household, and is an infrequent occurrence. This may be relevant when considering the prohibition against marriage between parallel cousins on the female side. Father's brother's children (FBC) are unacceptable marriage partners as they belong to the same Rus, and furthermore, in polyandrous households they are indeed siblings.

53My questionings resulted in repeated assertions that incest was unthinkable, rather than adequate structural explanations of this prohibition. Levine reports a similar marriage rule among the Nyinba:

Matrilateral parallel cousins are known as t'ag pun or mapun (khrag pun or ma pun) — 'siblings through t'ag' or 'through mothers'. But the children of cross sex siblings are potential marital partners and therefore are termed 'affines' (gnyen), and it is said to be an affinity created through t'ag (Levine 1981:61).


54If a woman is thought to be barren, for instance, or if the brothers have no (unmarried) sisters, and thus require more female labour.
Nowadays, about seventy-five per cent of marriages are ‘love marriages’, or made according to the wishes of the couple involved, and twenty-five percent of marriages are arranged. These arranged marriages are between people who barely know each other, as happens when a young man pursues education and a career outside of the village environment, in which case his parents will negotiate within the village or nearby villages for a suitable wife, who will live with them in the village household.

Arranged marriages were much less common twenty years ago, as the majority of young men spent most of their time in the village and made their own decisions on this matter. However, about half of the relationships that begin with mutual attraction become arranged marriages, as the son indicates his desires to his parents, who will proceed to negotiate the marriage with the girl’s family. Some prestige attaches to arranged marriages because of the expenditure involved in financing the wedding party, which is attended by the entire village of both bride and groom (but not the bride’s parents). An economy based on a cash crop enables the household to finance this more elaborate form of wedding. Furthermore, villagers agree that by arranging marriages they are following the Hindu custom and this is more acceptable from the point of view of the majority of Indians, as are non-polyandrous marriages.

Marriage by ‘abduction’ is socially acceptable within Lahul and in the past was the norm. Nowadays less than half of the marriages are made in this way. The young man (usually the eldest son if the marriage is polyandrous) must consult with his parents and have their consent. As he has been having a love affair with the young woman, she is in agreement, otherwise she would file a kidnapping charge with the police, and she is prepared for the ‘abduction’ — she will try to ensure that on the day arranged she is working alone in the fields, for instance. The young man with his brothers and close friends simply goes and carries her off. If her parents or brothers don’t like the fellow involved and have the opportunity, they will chase the abductors and beat them.

55See Sharma, R.C (1965:18-23) who mentions marriage by ‘stealing’ in Lahul, and Prince Peter’s description of traditional stealing (1963:318). Prabhat Thakur’s father made his marriage in this way, with a woman from Yurnath, which contrasts with the very elaborate arranged marriage between Prabhat and a daughter from the Gondha Thakur household. Neither of these marriages was polyandrous, which the Thakurs say has never been their custom (Prince Peter 1963:312, 325).
Celebrations follow that night in the groom’s household, and the marriage is made. After a few days at least, or longer if opposition is expected, the girl’s parents are approached, and depending upon their assessment of the husband and his household, they either agree, or resist. However, as it is already a fait accompli, there is nothing to do but to agree, ultimately. This may not occur until after the birth of a child in particularly acrimonious circumstances. If the bride’s parents are in agreement with the marriage, she is likely to return to their household for a few days, to a month, collecting her belongings before moving permanently to the new household.

A woman thus receives her inheritance, which consists of clothing and jewellery, at the time of her marriage. The villagers emphasised that this was not a dowry, although in those marriages that are arranged, it is likely that more items will be given to the girl. Marriage by ‘abduction’ does not incur the same expenditure at the wedding party and is preferred by the less wealthy. The custom of not inviting the girl’s parents to the first few days of celebrations, if at all, when the marriage is arranged, would seem to be associated with their necessary absence at a marriage made by abduction.

Norbu Tholakpa, who provided the above description of Kardang village, is a good example of the post-Independence generation, having pursued education and a career outside of the village. He now faces the conflict of the pressures which on the one hand, seem to compel him to become more Indian, integrated into the growing nation, and on the other hand, seem to require him to maintain his identity as a Karzhapa, from Kardang.

He is the eldest son in his household, born about 1950. He spent winters in the village participating in the festivals through his teenage years, participating in the Bagh and at one time carrying the Chair and the god from Peukar through Kardang. He attended school in Kyelang, walking the two hours each way six days a week during the summer, and residing in Kyelang with relatives during winter during the school term. He then went to Dharamsala where he completed his B.A. in Political Science and Public Administration. He also studied English which is

56It may be several days before the young couple are left alone together. Initially, a female friend and other women from the household will remain with the young bride, until she is more ‘accepting’ of her new situation. See also Prince Peter (1963:322-324).
compulsory. He completed his studies with a M.A. from Chandigarh in Public Administration, then competed with candidates from all over India in a written test and interview, and was one of the 120 chosen that year for a position in the Personnel Branch of the Indian Steel Authority. He began work in Calcutta in 1980.

His parents arranged a marriage for him with a girl from Kyelang while he was at college. Although he didn’t know the girl, he was happy about this arrangement, and by 1983 he had two daughters and his wife was expecting their third child. His wife and children remain in Kardang, so he lives by himself for ten or eleven months of the year in Calcutta, three days journey away. There are two other Lahulis living in Calcutta, working for the Reserve Bank, and another Kardangpa working for the Steel Authority in Jammu (Jammu and Kashmir). Norbu would like a transfer to Delhi as it is much closer to Lahul, only an overnight bus ride away, but as he has no connections he expects this is not likely in the near future. His father died in 1982, so that Norbu is now the eldest male from the Kardang branch of the family. His household in Kardang feel that Calcutta is too far especially in an emergency, and one quarter of his holidays are spent in travelling. The eldest male member of the family is his father’s brother, who is living in Kulu-Manali with the sons and wife of another brother, now deceased. There are three older female family members, including Norbu’s mother who lives in Kardang village. Both of the other senior women — his father’s father’s sister and his father’s sister — are practitioners at Kardang Gonpa.

Three of his four sisters are married, one living in Biling and the other two in Kyelang. The other lives in Kardang. His middle brother has joined Kardang Gonpa, although both Norbu and his father encouraged him to finish schooling and go to college. In 1983 his youngest brother was twenty and studying, and the family was debating whether he would remain in Kardang and take on the responsibility of the household, or leave and study elsewhere.57

When Norbu first began to work with the Steel Authority, which is the biggest company in India, the people from the village imagined that he sold stainless steel utensils, and several asked him to bring them thali sets (trays and bowls for eating curry) and stainless steel spoons. Most village people cannot

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57A genealogy of the Tholakpa household is presented in Chapter 5.
imagine what life in Calcutta is like for Norbu, who has been thinking of rebuilding his village house with steel reinforced concrete, and a corrugated sloping roof although he was concerned at how he could design a special house for the village gods, the male and females masks, so that they could continue to be kept on the roof of the Tholakpa house for the week after New Year, during the performance of Bagh. He hoped that a smaller house in new materials with better heating facilities and so on would improve his family’s lifestyle, and bring them the benefits of his education and experience elsewhere in India. This project seemed to be prohibitively costly, and to my knowledge has not been undertaken.

Clearly the winds of change are blowing strongly in Kardang, and Lahul, as integration into modern India continues. The culture and society of Lahul have nevertheless remained distinctive, and many find their identity in Buddhism. The Kardangpa asserted their identity in 1983 by building another, larger, village chorten — in response to the changing appearance of their village.

In 1870 Harcourt reported that the Buddhism as practised in Lahul was “not pure” but mixed with the "religion of the valley" and Hinduism, and that "Lahoulees are so much thrown into contact with the Kooloo people, that they are gradually becoming Hinduised." (1972 reprint:40, and 63-68). The winds of change were blowing strongly during the nineteenth century, with the Moravian missionaries, the Sikh dominance which gave way to the nominal rulership of the British Raj, and the increased trade opportunities of that era, and kuth growing, apparently the first cash crop of Lahul. Utilising some of the wealth thus accumulated, the people of Kardang asserted their identity by building gonpa in the early part of the twentieth century — and Kardang gonpa is the best known and largest of these.
Kardang Gonpa, side elevation
Main gonpa building with corrugated iron roof on left
Several practitioners' houses on the slope behind
Lama Gonpa, the hermitage built around the cave of Goisangpa, where Kunga Rinpoche lived.
Chapter Five
Kardang Gonpa — A Twentieth Century ‘Village Gonpa’ in Karzha

In this chapter I describe Kardang Gonpa as it exists today, indicating how the place has developed since 1912, when it was first established. The symbiosis between village and gonpa is explored. The household, which is the basis of social structure in the village, is found to be of great importance when considering the structure of the gonpa. Details of the physical structure, including additions and renovations to the buildings, and the acquisition of thangka\(^1\) and statues, trace the material development of the community. The wealth accumulated from the cash crops of kuth and potato have been used to expand and rebuild several of the houses in Kardang village. The villagers have also sponsored several phases of rebuilding and expansion at Kardang Gonpa.

The history of the gonpa is traced not only through its physical growth, for its continuation depends upon the individuals who choose to become spiritual practitioners residing in its precincts, and the villagers who support them in their chosen vocation. Using information collected in the oral biographies of the founder of Kardang Gonpa, Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche, and his spiritual brother, Kunga Rinpoche, and in the survey of household members from Kardang and nearby villages, extending back two or three generations, I trace the gonpa community through time, from its inception to the present. The ethnographic material on Kardang village presented in the previous chapter provides context for this discussion.

Kardang Gonpa is visible from Kyelang, where one alights from the bus, after the seven hour ride across the Rohtang Pass from Manali. It sits above and to the left of Kardang village, its corrugated iron roof glistening in the sun, beneath the peak of Nyimafed Latse. The smaller houses of the individual practitioners

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\(^1\) As mentioned in Chapter 3, a thangka is a painting on canvas, usually used as an aid to visualisation practice. Normally thangka are framed in elaborate silk brocade and made so that they can be rolled for storage and transportation. The wall paintings in Kardang gonpa are also painted on canvas, rather than directly on to the earthen walls. For information on pigments see Jackson, D. and J (1976). For brief histories of thangka painting see Smith (1970a), Thubten Sangay (1984).
cluster around the three-storey gonpa building. In rather stark contrast to the smaller meditation houses of the gonpa practitioners, the main gonpa building is large, cement rendered, with its sloping metal roof and smaller top room a crowning pyramid. The structure and new building materials create a rather imposing impression, but the overall effect of the gonpa and the several smaller houses is one of organic growth — the flat-roofed, earthen-walled houses nestling into the mountainside (photographs, pp.153-4). Indeed, the gonpa has grown from one small building to the several which now constitute Kardang Gonpa, and renovations and additions continue to be made.

The grass fields and cultivated terraced fields of Kardang lie below and to either side of the gonpa, and on the slope above stretch five long avalanche walls and three smaller ones. On the denuded mountainside above the village, level with the gonpa, sixteen lone trees stand, remnants of the kail pine forest which grew here earlier this century (see photograph, p. ).

From Kyelang, one must walk to reach Kardang, firstly descending to cross the bridge over the Bhaga River, before slowly ascending, zig-zagging up the narrow stony pathway. After an hour and a half, the village is reached. Continuing for another half hour or so through the fields, steadily climbing, the gonpa is reached. A small newly constructed chorten with fresh white paint sits in front of the large tree, marking the entry to the gonpa precincts (see photograph, p.250). The path leads to the left, passing the chorten on the right, in keeping with the Buddhist custom of respecting Dharma (Skt., chōs, chos, ‘Buddhist teaching’) objects by walking in a clockwise direction. A flat terraced area, a courtyard, with three much older chortens on the right perimeter, is reached. Behind and above these are a few flat-roofed mud houses, much smaller than those in the village, but nevertheless two or three storeys high. At the far end of this courtyard is the side wall of the main building, and if one keeps the main gonpa building on the right, one reaches the front entrance, which faces north (see drawing, p.210).

There is a bell above the door, which the villagers ring as they enter the covered circumambulatory passage around the shrine room (Lhakhang), which is lined with prayer wheels fixed in the inner right-hand wall. I was told that in the Bardo, the transition state after death, the consciousness is guided to rebirth by the sounds of the Buddha’s teaching. The ringing of the bell is thought to symbolise the
wisdom of the teachings, so it is rung upon entering to ensure familiarity. The villagers begin their rounds, spinning the wheel and saying mantras under their breath, as they count the beads of their mala (Skt. 'rosary'). Sometimes a few of the Kardangpa will spend time here as they pass through the gonpa grounds on their way up to collect wood, or otherwise go about their daily chores.

The assembly halls and shrine rooms are normally locked, unless there is a ritual being performed and the practitioners have gathered together in the Chöskhang (chos khang, ‘dharma hall’ where the scriptures are kept) or Dukhang ('du khang, assembly hall), rather than performing private meditation and spiritual practice in their houses or sitting on their roofs. This prayer wheel passage is always open, and the villagers may use it as they wish. Anyone wanting to enter any of the shrine rooms must seek the person assigned the task of keeping the keys, who accompanies one in one’s devotions, or in one’s sight-seeing tour, as the case may be.

In Chapter 3 I mentioned that Kardang Gonpa, now the biggest gonpa in Lahul, is quite popular with tourists, both Indian and Westerners. Unless one happens to visit on the tenth of the Tibetan lunar month, which is an auspicious day for practice associated with Padmasambhava; or the twenty-fifth, the day of the Dakini; or on special days such as the death anniversaries of important teachers; or when villages have specifically requested ritual performances, there may be little apparent activity at the gonpa, for Kardang gonpa is a community of yogic practitioners, who emphasise individual spiritual practice, and they do not assemble daily for communal practice. In the next chapter I discuss more details of the activity of the practitioners, particularly the individuals who have spiritually inspired and taught the community, and the rituals they perform communally at the gonpa and in the village.

Fixing events related to the growth of Kardang Gonpa in time is problematical. In this chapter I briefly examine the architectural evidence in association with information collected verbally to describe the physical growth of

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2I collected full architectural details (including plans and elevations, and details of inside and outside) of the entire structure and the gonpa houses, and anticipate presenting this material in more detail elsewhere. Because of the building techniques used, a close examination revealed at least some of the additions and extensions which are summarised here.
the gonpa, and consider the interrelationship between gonpa and village, focusing on the most important structural unit in village society, the household. When speaking about their society, the Karzhapa expressed the ideal that each village has its own gonpa, and each village household another smaller house at the gonpa. As indicated in the village ethnography, in practice, Kardang Gonpa is the focus of spiritual activity for all the villages on the left side of the Bhaga River, from Gozzang to Peukar, and gonpa membership cuts across village boundaries. Shashur Gonpa, above Kyelang, was the most important Gonpa in Karzha during the last century, a position it had held from the early seventeenth century when Dev Gyatso propagated the teachings (see Chapter 2), but its numbers have declined this century, as Kardang has grown in size and popularity.

In Chapter 3 I mentioned that Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche returned to Karzha with instructions from Togdan Shakya Shri to build a gonpa. Togdan Shakya Shri (1853-1919) was a Khampa from East Tibet. Although he never visited Karzha himself, both his disciples and descendants have played, and continue to play, an important role in the continuity of spiritual practice in Karzha.

Shakya Shri began his spiritual career in the Drugu (gru gu) gonpa of Chöje (chos rgyal) Rinpoche, a Drukpa Kargyu lineage, in Kham, however he left the gonpa, married and became a lay practitioner, establishing a ngagpa (sngags pa)

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3 More information on Shakya Shri is given in Section IV, in the discussion of namthar and oral biography, although a more thorough presentation of Shakya Shri’s lifestory, and the ngagpa and teaching lineages which he began is beyond the scope of the present work. Geoffrey Samuel and Tashi Tsering have recently conducted relevant research among some descendants of Shakya Shri in Orissa (personal communication and see Appendix).

Togdan Shakya Shri seems to have played a similar role in another small valley in the western Himalaya, that of Kutang in Nepal, where a local lama, Sonam Wangyal (bsod nams dbang rgyal) was a disciple of Togdan Shakya Shri. This area is reported to have a close connection with both the Drukpa and the Nyingma lineages at least since the seventeenth century, and as in Karzha, the term memé is used to denote a male spiritual practitioner and kushog (sku shogs) is used as an honorific title for important lama (Aris 1975). However, to my knowledge, the ngagpa lineage of Shakya Shri has not played a vital role in the continuity of religious practice in Kutang in the second half of the twentieth century.

Drugu is a district in Kham, East Tibet. Please refer to Appendix on the Drukpa Kargyu.

The ngagpa or ‘hereditary priests’ (as glossed by Aziz 1974:24) trace descent through the male line. Refer to Chapter 4 and the discussion of patrilineal descent.
lineage. His great-grandson Sé (Sras) Rinpoche now lives and teaches at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa in Manali, and teaches at Kardang Gonpa during the summer. These matters are further discussed in the next two chapters.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, in Kham, East Tibet, the nineteenth century was a period of religious efflorescence (see Appendix). Many of today's teachers within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition trace their lineages back to these masters from nineteenth century Kham. So important is this period in the continuity of the Tibetan Buddhist teachings, that it is now generally referred to as the Rimé movement, meaning 'non-biased, impartial' which refers to the characteristic unification of different practice lineages.7

The epithet Togdan (rtogs ldan), meaning 'having spiritual insight', was earned by Shakya Shri in recognition of his spiritual attainment. Shakya Shri received the Dzogchen teachings from several of the Khampa teachers, forming a particularly close relationship with his contemporary, Adzom Drukpa. He also received teachings in the Chagchen meditation tradition, his principal teacher being the VIth Khamtrul (khams sprul) Rinpoche, Tenpé Nyima (bstan pa'i nyi ma, 1849-1907).

These teachings were passed on to his many disciples, among them the group of Karzhapa who travelled to Kham, via Bhutan, in the first decade of the twentieth century. The Karzhapa disciples made three trips to Tibet, in order to receive teachings from Togdan Shakya Shri, and one of these men, Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche, became one of Shakya Shri’s principal disciples, one of the three full lineage holders (thugs sras) empowered to transmit the teachings to others. I recount the details of the lives of Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche, Kunga Rinpoche and the other Karzhapa disciples of the Togdan in Chapter 9.

Attention is now directed to Kardang Gonpa, which was initially built by the villagers of Kardang after the Karzhapa returned from Kham the first time. Shakya Shri had instructed Norbu Rinpoche to establish a small gonpa with the Karzhapa disciples in order to continue the spiritual practices they had been taught. The villagers agreed on a small area of land above the village where a female practitioner, known simply as Abhi, ‘grandmother’, had meditated beside the

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7For other references on this period see Smith, E.G. (1969a, 1970a, 1971b, 1971c); Tashi Tsering (1985); Samuel (n.d., 1).
shorten encasing the remains of her husband, Jhampa (jam dpal) Mémé, who was also a spiritual practitioner. Initially this new gonpa was known as ‘Abhi Gonpa’, differentiating it from the Kothi Gonpa in Kardang village which was near the building housing the imprints the Drukpa yogi Gotsangpa had left in the rocks in the twelfth century. Nowadays, nothing remains of the Kothi Gonpa where the practitioners from Kardang and Gozzang resided over winter, engaged in spiritual pursuits. The gonpa in Kardang village, which houses Gotsangpa’s imprints, is called Jabjez Gonpa, and the small gonpa built above the village in 1912 has grown into the largest and most active gonpa in Lahul — Kardang Gonpa.

The room which is now the communal dining room was previously the Chöskhang, as is clearly evidenced by the carved capitals on the pillars which structurally support all buildings, and the timber plank floor. The sequence of structural changes in the organic growth of the main building is difficult to establish, as only one gonpa member was old enough to remember details herself. This older Lhakhang was built under Norbu Rinpoche’s guidance, probably after his second journey to Kham, and was an extension of the original smaller building made in 1912. This original building is now the bottom floor of the three-storeyed main gonpa building.

After Norbu Rinpoche’s second visit to Kham, a two-storey block was attached to this Lhakhang, angled along the contour of the slope. Excavations and terracing were employed to make this extension, which included a store room, which when viewed from the rear of the building is below ground. Above this room the Chöskhang was built to house the Kanjur (bka' 'gyur), the set of Buddhist scriptures which had been donated to Norbu Rinpoche for the new gonpa. This room, which is now the dining hall, is thus the top floor of a two-storeyed block when viewed from the front. There have been several additions since then, and

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8 See discussion in Chapters 2 and 8.

9 As mentioned in Chapter 3, footnote 8, these two gonpa are erroneously thought to be one, see Government of Himachal Pradesh (1975:55, 275) and Handa (1987:67).

10 Two male practitioners at Kardang Gonpa were born between 1910 and 1912, and one at Lama Gonpa in 1913. The oldest practitioner was Abhi Tsenku Tholakpa, born in 1901. The next eldest female was born in 1917. There was thus only one female practitioner of age to remember the founding of the gonpa, although she did not join as a full-time practitioner until 1936 (see footnote 61).
nowadays, the main three-storeyed block consisting of the Lhakhang and circumambulatory passage, the Dukhang and the Chöskhang, now distinguished by its cement rendering and corrugated roof, when considered in isolation from the attached blocks which extend along the narrow strip of flattened land, is a 10.75 metre square.

The method of construction employed in Lahul means that walls can easily be demolished and rooms enlarged, or rooms at the same level or an extra floor added. At this site, terraces have been made to create enough flat land to accommodate the main gonpa building, and the various blocks of the building follow the contour of the hillside (see Ground Plans), hence the organic quality to the buildings, and the impression of labyrinthian interiors through storage rooms, annexes, hallways and stair-ladders connecting the different parts and levels of the building. From the rear the building is only two storeys high, the result of excavation and terracing.

A brief description of building methods will clarify this point. The basic unit of construction is the timber beam, the trunk of a tree. Timber beams form all the vertical supports, and the horizontal connecting supports between them - the roof or the floor to the next storey. Larger rooms thus have two or three rows of columns, usually between 1.7 to 2 metres apart. In buildings such as the main halls of the gonpa these beams are finished, and crowned with an elaborately carved and painted capital.

The outer walls are made by building with rocks and rubble, to a thickness of about fifty to sixty centimetres. This construction is greatly strengthened and stabilised against earthquake if interlacing horizontal timbers are fitted into the wall as it is built, as is the case with some of the older structures, but the acute shortage of timber means that these are commonly left out. The inner walls are not as thick, and may be simple dividers of wattle and daub about six centimetres thick. The holes in these random stone walls are filled with mud mortar, and then finished with a mixture of mud and pine needles. Pre-made wooden window frames and door frames are set into the walls as the stones are built up. Floors are either earthen or made with fitted planks. Ceilings are usually rough tree timbers, but
may also be of fitted timber planks, which are more costly but cleaner as less falls through from the floor or roof above.\textsuperscript{11}

Repairs, renovations and extensions become simply a matter of adding on rooms, and knocking down sections and rebuilding as necessary, reusing the materials in addition to the extra timber and stone required to make the alterations. Indeed, as the extra building material required becomes available, extensions which may well have been planned during a previous construction can be made.

In September 1983, I witnessed this procedure when the section at the extreme end of this main building, including the Zimchung (gzim chung, private quarters of the head lama) was demolished and extended, creating more guest accommodation. Some of the costs of this extension were provided through the District Administration, as sometimes tourists arrived late in the afternoon wishing to stay overnight, or could not find lodging in Kyelang at the Tourist Bungalow. Practitioners from other gonpa in Lahul were coming to Kardang during the summer months when Gegan Khyentse Gyatso (dge rgyan mkhyen brtse rgya mtsho), the principal teacher from Apo Rinpoche Gonpa in Manali, was invited to teach, and as he has a following of students in Ladakh, including the Drukchen ('brug chen, 'the great dragon') Rinpoche,\textsuperscript{12} it was anticipated that even more people may come to Kardang Gonpa. The gonpa itself could not provide accommodation for visitors, therefore one can stay only at the invitation of one of the practitioners, with the approval of the gonpa manager, the nyerpa. These additions were intended to accommodate such visitors in a section of the building separate from the renovated Zimchung.

Kardang Gonpa attracts tourists not only because it is clearly visible across the valley from Kyelang, but also because it houses some finely executed art work. Unlike many of the other gonpa in Lahul, the wall paintings at Kardang have been painted on canvas, rather than directly onto the earthen walls. The beautiful series

\textsuperscript{11}Compare with descriptions of building techniques for Bhutan, in which the walls are made of pounded earth using a wooden frame (Chime Wangmo 1985:108); Spiti, where sun-dried mud bricks or framed, pounded earth are used; Zangskar where pounded earth is used (Khosla, R. 1979:117–122). Materials used are determined by availability.

\textsuperscript{12}For information on the Drukpa lineages see Appendix.
of paintings on the life of Milarepa\textsuperscript{13} were commissioned from a Zangskapa master about 1930.\textsuperscript{14} This teacher, known as \textit{Lingshedpa pon} (\textit{?ling snyed pa dpon})\textsuperscript{15}, 'the master from Lingshed', and six of his students, came to Kardang to visit Norbu Rinpoche and were commissioned to do this series of paintings, as well as a large thangka of Togdan Shakya Shri and earlier masters from the Drukpa transmission lineage which is now hanging on the wall of the Dukhang. The Milarepa thangka were done before the other paintings in the Dukhang, although the same school of painters was involved. It seems these painters travelled between Zangskar and Karzha, as did Norbu Rinpoche when the next stage of gonpa construction was undertaken.

All the wall paintings at Kardang reach from the ceiling to about thirty centimetres from the floor and are set in timber frames. The series on the life of Milarepa was made originally for the older gonpa structure which is now the communal eating room, mentioned above. They now adorn the walls of the Chöskhang. Not only are they moveable, but they wear well and are less damaged by water than paintings made directly onto the clay wall, which are regularly repainted, or resurfaced and painted over with different frescoes if the earth walls crack or are damaged by water. These thangka were painted on canvas both to preserve them and as extensions were envisaged at the time they were commissioned.

These Milarepa thangka, and the others in the shrine halls at the lower two levels, as well as the many fine clay rupa or statues of the Buddha, meditational

\textsuperscript{13}Milarepa is a well known yogic practitioner in the Kargyu lineage, see Chapter 4, and Appendix. See also Garma C.C. Chang (1977); Kunga Rinpoche and Cutillo (1978); Lhalungpa (1979).

\textsuperscript{14}There are several styles of thangka painting. The style of these thangka is continued at the Thangka Painting School of Lahul and Spiti, in Manali, and by Lama Paljor from Kardang Gonpa, and a few other individuals, who produce very fine work, some of which has been shown at exhibitions in Japan. There is a wealth of material on which to base a thorough stylistic and iconographic study, well beyond the scope of this current discussion.

\textsuperscript{15}This is probably \textit{Lings snyed gonpa}, mentioned in passing in Snellgrove and Skorupski (1980:6, 43). Without further research it is difficult to establish if the school of painters and craftspeople were from this gonpa, or from another place in Zangskar. There has been inadequate research into active schools of thangka painting and statue making in these regions, as most art historians are interested in antiquity, a concern not shared by Tibetans and other Buddhist peoples, rather than the social context of the creation of these works, and their significance as objects of spiritual practice.
deities and lineage holders, housed in elaborately carved shrine cupboards, attract tourists who do not understand much of the iconography and philosophical significance of what they see. The key-keeper becomes a tourist guide, but as only one of the practitioners speaks more than a few words of English, Western tourists usually leave with their impressions, but without much explanation. These 'art works' — the paintings and statues housed in the Gonpa — are both objects of veneration and instructional tools, depicting not only the life of the very famous Milarepa, but other yogic masters of the transmission lineage practised at the gonpa, including Togdan Shakya Shri, Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche, as well as the meditational deities from the spiritual practices taught in this transmission lineage. Not only are the practitioners instructed through these visual representations, but the non-specialists, the villagers, learn something about the spiritual activity of the practitioners, and may receive explanations about these thangka, from time to time.

Every object housed in the Gonpa has been commissioned, or was a gift from a patron. Thus the story behind their acquisition reveals something of the growth of the community, and is indicative of accumulated wealth. The one hundred and eight volumes of the Kanjur, the set of scriptures, was donated to Norbu Rinpoche by the King of Bhutan when Kardang was first established.

By far the majority of such works at Kardang Gonpa are not the result of royal patronage, but have been donated over time by the villagers of Kardang, and Karzha. This contrasts with the majority of the gonpa in Ladakh, for instance, which were built with royal patronage and are thus indicative of the wealth and power of the ruler. I present details of one such Ladakhi gonpa for comparative purposes in the conclusion to this chapter.

16See discussion in Chapter 3. I found myself cast into the role of 'tourist guide' on several occasions, further acquainting me with the interests and general level of understanding of the majority of tourists.

17For instance, the story of Milarepa's life is generally well known, and can be 'read' from the thangka series (see footnote 13). There have been several general iconographic studies of Tibetan thangka, though detailed studies of the iconography of a practice lineage at a particular gonpa, and the social context of these are lacking. For instance, some of the thangka at Kardang Gonpa are representations of terma, discovered teachings, of Togdan Shakya Shri, and thus quite specific to this practice lineage. I anticipate making a more detailed analysis of my data from this perspective in the future. The villagers appreciate that such thangka depict terma of Shakya Shri, although they have not received instructions as to the practice techniques involved.
Although the small village gonpa predominates in Karzha, Tod and Tinan, some gonpa in Lahul such as Tayul and Shashur, were established as branches of larger gonpa in Ladakh, although their current social structure and relationship with the local villages may well allow them to be considered as village gonpa, rather than as gonpa operating under royal or state patronage.18

Architecturally, these small branch gonpa combine features of the village gonpa with gonpa built under royal patronage. The village gonpa do not follow the pattern of small cells for the practitioners incorporated into the main gonpa structure, but rather have individual houses for practitioners, as is the case at Shashur Gonpa and Tayul Gonpa. Although storeys may have been added later to the main gonpa buildings at Shashur and Tayul, their present plan and layout was probably created when they were first built19, and there is not the same evidence of growth as found at Kardang Gonpa.

The organic growth of Kardang Gonpa is the result of continued patronage from the villagers, and from 1912 to the present, Kardang Gonpa has grown considerably.

I was told that the prayer wheels in the circumambulatory passage of the Lhakhang were made in Kulu-Manali about 1912, when the gonpa was first built. This ground (or lower ground) level was the original single storey built after Norbu Rinpoche returned on the first occasion from Kham. The second stage of building was the addition, to the left, of the two storeys with storage underneath and the Chöskhang which is now the communal dining hall, above. It is difficult to clarify some points about the probable sequence of building, now that cement rendering has covered the outer walls of the main three-storeyed structure, thus hiding joins indicating extensions. To reduce maintenance, the floor of the Lhakhang was also concreted, in 1981. However, the window frames of this ground floor level are smaller and rougher than those employed on the two floors above, which indicates an earlier construction. These window frames are comparable to those of the adjoining double-storeyed section, also indicating that this section was the next

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18See Chapters 2 and 6.

19I further discuss this comparative data later in this chapter. See Romi Khosla (1979:83, 94, 100) for details and plans of Shashur and Tayul Gonpa.
built. When Norbu Rinpoche first went to live at Dzonkhul (rdzong khul)\(^{20}\) Gonpa in Zangskar, probably in the late 1930's, this was the main structure of Kardang Gonpa.

The second and third storeys were added one at a time, above the Lhakhang, after Lama Sherab (shes rab) Tholakpa had become the manager of Kardang Gonpa, in 1937.\(^{21}\) He collaborated with Norbu Rinpoche over the next ten years in the extensions made to Kardang Gonpa, and as mentioned above, the same school of painters from Zangskar were involved in painting several of the wall thangka.

It seems that a considerable amount of the money used to build and extend Kardang Gonpa, and to sponsor paintings and statues, came from Norbu Rinpoche himself - the offerings he had received from his disciples in Tibet and throughout the Himalaya - or were offerings made to him for the gonpa, as with the Kanjur scriptures. I was told, however, that there was not much expense involved in the actual building, as all the villagers contributed labour. As Norbu Rinpoche had attracted disciples from other places, assistance was received not only from Kardang and neighbouring villages, but from Sissu and elsewhere in Lahul as well.

The current Zimchung, the private quarters of the head lama, was built in 1960 in preparation for the arrival of the Tibetan refugee Apo Rinpoche, Togdan Shakya Shri’s grandson, and his family.\(^{22}\) I discuss their stay at Kardang Gonpa

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\(^{20}\) For information on Dzonkhul Gonpa, see Snellgrove and Skorupski (1980:55–57), and Nawang Tsering’s translation of the namthar of the eighteenth century Drukpa Lama Ngawang Tsering from Dzonkhul Gonpa (1979: esp.1–5). Shaksпо makes an intriguing reference to a Lama Norbuk from Karzha, who is a disciple of Lama Kunga Choegel from Dzonkhul Gonpa and is credited with renovations at Dzonkhul. Kunga Choegel lived during the nineteenth and perhaps early twentieth centuries, though information is unclear in the article. He travelled to Karzha later in his life, where he had several disciples. Whether the Norbuk mentioned is Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche cannot be established without further research (Shaksпо 1985:45–46).

\(^{21}\) Randhawa says that “Scherip” was the “Head Lama” (1974:208). He was the nyerpa or manager, and not necessarily the senior practitioner. The genealogy of the Tholakpa household is presented below.

\(^{22}\) With reference to the plans of Kardang Gonpa presented by Romi Khosla: they have been printed upside down and thus reversed, so that what is labelled the “second floor” shows the surrounding ground and some of the terraces. He has labelled the middle storey, now the Dukhang, as the Zimchung. The lower storey he calls the Dukhang. (1979:100). His information was collected over a ten year period (1968–1978), but as he does not state when his drawings were made, it is difficult to ascertain whether the function he ascribes to the middle story was at some stage appropriate, or whether there is some inexactitude here (Khosla, R. 1979:100). I suspect the latter, the result of his presentation of only partial plans
in the next chapter. In the late 1960's, the concrete was added to the outside of the main structure. The corrugated roof and top room were added more recently, in 1978.

As demonstrated in the above discussion, this main gonpa building has grown considerably in the seventy-odd years between the first building of the gonpa and my fieldwork. In this respect it differs from the other gonpa in Lahul. Chukta Gonpa in Peukar village was first established shortly after Kardang Gonpa, and rebuilt in about 1960, after it was swept away by an avalanche, on a safer site nearer the village. Although some additions have been made, this village gonpa has not been repeatedly extended, as has Kardang, indicating the difference in popularity of the two, and the effect of the presence of an important teacher or reincarnate at a village gonpa.

Lama Gonpa, above Gozzang village, was previously a cave associated with Gyalwa Gotsangpa, known as Gotsang Ritro or Gotsangpa Drupdé. It has no Dukhang or communal shrine hall, but functions as a hermitage. Another of Shakya Shri’s disciples, Mémé Gatug Dangrapa was the first to build a house up there after his return from Kham. A few others followed suit, and the original cave-building was remodelled and a second storey added for the use of Kunga Rinpoche. As it is built around a cave and rock face, the entire site is irregular and organic. It is much smaller than Kardang Gonpa and in many ways functions as an extension of it, a point which I elaborate upon later.

A detailed presentation of information pertaining to the paintings and statues in the three shrine halls of Kardang Gonpa must wait until the opportunity to present this iconographical study arises. Some general comments are appropriate in the current sociological context. Although sponsorship is a relevant consideration with regard to these art works, factors not related to the availability of funds clearly

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for Kardang Gonpa.

23My suggestion that the name ‘Gozzang’ was perhaps associated with Gotsangpa was regarded as dubious by the Karzhapa, and they had no meaning for the name. However Tucci (1971:738 note 4) corrects Hutchinson and Vogel’s reference to the eleventh century ‘Gozzan Lama’ of Lahul to Gotsangpa of the thirteenth century.

24Yurdzong, Gotsangpa’s winter cave, is similarly built along a cliff ledge (see Chapter 2), as is Phugtal in Zangskar, which is a much bigger Gonpa (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980:49-53).
prompt commissions for many of the pieces. When an important teacher dies, several chortens are usually constructed to enshrine the cremated remains. This may include a larger chorten built in the open, as well as smaller reliquaries containing some of the cremated remains, which are taken to the main gonpa associated with that teacher. These matters are discussed further in Chapter 7.

For instance, on the death of the Zangskapa, Jhampa Mémé, who had cared for Jabjez Gonpa in Kardang village and resided in the Kothi Gonpa during the nineteenth century, three chortens were made. His heart, which I was told did not burn in the cremation, was placed in a chorten, which was taken by his paternal grandson to Joling village. The chorten which encased the upper part of his body is kept in Jabjez Gonpa, in Kardang village. The chorten which encased the lower part of his body was built above Kardang village and became the site for the present Kardang Gonpa.25 The original gonpa building was actually built around the chorten of Jhampa Mémé. This chorten was later moved outside into the courtyard and rebuilt in about 1940, encasing the original chorten, so that it is passed when entering the precincts of the gonpa. It is now finished in concrete.

The chortens from three generations of this family are now in this courtyard — those of Jhampa Mémé, of his son Kulu Mémé, and of Kulu’s eldest son Norbu Mémé who was Kunga Rinpoche’s father (see Drawing of Kardang Gonpa courtyard, p.210). The chorten of the fourth and last member of this ngagpa lineage, Kunga Rinpoche, is kept in the Lhakhang.

Norbu Rinpoche’s chorten is kept in the Dukhang and was made in wood by Kunga Rinpoche and Lama Yontan (yon tan), a thangka painter from Kardang Gonpa, in 1947. In 1980 the Gonpa arranged for it to be covered in silver metal sheeting, the workmanship of the Domba silversmith in Cheling village. Kunga Rinpoche’s chorten was made in silver by this smith at the time of his death, in 1967. A wooden chorten for the remains of Khunu (khu nu, ku nu) Rinpoche was made by Lama Yontan shortly after this respected teacher from Kinnaur died at

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25There was no explanation known as to why a third chorten was built at the site above the village — although it is an auspicious site, close to the spring on the left, with the mountain Nyimafed Latse behind.
NGAGPA LINEAGE FROM JAMPHA MÉMÉ

Abhi • = ▲ JAMPHA mémé

= ▲ KULU mémé

= ▲ Norbu mémé ▲ Domba ▲ Palden

▲ KUNGA Rinpoche

Statue of Kunga Rinpoche

Statue of Norbu Rinpoche

Kept in Dukhang of Kardang Gonpa. Both statues were made in 1948 by Lama Taimain from Gandhla.
Shashur Gonpa early in 1978. Khunu Rinpoche's chorten, like that of Kunga Rinpoche, is kept in the Lhakhang.

Usually within a year of the death of the teacher, a life-like statue is commissioned and made from clay. These statues are usually sponsored jointly by villager and practitioner alike, and local craftspeople are frequently employed in these projects. The images of Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche in the Dukhang were made in 1948 and 1968 respectively and modelled by Lama Tamdin (rtwa mgrin) from Gondhla. There is also a statue of VIIIth Yongdzin (yongs 'dzin) Rinpoche in this shrine area, which was modelled by the same lama in 1954, three years after the young tulku (sprul sku, 'reincarnation') of Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche (d.1947) was born to Drukpa Yongdzin Rinpoche and his wife Kutima. The first statue of Shakya Shri acquired by the gonpa was made by a craftsman from Joling village shortly after the Togdan's death. It is kept in the Lhakhang. Later, Norbu Rinpoche commissioned another statue of Shakya Shri which is kept in the middle Dukhang, as he felt the likeness in the original statue could be improved upon.

In 1965, when Apo Rinpoche was at the gonpa, Lama Rigzin Norbu (rig 'dzin nor bu), a Bhutanese craftsman stayed for some time. He worked with Kardangpa Lama Yontan, and another lama, Lobzang (blo bzang), from Miya Nallah in the Pattan Valley (Chandrabhaga). They made the large statue of the Buddha Vajradhara (Skt.), Dorje Chang (rdo rje 'chang) yab-yum, which is kept in the Dukhang. Taking advantage of the visit by the Bhutanese craftsman, Lama Chering Dondrup Lharje (tshe ring 'don grub lha rje), the Tibetan doctor from

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26Khunu Rinpoche, Tenzin Gyaltsun (bstan dzin rgyal tshan, 1885-1978), was born in Kinnaur, H.P., and was a student of Khenpo Shvenea (mkhan po gzhan dga', 1871-1927) from Dzogchen Gonpa. He was a master of both Chagchen and Dzogchen methods, and one of H.H. the Dalai Lama's principal Dzogchen teachers. In 1981 the Dalai Lama toured Himachal Pradesh, giving teachings to several hundreds of people in Manali, expressly to continue the transmission lineage of Khunu Rinpoche in Himachal Pradesh. See discussion in Chapter 6.

27See photographs of these two statues. Lama Tamdin was still alive but senile at the time of my fieldwork.

28Iconographically, the representation of Vajradhara indicates that the practice lineage represented is Mahamudra (Chagchen). As Togdan Shakya Shri taught both Chagchen and Dzogchen, some of the other images in the gonpa are representations from the Dzogchen lineage.
Kardang, initiated the project to make the statue of Guru Rinpoche and his two consorts, Yeshe Tsogyal (ye shes mtsho rgyal) and Mandarava (Skt.), which are at Chukta Gonpa, Peukor village. He organised communal sponsorship, contributing significantly himself.\(^{29}\) It seems that the presence of a skilled craftsman, who apparently came to Kardang because of Apo Rinpoche’s residence there, prompted these commissions.

I conclude this discussion of the material growth of Kardang Gonpa with the following observations. Although as a generalisation it is clear that sponsoring paintings, statues and thangka, and the building of gonpa, their extension and renovations, are indicative of wealth accumulated through the villagers’ trading endeavours and cash crops, much of this activity is triggered by important events such as the death of a teacher, or the visit of a skilled craftsperson, often the disciple of the resident teacher.

Frequently, the entire community, both from the gonpa and the village or villages, contribute to these activities. Although at the time some individuals may contribute substantially more than others, these details are usually not remembered, although the craftsperson who actually made the object frequently is remembered. The extent of an individual’s contribution to any project is generally viewed as a matter of individual spiritual concern, rather than a matter of political expediency, although some individuals may gain the reputation of frequent and lavish sponsorship, which may have consequences in the sphere of their social relationships.\(^{30}\)

However, the creation of paintings, sculptures and chortens is not solely dependent upon outside skill. Lama Yontan, who died 1978, was actively engaged in producing several art works. His student, Lama Paljor Lharije, continues to make objects, and renovates the paintwork in the gonpa as necessary. Lama Paljor repainted all the woodwork, the columns and the carved capitals, of the Lhakhang in the summer of 1983, also assisting with the construction of the chortens that year.

^ The details of initiating this commission were remembered by Lama Paljor Lharje, the doctor’s son.

^ The Karzhapa did not suggest this connection between sponsorship and social status to me, instead talking in terms of an individual’s karma (Skt., ‘actions, cause and effect’). Sponsorship of a ritual, or the making of a religious statue, were discussed in terms of making merit, or good karma. However, if an individual developed a higher social profile in the village community, that would also be seen as the result of karma.
(see Chapter 7), and painted facial details on the brass statues of lineage masters purchased in 1982 (see next chapter). The presence of highly trained personnel, such as a thangka painter at Kardang Gonpa is indicative of the strength and activity of the gonpa. Furthermore, employing gonpa residents in these projects is relatively inexpensive, as their basic needs are already met by their household in the village. Other local craftspeople, such as the Domba silversmith from Cheling, are also employed from time to time.

Norbu Rinpoche’s presence at Kardang gonpa was significant as not only was he the driving force behind its founding, contributing funds — donations which had been made to him by disciples from elsewhere — but he also attracted skilled craftspeople, who also contributed to the manufacture of devotional and instructional works. Kardang Gonpa is a flourishing village gonpa. Its gradual and organic growth from its beginnings as one small building indicate its development in relation to the general economic conditions in the village. This is the outward manifestation of the spiritual growth of the gonpa community.

Before discussing details of the individuals who, by becoming practitioners at the gonpa, have contributed to its inner, spiritual continuation, without which the outer manifestation ceases, I will briefly mention some of the ritual procedures involved in choosing a site and building a gonpa. Norbu Rinpoche contributed not only inspirationally and financially towards the founding and growth of Kardang Gonpa, but his expertise as a ritual specialist and practitioner guided the choice of site, the laying of the foundations, and the rabné (rab gnas) or consecration of the different Lhakhang. All paintings, statues and chortens are also empowered ritually with a rabné before use, and many items may be consecrated in the one ceremony. Before this, statues and chortens are filled in a ritually prescribed manner. This entire ritual process requires the guidance and participation of a specialist, who is an accomplished practitioner. These matters are discussed in the next Section and are covered in detail elsewhere.31

The physical constraints of flat land free from the path of avalanches are important in the choice of any building site in Lahul. However, these are not the only considerations when a site for a gonpa is chosen. The site for Kardang was

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chosen by Norbu Rinpoche and agreed to by the villagers. The site is considered particularly auspicious, not only as it was previously sanctified by the chorten of Jhampa Mémé, and empowered by the practice of Abhi, but it has a northerly aspect, nestles into the slope with a pyramid shaped peak, Nyimafed Latse, rising behind it, and has a spring to the left. The ability to correctly decipher the geographical terrain in terms of geomantic considerations is an important skill possessed by some of the teachers in the Tibetan tradition, and according to the principles of Tibetan geomancy, Kardang Gonpa’s success is at least partly attributable to the skill demonstrated by Norbu Rinpoche in choosing the site.32

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Kardang Gonpa is also on the pilgrimage route around Drilburi. Terracing, to provide flat ground, and the building of avalanche walls, locally called ‘check dams’, have developed and protected the site chosen from potential danger.

In the discussion so far of Kardang Gonpa I have only briefly mentioned the small houses in which the practitioners live. These are not provided by the gonpa, but independently by the village households. As mentioned above, the ideal is that each village household also has a small house at the gonpa for those household members who wish to engage in spiritual practice.

Rather than document gonpa membership statistically (with breakdown by age, gender, percentage of population and so on),33 I describe the situation and the principles of social organisation which have apparently created it. As evidenced by the discussion in Chapter 1, the material available on Lahuli society relies heavily upon statistical methods of presenting information, and although such material provides an orientation, it does not lead to a deepening of understanding of the social structure.34 To my knowledge, data pertaining to gonpa membership

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32See discussion in next Section on Labchang Gonpa. For information on Tibetan geomancy see Gyatso, J. (1987:40-41); Trungpa (1978:303-4); Thubten Legshay Gyatsho (1979).

33The total number of practitioners involved is small and thus not amenable to meaningful statistical analysis, although questions such as the total number of members per village household are considered. The census was taken in 1981, and my own figures for the gonpa were collected in 1983.

34Several points were mentioned then which I raise again: (a) the census considers presence of people at the time of the census rather than all those considered to be either a member of the household, or the gonpa although they are currently elsewhere; (b) household
in relation to the social structure of the supporting village have not previously been presented for any Tibetan Buddhist community.

As in the village rituals, and in social and agricultural activities in the village, the principle of residence and social organisation at the gonpa is the household. The arrangement of households in the order derived from or mapped in the village ritual, particularly the Bagh, has no significance at the gonpa. There the arrangement of houses has been determined by availability of sites, prepared by terracing, on the slope behind the main gonpa building. These gonpa houses have been built as the need has arisen. Continued occupancy from one generation to the next from any particular household is not assured, and multiple occupancy by all members of that household who have engaged in the life of the spiritual practitioner readily accepted.

When the gonpa was first established, Norbu Rinpoche instructed that these small houses were not saleable. However, if any are unoccupied, the gonpa manager and the household involved can arrange for other occupants, perhaps members of a household without a gonpa house, or an outsider who has come to the gonpa from Ladakh or elsewhere, to take up residence.

If a house remains empty, particularly during winter when there will be no one to shovel the snow off the roof, it is quickly damaged and begins to fall down. If the house is to be preserved, arrangements must be made to clear the snow, so it is mutually beneficial to allow somebody without a house to use it, at least until such time as another member of the household who built the house wishes to reside at the gonpa. Then, if necessary, a gonpa house will be built by the household of the person without a house. However, practitioners may co-reside, or another house may be available as the result of a recent death in the gonpa community. Thus if there is an unoccupied gonpa house, it is unlikely that another house will be built at the gonpa.35

35Within the village itself, continuity of the household in the absence of sons is assured by the custom of a male marrying into the household. The possibility of selling a village house was not entertained, nor was the possibility that another family might join Kardang village, although occasionally, as with Jhampa Memé and Abhi, outsiders did come and establish themselves in the village (see discussion in text). These two spiritual practitioners may be regarded as exceptional, however, as they were invited to look after Jabjez Gonpa (see Section IV). It is generally thought that the only reasons outsiders would voluntarily

refers to a building, rather than reflecting the sociological status of the occupants.
Clearly, the addition of small gonpa houses is also a natural and organic process. Before reconstructing the development of Kardang Gonpa, and the transition from Jabjez Gonpa and the Kothi Gonpa to the new Abhi Gonpa, I briefly present data on Kardang Gonpa and its inhabitants during my field period. Kardang Gonpa draws members from villages other than Kardang, and also provides services to other villages, although there are three smaller gonpa: Lama Gonpa, above Gozzang village; Labchang Gonpa in Labchang village; and Chukta Gonpa, in Peukar village, all within about two hours walk. Comparative figures on these villages and gonpa in Barbog and Kardang Kothis were presented in the village ethnography (Chapter 4), and provide a reference for this discussion.

At the time of my fieldwork, there were seventeen gonpa houses clustered behind the main gonpa building (see Gonpa Plan, p.177) at Kardang. The slope is steep, and the sites for each house with its small kitchen garden are terraced to provide flat ground. The houses themselves are either two or three storeys, and of similar construction to the village houses, and the gonpa building. However, they are much smaller, with one to four small rooms on each floor, and all are finished with mud, and flat roofed. Each has a small stove, glass windows, and a drop latrine for use in winter, although there is also a communal one some distance from the gonpa on the right, the opposite side to the spring and closer to the village fields. Some have rubber piping for drainage, the only internal plumbing. Water from the spring is available at the gonpa from a barely buried rubber hose, and is collected in buckets for use. Electricity was brought to the gonpa in 1979-80, but the supply is poor, fluctuating in strength and barely providing enough current to a globe to enable reading from its light.

The total number of practitioners at Kardang Gonpa in 1983 was twenty-eight, and at Lama Gonpa ten, although three of the younger males were not residing at either gonpa, but engaged in study elsewhere. Two were residing in Manali: one studying Tibetan medicine with a skilled Lahuli practitioner living come to Kardang would be for spiritual reasons, for instance to be with a teacher residing there, or to be close to important places for spiritual practice. Government officials, and other transient workers such as the tree guard, are not seen to voluntarily take up residence within the village, and arrangements for them to board with a particular household are made by the village Panchayat.
House Names
1. Yiwas Miyong
2. Timorpa
3. Khyemches
4. Kyelapa
5. Peukor-Tenrig
6. Khyemches
7. Lharje
8. Gozzang Yangkyepa
9. Manepa
10. Thogmes
11. Dangrapa
12. Thowas
13. Manepa
14. Deskyizhi
15. Tholakpa
16. Gozzang Meyonks
17. Gozzang Deskyizhi.
there; and another studying thangka painting under the Zangskapa master resident at the thangka painting school. The third was pursuing studies at school.

At Kardang Gonpa there were eight practitioners living alone (eight gonpa houses), five gonpa houses with two people from the same household sharing the accommodation (ten individuals), and three gonpa houses with two people from different households sharing the house (six), and one gonpa house occupied by three people, each from a different generation of the same household (totalling seventeen gonpa houses with twenty-seven inhabitants and one absent).³⁶

I have briefly described Lama Gonpa above, which as mentioned may be regarded as a hermitage associated with Kardang Gonpa. As a place of practice empowered by Gotsangpa, it attracts those who wish to pursue individual practice in an environment where there is no communal practice hall. The physical constraints of the site will prevent it from growing into a larger centre. Here also, practitioners from the same household share the gonpa house. This principle of residence applies to the majority of gonpa in Karzha and Tod valley, although the detailed information collected applies to the left bank of the Bhaga River in Karzha.³⁷

In this residential arrangement at the gonpa, each practitioner has a small room in which each sleeps, and practices. The kitchen has a small stove, and is shared by the residents in the house. If invited to visit another practitioner, this is where one is usually entertained, sitting cross-legged on the cushions placed on the floor around the walls, with small individual tables in front of one.

As the principle behind gonpa residence in Karzha is household membership, rather than gender, males and females from the same village household reside together. Thus siblings, or any cross-generational combination are

³⁶I use the figures I collected in the summer of 1983 (there have been deaths among the practitioners since that time). I do not include myself. My own stay during the consecutive summers at the gonpa was discussed among the majority of the practitioners, with the manager the key figure, and was made possible by a Lama offering me his roof, half of which was enclosed on three sides, and roofed. As mentioned above, staying at the gonpa depended upon the hospitality offered by an individual (and their household in the village). The advantage for the inhabitants of the gonpa in my 'open' room was that everything I did was visible from some of the other roofs. It proved an ideal location for the anthropologist, who could also watch everything that went on outside and on the roofs, where a considerable amount of time is spent during summer.

³⁷Refer to discussion of Shashur Gonpa and Tayul Gonpa above.
possible within the one gonpa house, whether male or female. This is contrary to what most outsiders seem to assume is the case at a place of spiritual practice, based on Christian preconceptions (for instance those held by the Moravians), and the types of Tibetan gonpa frequently encountered in the literature, whether it be same gender 'monastic' social organisation or the serkhyim (ser khyim) gonpa of married practitioners and their offspring. Hindu/Indian preconceptions, derived from Hindu tantric practices, lead to the supposition that the households consist of sexually active couples (thus some of the more problematic responses from Indian tourists), rather than family members between whom such relationships would be incestuous, and are unthinkable. When a house is shared by people from different households, the occupants are always of the same gender, though practitioners visiting for short periods will be accommodated where room is available.

Although Togdan Shakya Shri was a married practitioner, whose grandson (son’s son), Apo Rinpoche, and his son in turn, Sé Rinpoche, as inheritors of this ngagpa lineage, have lived and taught at Kardang Gonpa, the majority of the practitioners at Kardang and Lama Gonpa have taken getsul (dge tshul) ordination, including vows of celibacy and against sexual misconduct. It is now expected that new recruits will take this ordination, although when the gonpa was first established this was not the expectation. This transition is discussed later in this chapter.

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38It should be born in mind that Kardang Gonpa, Lama Gonpa and Chukta Gonpa were all established while the Moravian Mission was active in Kyelang.

39For instance, in the Solu Khumbu, among the Sherpa, Devuche, the ani-gonpa for the female practitioners, is a physically separate establishment from Tengboche, regarded as the 'sister' gonpa. Also described are the serkhyim gonpa based on Aziz's research in Dingri (Ortner 1989a; Aziz 1978). See also Führer Haimendorf (1976:121-154) on a Drukpa ani-gonpa in Nepal (which I visited in 1978); and Aziz's description of Choslin (chos gling ?), "a combined monastery/nunnery in Solokhumbu", and a combined hermitage in Helambu, Nepal (1976: 155-167). Aziz does not provide a description of the residential arrangements, except to suggest that practitioners live separately, engaged in individual practice at the hermitage.

40My occupancy of a male practitioner's roof is the only exception encountered, but as this was an 'open' room, visible to all, and the practitioner was sharing his house with another younger practitioner, this was deemed to be an acceptable arrangement. This particular Lama was well respected and a very direct person, capable of taking the initiative in offering accommodation in the first place, and in countering the gossip which inevitably surrounded everything I did.

41On the getsul ordination see Samuel (n.d. 1, ch.11).
For the practitioners themselves there is no anomaly or problem in this type of residential arrangement in which (celibate) opposite-sex practitioners from within the same household and family, reside together. The confusion exists for the outsider, who projects his or her own biases onto the situation. The detailed discussion of the principles and realities of residential patterns within the village and at the gonpa in this Section resolves the apparent anomaly of the two genders co-residing in the one gonpa house.

I proceed with details of gonpa house, household and village in the social organisation of the gonpa. As the following description reveals, although there is a tendency for practitioners from Kardang village to live at Kardang Gonpa, and those from Gozzang to live at Lama Gonpa, there are practitioners from both villages at both places. At Lama Gonpa there are five practitioners from Gozzang and three practitioners from Kardang. At Kardang Gonpa there are eighteen practitioners from Kardang and seven from Gozzang. There is also one practitioner from Peukor and one from Barbog at Kardang Gonpa, one from Cheling at Lama Gonpa, and one Ladakhpa at Kardang. There are no practitioners from Kardang or Gozzang at any other gonpa in Lahul. Clearly, there are close connections particularly between Gozzang and Kardang villages and the two gonpa.

Through their teachers, particularly in the past Kunga Rinpoche, and recently Gegan Khyentse, both Chukta Gonpa and Labchang Gonpa are also connected in the network of the Drukpa practice lineage. All but two of the twenty-one practitioners at Chukta Gonpa are from Peukor. One is from Cheling and one from Piaso. Of the seven practitioners at Labchang Gonpa, three are from Labchang, two from Pasparag, and two from Charze, all small closely situated villages (see Map 3).

Although the comparative figures available for village population and gonpa population (see Chapter 4) are biased for the reasons previously mentioned, it can be said that generally a greater percentage of the population in Kardang Kothi is engaged in the life of the spiritual practitioner (at Kardang and Lama Gonpa) than in Barbog Kothi (at Labchang and Chukta Gonpa).

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42This includes three young women who had taken teachings and decided to join the gonpa in 1983. This is discussed further in the next chapter.
At this time it would be unlikely for a practitioner from Kardang village or gonpa to decide to move to any place other than Lama Gonpa, or Apo Rinpoche Gonpa in Manali — though the latter would probably be a temporary move to allow teachings to be taken — as the basis for economic support, the household, is absent. Similarly, from Gozzang or Lama Gonpa, a practitioner may move to Kardang or Apo Rinpoche Gonpa. A few practitioners from other villages have moved to Kardang Gonpa or Lama Gonpa, following personal inclination motivated by the presence of their teacher, either Norbu Rinpoche or Kunga Rinpoche, respectively. Generally, however, those who decide to become spiritual practitioners take up residence in the gonpa associated with their village, although there are a few individuals from neighbouring villages who have taken up residence at Kardang Gonpa or Lama Gonpa in preference to their village gonpa, in order to be closer to their teacher.

This general principle in which the practitioners from a village reside at the associated village gonpa, with some overriding preference for Kardang Gonpa and Lama Gonpa, is reflected in village-household ownership of gonpa houses. Currently at Kardang Gonpa there are three households from Gozzang with a gonpa house, and one household from Peukor. The other thirteen belong to Kardang households.

One of these households from Kardang village with a gonpa house at Kardang Gonpa has a member residing at Lama Gonpa, rather than in their gonpa house which is occupied by another practitioner without a house. This operation of personal preference over household affiliation is relatively uncommon, though not unheard of. For instance, the oldest female practitioner (Tsenku, tsheng sku, Tholakpa) was a very devout disciple of Kunga Rinpoche and lived at Lama Gonpa, although her family has a house at Kardang Gonpa. She remained at Lama Gonpa for twelve years after Kunga Rinpoche’s death, moving to Kardang in 1979 to be with her other family members at the gonpa, as she was too old to care for herself.

To date no members of households permanently residing in Kulu-Manali have decided upon the life of a practitioner. In such a case, Apo Rinpoche Gonpa would be the obvious choice.

Genealogical details for the Tholakpa household are given below.
Individual preference, based on the practitioner's connection with a particular teacher is the significant feature when considering those cases in which the choice of gonpa has overridden village affiliation and/or ownership of a gonpa house. However, there is a clear relationship between village and gonpa, and household membership with residence in their gonpa house.

As indicated in the above discussion, there is some fluidity in the choice of residence, with a few practitioners studying elsewhere, or shifting their place of residence from one gonpa to another. As the practitioners are totally dependent upon their household for support, these moves can only be made with the approval and co-operation of the household. Generally, all practitioners from the same household will reside together in their gonpa house. However, if an unoccupied house is available, or if one of the practitioners is engaged in strict personal retreat, members from the same household may reside separately, and if necessary the practitioner not in strict retreat will reside with someone else at the gonpa, at least for the duration of the retreat, which may be for several years.

In 1978 a young man from a Kardang Domba household joined the gonpa. This is unprecedented, as the Domba are regarded as low caste and generally on the periphery of village society, as described in the village ethnography. Although there was no previous case of a Domba person choosing to engage in the life of a spiritual practitioner, everyone welcomed his decision, and thought that generally it was a positive thing that he had this inclination.

His family could not possibly afford to build him a house at the gonpa, so he took up residence with the eldest male practitioner, assisting him in daily chores. This arrangement, with a senior practitioner assisting a novice in study and practice, and in return having some household chores such as fetching water and cooking attended to by the newcomer, is quite acceptable. Such an arrangement may be made at least for a few years, even if the new gonpa member's household is quite able to afford to make a gonpa house: until everyone concerned is assured of the determination of the young person to continue with his or her practice. In keeping with the voluntary nature of recruitment to the life of a practitioner in Karzha, it is quite acceptable for a person to reconsider his or her vocation if the gonpa lifestyle is found to be unsuitable, and to return to village life.
As mentioned in the ethnographic description of Kardang village, the Domba households are small in comparison with the other households in the village. This new recruit to the gonpa has two brothers, the elder married with a young son, and the younger residing with their parents in the village. This is the largest Domba household in Kardang. The reasons he gave for joining the gonpa were related to his personal preference for spiritual practice, though it is clear that as a gonpa member his status in village society, and that of his family may be elevated, in time. Within the five years since his joining, to 1983, there were no perceptible changes however.

Of the other twenty-two households in Kardang village (including Abizhi), less than a third had never had a member at the gonpa, and about half (thirteen) had gonpa houses. Some of the current village households are fairly recently divided, and only three tsangkupa or undivided households (according to the old village plan) never had a gonpa member. There appears to be no significant difference in household size and wealth, between those families with gonpa members, and those without, either now or in the past (excepting the Domba). It could be argued that smaller households could not afford to allow members of their workforce to join the gonpa, but such economic-based arguments seem not to apply. Rather, what emerges is a tendency towards household traditions.

For instance, the Lharje household (see diagram, p.184) has two current gonpa members, Lama Paljor the thangka painter, and his eldest brother's son, who is studying to be a doctor in Manali. Lama Paljor's father, Lama Chering, was a member of Kardang Gonpa, and specialised in the practice of Tibetan medicine, a family tradition which is being pursued by his grandson. Both Lama Paljor and his eldest brother, who practises as a doctor in the village and is not a gonpa member, have considerable understanding of the healing properties and preparation of herbs, many of which grow in the region, though Lama Paljor does not practice as a doctor but rather assists in collecting the herbs. Usually, practising as a doctor and spiritual practice are related in the Tibetan system, whether the doctor is a gonpa member or not. Lama Paljor's mother, who is in her late seventies with minimal responsibilities in the village household, spends a

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45 As mentioned in Chapter 2, Koelz, who was associated with the Roerich Institute in Naggar, made an extensive collection of medicinal herbs from Lahul (Koelz, n.d.).
**Lharje Household**

- O = ▲ d. Chering Dondrup
- ▲ doctor
- ▲ Tsering

**Khyemches Household**

- d. O = △ d.
- ▲ d. Rigung Dorje
- ▲ d. Tsandru
- ▲ d. Norbu Rinpoche
- ▲ △ = O d.
- ▲ d. Dechen
- O = ▲ d. Dondrup
- ▲ d. Sonam Angmo
- ▲ △ = Dechen Palmo
considerable amount of the time at the gonpa during the summer, though she is not regarded as a part-time practitioner.46

Similarly, the Khyemches household (see diagram, p.184) has a strong family tradition of spiritual practitioners, exemplified by Norbu Rinpoche and his two brothers, disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri and their other brother’s two daughters who were gonpa members, as well as his son, who is a part-time practitioner (one of the few remaining), and his daughter, the ‘granddaughter’ of Norbu Rinpoche, now a full-time gonpa member at Kardang.

As with the Khyemches household, it seems there is a tendency for those households whose young men left to travel to Kham and become disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri to continue their involvement with the gonpa in succeeding generations, as is the case with Manepa, Dangrapa, Thogmes and Timorpa, and the household from Cheling who have a gonpa house at Lama Gonpa. Only one household (Yuwas Yorak) who had a member who was a disciple of the Togdan has no current gonpa members (see below).

The tendency of household members to continue their involvement in spiritual activities through succeeding generations is not limited to those households whose members included disciples of Shakya Shri. Some households, such as Tholakpa and Gozzang Meyonks, soon had members who had become disciples of either or both Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche. In the Tholakpa household (see diagram, p.187) which was discussed in the previous chapter, two brothers became practitioners (one full-time and one part-time) as did one sister; and in succeeding generations, the daughter of one of these men, and her brother’s son.47

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46In the genealogies presented, gonpa practitioners are shown in black and named, with appropriate genealogical links shown. Other individuals not relevant to the present discussion are indicated, but their sex and marital status is not revealed, thus the exact composition of each household is not shown, preserving anonymity for polyandrous households, both past and present. ‘d.’ signifies that the individual is deceased.

47Norbu Tholakpa is named on the chart as he was mentioned in Chapter 4 and introduced Section II, though he is not a gonpa member.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housenames (by village)</th>
<th>Year gonpa house established</th>
<th>Previous gonpa members *Disciple of Shakya Shri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KARDANG VILLAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Miyas</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thachiji</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Deskyiizhi</td>
<td>1920’s</td>
<td>yes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Timorpa</td>
<td>(re)built c.1965</td>
<td>yes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dangrapa</td>
<td>before 1930</td>
<td>yes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Thogmes</td>
<td>1960’s</td>
<td>yes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Kyelapa</td>
<td>1950’s</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Kyelapa</td>
<td></td>
<td>no (post division)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Thogmes</td>
<td></td>
<td>no (post division)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Manepa</td>
<td>1920’s</td>
<td>yes*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Manepa</td>
<td>1940’s</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Karpa</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Karpa</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes (post division)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lharje</td>
<td>before 1930; rebuilt 1980</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Domba An Tsering</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Domba Gopi</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Domba Thusu</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Domba Drolma</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOZZANG VILLAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyonks</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangkyeapa</td>
<td>1950’s</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deskyiizhi</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PEUKOR VILLAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenrig</td>
<td>1930’s</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Houses at Kardang Gonpa
(N.B. All households in Kardang village are listed. Households in other villages are listed only where they have houses at the gonpa.)

In the Meyonks household (see diagram, p.187), one man became the disciple of Kunga Rinpoche, and thereafter his two sons (now deceased) and daughter, who is now at Kardang gonpa. In the next generation, one male joined, the son of one of the practitioners, and in the next, his elder brother’s son.

Among a few households, such as Timorpa (see diagram, p.188), there was a tradition of spiritual practice before the Karzhapa went to Kham and studied under Togdan Shakya Shri. In the Timorpa household there were at least two senior members from the preceding generation who were disciples of Kulu Mémé.
These men focused their spiritual activities around Jabjez and the nearby Kothi Gonpa, in Kardang village. One of the next generation became a disciple of Togdan Shakya Shri. His brother, father of the nyerpa Gyaltsun (rgyal mtshan), became a part-time practitioner and a disciple of Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche. The current nyerpa (manager) of Kardang Gonpa and his sister continue the tradition of spiritual practice within the Timorpa household.

It is apparent that involvement with Kardang Gonpa as a practitioner tends to occur from one generation to the next in some households. There is nothing to prevent a person from a household who has never before had a gonpa member from joining, as with the young Domba man mentioned above. Practitioners may be either male or female, and as it was acceptable for a married man to be a ‘part-time’ practitioner, there are several instances where the child of such a married male practitioner is now resident at the gonpa. There were no practitioners whose mothers had been ‘part-time’ gonpa members, although older women who had reared their families and were from households with gonpa houses sometimes spent a considerable amount of time at the gonpa. Clearly, rearing children prevented a woman from being a ‘part-time’ practitioner. However, a man could devote considerable time to spiritual pursuits, particularly in a polyandrous household in which he had brothers to share parenting and economic responsibilities.

From several perspectives the position of female practitioners at Kardang and the other gonpa in Karzha is interesting. This is particularly so as Karzha is held to be ‘khandroling’, land of the dakini, considering the nature of the dakini, the enlightened female energy principle, representing the wisdom of emptiness, and the high regard in which this feminine principle is held, discussed in Chapter 2.49 In collecting data on the spiritual practitioners through the generations leading up to the founding of Kardang Gonpa, Abhi was the only female mentioned to me as a practitioner in her own right, associated as she was with Jhampa Mémé. The new gonpa built above the village was called ‘Abhi Gonpa’
initially, and not ‘Jhampa Mémé Gonpa’, although it was Jhampa Mémé’s chorten which was enshrined in the first gonpa building.

No particular distinction was attributed to Kulu Mémé’s wife, Norbu Mémé’s wife or Kunga Rinpoche’s wife. Even if any of their names are remembered, they were not volunteered in the oral biographies collected. Abhi is remembered simply as Abhi, and nobody knew her name, or was sure if she was from Zangskar or Gondhla (though Abhi Tsenku said she was from Gondhla), though they knew Jhampa Mémé was from Zangskar.

There were no females among the disciples who travelled to Kham and became disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri. However, within the first few years from the founding of Kardang Gonpa, three women, either a sister or a father’s sister of a recently returned practitioner, had become a disciple of either or both Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche, and the involvement of female practitioners from that time has continued, as evidenced, for instance, in the Khyemches household, cited above.

At the time of my fieldwork, there were thirteen male practitioners (chöspa, chos pa) and fifteen female practitioners (chösma, chos ma) at Kardang, and six chöspa and four chösma at Lama Gonpa. Considering both gonpa together, there were then nineteen chöspa and nineteen chösma. At Chukta Gonpa, there were six chöspa, and twelve chösma - although six of these chösma were not yet ordained but in the process of becoming practitioners during the course of the fieldwork (see next chapter). At Labchang Gonpa there were three chöspa and four chösma.

In Karzha, at the time Kardang Gonpa was established, most households were comprised of three generations: several brothers, married polyandrously to one woman; their young children; and the (grand)mother and (grand)fathers. The household also included perhaps one or two of their sisters who had not married; and likewise, one or two of their father’s unmarried sisters. These extra women were valuable in the household’s workforce, contributing significantly to the agricultural work, and caring for their brothers’ children.

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50 Female practitioners are also called iomo (jo mo, ‘mistress, lady’) in the Tibetan tradition.

51 Married sisters and married father’s sisters resided patrilocally. See discussion in village ethnography (Chapter 4).
When Norbu Rinpoche returned with instructions from Togdan Shakya Shri to found a gonpa, chose the site where Abhi had practised, and built the first structure, these unmarried women, eager to hear their brothers’ and nephews’ stories of their travels across the Himalaya to Tibet, and inspired by the teachings, joined the disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri, becoming chösmas. The practitioners, aided by their households, built gonpa houses.

When it was economically viable, the practitioner could remain at the gonpa full-time. Some of the men had taken the getsul ordination, which included vows of celibacy, and withdrew from village life. Some married polyandrously, spending as much of the summer as necessary assisting their households with agriculture, herding or trading, and retired from village life with the onset of winter to practice in the gonpa above the village. Similarly, the unmarried women participated in the activities in the village as necessary through summer, opting for the ngöndro (sngon 'gro, the tantric preliminary practice or the ‘Four Special Foundations’) and meditation at the gonpa over winter, rather than the celebration of Halda, the New Year; Bagh; and Gotsi, the birth of the village sons.

According to figures collected by the Moravians in 1868, about thirty years before the Karzhapa travelled to Kham, there were seven Lamas in the region (Tinan, Gar and Tod) who had no other occupation. This no doubt included those mêmé from the ngagpa lineage of the Zangskapa Jhampa who were alive at that time. There were also 1,100 ‘village lamas’ who both married and cultivated land, and performed rituals at the village gonpa as necessary. There were also seventy-one ‘nuns’ who could both read and write, including one skilled in astrology and able to calculate an eclipse (Harcourt 1972 reprint:66). Considering that the total population for Lahul in the 1868 census was 6,265 (Harcourt 1972 reprint:40, 110), a large proportion of the adult male population, somewhere between one-third and one-half,52 and about one-fifth of the total population (all age groups) were engaged in spiritual activities. According to the Moravian Heyde:

Generally, the parents decide whether their daughter is to be one (i.e., a nun) or not when she is still quite a young child. In Lahoul no particular ceremonies or

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52This estimate is based on the assumption that there were approximately equal proportions of males and females, i.e. 3,132, which includes all age groups. One third of this figure is 1,044, which is slightly lower than the figure of 1,108, the combined figure for full-time and part-time mêmé.
rites are observed when a girl enters the religious order; her hair is cut quite short, and she wears thenceforth a red cap, and is bound to learn to read a little. Here the nuns have not, as in Thibet, proper cloisters of their own; they are attached to the monasteries in which they live only during winter for one or two months. They may also quit their order either to marry (they frequently do marry Lamas) or for other reasons. (Heyde as quoted by Harcourt 1972:67.)

No mention of these women practitioners from the past, the sisters and father's sisters in the village household, was made in any of the household histories which I collected. It is only the mème who have been remembered, although one married female practitioner, Jhampa Mémé's wife, Abhi, is also remembered. This is mirrored in the material presented in Section IV, for in the Tibetan tradition there are very few namthar (hagiographies) of women practitioners, despite the importance of the dakini and female principle in spiritual practice.

These female practitioners were, and are, called 'ani', father's sister, or 'abhi', grandmother, when two generations or more senior to the speaker. Generally they were unmarried, their status changing if they did make a marriage and engage in family life. Jhampa Mémé's wife, Abhi, seems to be an exception. Male practitioners were generally called 'mème', grandfather, with no distinction made on the basis of their marital status (see Kin Terminology, Chapter 4).^53

The village Jabjez Gonpa, built around the rock bearing the imprints of Gyalwa Gotsangpa's body, made during an encounter with a dakini,^54 was under the care of the patrilineal ngagpa lineage descending from Jhampa Mémé through the eldest son.^^Kunga Rinpoche's role in the transition from this ngagpa lineage and spiritual practice at Jabjez and the Kothi Gonpa in the village, to Kardang

53The term 'mème' is still used in normal conversation in Kharzha to indicate any male religious practitioner. Its usage in Karzha is similar to that reported by Aris in another border region, Kutang (Nepal). This usage is an extension of the standard Tibetan usage of mes mes, a kin term denoting forefather, or grandfather (see footnote 4, and Aris 1975:54, and Ramble 1983:276). Perhaps mème carries the connotation of wisdom associated with age. 'Abhi' is the corresponding term for the female gender. However, most female practitioners are called 'ani' — father's sister.

54The details of this story, one of the most popular about Gotsangpa in the local oral tradition, are recounted at the start of Section IV.

55It is not necessary for the ngagpa lineage to continue through the eldest son, though in this case it did.
‘Abhi’ Gonpa, and the hermitage Lama Gonpa above the villages, and apparently greater involvement of female practitioners, was pivotal.

In the case of Jhampa Mémé and the line of spiritual practitioners descended from him, it was the eldest son of each generation who continued the ngagpa lineage of practitioners. Kunga Rinpoche, both the inheritor of this ngagpa lineage and the last in the line, was also a disciple of Shakya Shri, and regarded as a tulku of Gyalwa Gotsangpa.

Kunga Rinpoche inherited the position as ‘caretaker’ of Jabjez Gonpa. By residing at what is now known as Lama Gonpa, another Gotsangpa cave, he combined both the empowerment of place by Gotsangpa and the revitalisation of the transmission of the practice lineage through Togdan Shakya Shri, teaching many Karzhapa who now reside not only at Lama Gonpa, but at Kardang, Labchang and Chukta Gonpa also. There are many more Karzhapa whose principal teacher is Kunga Rinpoche rather than Norbu Rinpoche, although the latter was the founder of Kardang Gonpa, established a reincarnation lineage, and was one of Togdan Shakya Shri’s full lineage holders.56

Norbu Rinpoche died twenty years before Kunga Rinpoche, in 1947, and spent much of the last decade of his life at Dzonkhul Gonpa, in Zangskar, whereas Kunga Rinpoche remained in Karzha where he died in 1967. Among the older practitioners (over fifty-five), some regard Norbu Rinpoche as their principal teacher, some Kunga Rinpoche and some both. There are no disciples of Togdan

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56Kunga Rinpoche was not a full lineage holder of Shakya Shri’s teachings. To my knowledge, the only teaching he had not received, to his satisfaction, from Shakya Shri was that of P’owa (‘pho ba, the transference of consciousness at the time of death) which he requested and received just prior to his death, from H.H. Dudjom (bdud ’joms) Rinpoche (1904-1987), in 1966/67. However, Kunga Rinpoche had received some instruction on p’owa from Shakya Shri some fifty years earlier, and practised it for three weeks during retreat, as this is one component of the Six Yogas of Naropa (see discussion in Chapter 6). Kunga Rinpoche was well qualified to teach the majority of teachings in the transmission lineage from Shakya Shri. A full lineage holder (thugs sras, ‘heart son’) is empowered to transmit the entire corpus of teachings from a particular master. The principal teacher, or tsawe lama (rtsa ba’i bla ma, root teacher) is regarded as being that teacher with whom the disciple has a particularly strong connection, or karmic link (see discussion in Section IV). It is a matter of personal preference whether a practitioner takes more than one tsawe lama. A practitioner may have one tsawe lama even though that teacher is dead — thus the present tense.
Shakya Shri still alive. Those practitioners between their early thirties and mid-fifties generally regard Kunga Rinpoche as their principal teacher.

In the next chapter, I relate how political events in Tibet have interrupted Norbu Rinpoche’s reincarnation lineage. Consequently, no younger practitioners have received teachings in this transmission lineage from Norbu Rinpoche’s tulku.

As mentioned, Kunga Rinpoche was the last in the ngagpa lineage from Jhampa Mémé, as he had no sons. Jhampa Mémé is said to have predicted that his lineage would last for four generations, and that then the line would change. Kunga Rinpoche had one child, a daughter, who made a magpa (matrilocal) marriage with another disciple of Shakya Shri from Pasparag village, Sonam Tenzin. This practitioner did not become the permanent caretaker of Jabjez Gonpa, and spent much time in Nepal. This couple also had one child, a daughter, who also made a magpa marriage with a man from Kardang.

Consequently, a female practitioner from Kardang Abizhi household (see diagram, above, page 188), which nowadays has three practitioners (including this chösuma) at Lama Gonpa, listed this ngagpa lineage as her own, tracing the line from her mother, the daughter of Kunga Rinpoche’s daughter. This was the only instance of descent traced through the female line I encountered, as magpa marriages had been made in two succeeding generations. Descent through the male line was absent in the information collected on household composition over three generations. Kunga Rinpoche’s father, Norbu Mémé, had two brothers: one, Palden married into a household in Joling village; and the other, Domba, went to live in Bhutan.58

Indeed, it seems that the name of this household has been taken from Abhi, Jampa Mémé’s wife. When Jhampa Mémé and Abhi came as caretakers for Jabjez Gonpa, a house was made for them near Jabjez, and subsequently land near Gozzang was given to the household, and another house made in that village. Consequently, Abizhi household is not included in Kardang village’s ritual cycle of the Bagh.59 However, as it is now at least six generations from when Abhi and

57This certainly is the case in Karzha, and I have not heard of any elsewhere.

58See the ngagpa lineage chart, above.

59See Chapter 4.
Jampa Mémé came to Kardang, details of the formation of this household are sketchy.\textsuperscript{60}

As mentioned in Section IV with regard to the oral histories, frequently the names of the women are forgotten. However, the Abizhi household’s association with Kunga Rinpoche was acknowledged by all the Karzhapa, and some suggested that this is why there are several practitioners from the one generation now at Lama Gonpa.

The role of caretaker of Jabjez no longer rests with the Abizhi household. In 1978, concern over the deterioration of Jabjez Gonpa building and the difficulty of its upkeep in winter, led the Karzhapa to erect a new concrete gonpa building with a corrugated iron roof to enshrine the rock with Gotsangpa’s body prints. Early in August 1983, a man from Gondhla, Tsewang Tenzin, came to live in Kardang to serve as caretaker of Jabjez.

As indicated by the cross-generational household information presented above, a tradition of spiritual practice is closely associated with some households, an indice of the continuity of spiritual practice in Karzha. Although I have not specifically addressed the issue of recruitment to the gonpa in the discussion so far, personal choice seems to be the critical issue in the decision to become a practitioner, just as personal preference is the most important factor in the choice of teacher and to some extent, in the choice of place of residence for the practitioner. In succeeding generations within the household, some family members opt for the life of a practitioner, frequently inspired by their household elders who live at the gonpa. Some individuals from households which have not previously had gonpa members also develop the inclination to become spiritual practitioners.

Rarely does an individual join the gonpa before twelve years of age, and usually one is a teenager before the transition to the life a practitioner, which is described in the next chapter, begins. The Karzhapa are pragmatic about such decisions, and the household may consider a member’s joining in a more or less positive light depending upon circumstances. The extra income afforded to the villagers from the cash crops, particularly potato, have enabled those household members wishing to engage in full-time spiritual practice greater opportunity to do

\textsuperscript{60}Abhi was not mentioned in the genealogy collected, though with some difficulty the chösuma traced her ancestry back to Jampha Mémé.
so. If necessary, the household can employ extra labour to assist during the two weeks of potato harvest, the period of peak activity.

There are no instances of a person joining at a very young age against his or her will, and a few of people joining despite some opposition from their household. Some are older when they join, in their late twenties or thirties, having decided that the opportunities offered them in the gonpa are preferable to those in the village, whether as an unmarried sister, or a polyandrously married brother - or even as a married woman. There is one chōsma who previously was married into a Yurnath village household. Whatever the basis of her decision to leave that household, Kardang Gonpa offered her more financial support, and better opportunities for teachings than any other gonpa in Lahul. The old Ladakhpa chööspa had also been married into a matrilocal household in Ladakh, and had decided to run away, quietly leaving his wife's bed and home one night.

Although I knew of no instances where this had happened, it is relatively easy for anyone to decide against the lifestyle of a practitioner during the transitional phase prior to taking ordination. Even after ordination, renouncing vows by 'returning' them to the one from whom they were received, is possible, if that is the decision of the individual involved. Although there may be other reasons for leaving the gonpa, one of the most likely involves a 'love' relationship. There would be shame involved if a practitioner with getsul ordination was found to be involved in a sexual relationship — for instance becoming pregnant. The appropriate course of action is to return vows before engaging in a liaison in which vows would be broken.

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61 For instance, Abhi Tsenku Tholakpa began learning the Tibetan alphabet when she was ten, and began the practice of prostrations at 16. However, it was not until she was 36 that she took her getsul ordination from Taksang Repa, while in Nepal. She says that it was after taking her ordination that she really became a member of the gonpa. However, she was clearly involved in Dharma practice before that time although she may also have married if the opportunity had arisen.

62 Her mother was from Kardang, although she did not regard this household as her own, and was not dependent on this household for her support. Details of the provisions made by Kardang Gonpa follow in text, below.

63 Gill reports that in 1962 two of the female practitioners from Chukta Gonpa had conceived (1979:59). One of these young women was a Ladakhpa, who returned to her matrilocal family in Ladakh. There was some disapproval of this type of conduct, that is of developing a 'love' relationship while residing at the gonpa. The other pregnancy was the result of a brief liaison between a local chōsma and a young unmarried Tibetan refugee
The youngest practitioner at Kardang Gonpa in 1983 was a seventeen-year-old girl in the process of joining, and the oldest the eighty-two year old Abhi Tsenku. All age groups were represented.

When in the process of joining, the female practitioners today continue wearing their normal clothes, and after a year or two cut their hair short and discard their jewellery. At this stage they resemble Heyde’s description of ‘nuns’ quoted above. After ordination, distinctive clothing is worn by both chöspa and chösma.

As with lay dress, the style of clothing is unique to Lahul, although superficially similar to the robes worn by Tibetans. The preferred colour is brown, rather than maroon, except for the zan (gzan, shawl worn over the left shoulder when performing rituals). The males either wear a ‘wrap-around skirt’ to the ground, with ties (rather than the Tibetan style lower robe made of a large seamed piece of fabric, folded and secured with a belt), or a coat-like dress or dugpo, with long sleeves. The females wear a plain brown coat-like dress (dugpo) to the ground, with high neck, and button across front (similar to a man’s), with long draw-string trousers beneath.

By the time of my field work all practitioners were expected to take getsul vows after their initial transition period during which they lived in the village during the summer, and retired to the gonpa over winter to do the ngöndro, the preliminary practice. A few later take gelong (dge slong) vows if that is their inclination. Since the gonpa was established, there has been a change in that it is no longer regarded as acceptable for a (male) practitioner to marry and continue to reside at the gonpa on a part-time basis. This of course, does not apply to the married reincarnating teachers from the ngagpa lineages, whose style of dress, reincarnate now residing in the USA. I was told that Kunga Rinpoche’s wrath was great when after this young tulku’s brief stay he learnt of this encounter. The young woman left the gonpa for some time, and later returned. Nobody, including the woman herself, divulged what had become of the child.

The dugpo is similar to the Tibetan male chupa. Lay men may wear a dugpo, though it is normally not dyed brown or maroon, and the lay women’s dugpo is decorated with lace (see Chapter 4). See photographs at the beginning of this chapter.
particularly the white and maroon striped zan and long hair worn in a top-knot, indicated their status as yogic practitioners.\textsuperscript{65}

Generally, the practitioner relies upon his or her household to build a gonpa house, although as I have already discussed, there is the possibility of joining and remaining at the gonpa without building a house. Moreover, the practitioner’s day to day support is met by the household, including all food, firewood, and the provision of blankets and the basic furnishings. Consequently, the decision to become a spiritual practitioner and at which gonpa (especially if the household has a gonpa house, and the individual wishes to reside elsewhere) is generally a consensus reached by the household and the individual. Residing at the gonpa closest to one’s village facilitates the delivery of food and firewood by one’s household members, both important considerations.

Most gonpa houses have a very small kitchen garden providing the few fresh vegetables grown at these altitudes (turnip and radish providing greens and roots), which are tended by one’s family members, although some practitioners will tend these themselves. However, practitioners are not involved in general agricultural activities because of the vows taken at ordination (vinaya, Skt.). This kitchen garden provides a supplement to the diet, rather than forming the basis of it.

When Norbu Rinpoche established Kardang Gonpa, he decided that the gonpa should have some provision for any person wishing to be a practitioner there who came from an impoverished household, or who was from another place, thus lacking household support. Consequently Kardang Gonpa owns a few small fields above the gonpa that were given to the gonpa when it was established. The original intention was that barley should be grown in these fields. These days they are planted with potatoes and worked by the villagers. Profit is divided equally between the gonpa and those who work these fields, and the gonpa receives about Rs.1,000 a year from this source. Rather than accumulating funds, the nyerpa will distribute food to all practitioners, if possible after maintenance of the gonpa buildings: for instance, each practitioner received six kilograms of wheat in 1981. In 1982 a new Buddha statue was purchased for the gonpa Lhakhang for Rs.5,000 and a considerable amount was spent on upkeep and repairs to the gonpa buildings.

\textsuperscript{65}Nowadays this style of dress, particularly the long hair, is not necessarily adopted by the married practitioners.
Shashur is the only other gonpa in Lahul with a similar arrangement. In the other gonpa, the practitioners are totally reliant upon their household for support. Since the avalanche in 1960, Chukta Gonpa uses the half-acre site where the original gonpa building stood as a potato field which is worked by the villagers from Peukor. The half share of the profits from this field that the gonpa receives are used for upkeep and general maintenance of the gonpa building. In August or September the practitioners from Chukta village receive donations from the Peukor villagers in the form of food, particularly the staple grains, and the gonpa members perform an annual ritual for the villagers.

As mentioned in the village ethnography, Kardang Gonpa also owns some dang lands immediately below the gonpa, the grass from which the villagers co-operatively buy to provide grass for the village yak bull and Jersey bull. This provision for some gonpa income enables Kardang Gonpa both to maintain and to extend its premises, with the participation and support of the villagers, and to provide for the practitioner from Ladakh and the previously married female practitioner, for instance. If necessary, Kardang Gonpa is also able to provide cooking utensils and some basic furnishings from the gonpa store acquired by the gonpa, if not needed by other household members at the gonpa, when a practitioner dies.

Generally speaking, the practitioner's household provides the bulk of the practitioner's needs. Income received as offerings from the performance of rituals sponsored by the villagers, either at the gonpa or in the village house, provides 'pocket money', perhaps Rs.2 or 5 for a day's ritual, or more if the sponsor can afford it. Although this money may be a welcome supplement to the practitioner's income, it is not enough to meet the basic needs of food.

The history of Kardang Gonpa may be told briefly, incorporating the understanding developed in the ethnography presented throughout this Section:

The first gonpa Lhakhang was made in 1912, whereafter the disciples of the Khampa, Togdan Shakya Shri, who died in 1919, returned to their homeland, Karzha. These individuals' households began to erect small houses in the vicinity of the Lhakhang for the use of the members of the household who were engaged in spiritual practice. Norbu Rinpoche made a small room around a cave some distance above the gonpa, in the ravine above the spring.
Several of the male practitioners at that time married and resided in their village house during summer, when their contribution to the household economy was needed, and in their gonpa house for a winter of retreat and spiritual practice, rather than engaging in the village ritual cycle. Several men who had travelled to Kham were not residents of Kardang. Some, such as Mémé Betsering from Bokor, established themselves in gonpa in their own village. Others joined the practitioners from Kardang, and as Norbu Rinpoche gained disciples, people from other Himalayan regions, such as Pangí, Ladakh, Zangskar and Bhutan also came, either to receive teachings and then return to their homes, or to take up residence for a longer period. Among those who came to Kardang Gonpa were skilled craftspeople who assisted the locals in the painting of thangka and making of statues, which adorn the three storeys of the main gonpa building as it stands today.

The presence of Norbu Rinpoche, one of the three lineage holders of the teachings of Togdan Shakya Shri, encouraged practitioners from other regions throughout the Himalaya to travel to Kardang and Karzha Khandroling, to seek teachings and visit the important pilgrimage sites associated with Gyalwa Gotsangpa, the siddha Drilbupa, and Padmasambhava. The practice lineage taught by Norbu Rinpoche included difficult and secret yogic practices known as Naro Chödrug, the Six Yogas of Naropa. Both Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche taught the ngöndro, the preliminary practices; yidam or meditational deity practices; and Chagchen meditation, as well as the yogic practices.

The shift in focus from the Kothi Gonpa and Jabjez Gonpa to Kardang Abhi Gonpa was a gradual and natural transition. Previously, Jabjez Gonpa had operated as the centre of spiritual practice for both Kardang and Gozzang villages, and individuals interested in Dharma continued residing with their household in their village, with all the distractions of village life, practising at the Kothi Gonpa for a month or two over winter. The majority were married male practitioners, most of whom continued with their agricultural activities over summer.

Apart from Abhi, Jhampa Mémé’s wife, little mention was made to me of female practitioners, the unmarried sisters and fathers’ sisters, who continued to work in the fields and assist their households over summer, but retired from the village, and the village rituals celebrating the new year and the birth of the villages’ sons, over winter. Each winter, these village rituals, Halda, Bagh and Gotsi, took
place, while the mémé and ani engaged in basic meditation near Jabjez, at the Kothi Gonpa which provided accommodation over winter.

After Kardang Abhi Gonpa was built, the focus in spiritual activity and practice, particularly over winter, shifted from the Jabjez and the Kothi Gonpa to the new Lhakhang above the village, where some households had built smaller gonpa houses for the practitioners. More practitioners engaged in full-time practice, encouraged by the teachings and transmissions given by Norbu Rinpoche, who died in 1947, and Kunga Rinpoche, who became the most important teacher in Karzha until his demise in 1967.

Kunga Rinpoche had inherited the position of caretaker of Jabjez Gonpa through his ngagpa lineage. He was also regarded as the reincarnation of Gotsangpa. As such, he was an important figure in the shift of spiritual practice from Jabjez Gonpa in Kardang village, which enshrines the rock imprints of Gotsangpa’s body, to Kardang Abhi Gonpa, and Lama Gonpa, which also enshrines a rock imprint of Gotsangpa’s body.

A few years after the new Kardang Gonpa was built, Togdan Shakya Shri died, and the Karzhapa disciples returned to Karzha. Kunga Rinpoche spent the next eight summers meditating at Guru Ghantal, above the confluence of the Chandra Bhaga, accompanied by a few of his disciples. In winter he practised in the cave Gotsangpa Drupdé. A few practitioners began to live in small houses built around this Gotsangpa cave above Gozzang village, where Kunga Rinpoche set up his principal residence. Lama Gonpa, as this site is now known, operates as a hermitage associated with Kardang Gonpa. The villagers from Peukar also decided to build a new Lhakhang, and established Chukta Gonpa a few years after Kardang Gonpa was founded.

From 1912 until the present, the original gonpa Lhakhang has been rebuilt and extended several times, reflecting the general prosperity of the community and the strength of the spiritual activity. Households primarily from Kardang, but also from Gozzang and Peukar, continued to build small gonpa houses in the proximity of the Lhakhang as the need arose.

According to Randhawa’s report of his visit to Kardang Gonpa in 1952, there were twenty gonpa houses (in contrast to the seventeen there in 1981-1983), accommodating thirty practitioners, twenty-two male and eight female. Although
the number of gonpa houses may have declined, I saw no evidence of demolished or ruined houses or foundations. Two houses had been built in 1980 and another was rebuilt at that time, replacing an earlier construction.

The data I collected from the Karzhapa reveal that there were sixteen chöspa and six chöisma from local villages at Kardang gonpa at that time, including Kunga Rinpoche and five other disciples of Shakya Shri. The extra practitioners (six males and two females) were from elsewhere. Two of the men were disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri and were from Lahul: one from a locale near Sissu, and the other from Miya Nallah, in the Pattan valley of the Chandrabhaga. The others, about whom little is known, were probably from Pangi, Zangskar and Ladakh.

The participation of female practitioners slowly increased, and by the 1980's they were equal in numbers to that of the chöspa. The introduction of cash crops, initially kuth and later potato, and the increased wealth of the village households has probably provided those women who wish to engage in full-time spiritual pursuits the opportunity to do so. Previously, unmarried sisters and fathers' sisters were required to work in the fields over summer.

Norbu Rinpoche tulku was born to a Drukpa reincarnate, Yongdzin Rinpoche, and his wife at Zomo Karag Gonpa (?zho mo kha rag) in Tibet. A few practitioners from Kardang assisted in his early rearing, but at the time of the Chinese takeover of Tibet, the eight-year old boy was unable to leave Tibet, and thus Kardang Gonpa has continued without its tulku. Kunga Rinpoche continued teaching until 1967, and in the early 1960's, Togdan Shakya Shri's refugee grandson and a holder of the practice lineage, came with his wife and family to Kardang Gonpa, and again offered the teachings and encouraged practitioners to undertake the three year Naro Chödrug retreat, after which the practitioner earns the title 'Lama' or teacher.

In this Section the ethnographic perspective which examines the relationship between village and gonpa and the historical development of Kardang Gonpa during the twentieth century has been presented. This provides a context for the ethnographic narrative in Section III, which deals with the continuation of the ngagpa lineage of Togdan Shakya Shri, particularly in Karzha, and the activity and ritual performances of the Drukpa teachers during the period of my fieldwork. Before continuing with this analysis, and as a conclusion to the study of Kardang
village and Gonpa presented in this Section, I briefly present comparative data on gonpa elsewhere in the Western Himalaya, and in particular, on one gonpa in Ladakh.

Romi Khosla in his study, *Buddhist Monasteries in the Western Himalaya*, identifies two main types of gonpa complexes found in the Western Himalaya: Ladakh, Zangskar, Lahul and Spiti. The older gonpa (before fourteenth century) are built around a central courtyard or planned to form a mandala, and are constructed on the valley floor (1979:79-89). The gonpa associated with Rinchen Zangpo, the tenth century translator and builder of temples, such as Tabo in Spiti, and Alci in Ladakh, are of this earlier type.

Khosla identifies the most commonly found architectural style for gonpa in the Western Himalaya, particularly Ladakh and Spiti:

This type of complex belongs to the later period [i.e. post fourteenth century] and consists of a conglomeration of separate buildings spread across the top or side of a hillock with no symmetrical axis or arrangement, and a general mixing of the functions of the temples, cloisters and other rooms whose locations and aspects are more determined by the physical terrain than symbolical considerations. These complexes tend to be large establishments which are extremely compactly built to afford excellent defence from attacks. (Khosla, R. 1979:80.)

Although several of the gonpa in Ladakh and Spiti were built with royal patronage, and may be considered as 'fortress monasteries' (Khosla, R. 1979:81), those from Lahul which he includes in this general typology of gonpa complex, including Kardang Gonpa, are village gonpa, rather than state foundations, and have never been used for defence purposes. Several features are shared by both

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66Romi Khosla's book provides useful comparative material on house construction and Gonpa construction throughout the western Himalaya, and is thus general rather than detailed (see footnote 11 and Chapter 4).

67For information on Rinchen Zangpo and the temples attributed to him see Chapter 2.

68Shashur Gonpa and Tayul Gonpa were both built as branches of larger establishments in Ladakh, although to my knowledge they have not been used for defence. The assertion that defence was an important determining function in architectural style warrants further investigation, as does the precise relationship between these two gonpa and the neighbouring villages, and the parent gonpa in Ladakh. Some information on Tayul Gonpa is presented in the next chapter. These gonpa may be better considered as village gonpa, or a variation
village gonpa and the state foundations, most notably the appearance of haphazard growth, largely determined by the scarcity of suitable flat areas for building purposes in the steep, mountainous terrain. However, in other ways, particularly in the economic and social arrangements between the gonpa and the neighbouring villages, as well as in the architectural details, there are significant differences between these two types of gonpa complex, despite a superficial similarity. The social relationship between village and village gonpa are poorly represented in the literature on Tibetan religious institutions, a deficiency which this thesis, and particularly this chapter, redresses.

Considerable differences in the social organisation and the economic base of gonpa are dependent upon the conditions which led to the founding of the gonpa. As demonstrated in the above discussion, the social organisation found at Kardang Gonpa is the result of the villagers replicating the social structure of the village, which is based on the household, at the site of the Lhakhang which Norbu Rinpoche built at the request of his teacher. Although some provision for an income for the gonpa was made by the villagers at the time the gonpa was established, the practitioners are dependent upon their household members in the village for their support. The extensions and renovations to the main gonpa building, and all acquisitions in the form of statues and thangka, are the result of donations and sponsorship, most of which come from the villagers, although earlier this century Norbu Rinpoche contributed the offerings he had received for his teachings while travelling in Tibet and through the Himalaya.

In order to provide an example of a gonpa established under royal patronage, which contrasts with the situation at Kardang Gonpa and substantiates on this type, as indicated above with reference to the discussion on the accommodation arrangements for the practitioners.

A thorough analysis of architectural styles is beyond the scope of the present discussion, particularly as this would require considerable detailed research. In the case of Kardang Gonpa, Khosla considers only the main three-storeyed section. Kardang is the only structure for which Khosla has presented only partial floor plans, as the rest of the building does not fit with the ordered plan of gonpa structure which he examines in his book (1979:100; and footnote 22). I mention again here another more recent contribution to the study of gonpa in this region, Handa's *Buddhist Monasteries in Himachal Pradesh* (1987). In the map Kardang Gonpa, which is claimed to be an old monastery renovated by Lama Norbu in 1912 (see above) is placed on the Chandrabhaga River. This work is so unreliable that I do not refer to it in the general discussion (see Chapter 3).
the above claim, I combine material from three sources. Phiyang\textsuperscript{70} (phyi dbang) Gonpa, 15 km west of Leh, Ladakh, is a branch of a larger Drigung ('bri gung/khung) Kargyu gonpa (see Appendix). It was founded in the sixteenth century by King Tashi Namgyal (bkra shis mam rgyal) who invited the Head of the Drigung order (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977:21).

The architectural plans for Phiyang (p.206) are taken from Romi Khosla's study, and are an example of a gonpa with cell living quarters laid out around a central courtyard, and a large assembly hall (tsog khang, tshogs khang). Although it seems that some additions have been made, for example, the dukhang sarpa (gsar pa), the new dukhang on the first floor, it is clear that the original structure was substantial, and provisions were made for future inhabitants in the construction (Khosla, R. 1979:83, 91, photographs 81-90; Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977:123).

The layout of Phiyang is representative of other gonpa established with royal patronage after the fourteenth century. Phiyang Gonpa is built on top of a hill, rather than on the valley floor as were the earlier gonpa. The entire structure is one large massive building, which contrasts with the layout of Kardang gonpa, with its long narrow main building which curves around the slope, and the several small gonpa houses which have been built into the steep terrain (see Kardang Gonpa plans above).

The choice of Phiyang as my example is determined by the published study undertaken in 1981 of a Ladakhi institution by Melvyn Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong (1985),\textsuperscript{71} not only providing adequate sociological data on this gonpa, but also supplying some general impressions of 'Tibetan monasticism'. The following

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{70}In Central Tibetan 'phy' becomes 'ch'. However, in the language of Ladakh this gonpa is called 'Phiyang'.

\textsuperscript{71}The pseudonym Kyilung is used in this article, but the description matches that of Phiyang and we are told the gonpa's location and that it belongs to the Drigung Kargu order (Goldstein and Tsarong 1985:14,18). The identification can be no other than Phiyang, as there are two gonpa from this order in Ladakh, Lamayuru and Phiyang, and the latter is located 16 km west of Leh, according to Snellgrove and Skorupski (1977:21).
\end{flushright}
brief description is taken from this study.\textsuperscript{72} During the time of research, it accommodated thirty-four full-time monks.\textsuperscript{73}

Each of the monasteries in Ladakh was formally linked to a number of villages such that any layman in these villages who wanted to become a monk was required to enter that (and only that) monastery. Ladakh monasteries generally owned land in such areas and the peasants living there were, to a degree at least, tenant or serfs of the monastery. In turn the monastery was responsible for ministering to the spiritual needs of the lay population there. (Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong 1985:18.)

Phiyang's membership is in accord with this description. Recruitment is a family decision made when the potential member is young, with novices joining around seven years of age (Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong 1985:19). Initially the novice resides with an older monk, who is often a relative, performing manual tasks in return for food and possibly instruction. At about twelve or thirteen years of age the novices are sent to the parent Drigung gonpa in Tibet (Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong 1985:20).

Three hundred and sixty acres of land spread throughout fourteen villages (Khosla, R. 1979:77) in the vicinity of the gonpa are owned by the hierarch of the Drigung order, who provides a field for the support of each monk residing at Phiyang. The monk does not work this field himself, but makes a financial or leasing arrangement with another, perhaps his family, and receives enough for his minimal subsistence requirements from this arrangement. Additional income is

\textsuperscript{72}I have not changed the terminology used in this article, thus use terms such as 'monks', and 'monastery', with some reservations: it is clear from the situation found at Kardang gonpa, that gender-specific concepts such as 'monastery' are not a satisfactory English translation for the Tibetan religious institution of gonpa. This is discussed further in the Conclusion. In the present context, I am simply presenting Goldstein and Tsarong's approach and data on social structure for comparison with my own field data.

\textsuperscript{73}It is thus of a comparable size to Kardang Gonpa, although Romi Khosla suggests that Phiyang had 115 monks attached to the gonpa during the 1970's (1979:77). The disparity is considerable. Possibly this is due to the inclusion of the occupants of three lower level gonpa in the village Phiyang serves. Goldstein and Tsarong specify full-time residents at Phiyang itself, and presumably do not include members studying in Tibet. The gonpa population is generally elderly, with fewer new recruits than in the past, but this is not in itself adequate to account for this disparity (1985:18-190). It is possible that there is a considerable number of individuals who are not full time at the gonpa but are nevertheless peripherally associated with it. From Goldstein and Tsarong's description and tables, we gain little feel for life at Phiyang.
derived from performing rituals for lay persons, in an individual sponsor-client relationship, and monks also receive a share of the offerings made to the gonpa. Income received by each monk more than fulfills his basic requirements (Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong 1985:22-23).

The monks are substantially involved in a variety of religious activities providing services for laypersons and requiring their presence in the village, which takes more than half their time, and spend about fifteen to twenty-five per cent of their time alone in their rooms (Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong 1985:24-25). In the opinion of the authors:

Tibetan monasticism represents one of history's most radical psycho-social experiments in that it has for centuries attempted to produce and reproduce an atomistic social and cultural structure in which the foundational building block is not a family of family equivalent but a solitary individual detached from the intense and intimate attachments inherent in the idea of family or intimate primary group. (Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong 1985:14.)

The idea of the life of a practitioner gleaned from this description contrasts strongly with the reality at Kardang Gonpa. Rather, the educated young men from Kardang village, such as Norbu Tholakpa who resides alone in Calcutta for eleven months of the year, three days journey from his home (see Chapter 4) more aptly fits the description of "a solitary individual detached from the intense and intimate attachments inherent in the idea of family or intimate primary group".

In Karzha, the gonpa provides ample opportunity for individual spiritual practice but also affords the closeness of spiritual kinship, as well as supportive and mutually benefitting relationships between the practitioner and their household and family members, and generally between gonpa and village, which can be traced in the organic and natural growth of Kardang Gonpa. In the following Section, I continue exploring these social relationships.
We spoke with Lama Paljor and it was decided. There was no other solution. We had been thinking that if we men of our generation, who remember our Buddhist ways and life in Kardang village before they built the road, and we grew potato and became a little wealthy... if the older ones don't take responsibility and build this chorten, then the younger ones will forget — maybe they will forget everything.

The bazaar in Manali is very attractive, and also there are business opportunities there, so they stay away. And now younger ones study in Chandigarh and Dharamsala, and then work far from Lahul. Living here is hard work, too, and the potato harvest is important, but now we employ labourers. We are becoming quite Indian. Many of the younger ones, their faith in the Buddha seems less. So our example is important. We are Buddhist people from a Buddhist country, in the midst of these Hindus and Sikhs. Our ways are changing, but this chorten will show everyone, and wake up our Buddhist ways.

There was an old chorten there, it had fallen down and no-one had bothered to fix it. No-one thought about it. Really this is not good. So we decided we would make a very fine chorten, big too, so we can see it from a distance, maybe even from Kyelang-side. If we don't bring things back into order here, then who will? This chorten will show us. Then everyone will remember the Buddha and remember who we are. Then things will be better for us all. [Transcript, Sherab Tachiji and Angrup Ang Kyantse, May 1983.]
Charten and Courtyard: Entering Kardang Gonpa Precints.
One of his lineage holders and his tripon

Pema Chögyal

Transmission

Gégan Khyentse Gyatso

Tripon

Tułku

Son of
Sê Rinpoche - Apo Rinpoche

Apo Rinpoche - his son's son
Apo Rinpoche and Se Rinpoche at Kardang Gonpa c. 1965

Norbu Rinpoche Tulku, 1958-9, Prior to closure of Tibetan Border.

Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche and practitioners from Kardang Gonpa c. 1930s?
Apo Rinpoche Gonpa

Performance of Gunchog in 1982 with several of the practitioners from Karzha who were in Manali at the time.

1982. Practitioners from Karzha sitting in the garden at Apo Rinpoche gonpa, taking a break from the Naro chödrug teachings.

Five of the young women who were in the process of becoming chömsa in 1981-1983. Note that three have cut their hair but continue to wear lay dress. The field worker is on the far right.
Kardang Gonpa

Below and right:

**Below:** Meditating on roof;
The Ngöndro practice:
performing the mandala offering.

**On the balcony of her gonpa house**

**Making tea for practitioners during ritual**

**CHUKTA GONPA**

**Making ink for printing from chimney soot.**
Chapter Six
Lamas Who Inspire — Apo Rinpoche, Gegan Khyentse and Sé Rinpoche

The ethnographic narrative in this Section covers a twenty-five year period which includes the three year period of my field work. The focus is on the practitioners of Kardang Gonpa with attention to the teachers whose input is vital for the continuation of an active religious community, and the interaction between gonpa and village. This material is based upon many conversations with practitioners, teachers, and layfolk, as well as events witnessed, and my interpretation is in accordance with the revitalisation perspective discussed in Chapter 3.

In order to discuss details of the lives and activities of the teachers whose input has been so vital for the continuation of spiritual practice in Karzha over the past twenty-five years, it is necessary to introduce several specialised concepts, related to the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, which will be discussed in more detail in Section IV, the subsequent and final section of the thesis, in which I examine the genre of namthar, the spiritual biographies, and the oral biographies of Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche.

In this chapter I trace the narrative of the events at Kardang Gonpa, which I began in Chapter 5, from 1959 when changed political conditions in Tibet had extensive impact not only in Tibet, but in many border regions, such as Karzha. Many of the peoples inhabiting border areas had traded freely through the Himalayan passes between India and Central Asia for centuries. This trade was significantly curtailed, if not brought to an abrupt halt. The economic and political conditions in Karzha which provide the background for this chapter have already been discussed.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, the Karzhapa disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri made three trips to Tibet, in order to receive transmissions and teachings. Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche became quite well known as a teacher throughout the Himalaya and Tibet, and his disciples visited him at Kardang Gonpa during the 1920's and 1930's, and later in the 1940's at Dzonkhul Gonpa in Zangskar, where he spent the last ten years of his life.
Kunga Rinpoche's retiring nature and his desire to practise quietly in the Lama Gonpa hermitage, as well as the fact that he did not have the reputation as one of Togdan Shakya Shri's full lineage holders, meant that he did not attract large numbers of disciples from far-flung places, although he certainly had several devoted students in Karzha. During the 1940's and 1950's, Kunga Rinpoche continued his practice and instructed the Karzhapa, though fewer pilgrims travelled from afar to Karzha Khandroling. People from Karzha continued to join the gonpa, replacing those practitioners who died, with membership at Kardang Gonpa remaining about thirty, with another eight to ten practitioners at Lama Gonpa.1

After the birth of Norbu Rinpoche tulku, three or four practitioners left Karzha, staying with Yongdzin Rinpoche, Ngagi Wangpo (ngag gi dbang po, 1906-1959),2 the boy's father, and his family, at Karak (kha rag) Gonpa in Tibet.3 Several journeys were made between Kardang and Tibet, and gonpa business was mediated by those practitioners, and managed by the nyerpa, Mémé Sherab Tholakpa. Some of the practitioners were away from Kardang Gonpa for a few months, while others, such as Gozzangpa Mémé Sidji (?srid gzhi, ?gezi brjid) Yangkyepa and Kardangpa Mémé Ngawang Thogmes, became disciples of Yongdzin Rinpoche and remained away for several years.

Although the Karzhapa were devastated by the Chinese occupation of Tibet which resulted in the captivity of the young tulku Norbu Rinpoche and the closure of the border, the flight of many Tibetan refugees into India, including Apo Rinpoche, Togdan Shakya Shri's grandson, with his sangyum (gsang yum, 'secret mother, consort') Urgyan Chödron (o rgyan chos sgron), presented a beneficial opportunity, especially for the members of Kardang Gonpa.

Like so many refugees, Apo Rinpoche and his company fled to India and spent a very difficult period in the refugee camp at Buxa in West Bengal, near the

1See discussion in previous chapter with regard to membership of Kardang Gonpa. My data indicates that in 1950, for instance, five chöspa and three chösma, as well as Kunga Rinpoche, resided at Lama Gonpa.

2See Appendix.

3The seat of the Yongdzin Rinpoche reincarnate lamas was Dechen Chökor (bde chen chos 'khor) Gonpa, in Central Tibet (close to the present-day location of Lhasa airport). I am unclear whether Karak is another name for this gonpa, or another gonpa where Yongdzin Rinpoche was then residing.
border with Bhutan. Shortly after Apo Rinpoche and Ama-la (as she was affectionately known to all) arrived in 1959, their first child, a son, was born. Three days later, he died. It was a very painful period in Ama-la’s life: she became very unwell, and later preferred not to talk about it, except in terms of Buddhist philosophy, saying only that they experienced the impermanence of life through their son’s death.

In 1961, another son was born, who is known as Sé Rinpoche, Sé being the honorific term for ‘son, prince’. He was named Ngawang Geleg Namgyal (ngag bdang dge legs mam rgyal) and recognised as the tulku of Tripon Pema Chosgyal, who died in Dingri in 1959. Tripon Rinpoche, one of the three Shakya Shri lineage holders, was both Apo Rinpoche’s and Ama-la’s tsawe lama. It was he who had advised the marriage, when many were requesting that Apo Rinpoche marry in order to continue the ngagpa lineage of Togdan Shakya Shri.

In 1961, when Sé Rinpoche was a baby, Lama Paljor Dangrapa, who resides at Lama Gonpa, travelled to Sikkim in order to escort Apo Rinpoche and his small party to Kardang Gonpa. Although the Kardangpa had lost their tulku as a consequence of the Chinese occupation of Tibet, they were fortunately able to offer refuge to the members of Shakya Shri’s ngagpa lineage. When Norbu Rinpoche first established Kardang Gonpa he had explained that he anticipated that at some time the Rus of Shakya Shri would come to Kardang Gonpa. Apo Rinpoche took up residence as the Head Lama, staying in the newly built Zimchung at Kardang

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4For information on Tibetan refugees, see Goldstein (1978); Miller (1978); Nowak (1984); Palakshappa (1978:4-6, 16-19); Pulman (1983:119-171); Woodcock (1970:410-420).

5Ama (a ma) means ‘mother’ in the Tibetan language (see Kin Terminology, Chapter 4), and the suffix -la (lags) indicates respect. See also ‘ani-la’, the usual respectful term used to address female practitioners. Ama-la Urgyan Chodron passed away in 1985, shortly after she returned to Kardang Gonpa and completed a retreat in which she performed 100,000 Tara sadhana (Skt.).

6Some of these relationships are represented photographically at the beginning of this chapter.

7This was mentioned by several people. By ‘Rus’ Norbu Rinpoche clearly meant the male descendants of Shakya Shri who inherited his ‘bone’. See discussion in Chapter 4.
gonpa, with a small entourage — his Sangyum and son, and his tripon, Gegan Khyentse Gyatso, and Imi Tubten (thub bstan).

In 1963, a daughter, Dechen Wangmo (bde chen dbang mo) was born to Ama-la and Apo Rinpoche. She died in 1965, in Pangi, when Apo Rinpoche was visiting and teaching there. Another daughter, Thinley Chöden (‘phrin las chos sgron), was born in 1966. During these five years, Apo Rinpoche remained at Kardang Gonpa. He visited Chukta Gonpa, where he stayed for a week on one occasion, and later for four months when he directed the making and ritual performance of rabsné (consecration) for the large statues of Guru Rinpoche and his two consorts, the dakini Mandarava and Yeshe Tsogyal. He also practised at Gotsangpa Drupdé, or Lama Gonpa.

Apo Rinpoche was a direct descendant of Togdan Shakya Shri, the son of Shakya Shri’s third son, who was a practitioner and a member of his ngagpa lineage. He was also Tripon Pema Chögyal’s heart-son (thugs sras), and therefore he held the transmission lineage derived from his grandfather. His presence at Kardang Gonpa, within two years of the closure of the Tibetan border and the consequent impossibility of receiving religious instruction in Tibet, and the displacement of large numbers of Tibetan refugees, resulted in unprecedented religious activity there. When Apo Rinpoche gave wangs (dbang, ‘initiations, empowerments’) many people from Pangi, Kinnaur, Zangskar and Ladakh, and even as far away as Sikkim and Bhutan, travelled to Karzha in order to receive them. Whilst staying at Kardang Gonpa, Apo Rinpoche discovered some terma, teachings hidden by Guru Rinpoche, confirming the power of Karzha

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8Tripon (khrid dpon) means the teacher who gives the oral explanation and instruction for the practices that have been transmitted by the master. See discussion in text, below.

9Gegan Khyentse told me that this girl, who had a birth mark in the shape of a crossed-vajra (visva-vajra, Skt.) on her arm, was a special being, further substantiating the power of Shakya Shri’s Rus.

10See previous chapter for information on the sponsorship and craftsmen involved in making these statues.

11Particulars pertaining to Shakya Shri’s ngagpa lineage are discussed further in Chapter 9, and Appendix on the Drukpa.

12See Chapter 2 for discussion of Padmasambhava’s presence in Karzha, and the terma tradition of hidden teachings.
Khandroling as a place of practice. In the context of the larger Tibetan cultural arena this situation effectively put Kardang Gonpa ‘on the map’, with immediate continuity of the spiritual teachings, largely a result of Karzha and Lahul's political status within India. Naturally, the interest of practitioners from Tibet and elsewhere in the teacher now residing at Kardang Gonpa generated interest in the spiritual path in Karzha.

Indeed, in 1966 H.H Dudjom Rinpoche (1904-1987), a great master and terton in the Nyingma lineage, came to Manali, and then to Karzha, where he visited Labchang Gonpa at the invitation of one of his disciples, Lama Sonam. The practitioners at Labchang had been experiencing some disturbances with their practice, and Dudjom Rinpoche, a spiritual master and an expert in Tibetan geomancy, diagnosed that the aspect of the gonpa was creating an unbalancing effect on the practitioners. Appropriate rituals were performed to counteract this, which were effective for a time.

In 1959, when Paljor Lharje was nine years old, he joined the gonpa, fulfilling his childhood desire to be a practitioner like his father. However, it was not until 1961 when Apo Rinpoche came to Kardang Gonpa that Paljor made a strong connection with a teacher, becoming Apo Rinpoche’s first Karzhapa disciple. A close bond developed between Apo Rinpoche and the young Paljor. His story is presented below, demonstrating the flexibility of the life of an individual practitioner in this society. Through Lama Paljor’s story we learn something about the activities at the gonpa during the twenty years prior to my arrival in 1981,

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13Before many Tibetans became refugees, it would have been highly unlikely for such a famous or highly ranked dignitary to visit Karzha. It was during this visit that Kunga Rinpoche requested the teachings of P’owa from Dudjom Rinpoche, see Chapter 5, footnote 56.

14Generally, a northerly or easterly aspect is regarded as positive, whereas a southerly or westerly aspect is regarded as negative. Labchang Gonpa has a poor aspect due to the contours of the steep terrain near Labchang village which resulted in the gonpa’s positioning, and the lack of an expert skilled in geomancy at the time this gonpa was built who would have been able to select a better position or counteract the negativities of the chosen site in the process of laying the foundations (see Chapter 5). The negativities experienced at Labchang Gonpa are discussed further in the next chapter.

15The discussion of the spiritual biographies in Section IV will retrospectively inform the biographical material on the practitioners presented in this chapter. The details of Paljor’s life are based on the information Paljor told me, corroborated by information collected from several other people.
which coincided with Gegen Khyentse’s and Sé Rinpoche’s first extended teaching visit to Kardang Gonpa since the passing of Apo Rinpoche, in 1974.

Paljor, an energetic and talented man, has a high profile among the practitioners at Kardang Gonpa, yet in many ways he is not extraordinary. Each person’s story is filled with similar detail. Perhaps exceptional in so far as his zeal for the life of a practitioner is concerned, he remains nevertheless a simple and devoted Dharma student, with an infectious laugh and mischievous sense of humour which is greatly appreciated by those who know him. As such, his role in continuing the practice lineage and enthusing others to embark on the life of a practitioner is an important one in Karzha.

Paljor had always been interested in the life of a chöspa, and as a small boy had cut all of his hair, saying that he was a ‘lama’.16 His father, Amchi Chering Dondup, was a doctor and also a memé, who spent the winter months involved in practice in the small house he had built at Kardang gonpa. The young Paljor was a bright student at the government school, but in 1959 his resolve to study the Dharma firmed, and he started taking teachings from Kunga Rinpoche, and studying the Tibetan language.

In 1962, a year after Paljor had met his tsawé lama, when Paljor was twelve, the Deputy Commissioner, M.S. Gill attempted to dissuade him from the life of a practitioner, demanding that he return to the government school in Kyelang. The incident, which involved both Apo Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche, is mentioned by Gill, who suggests that the young boy (for whom he uses the pseudonym ‘Tashi’) was being coerced into becoming a practitioner when he was too young to make a decision for himself (Gill 1979:66-67). Paljor says that Gill used the pseudonym to hide his identity so that people would not be able to establish that Gill greatly misrepresented the situation.

Gill’s orientation to the situation in Lahul, as its first Deputy Commissioner overseeing the development of Lahul into the Indian nation, is clearly evident:

...I felt sorry for this bright young lad. The faith was already disappearing. With a few more years of roads, jeeps, community development and contact with the

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16Such behaviour is thought to indicate that the child may be a reincarnation, and although this had been suggested in Paljor’s case (see also Gill 1979:66–67), it is something which Paljor now laughs off, saying that everybody is a reincarnation. Of course, a possible interpretation is that Paljor may simply have been emulating his father.
plains, it would lose whatever little power it had. The boys of the Kyelang high school were going to a world of vast opportunities. Tashi could have been with those boys. (Gill 1979:67).

As Paljor observed, this assessment of Buddhism in Lahul was biased, and furthermore it was indicative of the wishes of the Indian administration, who had no respect for the Dharma. Paljor is grateful that Apo Rinpoche, Kunga Rinpoche and his father had stood up to the Deputy Commissioner, enabling him to continue with his spiritual training. He said he is content with his career choice and wishes to set an example for the young village boys who are facing decisions about their future. Perhaps they will emulate Norbu Tholakpa, who was among the boys studying at Kyelang high school in 1962, and live in far-off Indian cities. Then again, perhaps they will follow the spiritual path, and live at Kardang Gonpa or Lama Gonpa, performing rituals for the villagers, meditating in retreats and travelling with their teacher on pilgrimages throughout the Himalaya.

Paljor was greatly inspired by Apo Rinpoche when he first came to Karzha, taking the Chagchen ngöndro teachings, and completing these preliminary tantric practices by the time he was sixteen. He was then taught single-pointed concentration (shine, zhi gnas, samatha Skt.), insight meditation (lhag'tong, lhag mthong, vipasyana Skt.) and a yidam practice. He then received the Naro Chödrug teachings (the 'Six Yogas of Naropa'), one of the more advanced practices in the Chagchen meditative method. During this time, others gradually became inspired by Apo Rinpoche’s teachings and decided to take up the life of a practitioner, while the majority continued with the practices they had received from Norbu Rinpoche, Kunga Rinpoche, and, in a few cases, Yongdzin Rinpoche, further developing their spiritual understanding through the teachings received from Apo Rinpoche. Some of the older practitioners came to regard Apo Rinpoche as one of their principal teachers, or tsawé lamas.

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17 For a practice-oriented explication see Trungpa (1982:228).

18 For details see Guenther’s translation and commentary to the namthar of Naropa (1963). Guenther studied this text at Shashur Gonpa in Karzha, and did most of the translation in Prabhat Thakur’s household in Rangri where I myself stayed at the beginning of my fieldwork. Apart from passing references in the introduction to this volume, Guenther has not to my knowledge written about his stay in Karzha. Other information about Naro Chödrug can be found in Garma C.C. Chang’s ‘Introduction to the Six Yogas of Naropa’ (1977:49-128) and Kelsang Gyatso (1982).
Apo Rinpoche and company accepted the hospitality of the Kardangpa for about five years, also visiting other gonpas and hermitages throughout the Western Himalayas, as invited by disciples during this period. The borders with Tibet remained firmly closed, and several refugee Rinpoche began to realise the necessity of acquiring land for establishing settlements and gonpas, in order to relieve the hardship experienced by so many of the Tibetans in the temporary and crowded refugee camps.

In 1963, the VIIIth Khamtrul (khams sprul, an important Drukpa Kargyu reincarnation lineage from Kham, East Tibet) Rinpoche,19 moved from Kalimpong in north-eastern India to Banuri in the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh, accompanied by several hundred refugees living in tents. Conditions were extremely difficult, so Khamtrul Rinpoche moved with the refugee community to the more elevated area of Dalhousie, forming a registered society, the ‘Tibetan Craft Community’, in 1965, with the intention of fostering the Tibetan culture which in the refugee situation was severely threatened. The VIIIth Khamtrul Rinpoche was himself accomplished in the art of Lama Dance (cham 'chams) and music and wished to create an environment in which these skills could be passed on.

Soon after this refugee community moved to Dalhousie, Apo Rinpoche travelled there to visit Khamtrul Rinpoche, with Paljor as a companion. There the young Kardangpa met Khamtrul Rinpoche, who suggested that Paljor become a thangka painter and remain in Dalhousie with Khamtrul Rinpoche’s support. Although Paljor had drawn sporadically since he was quite young and clearly had talent, his training in this discipline had been interrupted by meditation retreats, accomplishment in spiritual practice taking priority in his life. While grateful for this offer, and the encouragement received from Khamtrul Rinpoche, Paljor decided to remain with his teacher, Apo Rinpoche, and continued travelling with him.

Shortly after, in 1967, they went to Pangi and remained there for a year. During their absence from Kardang Gonpa, Kunga Rinpoche died. Paljor returned to Kardang, but within a year was travelling again, this time to Ladakh in order to

19Refer Appendix.
see Apo Rinpoche who was teaching at Hemis (he mis) Gonpa. There were six other practitioners travelling with him, including two Ladakhpa from Changthang, one of whom was an ani-la. There was another chösmā in the group. It took the party eight days, travelling by foot along the military road, to reach Hemis Gonpa. Paljor and his cousin (FZS) Angrup (dngos grub)21 Yarpa from Gozzang village stayed there for a year, although they had no extra clothing or provisions, and had not intended to stay for the winter.

Until this time, Angrup had not taken teachings from Apo Rinpoche, regarding Kunga Rinpoche as his tsawé lama. Since his teacher had recently passed away, Angrup was ready to forge another connection with a teacher, and took Apo Rinpoche as his second tsawé lama. He had not received teachings on the Naro Chödrug from Kunga Rinpoche, who only occasionally gave these teachings. Paljor had by this time completed three ngöndro, and says that he practised tummo (gnum mo, ‘psychic heat’, one of the Six Yogas of Naropa) over the winter to keep warm, whereas Angrup, without the transmission of the psychic heat practice, found conditions more difficult.22

Some disciples of Apo Rinpoche from Karzha, mainly from Kardang village, donated a small piece of land to him in Chittyari, near the hot springs at Vashist (close to Manali, see Map 3) and a small gonpa and family house was built there. Conditions in Karzha, particularly during winter are difficult. As the Kardangpa wanted Apo Rinpoche and his family to settle, a suitable site across the Rohtang Pass, where winters are less severe, was chosen and purchased. This ensured that

20For details on Hemis, one of the most important Drukpa Gonpa in Ladakh, see Crook (1980:161); Khosla, R. (1979:87-90); and Snellgrove and Skorupski (1977:127-130).

21 The reader familiar with the Tibetan language will note the Karzhapa’s unusual pronunciation of this name, which is usually ‘Ngödrup’. Compare with ‘Chering’ for ‘Tsering’ (tshe ring), although the latter name is also used in Karzha. For instance, Paljor’s father was called ‘Chering’, whereas his nephew is called ‘Tsering’ (see genealogy in Chapter 5).

22 Paljor’s claim about the benefits of practising tummo can be read at one level as an assertion of his relatively advanced spiritual practice resulting from the teachings of the Six Yogas of Naropa given to him by Apo Rinpoche, although he had not yet undertaken the retreat for developing these practices, when compared to Angrup, his cousin and a close friend, who is four years his senior. Paljor’s claims that he was actually able to increase his body temperature may seem suspect. However, bio-medical neurophysiological studies undertaken in 1981 on three yogis from Upper Dharamsala demonstrated that the subjects were able to increase the temperature in their fingers and toes by up to 8.3 degrees C (Benson et al. 1982).
the Rus of Togdan Shakya Shri would remain within reasonable proximity to Kardang.

Two more sons were born to Apo Rinpoche and Ama-la, Jampal Dorje (jam dpal rdo rje) in 1968, and Jigme Dorje (jigs med rdo rje) in 1969. After Apo Rinpoche took up residence at Chittyari, his Karzhapa disciples travelled across the Rohtang to visit him, and continue their teachings, or invited him to Kardang to visit during the summer.

When Paljor was 24 or 25 (1973), he decided to begin the Naro Chödrug three year, three month and three day retreat, with his cousin Angrup from Lama Gonpa, and Ngawang Rigzin Meyonks from Gozzang village, a practitioner at Kardang Gonpa. It was already seven years since Paljor had received these teachings from Apo Rinpoche and he had already developed some skill in the practices, a necessary condition for the three year retreat. Generally, retreatants remain in complete isolation, receiving clarification on the practices from their tsawe lama as the retreat progresses. When a few practitioners are in retreat together, as is usually the case in the three year retreat, they maintain minimal contact with each other, discussing the practices as necessary. However, a strong bond develops between chöspa during this time, who are regarded as vajra brothers. Usually a junior gonpa member is assigned the task of attending to the retreatants, for instance, bringing water each day. Rigzin Tholakpa, Norbu’s younger brother, undertook this responsibility, and in return received some tuition in the Tibetan alphabet from Paljor.

As the practitioners collect the staple foods together before the retreat begins, their requirements are few. Paljor says that although neither he nor Angrup had adequate supplies for the three year retreat, Apo Rinpoche had insisted that they begin without delay, rather than postponing the retreat for a year or two until they had collected more supplies.

The Naro Chödrug ts’am (mtshams) or retreat usually begins in autumn. It involves advanced tsa-lung (rtsa, nadi Skt., ‘psychic vein’; rlung, prana Skt., ‘inner

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^For details of practitioners from the Meyonks household, see genealogy in previous chapter.

24Generally, any practitioners undertaking tantric initiations together from the same teacher are said to be vajra brothers and sisters.
air') practice, and Chagchen meditation each day. There are six specific yogas which are practised in succession:

1) tummo or psychic heat (candali Skt.) is developed, with trulkor (phrul 'khor, 'khrul 'khor) or physical exercises in the autumn, and in the winter the tummo continues with rékyang (ras rkyang) and répu (ras pu), in which the body heat generated by the yogi, while meditating out in the snow at night, is used to quickly dry the robes which have been soaked;

2) gyulu (rgyu lus), the 'Illusory Body' practice, is for recognising the illusions of samsara and is undertaken in spring;

3) milam (rmi lam), the 'Dream Yoga' is practiced every night while sleeping, as is

4) osal ('od gsal), the 'Clear Light' practice;

5) bardo, the 'intermediate state' practice for after death is pursued in early summer; and

6) p'owa, 'the transference of consciousness' practice, is performed for one week only.

These six practices are repeated three times, in sequence, each year for the duration of the retreat. The practitioners also engage in visualisation and mantra recitation of the yidam Khorlo Demchog or Cakrasamvara, and the dakini Dorje Phagmo or Vajravarahi, as well as an extended guru yoga throughout the entire retreat.

Their teacher Apo Rinpoche was to guide them through this retreat. However, just nine months after they began, in mid-1974, Apo Rinpoche passed away. This caused considerable concern at Kardang Gonpa, for it is necessary that practitioners involved in such a retreat receive expert guidance from a qualified master. Paljor recounts that all the mémé and ani-la were crying, and everyone gathered around the door to the retreat house, crying along with the three

25 As these practices are regarded as secret, and cannot be engaged in without the appropriate transmission and teachings, I provide only a brief description of the retreat schedule. See references in note 18.

26 See Chapter 4, footnote 31.
practitioners inside. They could not talk to them, and they could not see them, but the Kardangpa chöspa and chöisma shared their grief.

Mémé Sherab, the Nyerpa, told everyone to stop crying, and that they would certainly get another lama to come to the gonpa. Fortunately, the most senior practitioner in the Drukpa lineage, Tuksé (Thugs sras) Rinpoche (1916-1983) who came to Chittyari for Apo Rinpoche's cremation, was able to come to Kardang Gonpa, and continue the practice transmission and instructions. The young retreatants requested and gratefully received Shakya Shri's nyen gyud (snyan rgyud) teachings from Tuksé Rinpoche, who had previously spoken with Apo Rinpoche about his disciples at Kardang. Apo Rinpoche had recommended Paljor as a promising student, so Tuksé Rinpoche was pleased to be able to assist this group in their Naro Chödrug retreat. He also suggested that they visit him in Darjeeling or at Hemis Gonpa in Ladakh upon the completion of their retreat, although they were unable to do so before he passed away in 1983, due to lack of funds.

Later Khunu Rinpoche, an older and highly respected teacher from Kinnaur, H.P., came to Kardang Gonpa and visited the retreatants, giving them some special Drukpa Chagchen ronvom kordru (ro snyoms skor drug) teachings. Khunu

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27The Karzhapa regard the overt display of emotions, as in crying, as appropriate behaviour for both males and females, and further as a behaviour which distinguishes them from Tibetans. They frequently comment upon and joke about their crying. Weddings are another occasion providing ample opportunity for crying. Further, it is expected and condoned in this situation.

28Tuksé Rinpoche, like Apo Rinpoche, was a grandson of Shakya Shri, being the son of the Xth Drukchen and a daughter of Shakya Shri. See discussion in Chapter 9, and Appendix.

29These nyen gyud, or 'oral lineage' teachings were received in a meditative vision by Togdan Shakya Shri 'directly' from the Indian siddha Tilopa (?988-?1069), who had instructed the Indian siddha Naropa (?1016-?1100), the originator of the Six Yogas of Naropa (cf. terma). As such, they are regarded as a particularly powerful explication of the practices, and are not frequently bestowed on practitioners. The retreatants had hoped to request these teachings from Apo Rinpoche. See discussion in Chapter 9.

30See Chapter 5, footnote 26.

31These teachings on the 'equal taste of appearances' were hidden by Rechungpa (ras chung pa, 1083-1161), a disciple of Milarepa, and rediscovered by Tsangpa Gyare Yeshe Dorie (gsang pa rgya ras ye shes rdo rje, 1161-1211), the founder of the Drukpa lineage (Aris 1980:172; Smith E.G. 1970b:3, 6). The ro snyoms cycle of teachings is attributed to Naropa, passing through the main Kargyu lineage to Milarepa, and thence to Rechungpa (see, for instance, Gyatso 1985:327). On Drukpa lineages see Appendix.
Rinpoche was in his late eighties, and the journey to Kardang Gonpa was difficult for him. Lama Ngawang Thogmes carried him from Kyelang to Kardang Gonpa. Rigzin, the attendant, carried him into the retreat house as he was the only person permitted to enter. Gegen Khyentse also came and advised the three practitioners from time to time, so they were well guided through their retreat.

Sé Rinpoche was fourteen years old at the time of his father's death, and was studying in Darjeeling with Tuksé Rinpoche. It took seven days for Sé Rinpoche and Tuksé Rinpoche to arrive in Chittyari, during which time the body showed no signs of deterioration. On the seventh day the body began to lose its elasticity, and the cremation was performed with Sé Rinpoche and Tuksé Rinpoche present.

When the vajra brothers, Paljor, Angrup and Ngawang began their retreat, they were quite poor, without adequate provisions, and they experienced bouts of ill-health and other obstacles, most seriously their lama's death, during the early phases. However, these obstacles only increased their devotion to their teacher who had encouraged them to begin the retreat without delay, and they interpreted the obstacles as a sign of successful karmic purification. They then received offerings of food from different people, and more importantly transmission, teachings and instructions from well-qualified masters, and their retreat proceeded well.

In the final months of the three year, three month, and three day retreat, when the yogis performed the practice of répu, many auspicious signs were seen by the people of Karzha, which indicated the strength of their practice. Consequently when they completed their retreat, many people came from Gozzang and Kardang, and all over Karzha and made offerings to them of tsampa (tsam pa, roasted barley flour), butter, sugar and many other things. The three practitioners

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32The body maintaining elasticity after death is an indication that the practitioner is engaged in bardo meditation, or meditation in the intermediary state after death and before rebirth. The body must not be touched nor the cremation performed until signs of deterioration are evident. See Chapter 7.

33The implication being that if they had not begun the retreat before Apo Rinpoche's death, the opportunity and inspiration to do the retreat may have not have arisen. It is also said that the greater the obstacles which arise during practice, the greater the accomplishment in overcoming them.

34Auspicious practice-related signs are discussed further in Section IV.
made one thousand tsog (tshogs) offerings in thanks for the blessings received during their retreat.

As is customary in such retreats, none of the men had cut their hair, which after the three years reached their waists. Allowing the hair to grow symbolises that the practitioners are yogis, meditators of the inner yoga (tsa-lung) practices who have cut all attachments.35 Long hair changed the appearance of the three young men, and many of their relatives didn't recognise them. Indeed, during the retreat they had really changed and were now qualified to be addressed as 'Lama', although they all remain humble, seeing themselves as simple practitioners, rather than as gurus or teachers, which is the translation of lama.

The title 'Lama' is earnt by a practitioner through the accomplishment of the practices in the three year retreat. In Karzha, this contrasts with the term 'mémé', which designates a spiritual practitioner and shows respect, but does not refer to particular spiritual accomplishment. The kin terms 'mémé' and 'ajo' are frequently used between practitioners and by the villagers, even when the practitioner has completed the three year retreat (see Chapter 4), and the title 'Lama' reserved for one who is regarded as a teacher. As in Tibetan, the title 'Rinpoche' meaning 'precious' is used when speaking of or addressing reincarnate lamas, or other revered teachers, such as Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche, who were also frequently called Kushog (sku shogs) Norbu and Kushog Kunga.36

Paljor says that many of the ani-la cried when they saw the three yogis, because they were both amazed and happy at the result of the retreat, and they remembered their own long locks which had been cut when they had made the decision to become full-time practitioners. Conversations with different chösma confirmed that some of them regretted their short hair, as long hair is highly regarded and all women wear plaits. However, the ani-la's sadness is tinged by a regret that they are not able to undertake the Naro Chödrug retreat, and engage in yogic practices as are the male practitioners, and thus grow long hair as a

35 A discussion of Tibetan hair symbolism in comparative context would be of interest, but I limit myself here to presenting some relevant information. Cf. Leach (1958), Obeyesekere (1981).

36 Kushog is a term of respect in Karzha, which was used frequently when referring to both Norbu and Kunga, instead of Rinpoche. I have used the more familiar term, Rinpoche, throughout the thesis to avoid confusion for the reader unfamiliar with Tibetan. See discussion of the title Kushog in Kutang, Nepal, Chapter 5, footnote 4.
practitioner. I was told that although Togdan Shakya Shri had taught the Six Yogas to some female practitioners, and that there was a transmission lineage for women, that there had been some difficulties, and the teachings were no longer given to chöṣma.\(^{37}\) Some of the female practitioners at Kardang felt limited by the attitude to their potential spiritual achievement, based on this gender stereotyping, and regretted that they were excluded from the most highly regarded yogic practices in the Drukpa lineage.

A female practitioner, such as Ama-la, who is married to a yogic practitioner and is therefore regarded as a sangyum or spiritual consort, does not cut her hair. As mentioned above, long hair symbolises that the practitioner has cut all attachments and is accomplished in the inner yoga practices. In the case of such a married woman, this status symbolised by the long hair is largely derived from the woman’s relationship with the yogi, rather than from her ability as a practitioner, and it is very rare for such a chöṣma to be asked for teachings, or to in any way regard herself as a teacher, although she may be a highly accomplished practitioner.\(^{38}\)

The three yogis, Lama Paljor, Lama Angrup and Lama Ngawang Rigzin travelled to Manali by bus, and went to Apo Rinpoche Gonpa. Beside their tsawé Lama’s chorten, they cut their hair, remembering the kindness of their teacher. The three Lamas then travelled to Tashijong (bkra shis ljongs), to see Khamtrul Rinpoche and Chöje Rinpoche,\(^{39}\) before returning to Kardang Gonpa.

\(^{37}\)I know of one Tibetan yogi who has taught these practices to female practitioners, although this has occurred infrequently. As these teachings are secret they are discussed infrequently, and there may be others teaching chöṣma these practices, but in any case, it seems that female practitioners are less likely to receive these teachings than are male practitioners. The chöṣma at Kardang Gonpa were generally unaware that they could obtain these teachings.

\(^{38}\)There exists a transmission lineage, which however is usually given to male practitioners, called the Niguma Chödrug (ni gu ma chos drug, ni gu ma’i chos drug), the Six Yogas of Niguma, which derives from Naropa’s consort or sister, Niguma (Mullin 1985:92-151). Khandro Tsering Chödrön, the sangyum of Jamyang Khventse Chökvi Lodro (’jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse chos kyi blo gros, 1896 – 1959) is one of the better known and highly regarded female practitioners whose status largely derives from her being a greatly respected Lama’s consort. She rarely gives any formal teaching, although she will engage in chanting during ritual performances, as did Ama-la, and many regard the opportunity to chant with her as an empowerment to their own practice.

\(^{39}\)Khamtrul Rinpoche had moved the Tibetan Craft Community from Dalhousie to an area near Palampur in Kangra District H.P. This large refugee settlement is known as Tashijong, which I visited briefly in 1982. Stephan Beyer conducted his research on Tara
During this three year retreat, Paljor had seriously begun to devote time to thangka painting in between his practice sessions, tutored by Lama Yontan from Kardang Gonpa. He continued his training until 1979 when his teacher died. In order to further his skills, he spent a year, 1981, in Manali where he lived at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa and every day walked about five kilometres to and from the Thangka Painting School of Lahul-Spiti, studying under the Zangskapa teacher.

As one of the few Karzhapa able to paint thangka, Paljor finds that he is often in demand. Not only is he an experienced thangka painter, but he also paints the elaborate decorations on the woodwork in the gonpa buildings. In 1980, Paljor repainted the woodwork at Chukta Gonpa, and then a new thangka of Padmasambhava for that Gonpa. He was also called upon to paint the features on several statues that had been made in 1982, before their rabné or consecration. In 1983 he completely renovated the Lhakhang at Kardang Gonpa, painting spotted dragons, flowers and other traditional motifs on the pillars and capitals (see previous chapter). Because of this skill Lama Paljor is also very knowledgeable in the details of iconography and the symbolism employed in the meditational deities (yidam) used in visualisations and represented in thangkas, and it is to him I owe much of my understanding of these matters.40

This brief biography of Lama Paljor Lharje provides an example of the more recent relationship between disciple and teacher in Kardang, and we see the continuity and strength of the practice lineages. After Apo Rinpoche passed away, the practitioners who had already received transmission and instruction continued their practice, and the Naro Chödrug retreat continued with the assistance of T’uksé Rinpoche, Khunu Rinpoche and Gegan Khyentse who visited the gonpa on a few occasions to ensure the guidance of the retreatants. A few chötsma were inspired to take their getsul ordination from T’uksé Rinpoche. Generally the rhythm of the seasonal interspersion of winter retreats and summer communal rituals in the village and at Kardang Gonpa continued, with the blessings of more teachings when Khunu Rinpoche again visited Karzha, in 1977.

40I also received descriptions of the yidams central to this practice lineage from Gegan Khyentse.
On this occasion, Khunu Rinpoche Tenzin Gyaltson, or Negi Lama as he used to be called, spent two or three months at Kardang Gonpa, teaching Gampopa’s *The Jewel Ornament* and *The Precious Rosary* (dwags po thar rgyan lam mchog rin chen ’phreng ba*). He then spent a month in Gemur, and another month in Kyelang, before going up to Shashur Gonpa, where he spent another month in retreat before passing away there on the second day of the first month (Tibetan calendar), 9th February 1978, aged 91 or 92. In all he was in Karzha for about six months over winter. His chorten now stands near Shashur Gonpa, across the valley and visible from Kardang Gonpa. There are smaller chorten containing some of his remains in Bokor Gonpa and the Lhakhang of Kardang Gonpa, both of which were made in 1978, by Lama Yontan (see Chapter 5).

In 1981 when the Dalai Lama came to Manali in order to propagate in Himachal Pradesh some of the teachings he had received from Khunu Rinpoche, many Karzhapa attended. At that time the Dalai Lama emphasised that although Khunu Rinpoche dressed very simply and did not wear elaborate robes, he was nevertheless a highly accomplished practitioner whom he revered greatly. Moreover, the Dalai Lama emphasised that there were several superior practitioners who had come from Himachal Pradesh, and that since the closure of the border with Tibet, these people had greatly assisted in the continuity of the Buddhist teachings. The occasional visits to the region by important teachers continue to provide stimulation and interest for the practitioners.

During the course of the Naro Chödrug retreat, Paljor, Angrup and Ngawang Rigzin developed confidence in Gegan Khyentse’s ability as a teacher,
and each summer after the completion of the retreat, they travelled to Manali for further teachings. They encouraged the other disciples of Apo Rinpoche to do likewise. Initially, they were joined by another two young men from Kardang Gonpa and one young man from Bokor Gonpa, who frequently stayed at Kardang; another chöspa from Labchang Gonpa; and another from Chukta Gonpa. They were subsequently joined by another three young men from Chukta Gonpa; and three more from Kardang who previously had not taken teachings from Apo Rinpoche. This group, ranging in age from late teens through to late twenties (with the yogis in their thirties), constitutes the core of the new male recruits (see photographs, pp.213).

During Apo Rinpoche's stay at Kardang, and later in Chittyari, Gegan Khyentse Gyatso had been the tripon for Apo Rinpoche. Prior to this, in Tibet, when Apo Rinpoche had been at Kyiphug, (skyid phug, 'happy cave')45 Gegan Khyentse had been the tripon when Apo Rinpoche taught, and he was always with him. The closeness of the association between the two was partly attributable to their having done their Naro Chödrug retreat together, after receiving transmission and instructions from Tripon Pema Chögyal, one of Shakya Shri's three lineage holders.

The tripon is the meditation teacher who works with an important teacher, giving precise instructions, answering students' questions and explaining any details that the disciples have not understood in the transmission and teaching received from the master. In the practice of the Naro Chödrug, for instance, the tripon will assist with practical demonstrations of the yoga exercises that are to be performed.

The master must of course be fully confident of the tripon's understanding and ability before directing students to seek advice. Togdan Shakya Shri had such faith in Pema Chögyal, which is how the latter earned the name 'Tripon Rinpoche'. Apo Rinpoche similarly had such confidence in Gegan Khyentse, so that Apo Rinpoche's disciples naturally developed respect for Gegan Khyentse's ability to teach. Indeed Gegan (dge rgan) means 'teacher'.46

45Kyiphug is a hermitage near Sanga Choling (gsang snags chos gling) Gonpa in East Tibet, which is the seat of the Drukchens. See Chapter 9 and Appendix.

46These relationships are indicated photographically on p.211.
Sé Rinpoche was fourteen years old at the time of his father's death, and had not completed his religious training. Thus he was not yet qualified to be a teacher, although his background and lineage indicated that he surely had the potential to develop in this capacity, and he had seriously applied himself to his spiritual training revealing considerable capacity for both Chagchen and Dzogchen methods of meditation. Indeed, he has received the complete transmission of all teachings in the lineage of Togdan Shakya Shri, so that not only is he the great-grandson of Shakya Shri and an inheritor of his ngagpa lineage, but he has also inherited the complete transmission lineage. He spent some time in Bhutan studying with Lopon Sonam Zangpo, one of Togdan Shakya Shri's three lineage holders, and with Dilgo (or Dingo) Khyentse (dil mgo, dis mgo mkhyen brtse) Rinpoche (b.1910). He studied with his vajra brothers, the young Drukchen Rinpoche (b.1963) and Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche (b.1961).

Sé Rinpoche is like many of the younger generation of reincarnates, born in a refugee situation and greatly influenced by the myriad of life choices available in India. When I first met him he was 19 years of age, and he had some reservations about his ability to teach well in this environment. These reservations were shared by some of the Kardangpa, who had on occasion seen the young tulku wearing jeans in the Manali bazaar, rather than his maroon robes, and wondered at the appropriateness of such behaviour. Sé Rinpoche was acutely aware of the traditional attitude held by many of the Karzhapa and Tibetan refugees, and has great respect for the masters in the lineage with whom he has studied. He was also in awe of his great responsibility towards the lineage, as Shakya Shri's great-grandson and lineage holder, and as the tulku of Tripon Pema Chögyal. These

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47 Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche is one of five main reincarnation lineages which are the recognised rebirths of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, a nineteenth century master from Kham associated with the so-called Rime movement. See Chapter 5, Appendix, and Smith (1970a:74).

48 Lopon Sonam Zangpo is Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's maternal grandfather, while his paternal grandfather is H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (the high-ranking Nyingma master who gave the p’owa, transference of consciousness, teachings to Kunga Rinpoche, see Chapter 5). Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's father is also a highly regarded teacher, and thus he inherits that ngagpa lineage. He is also the reincarnation of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodro (see footnote 34), another of the five Khyentse reincarnation lineages. Although he principally teaches the Khyentse Rime teachings, he also transmits the Drukpa practice lineage. In 1986 and 1990 when Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche was in Australia, he gave transmission and teaching for Shakya Shri's p'owa.
factors contributed to his own reservations about his ability. He often told me that he was really quite an ordinary person, not a great practitioner at all, and that he was not interested in becoming famous, and would prefer to live and practice quietly.49

As I mentioned above, Sé Rinpoche and Gegan Khyentse’s first extended visit to Karzha occurred in 1981, coinciding with the beginning of my fieldwork. In effect, this visit marked the beginning of Sé Rinpoche assuming his adult role as lineage holder.

Rather than describing in detail the many rituals which were performed, I shall indicate their nature, highlighting those which attracted greatest attention, and focusing on the social context of the events, in keeping with my intention to elucidate the relationship between gonpa and village, and spiritual practitioners and laypeople. Particularly I shall explore the effect of Gegan Khyentse and the teachings he offered to the people, several of whom became inspired and filled with devotion, deciding to take up the life of a practitioner during the course of my fieldwork. The events of this time thus mirror the earlier enthusiasm for the religious life inspired by Kusho Norbu and Kusho Kunga, and Apo Rinpoche, continuing the revitalisation of the practice lineage in Karzha.

Early in 1981 I took up residence with the Thakur family living in the hamlet of Rangri, which is a few kilometres down the valley from Manali. I walked the six or seven kilometres to Apo Rinpoche Gonpa on most days, beginning my association with this gonpa, and the people there. My presence there was not unusual, for several westerners had been attracted, over the fifteen years or so since the gonpa’s construction, to the warm and hospitable atmosphere created by Ama-la and the family, and the teachers Apo Rinpoche and Gegan Khyentse.50

Gegan Khyentse and Sé Rinpoche had been invited to Kardang Gonpa for the summer. This was the first formal invitation issued since Apo Rinpoche’s death

49Tripon Pema Chögyal also preferred to live quietly, moving to Dingri in 1934 where he lived in seclusion for a few years, escaping his fame as a teacher for a while (Aziz 1978:215-216).

50For instance Elizabeth Harper, who gave me considerable assistance in my research, had lived at the gonpa for several years as one of the family. See also Allione (1984:xxxii-xxxiii).
seven years earlier, although Gegan Khyentse had come to Kardang and instructed the three chöspa in retreat, and as mentioned above, several practitioners regularly travelled to Manali for teachings. Because of the devotion which these younger practitioners showed towards Gegan Khyentse, and their requests to the nyerpa for the opportunity to receive teachings, a formal invitation was issued. Within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, reincarnate Lamas and teachers only visit other gonpa when formal arrangements have been made, and further, each teaching given must be formally requested. This extended visit was the perfect opportunity for my first visit to Kardang Gonpa, and Karzha Khandroling, for it is expected that Dharma students will follow an important Lama whenever he is invited to teach.

A few practitioners from Manali accompanied Sé Rinpoche and Gegan Khyentse, and chöspa and chötsma from other gonpa in Karzha also availed themselves to the opportunity, so that Kardang Gonpa was once again host to not only the ngagpa lineage of Shakya Shri, but many visiting practitioners. As well as the teachings, there were several rituals requested by both the practitioners and the villagers, and some rituals which are performed annually coincided with the visit.

In the Tibetan tradition, the anniversary of an important teacher's death is regarded as an important day to engage in practice, as it is thought that in so doing, the transmission received from that teacher will be strengthened. Apo Rinpoche had passed away on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth Tibetan month. The Gundzog (?dgung rdzogs), the anniversary of his death, occurred on July 27th in 1981.51

Kardang Gonpa normally holds collective puja only twice a month, on the tenth day of the Tibetan month, Padmasambhava's day, and the twenty-fifth, the day of the Dakini.52 The nyerpa will excuse from attendance any practitioners involved in retreat or particular meditation practices which should not be disturbed, so that often the attendance may be quite small. But on this day, everyone was involved, and the ani-la (who normally have more opportunity to join their spiritual brothers in the Lhakhang) and villagers were very busy, preparing large quantities

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51Gundzog are calculated according to the Tibetan calendar, and so the date changes from year to year by the Gregorian calendar.

52These two days are regarded as particularly auspicious and the most important for practice during the Tibetan month.
of offerings for the ritual, and food for everyone. Delicacies such as momo (mog mog, meat balls in very fine dough, either fried or steamed) were made for Sé Rinpoche and Gegan Khyentse.

It was a memorable occasion for all who were there — practitioners from Kardang Gonpa, Lama Gonpa and Chukta Gonpa, and also many villagers. During ritual performances, the practitioners sit according to their rank. Generally, reincarnate lamas have highest status. Seniority is then determined on the basis of age and recognised spiritual attainment. As an important tulku in the lineage, Sé Rinpoche was placed upon a small throne (the highest seat), with Gegan Khyentse to his left, sitting lower. Lama Wangchuk, the eldest and most respected practitioner from Kardang Gonpa was seated next to him. There were thirty or so chöspa involved in this puja, with several of the chöasma joining when possible, and villagers coming to sit in the doorway from time to time, before leaving to continue their work about the gonpa.

The ritual performed at a gundzog is not fixed, though it is likely to be Lama chodpa (bla ma mchod pa), Dorsem (i.e. Dorje Sempa, rdo rje sems dpa', Vajrasattva Skt.) or Guru Dewa (gu ru bde ba), one of Shakya Shri's terma. Otherwise, Demchog Chusuma (bde mchog bcu gsum ma) might be performed. It is up to the practitioners to decide. Usually the ritual to be performed will be determined by the most senior lama. On this occasion, Gegan Khyentse's guidance was sought, and the ritual chosen was Lama Chodpa. In any event, the important thing is that through practising on the anniversary of the passing of the teacher, it is possible to purify the transmission and to connect strongly with the practice lineage.

On this day in Kardang Gonpa Sé Rinpoche sat for the first time on the throne where his father had sat before him. About half way through the ritual, a thread of five coloured strands, which were intertwined, was stretched from the elaborate mandala shrine which had been arranged in the centre of the room to Sé Rinpoche who held it to his heart-centre. Within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, during this ritual act, the practitioner visualises the yogic body, and the cakra (Skt.) at the heart-centre is conceptualised as the mandala of the mind or sem (sems, citta

When several reincarnates are present, great care is taken in determining relative status and arranging the seating accordingly.
Skt.), which is the superior and determining component of the mind-body complex. This symbolic act had an impact on all present, and the Karzhapa began to understand that Sé Rinpoche really was the epitome of their lineage.

In this traditional environment of religious performance Sé Rinpoche was transformed into the being that he was claimed to be, and the image of the person previously seen in Manali bazaar faded. Gegan Khyentse sitting beside the young tulku was perceived as no less a being, and everyone began to understand what the few disciples of Apo Rinpoche and Gegan Khyentse had been saying for some time now. It was the continued devotion of those disciples, their visits to Apo Rinpoche Gonpa with requests for more teachings from Gegan Khyentse, and the apparent benefit they had received, that resulted in the issued invitation. The nyerpa of Kardang Gonpa had seen the spiritual progress being made by the younger recruits, and was largely responsible for issuing the invitation.

That night, following the day long gundzog ritual, was one of great celebration in the gonpa grounds, with all the villagers dressed in their best clothes congregating around the courtyard in front of the chortens of Mémé Jhampa, Mémé Kulu and Mémé Norbu. They drank chang, they sang and they danced, rhythmically swaying with their arms held beside their heads, and hands gesturing to the beat of the music, provided by drums and horns. Several of them had spent the day at the gonpa, assisting in the arrangements, preparing and cooking food, chattering and laughing, and watching the gonpa members performing the ritual from time to time. Some of the young women had set out with kilti (Hindi, wicker baskets carried on the back and supported by a rope across the forehead), returning four or five hours later with woody roots dug from the hillside, to be used as firewood. But with the evening, and the completion of the days activity, all that was left to do was to rejoice in the presence of the lama!

On the following day, the practitioners again began early in the morning, performing the Dorsem ritual in memory of Togdan Shakya Shri, purifying their connection to and transmission from the spiritual lineage. The practice of Dorje Sempa is taught as the second of the four parts of the ngöndro, and this

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54 A colour photograph taken during this ritual showing Sé Rinpoche with the five-coloured thread held to his heart centre and Gegan Khyentse, forms the frontispiece to the thesis. For a discussion of the yogic body and the way in which cakra are conceptualised see Chapter 7 and Samuel (1989).
Sambhogakaya (Skt.) manifestation with the one hundred syllable mantra is particularly associated with purification. As on the previous day, the presence of Sé Rinpoche and Gegan Khyentse was felt to empower the practice, and the larger community was gathered together again.

Many villagers asked Gegan Khyentse and Sé Rinpoche to come with the other practitioners to their houses and perform rituals, particularly to bestow the blessing of Padmasambhava, in the Dambargva (dam pa rigs brgya, 'the one hundred types of sacred things') ritual, which takes all day and involves the preparation and later distribution of large quantities of tsog offerings. Not only were many ritual performances requested by different village households, but also specific teachings were requested.

Chukta Gonpa asked Gegan Khyentse to come and teach there, after realising that indeed he was a fine practitioner, and an inspiring teacher. He taught very powerfully on the 'Four Ordinary Foundations', or the 'four thoughts which turn the mind towards the practice of Dharma': the precious nature of human rebirth; impermanence; karma, or cause and effect; and the nature of samsara (Skt.) or cyclic existence, both at Kardang and Chukta Gonpas. These particular teachings contain the fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy and provide the motivation for spiritual practice. On these occasions not only were the gonpa members present, but also some of the villagers, particularly the older folk, and the younger ones who have an interest in the teachings.

Gegan Khyentse's Khampa dialect is quite unfamiliar to the majority of Karzhapa, and so when he teaches Lama Paljor Lharje translates. There is restlessness and a little chatter for maybe ten or fifteen minutes, when Gegan Khyentse speaks, followed by attentive silence when Paljor reiterates the points made. Even before Paljor had made his three-year retreat, Apo Rinpoche had directed some of the new recruits to Paljor to learn the alphabet, and receive more detailed explanations on the ngöndro practice. Gegan Khyentse similarly directed the Karzhapa to Lama Paljor should they require further assistance over the winter.

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55Please see footnote 57. For a discussion of the concept of trikaya (Skt.), including the Sambhogakaya, see Section IV.

56For teachings on these four principles, see Jamgon Kongtrul, translated by Judith Hanson (1977:29-52).
after giving the appropriate teachings and initiations to those who requested them. Thus Lama Paljor is developing as a tripon, although he does not regard himself as such, but describes himself as simply helping the other practitioners.

There were three young women from Peukor who had decided to pursue the life of a practitioner at Chukta Gonpa even before they had met Gegan Khyentse. His teachings provided further inspiration, and they were joined by another three girls from Kardang. These young women received teachings on Refuge and Bodhicitta, as well as Prostrations and Dorje Sempa, the first two practices of the ngöndro. They began these practices in retreat over the winter months (1981-82), moving into their respective gonpa for that time and slowly familiarising themselves with the lifestyle of a practitioner.

As mentioned in the discussion of recruitment to the gonpa in Chapter 5, it normally takes about three years for the transition from village life to gonpa life to take place. In the time that I stayed at Kardang Gonpa I thus saw this transition made by these young women, and the process commenced by another three from Peukor who also decided subsequently to join Chukta Gonpa. Five were aged between fourteen and seventeen, two in their early twenties, and two a little older, about thirty. For the two older women, a factor in their decision to join the gonpa may have been that they had not already married, though this was not suggested by them at any time. In response to my questioning them on this matter, they explained that they had always had an interest in the life of a chösmä, but until meeting Gegan Khyentse, they had not met with a teacher who inspired and motivated them.

Every gonpa member spoke about their faith in the Dharma and their desire to live a life of practice and meditation when asked about reasons for becoming a practitioner, emphasising that this career choice offered a meaningful and respected

57In this Drukpa Kargyu Chagchen ngöndro, prostrations are combined with Refuge practice and the aspiration to develop Bodhicitta, or the enlightened mind. In the Refuge practice, the aspirant enters the path of Buddhist practice, taking solace in the Buddha as an example of a human being who triumphed against cyclic existence. A formulaic recitation to this effect accompanies each prostration. After the completion of a 100,000 (actually 108,000 counted as one thousand repetitions of the rosary which has 108 beads), the practitioner proceeds with the second part of the ngöndro, which is the purification practice of Dorje Sempa. This entails a detailed visualisation and the recitation of the 100 syllable mantra, which is also performed 108,000 times. Depending upon the speed and intensity of the practice, each practice takes from one to two months to complete. For further description see Kongtrul (translated by Hanson 1977:53-90).
lifestyle in their community. Some of the younger men had received opposition from their family, who preferred that they study and attend college in Dharamsala or Chandigarh. As Lama Paljor said, if one or two popular individuals decide to take up the life of a practitioner, and advocate the lifestyle, gradually other younger people decide to join the gonpa also. Further inspiration comes from the teachings delivered by a great practitioner such as Gegan Khyentse. A few other younger people showed considerable interest in the Dharma during my field stay, regularly attending teachings and spending time at the gonpa. They, too, will choose in their own time between the life of a spiritual practitioner or that of a villager. However, for the young men the options are greater, for they may pursue an education in college, and a career in government or industry, and like Norbu Tholakpa find themselves working in Calcutta or another large Indian city.

For those interested in becoming gonpa members, summer months are spent working in the fields or attending school as well as studying the Tibetan alphabet and receiving teachings in preparation for the winter retreats. At this stage the individual continues to wear lay clothes. In keeping with the self-motivational aspect of recruitment to the gonpa, it is quite acceptable either to confirm one’s intent to join the gonpa, or to decide to leave and marry during this transitional phase. As mentioned above, a young man may decide to study in college, in preference to becoming a chöspa. Some may later decide to complement their spiritual pursuits with the study of Tibetan medicine or thangka painting. In both cases it may be necessary to live elsewhere for training, although the practitioner remains connected with his gonpa. Although chöisma may pursue these ancillary spiritual careers, they seldom do so, in keeping with the more retiring profile of the female practitioner, discussed above.

As mentioned in the presentation of Lama Paljor Lharje’s biography, there is ample room for individual preference and variation of lifestyle as a spiritual practitioner in Karzha. Practitioners may travel to Manali, or elsewhere, for teachings. Pilgrimages to Pangi, Ladakh, Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan are made, by both chöspa and chöisma, although the latter tend not to travel as far afield. The practitioner may retire and enter into retreat for long periods, rarely participating in any communal rituals.

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58 Tibetan is not taught in the Indian school system, see Chapter 1.
For the women the confirming of their intention is symbolised by the cutting of their hair, and the abandonment of their jewellery, usually over the second winter in retreat. For the young men at this stage, the change is not so dramatic. Both males and females continue to wear lay clothes until they take getsul ordination. The other members of their household become accustomed to the changes in the available workforce. Perhaps a son will marry and bring in another woman, or a younger sibling will take on more responsibility. If the household already has a house in the gonpa precincts, the new recruit may live there over the winter, although he or she may stay with another practitioner who can encourage and guide the meditation practice. The household members must repair the gonpa house if it has been uninhabited to ensure that it is sealed against the harsh winter, or perhaps build a new house, as appropriate.59

The path of male and female practitioners in the advanced stages of practice differ. Initially, recruitment and practice are similar, and it is usual for a practitioner to complete several ngöndro before proceeding with further meditation techniques. The final step in becoming a full-time practitioner nowadays is taking the getsul ordination and vows,60 and donning the distinctive brown outfit and maroon zan worn by the Karzhapa.61

As discussed above, the ani-la are not given teachings on or transmission of the Naro Chödrug, although there are teachings and transmissions in this practice for females. All practitioners are taught ngöndro, shiné and lhagt'ong meditations, Chagchen and yidam practice, as well as the practice of chöd.62 The chöasma are usually taught a Chenrezig practice as their main yidam, whereas the chöspa are usually taught Dorje Phagmo, in preparation for the Naro Chödrug. This seems to be the result of the cultural bias against women as practitioners, also evidenced by the lack of details available about them discussed in the gonpa ethnography.

59See discussion in Chapter 5. A house that is uninhabited will begin to collapse in a matter of two or three years. The weight of the snow, and the water dripping through the stone and mud walls wreaks quick destruction unless the snow is frequently shovelled from the flat roofs.

60Celibacy for several years is a prerequisite for training in the Naro Chödrug.

61For a discussion of dress see Chapter 5.

62See Chapter 7, footnote 64.
I was told, however, that female practitioners were often superior to their male counterparts, if they persisted and managed to overcome the obstacles in their path, which are considered to be naturally greater for a woman. Furthermore, it was suggested that females could attain great spiritual realisation without undergoing the rigours of the yogic practices. On the other hand, it was suggested that if a female was to succeed in overcoming the prejudice against her being given the more advanced and secret practices, her accomplishment would be greater. However, it was also emphasised that the teachings available to the chöṣma provided a complete path to enlightenment, and that accomplishment of the yogic practices by the male practitioners was not synonymous with complete realisation. Indeed, such accomplishment could create an enormous obstacle, the result of the development of pride, and ego’s attachment to the development of relative siddhis, or spiritual power, which could prevent the attainment of the absolute siddhi — complete realisation.63

Several of the younger men in Karzha had completed the ngöndro practice to Gegan Khyentse’s satisfaction, and had also learnt the other meditation techniques. They then asked for the teachings on the Naro Chödrug. Because Gegan’s schedule over this summer was too hectic, and as the training is quite intense and done preferably in winter, seven traba (grwa ba, ‘novice’)64 as well as Lama Paljor, who had spent most of 1981 studying at the thangka school, spent the winter at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa, Chittyari. These young practitioners (three from Chukta Gonpa; one from Labchang Gonpa; one from Bokor Gonpa; and two from Kardang) were given instruction, and again Lama Paljor assisted Gegan Khyentse, translating where necessary, and demonstrating the yogic exercises.

A team of American scientists from Harvard University who were researching the neurophysiological aspects of Tibetan yoga were sent to Manali by H.H. the Dalai Lama, who requested that Gegan Khyentse, Lama Paljor Lharje,

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63 Although these statements may seem to be contradictory, they are a precise summation of the issue of female practitioners and tsa-lung practices, and relate to the discussion above and footnote 37. Further explanation on these points is impossible without a detailed and inappropriate discussion of the practices involved. It should be noted, however, that the ngöndro, in itself, is regarded as a complete path to full realisation.

64 Elsewhere in the Tibetan Buddhist region, grwa pa is frequently used as a general term for all male practitioners who have monastic ordination (e.g. Fürer-Haimendorf 1964 = thawa). In Karzha, it is used to refer only to junior members of this group.
and Lama Kunzang (kun bzang) Dorje from Tsopema assist in the research project. The Dalai Lama, who actively encourages the dialogue between western science and the philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism, came to Manali to consult with the yogis after the several days of tests. The high regard in which the Drukpa practitioners of the Naro Chödrug are held is evident from this episode, which further boosted Gegan Khyentse's reputation in Karzha.65

Over the three years that I witnessed Gegan Khyentse teaching in Karzha, it was clear that the number of individuals pursuing the path of practice was increasing. Further, although the centre of religious activity was at Kardang Gonpa, the other gonpas in Karzha, Lama Gonpa, Labchang Gonpa and Chukta Gonpa became increasingly involved. The lone practitioner from Bokor Gonpa, Ngawang from Gumrang village, on the other side of the valley, had followed Mémé Betsering's example (he was one of the group who travelled to Kham becoming a disciple of Shakya Shri) and spent much of his time at Kardang Gonpa, or at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa, though he maintained his affiliation with Bokor Gonpa. He decided at the end of 1982 to spend winter at Tayul Gonpa, a little further up the valley, as there were a few other practitioners there with whom he could seek fellowship.

Towards the end of summer, 1983, when Gegan Khyentse was again teaching in Karzha, he gave this group the necessary initiations at Chukta Gonpa, enabling them to begin their three year Naro Chödrug retreats that autumn. The young men intended to form two sub-groups, one staying at Chukta Gonpa, and the others at Kardang Gonpa, for the duration of the retreat, and they were relying on Lama Paljor to assist them in conducting their retreat in the proper manner. During the time that I was there this group had completed their ngöndro practice (performing three to five series), continued their training in meditation techniques with shiné and lhagt'ong and at least one yidam practice, as well as learnt all six yogas satisfactorily, in order to embark on the prolonged retreat. Everybody was very happy about another long Naro Chödrug retreat taking place, saying that it indicated how strong the practice lineage in Karzha really is. It was ten years since Lama Paljor, Lama Angrup and Ngawang Rigzin had entered their three year retreat.

65See footnote 19. Written requests for details on this research have not been answered.
In 1983 three young men from Tayul Gonpa, on the other side of the valley, requested Gegan Khyentse to come to give them the teachings on the ngöndro. These young men and two of the ani-la had regularly come to Kardang Gonpa when Gegan-la was teaching. The two women had become disciples of Apo Rinpoche in the sixties, and were eager to further their training and religious instruction. A brief description of the situation at Tayul Gonpa is included here, as it typical of the other gonpa in Lahul, and demonstrates how the sphere of influence of a strong teacher spreads.

The practitioners at Tayul Gonpa come from families living in the villages of Yurnath, Guskiar, Gumling, Bhar, Satingri and Kyor (See Map). The head mémé practises meditation, but has not studied the more advanced Naro Chödrug practices. Some villagers come and stay at the gonpa during summer, as it is closer to some of their fields, and there are empty houses. There are four ani-la aged between forty and fifty, and four older mémé aged between seventy and eighty. Usually the practitioners here do not take Getsul ordination, and they will sometimes work in the fields if their families require assistance. Older village folk may join life at the gonpa, and indeed some of the mémé and ani-la were married in the past, and had children in their younger days. The gonpa members can perform simple rituals, such as the blessing of the villagers' fields each spring, and the recitation of the appropriate texts at the time of death.

Clearly the three younger men who over the past few years have come to live at the gonpa because of their desire to follow the religious life are not in the same inspiring environment as are the new recruits in Kardang Gonpa. They have been taught how to attend to the shrine in the Lhakhang, and have had some basic instruction in meditation technique from the head mémé.

Tayul Gonpa is nominally Drukpa, but belongs to a different branch and practice lineage from Kardang, being associated with Stakna (stag sna) Gonpa in Ladakh. For several years now the small group have been asking Stakna Rinpoche to come to visit, in order that they might receive ngöndro transmission and teaching, but he has failed to accept their invitation. They had resisted taking

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"Tayul Gonpa belongs to the Lho Druk (lho 'brug) branch, associated with Bhutan. For some discussion on Tayul Gonpa see Chapter 5 and on the branches of the Drukpa, see the Appendix. On Stakna Gonpa see Snellgrove and Skorupski (1977:131)."
teachings for the ngöndro practice from Gegan Khyentse in 1981 and 1982, feeling that this would be inappropriate as the lineages of transmission are different, although both are Drukpa.

Ngawang from Gumrang village does not belong at Tayul Gonpa, but as he is the only serious practitioner from Bokor Gonpa nowadays, and an empty house was made available for him at Tayul, the move seemed appropriate, at least for the time being. His strong practice over the winter of 1982-1983, and his intention to begin the Naro Chödrug retreat in the autumn of 1983 inspired the younger group, and they decided they could wait no longer for teachings. Gegan Khyentse was invited by the three young would-be practitioners. So he came to teach for a few days, and was attentively waited upon by the young men and the two ani-la mentioned previously. Lama Paljor translated the teachings. The young men were eager to embark upon their ngöndro practice that winter, even anticipating eventually qualifying for the three year Naro Chödrug retreat sometime in the future.

Sé Rinpoche decided to continue his Dharma studies in McLeodganj, at the School of Dialectics, studying Buddhist philosophy and debating techniques, so that he did not again accompany Gegan Khyentse on his subsequent visits to Karzha in 1982, and 1983. The Karzhapa have continued to issue an invitation to Gegan Khyentse to come to teach each subsequent summer, and show their respect by addressing him as ‘Rinpoche’. The visit of 1981 was quite strenuous for Gegan Khyentse, with so many people requesting rituals in their homes. In 1982 and 1983 he limited this activity, and instead concentrated on more specialised and larger ritual performances which nevertheless catered to the entire population.

During August of 1983, at Kardang Gonpa, Gegan Khyentse performed the tantric initiation or wang of Midrukpa (mi 'khrugs pa), a form of Akshobhya (Skt.), which involved considerable preparation, and was supposedly available only to those who had completed a ngöndro. Practitioners from Lama Gonpa, Labchang Gonpa, Chukta Gonpa, and Tayul travelled to Kardang. On the day, quite a few villagers, especially the older folk who spent some time at the gonpa, presented

67 ‘Rinpoche’ meaning ‘precious’ is the title usually given to reincarnates, and is applied to other teachers rarely.
themselves. No one was turned away. The Lhakhang was full with over one hundred in attendance. I was told that the benefit of receiving this initiation is experienced at the time of death. It is not necessary for a skilled practitioner to perform the specialised practice of p’owa, the transference of consciousness, for the dead person, for the initiate will be guided as a consequence of having received this empowerment, if the practice has been accomplished through the appropriate mantra recitation.

This particular wang given by Gegan Khyentse was attended by a large group of individuals and was the only public ritual initiation given during the period of my fieldwork. He also performed those wang necessary for the ngöndro practice, and the Naro Chödrug retreat, though attendance at these was carefully monitored, and therefore involved only the practitioners involved and one or two ritual attendants.

Every household requested that Gegan Khyentse perform the Dambargya ritual in their house. The Dambargya generally is performed as a confession (shagpa, bshags pa), and one thousand tsog offerings are made which is said to bestow the blessing of Padmasambhava. This Dambargya ritual is usually performed when someone dies, in which case another section, the Lamdan (lam bstan, ‘to show the path’)[^68] is included after the remainder offering (tsogl’ag tshogs lhag).[^69] However, the gonpa members may instead do the Midrukpa ritual when someone dies.

Each year Dambargya is performed by the gonpa members in each of the houses in Kardang village (except the Domba households), with the wealthier households sponsoring two rituals, as their wealth permits the quite lavish expenditure on the offerings. Normally it is performed when the gonpa members and villagers have ample time, after the harvest in November or December, and preferably on auspicious days such as the tenth and twenty-fifth of the month. It is also performed in the second half of the first month of each year, when the

[^68]: This section is the advice to the recently deceased consciousness about the intermediate state after death, known as the Bardo. See Fremantle and Trungpa (translators, 1975).

[^69]: When a tsog offering is performed, each participant saves a portion of the offerings, the ‘remainder’, which are given to the preta (Skt.) or hungry ghosts.
practitioners go to the village and perform ritual for sixteen days. The Dambargya is the first of these.

Gegan Khyentse was unable to meet all the requests that were made, but each year, rotating through the houses in the village, Gegan Khyentse continued to perform a limited number of Dambargya rituals. This took place during October, in autumn at the end of Gegan Khyentse's stay in Karzha, prior to his departure for Apo Rinpoche gonpa and the closure of the Rohtang Pass. The majority of the practitioners from Kardang Gonpa accompanied Gegan Khyentse in these ritual performances, which again required considerable preparation of offerings, beginning at three in the morning. The entire household would assemble in the centre of the room for the climax of the performance and the bestowing of the blessing of their beloved Guru Rinpoche, and the distribution of the tsog offerings.

A complicated fire ritual (sbyin sreg) was performed in Gozzang village in 1982, for a household whose members had been experiencing many difficulties, including death and recurrent ill-health and financial problems. Such rituals must be performed meticulously if they are to be efficacious, and everyone was confident of Gegan Khyentse's expertise. I was told that the gonpa members would not consider performing such a ritual without his guidance.

Everybody took advantage of Gegan Khyentse's visits to Karzha to have items consecrated or empowered in a rabné, another specialised ritual. Several brass statues of teachers of the lineage had been commissioned in Delhi, and in 1982 great care was exercised at Chukta Gonpa in performing the rabné for these. Each figure was carefully packed with many mantra and relics, sealed and painted by Lama Paljor, and the ceremony then performed. Recently painted thangka, and other smaller personal Dharma objects such as mala or rosaries, were gathered and placed together with the statues for this ritual consecration.

This sanctification of these objects was later said to be an auspicious omen for the events of the following summer, when three more large rabné were performed, on each occasion for a newly constructed chorten or stupa — the subject

70A comparison between this ritual and the Vedic Homa ritual studied by Frits Staal would be productive if complicated (see Staal 1975; 1975-6; 1979; 1982a; 1982b; 1982c; 1983; 1986). Staal raises several pertinent and controversial issues with regard to the study of the meaning of ritual. In the context of the present discussion these issues are peripheral as my focus is on the social context of ritual, rather than the meaning and function of ritual per se.
of the next chapter. This chapter is concluded with a brief summary of the events at Kardang Gonpa since 1959 and a comparison with the situation prior to the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Whereas in the past, those with strong interest in the teachings such as Kusho Norbu, Kusho Kunga and their Karzhapa Dharma brothers, travelled to Tibet and other regions for transmission and teaching, altered political conditions in Tibet have meant that Tibet itself has become inaccessible.

The displacement of a refugee population, including many religious practitioners and teachers, and their assimilation into socially and culturally familiar regions wherever possible has had and continues to have a positive influence in Karzha Khandroling, particularly at Kardang Gonpa, in the eyes of the inhabitants. Here, previously developed lineage connections were activated, and the current lineage incumbents, refugee teachers, were given an interim refuge which stimulated spiritual involvement, and also brought considerable prestige and recognition to Kardang Gonpa, and some of the practitioners. The vacuum created by the detention of the young incarnate Norbu Rinpoche from Kardang Gonpa was quickly filled by a direct patrilineal descendent of Togdan Shakya Shri who was thus a member of his ngagpa lineage as well as an accomplished practitioner authorised to transmit this practice lineage, which specialises in the Naro Chödrug, as had been Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche, who established Kardang Abhi Gonpa.

The life of a practitioner in Karzha continues to be filled with considerable personal choice and mobility, but with the closure of the border with Tibet, pilgrimage and travel for teachings is now to other regions within India such as Ladakh, Pangi and Sikkim, and to Nepal and Bhutan. The necessity for travelling to receive teachings no longer exists, both due to the efforts of particularly Kusho Norbu, who made Kardang Gonpa a place of future refuge, and Kusho Kunga who continued to quietly teach and practice in the area. Since the political conditions altered in 1959, accomplished teachers have resided in and visited the area, and due to their continuing presence, the needs of the gonpa members (and villagers) have been met.

This point is elaborated upon in the discussion of the building and consecration of chorten, the final consolidating acts witnessed during my field stay which likewise practically unifies the various threads of the analysis of the
revitalisation of the Drukpa practice lineage in Karzha.
Lama Paldor Lharje assisted by Chöspa painting the spire on the new chorten in Kardang village. Village girls standing on chorten for photograph.

The first chorten built in 1983 to replace the damaged kudung chorten of Memé Sherab chózang Timorpa.

The shrine on the Kardang village Chorten during the Rabné or ritual consecration.
Several of the villagers gathered beside the chorten after the rabnê.

The village men, after the rabnê, sit and discuss the successful completion of the chorten project.

The two organisers, Sherab Tachy and Angrup Ang Kyantse with the village Sarpanch, Rigzin Lhargê beside the kar-dana village chorten, at the completion of the rabnê.

Note other items also consecrated in the ritual and offerings on shrine.
Chapter Seven
Constructing and Consecrating Chorten

In this chapter I complete the ethnographic narrative with a detailed presentation of the social context surrounding the construction and ritual consecration (rabné) of three chorten, all of which were built in 1983 during the last twelve months of fieldwork. In the previous chapter I examined the events within Karzha during the twenty-five year period from 1959, when the border with Tibet was closed, to the early 1980's. The teachers of the Drukpa practice lineage, who contribute significantly to the vitality of the the gonpa community and the interaction between Kardang Gonpa and Kardang village, play an important role in building and consecrating chorten.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the chorten may be simply conceived of as a symbol of the enlightened mind of the Buddha. Before examining the conditions which led to the construction of these three chorten in Karzha, some background information is provided. The stupa is the ubiquitous symbol of Buddhism, occurring in every country where Buddhism has been practised, and in many stylistic variations, from the burial tumulus of Sanchi (Skt., third to first centuries B.C.) in India, to the stupa-mandala of Borobodur in Java (Chandra 1979a, 1979b, 1980b), to the stupa of Swayambhu (Bajracharya, M.B. 1978) and Bodhanath (Dowman 1973), which is known as Jarungkashor (bya rung bka' shor, bya rung kha shor, ‘once authority to build is given every obstacle is overcome’), in the Kathmandu valley, to Samye (bsam yas) in Tibet. The stylistic development of the multi-tiered roof of the pagoda has been traced from the chettru, caitya (Skt.) or umbrella spire of the stupa. Numerous studies have been made of stylistic and architectural developments, and of the symbolism associated with the stupa, both within a culture and cross-culturally.¹

Stupa are not only large architectural structures such as these, but may be small portable reliquaries just a few centimetres tall, or about half a metre to a metre high, like those of the teachers in the Lhakhang at Kardang Gonpa. These reliquaries,² which are made in the shape of stupa and are hollow until filled in the ritually prescribed manner and sealed, are a cultural manifestation of the veneration of relics of spiritual teachers within the Tibetan tradition, like the small portable shrine boxes, called ga’u (ga’u), in which are placed photographs of teachers and their relics, as well as written mantra and mandala.

Tsa tsa (tsha tsha), which are made in moulds from clay mixed with sacred substances such as the ash of the cremated remains of a teacher, may be made in the form of chorten, Buddhas, deities and highly revered teachers, and may be three dimensional or bas-relief (Martin 1985:17; Norwick 1985; Skorupski 1982:375-376; Tucci 1932 and 1973:74-121). Thousands of tsa tsa can be made in a relatively short time to be distributed among disciples or placed within a chorten, for instance. The sacred substances added may be a minute proportion of the ingredients. I was told that it was important to add even a very small amount of whatever relics and sacred substances were available. Moulds are used to make similar small objects of devotion out of ‘blessing medicine’ or dutsi chös men (bdud rtsi chos sman, ‘amrita dharma medicine’), which also contain relics and are ritually blessed.³ These are likely to be kept in portable shrine boxes.

²Snodgrass suggests that stupa have three main functions. The first and most common is as a reliquary, particularly of the remains of the Buddha. Typically, relics of the Buddha are placed in the harmika (Skt.), at the top of the dome and the base of the spire. The second is as a memorial for events in the Buddha’s life, and these stupa are not reliquary. The third is as a votive offering to earn merit. Whether relics are placed within these stupa is not discussed, though Snodgrass includes Tibetan chorten in this category (Snodgrass 1985:246-273, 353-359). However, all Tibetan chorten are reliquaries. The equation that occurs within Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism between the Buddha and the Lama in the conceptualisation of the Refuge (discussed below in text and in Section IV) correlates to the importance of relics of spiritual teachers, and the chorten as a reliquary. For comparative information on charismatic teachers, relics and amulets in Thailand, a Theravadin Buddhist culture, see Tambiah (1984).

³For instance, the Khyentse incarnations are thought to be emanations of Manjusri (Skt.), the bodhisattva (Skt.) of wisdom and knowledge. A small bas-relief mould of Manjusri is used by the Khyentses to make images from Dutsi chös men which contain relics of previous and present Khyentse incarnations for distribution to disciples. See also Martin (1985:32 note 32) whose literal translation of bdud rtsi is ‘Delusion Juice’, with connotations of transformation of substances and alchemical processes.
Relics, both *ring*sel (*ring brsel*, 'kept for a long time, cherished') and *dung* (*gdung*, honorific for 'bone', also 'ancestry, clan', cf. Rus, and extended to mean 'remains')⁴ which are objects of veneration within the Tibetan tradition are discussed throughout this chapter, as they are an important item used in filling chorten.⁵

The most detailed presentation of the contents of chorten, based on written catalogues which were made at the time of construction,⁶ and the cult of relics and pilgrimage in the popular religion of the Tibetan tradition is found in Martin (1985) who suggests that one facet of the social importance of the terton (the finders of hidden treasures), which has not been previously assessed in the literature, is their role as translators of relics and pilgrimage leaders, particularly those pilgrimages associated with migration to a previously hidden country or *beyul* (*sbas yul*)⁷ (Martin 1985:18-20).

The key to this reassessment of the Terton lies in the fact that the books they discovered were not, contrary to our own cultural expectations, viewed primarily as literary works to grace library shelves. They were

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⁴Martin discusses both the narrower meaning of these two words in Tibetan usage, and an extended usage which includes most of the contents of a chorten (1985:2, 17).

⁵Bernard (1988) has compared relics in Buddhist tradition with the Christian tradition of relics, noting that

...in both traditions the founders' relics came to be regarded as treasures - precious items to venerate. These relics, [which] include not only corporeal ones (in the case of the Buddha's), but also items which came in contact with the founders or that were used by them. (Bernard 1988:43.)

⁶As Martin notes, many reliquaries and images have been opened by museum curators in order to scientifically investigate their contents. The information gleaned from this desecration is not incorporated into his analysis (1985:30). Furthermore, the findings are limited as the significance of the often tiny amounts of relics found within such images cannot be established. Note, however, the analysis undertaken of a thirteenth century Tibetan chorten which had a broken base plate, by Hatt (1980). Perhaps the most interesting revelation of Hatt's investigation of the contents of this chorten is that it contains no central wooden obelisk (1980:177, and discussion below in text). See also Gyalzur and Verwey (1983:171).

⁷For information on beyul, see for instance Aris (1975); Brauen-Dolma (1985); and Reinhard (1978). For comparative cross-cultural information on charismatic Buddhist teachers see, for instance, Tambiah (1984). The material available on Terton Duldzhu Lingpa, who was active in Lahul in Miyah Nallah, a tributary valley to the Chandrabhaga, earlier this century (Mullin 1986:95-125, and Chapter 2), indicates that this approach to the role of the terton in popular religion is productive, particularly as it may assist in the elucidation of the social context of the terton's activity, which as suggested by Brauen-Drolma (1985), may be regarded as millenarian movements forming around a charismatic leader.
above all relics, either as objects owned by ancient saints or manuscripts written with their own hands. These books as may be seen in the few instances of the chorten Guides summarized above, were inserted into images and chortens in consecration rites. It is surely not by chance that a large number of Terton’s finds were made in images, chortens, and temples; and usually together with all the other items Tibetans call relics (ring-brsel), consecrated articles (dam-rdzas) and images. (Martin 1985:19)

The terton’s discoveries are not only relics, although those texts and images discovered in chortens and temples may be regarded as such, as suggested by Martin. Terma have also been found in the earth, rocks, caves, lakes, and may be discovered in visions during meditation or in dreams. Indeed, terma may be hidden in any of the five elements: space, air, water, fire, earth. These hidden teachings may be written in a symbolic script, and it is thought that they are protected so that they will not be discovered at an inappropriate time. In some cases they are protected by dakini who are also instrumental in decoding the symbolic script. Only highly realised individuals are capable of discovering these hidden teachings (Thondup 1986:67-93).

I do not know of instances of terma being discovered inside chorten or other images in Karzha. However, the discovery of terma, either as texts and images, or through visions in meditation and in dreams, by teachers such as Apo Rinpoche, and Kunga Rinpoche, have clearly been significant in the revitalization of the practice lineage within Karzha Khandroling. In this regard, it is of paramount importance that Karzha is regarded as a place of dakini, with the dakini both protecting and assisting in the revelation of the terma.

In the Tibetan tradition it is thought that Guru Rinpoche established beyul, hidden countries, as he travelled through the Himalaya, which were to be discovered during times of turmoil to serve as refuges for those who engaged in Buddhist practice. As discussed in Chapter 5, Kardang Gonpa is seen to have

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8Thondup (1986:80), who mentions the discovery of ter in chorten, statues and temples. Of course, the extraction of terma from ritually consecrated and sealed items by a terton in the appropriate manner, which entails opening only that section where the terma is placed, does not constitute a desecration. See footnote 4, above.

9For an account of a recent terma discovery from a rock (earth element), by a female Bon practitioner, see Hanna (n.d.).
functioned as a refuge for the practice lineage derived from Togdan Shakya Shri as well as his Rus, or bone. Some of the Karzhapa suggested that Karzha had functioned like a beyul in the past, but that it was now at the point of succumbing to the disturbing influences which were troubling the rest of the world, and that the building of the chorten in Kardang village was a means of shoring up Karzha.

As is clear from the statement made by the two villagers from Kardang about the changes that were taking place in Lahul, and their desire to reassert Buddhist values, which is presented at the beginning of this Section, the chorten, or stupa, symbolically represents harmony and balance between microcosm and macrocosm.10 The villagers state that they wish to counter the disturbances perceived between the individual and the local community, and between that community and the Indian political and economic system in which it is encapsulated.

In the historical and ethnographic tour of Karzha Khandroling undertaken in the preceding pages, chorten are frequently mentioned, indicative of the potency with which this symbol is invested. The peak Drilburi is regarded as a self-created stupa or chorten, and as discussed in Chapter 2, is the heart of the mandala, the sacred landscape that is Karzha Khandroling.

Large man-made chorten are encountered in the cave of Gotsangpa and Ghandhapa above the Thakur house in Gondhla; in Kardang village to one side of the Bagh ground; and in the courtyard when entering the precincts of Kardang Gonpa. Indeed, the site that Norbu Rinpoche chose to build the gonpa which nowadays is called Kardang Gonpa was distinguished by the chorten of Jhampa Mémé, around which the initial gonpa building was constructed. This chorten was later moved and rebuilt in the courtyard, and the chorten of subsequent members of this ngagpa lineage were built beside it. Smaller chorten are kept inside the Lhakhang, containing some of the mortal remains of Kunga Rinpoche, the last of this ngagpa lineage; Norbu Rinpoche, the founder of Kardang Gonpa; and Khunu

10The microcosm/macrocosm theme occurs repeatedly throughout the literature on Buddhist society and philosophy, and particularly in relation to stupa. See, for instance Dowman (1973:6-7); Govinda (1976); and Snodgrass, who delineates the theme cross-culturally (1985:104-208). There are particular implications of this correspondence with regard to the point of view and method of Dzogchen, in which "...the individual can always be said to be the centre of the universe, in the sense that the individual as microcosm is a perfect reflection of the universe as macrocosm. The essential nature of the one is the essential nature of the other." (Namkhai Norbu 1986:124)
Rinpoche, a highly revered teacher from Kinnaur. Another larger chorten containing the cremated remains of Khunu Rinpoche is clearly visible across the valley below Shashur Gonpa where he died.

In the local tradition, the efficaciousness of the chorten to heal, protect and balance is recognised in large chorten on the periphery of Gumrang village, on the other side of the valley, which is attributed to the Rinchen Zangpo, the tenth century translator and temple builder. Although avalanches sweep down the mountainside each winter, they do not touch the chorten or encroach upon the village. Avalanches had caused destruction ten centuries ago, before Rinchen Zangpo instructed and guided the villagers with the construction of this chorten.11

In 1983, a further three chorten were built in Karzha, all larger structures which are permanently outdoors. The smallest of these and the first to be built is positioned beneath an old tree below Kardang Gonpa, beside a Mani wall12 on the pathway leading to the courtyard where the three chorten of Jhampa Mémé and his descendants stand, and Kardang Gonpa. The largest of the three, which also took the longest to build, is in Kardang village. While this chorten was being built unusual circumstances arose in Labchang, and a third chorten was quickly built in front of Labchang Gonpa. Although chorten are frequently encountered in Karzha, it is unusual for three larger ones, the majority of which are built to enshrine the cremated remains of a spiritual teacher, to be built in one year, particularly as none of these were built as a consequence of the death of a teacher.13

Little attention has been given to the actual making or construction of chorten, and their rābné, and even less to the social context of chorten making in the available literature from many different Tibetan Buddhist areas. The material in this chapter fills this gap. I shall focus on the social context of chorten making

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11 See discussion in Chapter 2.

12 Walls made of stones and rocks, with the mantra of Chenrezig, ‘Om Mani Padmê Hum’, carved or painted on them, as well as other mantra, are usually called ‘Mani walls’. They are often built along pilgrimage routes, or on the pathways to gonpa. There is a photograph of this chorten, and the Kardang village chorten, at the beginning of this chapter. A drawing of the three chorten seen when entering Kardang Gonpa is at the beginning of this Section.

13 As well as a larger immovable chorten, several smaller chorten each encasing some of the remains of a teacher, which will be distributed among the gonpa associated with that teacher, may be built when a teacher dies, as noted in Chapter 5, and see below in text. Thus several smaller chorten may be built when a teacher dies.
in Karzha, and elucidate the core meaning of the chorten through an analysis of construction, particularly of the srog shing (see later), the relics and other items that are placed within the chorten, and rabné, consecration or ritual empowerment, as explained to me during the summer of 1983 while the Kardang village and the Labchang chorten were being built.

To my knowledge, the only detailed study available is Schwalbe's unpublished dissertation, 'The Construction and Religious Meaning of the Buddhist Stupa in Solo Khumbu, Nepal' (1979), which provides a good description of the process of building a smaller chorten in the grounds of Serlo (ser logs) Gonpa, which belongs to the Nyingma tradition, sponsored by that researcher. Thus to some extent this chorten is created through conditions external to those naturally arising within the Sherpa community, whereas in the approach to chorten making in this discussion, focus is placed upon the social context of the building of chorten, which further demonstrates the interdependence and symbiosis between village and gonpa, one of the themes of this dissertation.

As mentioned above, chorten are made when a spiritual teacher passes away and serve as a container for the cremated remains of that teacher. There may be several made for any one teacher, as was the case with Jhampa Mémé, for whom one larger stucture, and two smaller ones were made. Chorten for the mortal remains of a lama may be called Kuten (sku rten) meaning 'body receptacle, container or support' or more specifically, Kudung chorten (sku gdung mchod rten), the chorten for the bone or remains (honorific, of a lama).

Chorten are not only made specifically to encase the remains of a particular teacher, but may be constructed as an act of devotion, earning merit (sonam, bsod nams), and directed to specific beneficial ends, as in the case of the chorten which

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14 From another perspective, the presence of researchers from a variety of disciplines collecting data in Solo Khumbu, not to mention tourists, trekkers and mountaineers, has become very much part of the social conditions prevailing in Solo Khumbu. Schwalbe's discipline is religious studies, rather than anthropology, and reasonably his emphasis is on 'religious meaning', which he elucidates using a framework developed by Eliade (Schwalbe 1979:62–69). I refer to some comparative details in the footnotes, however the interested reader is referred to Schwalbe for full details.

15 On dung, see above. Note that dung is the honorific for Rus. Ramble reports this usage in Mustang, north west Nepal (1982:347).
provides protection against avalanches in Gumrang village.\textsuperscript{16} The remains of highly accomplished spiritual beings, and other relics including items of their clothing, for instance, are necessary items for inclusion in these chorten, and thus all chorten are reliquaries.

Before focusing on the events in 1983 and the construction of the three chorten, I shall present a more detailed discussion of the symbolic significance and use of chorten by the practitioners at Kardang Gonpa, as this further elucidates both the importance of relics from teachers and the veneration of chorten.

Gegan Khyentse’s explication of the significance of chorten began with a discussion of the ten (rten), the support, container or receptacle for the Refuge: Kuten (sku rten, ‘body receptacle’), which is the image of the Buddha, or teacher; Sungten (gsung rten, ‘receptacle for voice or speech’), which means the Scriptures, either a book or mantra; and Tugten (thugs rten, the honorific Mind/Heart receptacle), which is a chorten (See also Tucci 1973:114-115, for instance).

When founding a gonpa, or more generally when making a shrine, objects representing the three aspects of Refuge are acquired, and placed together in a specially prepared place, (the Lhakhang or shrine). The outer\textsuperscript{17} Refuge of the Three Jewels or Kunchog Sum (dkon mchog gsum), which are the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, are represented by the three types of receptacle, a statue of the Buddha, the scriptures of the Buddha and a stupa or chorten, which are symbolically Buddha’s Body, Speech and Mind (kaya, vac, citta, Skt. sku, gsungs and thugs) respectively, are the basic requirements for a shrine.

When Norbu Rinpoche founded Kardang Abhi Gonpa, he acquired the Kanjur scriptures as an offering from the King of Bhutan, the Speech or Dharma component of the Refuge. The chorten of Jhampa Mémé provided the representation of Buddha Mind, and a Buddha statue was commissioned in Nepal (see Chapter 5).

\textsuperscript{16}Cf. footnote 2 above. Indeed, it is generally said that making any representation of the Buddha, a symbol of the Buddha (such as a chorten) or the Refuge (see below and in Section IV), earns merit for the maker.

\textsuperscript{17}The levels of Refuge: outer, inner, secret and most secret, which are associated with levels of meaning and may be symbolically indicated, are discussed further in the next chapter.
Norbu Rinpoche again made many offerings of the Three Jewels after Shakya Shri's death, in 1919. He commissioned representations of Body, Speech and Mind which specifically portrayed the Drukpa practice lineage of Togdan Shakya Shri. In particular a statue of Shakya Shri was made, and filled in the prescribed manner with relics, ringsel, mantras, 'blessing medicine' or dutsi chöṣ men, and various representations of the Three Jewels. In the next level of Refuge (see note 14), the inner Refuge, which is the Lama (guru Skt., 'teacher'), is seen as the embodiment of realisation, equal to the Buddha. Norbu Rinpoche's offering of speech was in the form of woodblock prints of several texts, especially the namthar of the masters of the practice lineage, which were commissioned and are now kept at Kardang Gonpa. A gold chorten, representing Mind, containing relics of Shakya Shri and the Drukpa practice lineage was commissioned in Nepal, and is now kept in the Dukhang. Not only did Gegan Khyentse provide a detailed exegesis of the receptacles for the Refuge, he further discussed the meaning of chorten (mchod rten, 'offering receptacle'), which, as he explained, may be considered to contain the offering of wisdom, which is communicated to other beings through the transmission lineage, and relics pertaining to the practice lineage of Shakya Shri were thus significant items placed within this chorten. All offerings were ritually empowered in a rabné.

Detailed instruction about the appropriate treatment of the objects of Refuge and making a shrine is given at Kardang Gonpa, and by Gegan Khyentse during the teachings on the initial meditation of the ngöndro which includes the Refuge practice. For instance, these objects should never be placed on the floor, nor on a seat, nor stepped over, but should be kept in a relatively high place, as a mark of respect.

Further instruction is given about the appropriate offerings (chodpa, mchod pa) to be made. These include offerings of the five senses: form, sound, smell, taste

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18Extensive philosophical questions are raised in the issue of adequate translations for many of the concepts mentioned in this chapter (see for instance, Gregor 1990). As will be discussed in relation to namthar, and the levels of meaning contained therein, key terms have multiple levels of meaning, associated with the perspective or point of view of the different paths (the yana, Skt., or vehicles: Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Skt.) and Dzogchen; the level of Refuge (outer, inner, secret, most secret) and practice (Outer tantras, Inner tantras) with which the practitioner has engaged. As I am not addressing myself to the specialist, or practitioner, I engage with these various levels only in so far as they elucidate the issues under discussion.
and touch (rupa, shapta, ghandhe, rasa, sparshe, Skt.), and offerings of fire, usually in the form of butter lamps, and the use of incense as an offering and a purifier.\textsuperscript{19}

The Refuge objects in the three Lhakhang at Kardang Gonpa are daily attended to, usually by a younger practitioner appointed to that responsibility by the nyerpa. More elaborate offerings are made on those days when communal puja are performed, and during special rituals such as Dambargya (see Chapter 6).

Not only do the practitioners attend to the shrine within the Lhakhang, but they daily make offerings at their own personal shrines. Each practitioner has a small shrine in his or her room, which is initially assembled when the practitioner decides to begin the ngöndro retreat. In order for the shrine to be complete, the three receptacles of the Buddha must be represented, albeit very simply as statues and thangka are relatively expensive. If a photograph of the practitioner’s tsawé lama is available, this will be used to represent the aspect of Body. Otherwise, a simple postcard or photograph of a Buddha statue can be used when making a shrine, empowered by the writing of the three Vajra syllables, which are described below.\textsuperscript{20} Speech is likely to be symbolised by a written mantra, or a small stone with the mantra written or painted on it. A drawing, postcard or photograph of a chorten can be used to portray the aspect of Mind. Tsa tsa are also used to represent the Body and Mind aspects.

Throughout the practitioner’s life, as precious objects representing the Refuge and any relics, such as ringsel following the cremation of a teacher, are acquired, they are added to the shrine. When a great teacher dies, items of clothing, such as the belt which fixes the robes around the waist, may be cut into

\textsuperscript{19}Cf. Schwalbe (1979:49). Different types of offering are appropriate for the different levels of Refuge, and the different levels of tantra practised, particularly whether lower or higher. According to the Nyingma tradition there are six divisions within the tantra: the Outer or Lower Tantras of Kriya Yoga, Charya or Upaya Yoga, and Yoga (Skt.); the Inner or Higher Tantras of Maha Yoga, Anu Yoga and Ati Yoga (Skt.). In the New translation or sarma (gsar ma) traditions, four classes of tantra are recognised: Kriya Yoga, Charya Yoga, Yoga and Anuttara Yoga tantra. Here the main distinction in offerings is between Kriya Yoga and Anuttara Yoga Tantra. The method of meditation and transformation employed in each of the different levels of tantra is distinct and graduated (see Beyer 1978:148–164; Namkhai Norbu 1986:34–35; and Sogyal Rinpoche 1989:67–81). The offerings of the five senses are used in the Higher Tantras. In ritual performance offerings may employ actual physical offerings, mudras, and visualisations.

\textsuperscript{20}The actualisation of this simple rabné requires a master to either write the Vajra letters, or if there are many images, such as when photographs of a Guru Rinpoche statue are being prepared, they may be stamped by an assistant and empowered by the master.
small pieces, each perhaps just a thread or two no more than a centimetre in length, and carefully wrapped in paper and distributed to disciples. As well as pieces of clothing, and possessions of teachers such as rosaries, the hair and nails are included in this relic category (kubal, sku bal). However, it is the small pearly relic balls or ‘increasing bone’ (peldung, 'phel gdung), which are regarded most highly. Lama Paljor and some of the other disciples of Apo Rinpoche had ringsel which they had been given after their teacher’s cremation. This ringsel, which was regarded as an indication of Apo Rinpoche’s spiritual accomplishment, was carefully wrapped and placed inside ga’u which were kept on the personal shrine.

Ringsel are small spherical relics, usually white, though sometimes manifesting the five colors, which emerge from the ashes of great teachers after their death or from sacred places such as Buddha statues or stupas. It is said that they are brought forth by the devotion of the disciples, and that even when a very very advanced practitioner dies, if there are no devoted disciples, there will be no ringsel. There are also cases of ringsel appearing after the ashes or bits of bones have been collected and kept for some time. Someone might have some remnants and keep them very devotedly and carefully, and after some time, look at them and they may have turned into ringsel. Ringsel also have the ability to reproduce. One of them gets bigger and bumps appear on the side and then the bumps become small ringsel. (Allione 1984:203, note 140; also quoted in Martin 1985:23).22

When the practitioner receives teachings and transmission for yidam practice, images which will help with the visualisations are obtained if possible, and thus representations of the yidam and khandro particular to one’s practice (the inner Refuge of the Three Roots, tsawa sum, rtsa ba gsum, Lama, Yidam, Khandro) will be kept on the shrine. As mentioned above, many of these objects, particularly relics and tsa tsa, may be kept in a portable shrine box, or ga’u, which the

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21 Unlike the rest of the material body, the hair and nails are considered to be impure substances, which are lifeless by-products. Refer footnote 74. See also Allione (1984:192-193 note 42) and Martin (1985:12-14, 39-40 note 116).

22 This quotation accurately summarises the general understanding of ringsel held by the majority of Karzhapa. For a more learned categorisation see Martin (1985:20-22) who provides a summary of the third chapter of a Nyingma tantra from the Manngagde (man ngag sde) class, the sku gdung ‘bar ba, ‘Blazing Remains'.

practitioner will take on pilgrimage or any journey. Ga’u are usually made of metal, such as gold and silver and may be quite elaborately decorated. Some are ten to fifteen centimetres high and made so that they can be fitted onto a belt and worn at the waist. Other smaller ones are made so that they can be worn around the neck.23

The village households also keep a simple shrine, either in a high place in the main room, or perhaps in a small room built specifically for this purpose. The spiritual practitioners from the household will assist in maintaining this shrine, and will provide basic instruction about the correct offerings and maintenance to household members, who may also receive these teachings at the gonpa, as the teachings on Refuge are often attended by villagers. Offerings are made daily, and household members may engage in simple meditation and mantra recitation as instructed by their teacher. The villagers of Karzha were inspired by the teachings given by Gegan Khyentse, and several said they were diligent with their daily practice as a consequence.

When a full ritual consecration is performed, these objects from the household shrine and from a practitioner’s personal shrine will be placed on a table in the ritual arena, particularly if they are newly acquired and have not been previously consecrated.24 This occurred both in 1982 and 1983, as described in Chapter 6, when Gegan Khyentse performed rabné, firstly in 1982 for several images of the teachers of the lineage which were commissioned from Nepal by Chukta Gonpa. Several practitioners and some household members also availed themselves to the opportunity of acquiring an image for their shrine on this occasion. Many personal items were ritually empowered in 1983 when the newly constructed chorten were consecrated.

Any object, whether a representation of the outer Refuge, or of the inner Refuge used for visualisation during meditation, should be properly empowered before use. If elaborately performed, this entails a rabné, a full ritual consecration.

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23See the photograph of one of the village women wearing a ga’u at the beginning of Chapter 4 (p.104).

24The photograph at the beginning of this chapter showing a detail of the shrine made on the Kardang village chorten for the rabné (p.250) shows several items, such as photographs of teachers, mala or rosaries, and so on. See also section of offerings in photograph of the organisers (p.251).
More simply, in the case of two dimensional images, this involves empowerment through the Three Vajras by writing on the reverse side of the image, either in Sanskrit or Tibetan, the seed syllables symbolising Body, Speech and Mind: OM; AH; HUNG. These are written respectively at the forehead, throat and heart. These three places correspond to the chakra of the yogic body. Each figure in a painted thangka will be empowered in this manner by the three Vajra syllables before ritual consecration.

In the case of statues, whether of the Buddha (outer Refuge) or the Guru, Deva or Dakini (inner Refuge), and chorten, the inside must be filled in a ritually prescribed way, the basis of which is the placement of the ‘life wood’ or srog shing (srog shing) as the central axis with the three syllables of the Three Vajras written in the appropriate three places. The core of the three dimensional object of Refuge is the srog shing, and the rabné ritually transforms the appropriately prepared piece of wood into ‘life wood’.

Yael Bentor’s unpublished paper (1989) develops an historical perspective on consecration ritual, with particular focus on the comparison of Sutra style consecration with Tantric forms of the ritual. Sutra style consecration relies on the Ye Dharmah Gatha (Skt.), which is considered to subsume the essence of the Buddha’s teachings. The Ye Dharmah Gatha is also used in Tantric style consecration, which however pivots on the correspondence between the yogic body and the item which is being consecrated and therefore employs the srog shing, which is absent in Sutra style rabné.

25 This formulation of the Buddhist creed, from the Prajnaparamita (Skt.) is called the Tendrel nyid lnga gzung (rten 'brel snying po'i gzungs, 'the origination by dependence') See Gyalzur and Verwey (1983:176–177), and discussion below in text.

26 There is very little information in the literature about the manner in which stupa or Buddha statues are filled. Personal communication with Ven. Phra Khru Samai of Wat Phra Buddhharangsi, in Sydney, confirms that there is no central pole placed within contemporary Thai Stupa and Buddha statues, nor to his knowledge was this done in earlier periods. Relics are however an important item and are placed inside. Refer also to footnote 5 above, and the absence of this central wooden obelisk in the thirteenth century chorten investigated by Hatt (1980:177). The concept of the stupa as *axis mundi*, which universal symbol Snodgrass argues is fundamental to the symbolism of the stupa and is related to two other perennial and ubiquitous symbolic themes, those of the mountain and the tree (1985:161–188), can be seen to develop into the srog shing. However, my analysis gives priority to the meaning and symbolism explained to me, and thus the correlation between yogic body and the central channel with chorten and srog shing.
Rabné is frequently translated as ‘consecration’ although its meaning has connotations specific to the world-view of Tibetan Buddhists, including the Karzhapa, which are more extensive than simply ‘to sanctify, or make holy’. ‘Empowerment’ is the term usually used to translate wang, and the transmission or process of symbolically communicating the realisation of the master to the initiate occurs within a similar framework of ritual transformation which structures the ritual of rabné. A rabné is thought to both sanctify and empower an object, making it a fitting vessel for veneration and moreover increasing its potential to exert an influence on its surroundings, and on those who have contact with it, whether as spiritual practitioners who may use the object in specific meditation practices, or as lay folk who have a more casual contact, and an attenuated understanding of the intricacies of the ritual processes involved.

Gyalzur and Verwey (1983) have published a detailed exegesis of the preparation of the srog shing and ritual consecration of the contents of a Buddha statue at the Tibetan Institute at Rikon, in Switzerland, in 1968. The texts they use and discuss in some detail belong to the Gelugpa tradition, however the principles of rabné do not differ significantly from the oral expanations which I received from Gegan Khyentse and Lama Paljor Lharje.

I am using the term 'consecration ritual' for the Tibetan rab-gnas cho-ga (Skt. pratistha-vidhi). There has been some confusion in English created by the use of the term 'consecration' for translating both rab-gnas and dbang-bskur. But the Tibetan language makes a clear distinction between the two terms. Dbang-skur, for which I prefer the translation 'empowerment', is conferred on people, while rab-gnas is conferred on receptacles of the Buddha's Body, Speech, and Mind; meaning mainly images, stupas, temples and books. Both the Tibetan term rab-gnas and the Sanskrit term pratistha can be rendered in English as 'firmly establish' or 'stably reside'. While the Sanskrit term pratistha originally meant 'establishment of an image or stupa', it later developed the meaning of firmly establishing the 'holy' or 'sacred' within the image or stupa. The latter is also the meaning of the Tibetan rab-gnas. It corresponds to the English term 'consecration', the etymology of which is 'together with the sacred'. In Vajrayana Buddhism, the 'holy' is the Enlightened Awareness Being (Ye-shes-sems-dpa’/Jnanasattva) which, by the consecration ritual, is invited to reside within the sacred object (rten), making it suitable for worship. (Bentor, 1989:1.)

I make appropriate comparative reference to this exegesis in footnotes.
My intention is to present not only the ritual specialist’s appreciation of the construction and consecration of objects, specifically chorten, as it was communicated to me, but also the perceptions and understanding of the villagers from Kardang. The discussion therefore mediates between these two positions, which are essentially in agreement with each other. For the villagers and indeed for the practitioners at Kardang Gonpa, the precise construction, filling and rabné of the chorten was totally dependent upon the expertise of Gegan Khyentse, who not only directed but also instructed practitioners and villagers throughout the entire proceedings. Lama Paljor also played an important role in the construction of the Kardang village chorten, as he was chosen by the villagers as the gonpa representative to organise and assist them in the project. Gegan Khyentse often deputised to Lama Paljor, who consequently mediated between Gegan Khyentse, the ritual expert who consulted the appropriate texts when necessary, and the villagers. Lama Paljor also discussed at some length the building of the chorten, the preparation of the contents, and the rabné with me, clarifying details which he had conveyed to the villagers or which had been previously taught by Gegan Khyentse to the practitioners engaged in the preparation of the contents.

One of the key teachings on the purpose and building of the chorten, and its ritual consecration, uses the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm which as I have suggested above, is thought by both villager and practitioner to inhere in the relationship between a chorten and its environment. It is difficult to assess the extent to which non-specialists appreciate the intricacies of the ritual processes involved, particularly as the inner yoga practices which the tantric master uses are regarded as secret, however the general framework of the transformations and correspondences seems to be readily appreciated.

The chorten must be properly built, with special attention to the precise proportions and measurements, so that like the body of the Buddha it is in complete harmonious proportions. While we are building, all the special contents will be gathered together. As you know, I’ve been to Dharamsala and have some things already. Still there is a lot to do. All these things must be kept pure and prepared for insertion, and Gegan Khyentse will bless them. We will carefully position them inside the chorten. We will do this in stages, as

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29See discussion above.
this will be a very large chorten, really very fine. When all is done Gegan Khyentse, assisted by all the practitioners, will perform the rabné. Rabné transforms an object from the realm of the relative into the absolute nature, which thus can affect the relative, awakening beings so that they recognise their true nature. Then all of Karzha, and Kardang particularly, will be in harmony because the effect is on everyone. When the real meaning of rabné is understood, it is apparent that a master can accomplish this with the very minimum of ritual performance, or with a lengthy and precisely executed ritual. Because everyone is working together on this project, and so that we can all participate, we will arrange a full ritual to be performed at the site of this chorten in Kardang village. During the preparation and building process, there are some rituals for purification and blessing which Gegan Khyentse will perform quietly, as you know, but with completion we will all participate together. (Lama Paljor Lharje, Transcript 1983).

With this instruction that was given to the villagers of Kardang, and the preceding discussion as an orientation to the construction and consecration as well as the symbolic significance of the chorten, I shall examine the specific conditions leading to, and the social context of, the construction of the three chorten in Karzha in 1983, during the final twelve months of my fieldwork.

As mentioned above, the smallest of these chorten and the first to be built is positioned beneath an old tree below Kardang Gonpa, beside a Mani wall on the pathway leading to Kardang Gonpa via the courtyard where the three chorten of Jhampa Mémé and his descendants stand. A fourth chorten, built in about 1928, had stood beside these three Kudung chorten of Jhampa Mémé’s ngagpa lineage. However, as it was damaged it was decided to rebuild it at another nearby location. When I visited the gonpa in 1981 and 1982, I had noted that all but the largest cement chorten were in relatively poor repair. The other three were constructed from stones, with mud mortar, and the wooden shikar (Hindi), or umbrella spire, was missing, and most of the outer mud coating had worn off.

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31 Quietly and without announcement, very early one morning, Gegen Khyentse had already stabilised and purified the chosen site and laid out the foundation mandala. Cf. Schwalbe (1979:33-35), Snodgrass (1985:184-188).
The cement-rendered chorten was built about 1940, encasing the older chorten which contained the remains of Jhampa Mémé. As mentioned earlier, the original Lhakhang had been built around Jhampa Mémé’s chorten, which was moved from inside to the courtyard when it was rebuilt. A smaller chorten containing the remains of Kulu Mémé stood next to this concrete one, and the third bell-shaped chorten of Norbu Mémé next to that. Beside this chorten stands a tall pole with a prayer-flag running its length. Another such pole stands closer to the gonpa building (see drawing at beginning of this Section).

There are eight types of chorten described in Tibetan literary sources, each of which is said to commemorate an event in the life of the Buddha. The majority of chorten in Karzha correspond to one of these eight, the Changchub (byang chub) chorten, the Enlightenment chorten commemorating the Enlightenment of the Buddha (‘the support/receptacle for the offering of purified perfection’). Norbu Mémé’s bell-shaped chorten was one of the few chorten which was of another form, the nyangde (myang ’das) chorten or Nirvana (Skt.) chorten commemorating the Buddha’s parinirvana or death (‘the support/receptacle for the offering of that which has gone beyond suffering’). All three chorten built in 1983 were Changchub chorten.

As discussed in Chapter 5, renovations occur at Kardang Gonpa as the need and opportunity arise. The new sloping corrugated roof on the main gonpa building has decreased the maintenance required, as snow now simply falls off the roof, rather than requiring repeated shovellings during the winter. This particular employment of new materials had an unanticipated effect during the winter of 1982-1983, when the snow falling from the gonpa seriously damaged the fourth chorten, which stood closest to the gonpa building. This chorten contained the remains of another of Shakya Shri’s disciples, Sherab Chözang from the Timorpa household in Kardang. The Timorpa household had at least two mémé from senior generations engaged in spiritual practice, both disciples of Kulu Mémé, and the

32See Schwalbe (1979:4-27) for details on erecting a prayer flag pole in association with building a chorten.

33E.g. in a text by Pema Karpo, which has been annotated by Khamtrul Rinpoche and printed at Tashijong. However, to my knowledge this text was not known to the Karzhapa. See also Khosla, R. (1979: plates 166-173) and Tucci (1973:113-114).
current nyerpa is from this household, the grandson (son’s son) of Mémé Sherab Chözang (Chapter 5).

In order to repair this chorten, a new site was chosen below the courtyard, on the path leading up to the gonpa, beside the earthen and rock Mani wall, leaving the three Kudung chorten from the same ngagpa lineage in the courtyard. The fourth Kudang chorten was rebuilt and rendered in cement, and completed with several fresh coats of white paint. A prayer flag was erected beside the chorten.

A special fund may be set up by those who have sponsored the construction of a chorten for its maintenance, which may include periodic re-painting and renewal (or restanding) of the wooden spire, as well as re-making of prayer flags for the poles standing by the chorten which were erected at the time the chorten was made. It is considered to be a worthy act, earning merit, to sponsor such repairs, and restore a chorten to its pristine condition.34

A rabné is always performed after repairs, in order to restore the quality of empowered consecration to the chorten. I was told that on one of the two occasions when Togdan Shakya Shri sent a party of some of his sons and disciples, including some of the Karzhapa, to Bodhanath to repair this stupa, Jarongkhasor, he performed the rabné upon the completion of the repairs from where he was in Kham, East Tibet.35 It is said that his yogic powers were so great that the rice, which was tossed in the ritual, fell on the stupa in Nepal. Most repairs and rabné are performed on site, and few practitioners are held to have the exceptional powers accredited to Togdan Shakya Shri.

The older chorten, which are built of stone rubble and earth, similar to the method employed in building houses, are particularly subject to decay from the elements, and many have lost their wooden spires.36 If funds are available, repairs will be made, but as long as the bumpa (bum pa), the pot or vase of the chorten, remains sealed, repairs are seldom carried out. Once this main body of the chorten

34 Cf. Schwalbe (1979:56).

35 These events are further discussed in Section IV. Nowadays a rabné is performed annually at Bodhanath in the nearby Gelugpa gonpa (Bentor 1989:6 and personal communication, Samuel).

36 The photograph at the beginning of Chapter 3, of Gotsangpa's cave (p.73), clearly shows one of the chorten inside which has lost its spire.
is broken and the contents of the chorten exposed, immediate repairs are necessary. The reason given to me was that the ritual preparation and purification of the objects enclosed within the chorten and the rabné, are effectively broken, with associated loss of power and enlightened essence and possible intrusion of numerous negative influences, when the seal to the bumpa is damaged. Comprehension of this effect will be assisted by the description of the ritual processes involved in making the chorten.

As well as the chorten which stands to one side of the ‘howa’, the Bagh ground, there were three other chorten standing in the open in Kardang village (refer Plan of Kardang village, Chapter 4). Early in 1983, during the second half of Tsusksila (March) when the practitioners from the gonpa were engaged in the annual ritual performances in the village, two of the men from the village approached Lama Paljor Lharje and talked to him about the possibility of organising the construction of a new chorten in the village. They seem to have been inspired by the rebuilding of the chorten up at the gonpa, for they intended to build a chorten in the village to replace a much older one that was in exceedingly poor repair. The reasons they talked over with Lama Paljor were a clear statement of their concern over the effects of the changes wrought in their society by the increasing integration with plains India, and a sense of loss of identity, especially among the younger generation from the village (see Chapter 3).

The two men concerned were the eldest males from two households which do not have members in the gonpa. Sherab Tachiji was in his early fifties and the Angrup Ang Kyantse about ten years older. Whatever the reasons for both these households having no current gonpa members, their participation in initiating and organising the chorten in the village greatly increased their interaction with the gonpa, particularly with Lama Paljor, and of course, they earnt the merit appropriate to such an endeavour. These men were generally admired for their involvement in establishing this project in which the entire village, and also the people from Gozzang village, participated.

Lama Paljor was very encouraging when the two men approached him. He had previously built smaller chorten, and his training as a thangka painter with Lama Yontan meant that he was well versed in the proportions and method of construction of a chorten, as well as the requirements for its contents. Generally,
Lama Paljor is well respected in both gonpa and village, and his direct ways and initiative recommended him for this task. Lama Paljor agreed to assist the two villagers, and undertook to enlist the guidance and advice of Gegan Khyentse, whose training, superior knowledge and qualities as a teacher and practitioner would certainly increase the value of the project. As Lama Paljor translated teachings given by Gegan Khyentse when in Karzha, he enjoyed a close relationship with the teacher and saw himself as a ‘go-between’ and worker on this project, regarding Gegan Khyentse as the expert, as mentioned above.

Lama Paljor and the two village men began to discuss this project with the other villagers and gonpa members, and received considerable encouragement. There were many who felt very positive about building a village chorten, and thus making a clear statement about their identity as Buddhists, as well as strongly placing the power of the chorten in the village. The site chosen on the north/north-west boundary of the village was near the older, smaller chorten which was badly damaged and in very poor repair (refer to Plan of Kardang village in Chapter 4). The circumstances surrounding the building of this older chorten were not known.

The project effectively began with an offering of a white khatag (kha btags, offering scarf) and Rs.10 to Gegan Khyentse, requesting him to direct the construction and perform the rabné. Throughout the entire procedure Lama Paljor followed Gegan Khyentse’s instructions, visiting him at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa en route from Kardang to Dharamsala when the request was made, and also on the return journey. Lama Paljor made this trip before the Rohtang Pass was open, crossing on foot, in order to initiate the project and speed the assembly of the required items for the inside of the chorten so that its building could proceed swiftly once Gegan Khyentse arrived.

The chorten was made and the rabné performed according to instructions in a woodblock print text composed by Kunkhyen Pema Karpo, an important hierarch in the Drukpa lineage (see Appendix), which was in Gegan Khyentse’s possession, and was therefore done strictly according to the Drukpa Kargyu
These specifications determined not only the outward form of the chorten but also the many different items which were required for inclusion within the chorten. Attending to all these matters was the responsibility of the three organisers.

Once the work in assembling the items to be placed in the chorten was begun at the gonpa, special restrictions were put into operation to ensure the purity of the practitioners and the environment in which the preparations were made, thereby ensuring the purity of the items destined for the interior of the chorten. The use of meat, alcohol, and also poisonous substances of any kind was prohibited. These restrictions applied not only to their consumption by the practitioners but to all activities associated with the preparation of items for the chorten. For instance, when glue was required in the preparation of the zung for the chorten, flour and water were used, rather than the animal-based products which could be purchased. Normal concerns about the use of tobacco, which is regarded as a poison and should not be used in the gonpa precincts became very important at this time. Thus tourists, who are generally unaware of the appropriate behaviour, were regarded with some suspicion as they could cause considerable disruption and obstacles.

In order to ensure purity and minimise any obstacles, important stages of the construction, such as purifying the site, laying the mandala of the base and placing the appropriately prepared contents within the structure, were often carried out with no announcement or forewarning, perhaps very early in the morning when few

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37This text remained in Gegan Khyentse’s possession, and I was unable to obtain a copy of it. Lama Paljor consulted the text on many occasions, under Gegan Khyentse’s guidance. My requests to see the text were taken as an indication of my intention to build a chorten. Although I failed to obtain the text, Lama Paljor mediated between the textual knowledge, and Gegan Khyentse’s commentary on it, and myself, providing detailed blueprints of the outward proportions of the chorten and the srog shing, which are reproduced below with a translation (in green) of the proportions, as well as the lists of contents and the appropriate method of preparing the items involved. This information is included in the following account. The Karzhapa attitude to Tibetan texts is reflected in this interaction, a matter which is discussed further in Section IV.

38Poppy flowers are generally thought to be quite attractive, and sometimes collected by the villagers for offerings. I have seen a senior practitioner when checking offerings remove these flowers, explaining that the plant is poisonous, and therefore the flower unsuitable for an offering. Possibly the activities of the Afghani refugees selling heroin in Manali, which created severe social problems for some of the wealthy sons of Lahuli families running businesses there, contributed to this action (refer Chapter 3).
people would accidentally come across the ritual being performed. Only those ritual specialists required in these operations were present.\textsuperscript{39} The tree which was to become the srog shing was cut, following Gegan Khyentse's advice on time, place and method of felling, and allowed to cure, while all the other preparations were begun. The juniper tree chosen was felled from and made to fall in an easterly direction, as specified in the text.\textsuperscript{40}

All work places at the gonpa were especially prepared, cleaned and purified with juniper incense smoke, and proper decorum was observed by those involved in the preparations. On one occasion, I joined a group of male practitioners preparing the zung (gzungs, dharani Skt.). I had some questions about the Drukpa lineage to clarify with Gegan Khyentse, and this enquiry was regarded as appropriate considering the nature of the work. To join the group for idle chatter was not possible, as the practitioners were required to maintain focus and concentration, and employ the appropriate mantra for purification whilst engaged in these preparations, which must be executed precisely.\textsuperscript{41}

The zung or mantric formula which the chöspa prepared were each printed one hundred thousand times. Zung were required for all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and the complete Drukpa lineage, including mantra for all the lineage lamas, mantras from the four classes of tantra,\textsuperscript{42} and the yidam, khandro and the Dharma protectors or Dharmapala (Skt.), and all the wealth gods. Included were the zung of Padmasambhava,\textsuperscript{43} Tara (Skt., Drolma, sgrol ma) and Chenrezig, which were already printed and readily available in Dharamsala, so in order to save time these were purchased. The zung available in Dharamsala are for the yidam and protectors of the Gelugpa lineage, so apart from these more general ones

\textsuperscript{39}Schwalbe's experiences are comparable (1979:esp.44-45).
\textsuperscript{40}Cf. Schwalbe (1979:29-31).
\textsuperscript{41}Cf. Schwalbe (1979:32, 36, 44-45).
\textsuperscript{42}This division of the tantra is according to the Chagchen method of meditation followed in the new translation (gsar ma) schools, to which the particular Drukpa lineage used for the Kardang village chorten belongs. Refer footnote 19.
\textsuperscript{43}Revered throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world, Padmasambhava is from the lineages of the old translation school of the Nyingma, and Dzogchen (refer Chapter 2). As the Drukpa Kargyu follow both Chagchen and Dzogchen, Padmasambhava's mantra was included, as was his namthar, the padma bka' thang.
which were purchased, they were inappropriate. Zung particular to the Drukpa lineage were therefore printed from the woodblocks at Kardang Gonpa. The Drukpa lineage ngöndro text was purchased from Apo Rinpoche Gonpa.

The mantra were prepared in the following manner after they had been printed or written, if wood blocks were unavailable. They were cut into strips and dipped in a purifying bath of water and several perfumed substances44 and then tightly rolled around a small stick of juniper.45 The way in which the different mantra or dharani were rolled (clockwise or counterclockwise) depended upon whether they were male or female, and peaceful or wrathful. They were then wrapped in yellow silk and five coloured threads: blue, green, white, red, yellow; representing the elements.

As well as the zung, more mundane requests were made and prepared in a similar manner. Protection against natural disasters such as avalanche, disease and famine were written out to be placed in the chorten. As Gegan Khyentse is an expert on these matters, his counsel was sought.

After considerable discussion, the villagers decided that their principal request was to ensure bountiful harvests and good yields. The reasons discussed among the villagers and communicated to Gegan Khyentse by Lama Paljor for this request were as follows. The physical conditions in Karzha mean that there is always concern about completing agricultural activities before the snow comes, as well as producing sufficient yields from limited arable land. Although at the time the villagers were experiencing greater wealth than they had in the past, particularly as they now had entered a cash economy with a valuable crop, seed potato, they could not be sure that such conditions would continue. In the past they had grown all their grains, and were skilled in the appropriate methods of cultivation. Now they did not grow these grains very much, but relied on purchased produce instead. Certainly if they did not dispose of some of their new-found wealth with well meaning spiritual intent, but merely used it to accumulate more

44The substances which are dissolved in water as given to me: dza ti, nutmeg; li shi, cardamom; gu gul, a resinous kind of incense; ga pur, camphor; gla rtsi, musk; tsan dan dmar po dang dkar po, red and white sandalwood; gur gum, saffron; and si la, clove. Note that Jäschke gives li shi as cardamom in the Western Tibetan dialect, whereas it is cloves in Central Tibetan; and si la simply as a type of incense (1881 reprint 1975:572, 547).

worldly goods, such as orchards and businesses, they could expect that their good karma would run out, and they would then be faced with serious hardship, perhaps famine.

Thus the requests made were related to the initial intention which had prompted the two elder village men to initiate the plan to build a chorten, but had been couched in a Buddhist ideological framework, that of karma, which was appropriate to the endeavour.\textsuperscript{46} The ambivalence felt by the Karzhapa towards the rapid agricultural, economic and social change which had been taking place was thus expressed, and brought into harmony through this encapsulating Buddhist framework, which gave priority to Buddhist values, rather than the accumulation of wealth, a considerable amount of which was now dedicated to the accumulation of merit (spiritual currency).

While the chospa were engaged in the preparation of the zung and the handwritten mundane requests, the chosma were making tsa tsa to be placed inside the chorten. Clay is mixed with rocks and water from important pilgrimage places in India and Tibet, such as Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarowar, and with special blessing medicine which contains relics. Tsa tsa are made by stamping this mixture into moulds, which is then allowed to dry. As mentioned above, tsa tsa are made in a variety of forms and are usually quite small. The ones made on this occasion were about five centimetres in height and in the shape of a simple stupa, with a circular base and conical upper part. About ten thousand were made by the twenty or so chosma who worked at this task for twenty-five days. Small balls of barley bough mixed with earth and water from pilgrimage places were also made. The maintenance of purity, focus and concentration were required for this task, as with the preparation of the zung.\textsuperscript{47}

Lama Paljor was responsible for collecting the offerings of sacred objects, which were to be encased in the chorten. Every practitioner offered whatever relics or ringsel were in their possession. Several practitioners offered the ringsel of Apo Rinpoche which they had carefully kept on their shrines since his cremation. Some practitioners, such as Lama Sidji and Lama Wangchuk who had travelled and taken

\textsuperscript{46}Refer footnote 30, Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{47}Cf. Schwalbe (1979:39).
teachings elsewhere, were able to offer ringsel and other relics from several high lamas, which were greatly appreciated.48

While these preparations were taking place at the gonpa, the two village organisers were also busy collecting offerings and supervising the preparation of the building materials. There is a long list of foods, grains, herbs and precious substances which should be included in the offerings placed within the chorten, several of which are classed into groups with five items in each group.49 Everything was washed and purified, then placed separately in small bags made out of yellow cloth. Large quantities of shugpa (shug pa, juniper) and balu (ba lu, rhododendron) incense were collected from the east by a person who has both parents alive, both auspicious conditions, and used to pack around the other offerings.50

About a kilo of valuable stones and metals, including gold, silver, zi (gzi, dzi),51 amber, turquoise, coral, pearls and ruby were offered by the villagers, who also contributed the required unhusked grains, which the text specified should be of five types: pea, barley, wheat, sesame and rice. As the main worldly request being made was for good yields, large quantities of grains were offered, including about eight quintals of barley (350 to 400 kilograms), six or seven pipa of rice.

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49Lama Paljor explained that this grouping into five corresponded to the five Buddha families, and the five elements, the consorts of the Buddhas (see below in text). Schwalbe lists twenty-five substances, five lists of five, minute proportions of which are mixed with water to make the consecrated water which is drunk in small proportions during rituals. There is some correspondence between these lists and those given to me as items for inclusion in the chorten, particularly between the five grains and the five medicines (Schwalbe 1979:70).

50Cf. Schwalbe (1979:40).

51Zi are beads which are usually of a dark brown or black, with a white pattern, typically of circles and lines called ‘eyes’. Although Tibetans believe them to be of supernatural origins, technically they are made from etched agate, and are of considerable antiquity (perhaps from the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung). They are worn by both men and women and are held to have considerable protective power, and fetch huge sums if sold (the cheapest the equivalent of about US$75, up to US$10,000) (Ebbinghouse and Winsten 1988). The photograph (Chapter 4) of the older village woman from Kardang wearing the ga’u also shows her zi, coral, turquoise and pearl necklaces and amber hair decoration. Many people offered items of personal jewellery for inclusion within the chorten.
seven or eight pipa of wheat, and three to four pipa of peas. All offerings were
cleaned, washed and purified, using about forty grams of saffron, before being
placed in the chorten.

Not only were all the households from Kardang village involved in this
project, but also those from Gozzang, about forty households in all. It was decided
to build a very large chorten, between thirty-six and forty feet in height. Scaffolding,
made from thin poles tied together, was required to build the chorten to this
height. Such a massive structure was only possible with the participation of all the
village households. Each household contributed one person's work each day, as an
offering. Normally the payment for this labour, which involved cutting stone and
carrying it to the site, is Rs.30 a day, which would have amounted to Rs.1,200 a
day over thirty-five days, about Rs.42,000 in all. Only through the co-operation and
dedication of the people was this project possible.

Considerable expense was entailed apart from the labour offered. Records
of these expenses and the donations made were kept by the three organisers, with
Lama Paljor tending to the special ritual requirements and donations of ringsel and
the like, and Sherab and Angrup dealing with the more mundane concerns. The
details of the expenditure were happily supplied to me, as well as an overall picture
of the donations received. As everyone from both Gozzang and Kardang villages,
and the gonpa, contributed as they were able, and every household donated labour,
it was decided that it was not useful to provide me with precise details of what was
contributed by whom.

Lama Paljor explained to me that in a project such as building a chorten,
intention is very important, not matters of comparative wealth and ability to make
larger and smaller donations. Even if a person had only Rs.5 to give, if this was
given with the intention to benefit all sentient beings and bring them to
Buddhahood this was of much greater value than the person who gave Rs.50, or
Rs.500, with the intention to be admired for his generosity. It was important to

52A 'pipa' is large oil tin full, maybe fifty centimetres in height by twenty-five
centimetres by twenty-five centimetres. All these grains were received as offerings, rather
than purchased. Although many types of grains were included in the offerings encased
within the chorten there were no offerings made of the potato, even symbolically, despite
its economic importance in the current scheme of things in Karzha. Of course, the foods
included should not perish. In the climate and altitude of Karzha, potato keep well,
providing they are stored in the dark. However, its inclusion would certainly be contrary
to the textual advice presented by Pema Karpo.
create a strong sense of unity and co-operation throughout the entire procedure, and inappropriate inquisitiveness on my part was potentially divisive.

On the other hand, details of costs were very useful to know, in case I wished to construct a chorten (and presumably there was no other reason for my interest in the whole procedure). Considerable expenditure was involved in building such a large chorten, which totalled Rs.60,000, comprised of the expenses mentioned below (Rs.11,218), the value of all the items received as offerings for inclusion within the chorten (approximately Rs.45 to 50,000), plus the offering made at the rabné of Rs.750 and fifty kilos of barley to Gegan Khyentse and Rs.35 each to the practitioners. If all labour had been paid for the costs would have been in the vicinity of Rs.100,000. Such a large offering was regarded as a good indication of the strength of Buddhism in Karzha, especially in Kardang.

Stone was cut from beyond Gozzang, towards Tandi. This took about a month, and was commenced in spring. The villagers had to work around their normal agricultural activities, and were thus especially busy with their extra workload. Everybody said that as they were involved in such a worthwhile project they were happy to donate their time and energy, and they enjoyed working together. It took a further month or so to carry the stone to the site, and for the actual construction several builders and concrete layers were employed at rates varying between Rs.35 and Rs.40 a day, with a total expenditure of Rs.2,883. As several of these skilled workmen made a donation of a days’ labour, this amount is considerably lower than the actual cost. A Nepali Makunpa who owned twenty-four donkeys was employed to carry the stone for a period of thirteen days, for which he was paid Rs.1,200. Bags of concrete, sand and iron used for reinforcing and the armature of the chorten, costing Rs.2,843, were also carried in by donkey, for Rs.505. Angrup Ang Kyantse’s expenses in travelling to purchase the building materials was a further Rs.385.

Other costs included the purchase of printed mantra, appropriate texts and paper for woodblock prints from Dharamsala, cloth and thread of the five colours,

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53In 1983, Rs.60,000 converted to about A$5,400, and Rs.100,000 to about A$9,100. However, in terms of relative value (i.e. cost of living), these two amounts can be regarded as A$60,000 and A$100,000.
material for making glue, paint and saffron and other purifying substances (Rs.1,885) plus Lama Paljor’s expenses for the journey to purchase these items (Rs.301). A further Rs.120 was required for the paint for the exterior of the chorten, and Rs.421 for the vegetable oil used for the offering lamps. Gegan Khyentse’s travelling expenses to Kardang Gonpa and food while he was there cost Rs.675.

Apart from the srog shing which required specialist preparation, two other special items, which were placed at a lower level, were required for inclusion in the chorten. One was the woodblock prints of male, pokhor (pho ’khor, ‘male circles’), and female, mokhor (mo ’khor, ‘female circles’), two groups of harm-doers or nodchin (gnod sbyin, yaksha Skt.). They represent all negativities, and were placed in a special box and sealed, with the female on the bottom.

The other was a specially prepared bumpa or vase, which is preferably made of copper, a preference which was met. Woodblock prints of the wealth gods, dzambhala (dzam bha la, Jambhala, Skt.), Ganesh or Ganapati (Skt.), and the mantra for wealth, which were obtained from Dharamsala, were placed inside this bumpa, along with all the precious metals and stones which were offered as well as the written requests of a mundane nature mentioned above, such as those for good harvests and protection from natural calamities. Although the text specifies that diamonds should be included, they were unavailable. However, as the list of offerings given above indicates, a considerable number of precious items were included.

The bumpa was placed beneath the box in the khang zang (khang bzang) or noble house (see Chorten Diagram, p.281), surrounded by the tsa tsa, the five kinds of grain, the five kinds of medicine and so on, which were prepared and bagged as described. These were packed with the juniper and rhododendron incense. This section, at the level called the ten virtues (ge chu, dge bcu) was sealed

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54The list of five medicines: kandakari (Skt.), identified to me as a type of gooseberry from the Solanum family, and as wild Rubis by Schwalbe (1979:70); sle tres, a climbing medicinal plant; gesar sum tig, the flower of a medicinal herb; shug dag dkar po, a white medicinal plant; and rgyatsho wu ba (unidentified marine substance).

55Other groups were nuts, dried fruit, and tea, plus a group consisting of crystal sugar, treacle, honey, butter, and salt.
using reinforced concrete. This became the platform into which the fully prepared srog shing was placed. It is essential that the srog shing be firmly fixed.

I was told that it is appropriate to include the shoes of an important lama in the khang zhang, and that a pair of Gegan Khyentse's shoes had been included. As mentioned, items of clothing belonging to an important teacher or reincarnate lama are regarded as relics. As the chorten symbolically represents a body with crossed legs, sitting stable and firm like a mountain, such items must be placed at the corresponding level. It would be most inappropriate to place shoes, even those of a spiritually realised being, higher in the chorten.

The srog shing for the Kardang village chorten was twenty-two feet in height (about seven metres), and about a foot wide at the base (about thirty centimetres), tapering to about three inches (ten centimetres) before the point at the top. It rose three stages higher than the minimum height specified for the srog shing, which is at the base of the spire (see Diagram, p.281). The srog shing may extend to the top of the spire.

Such a large srog shing required much preparation, and Gegan Khyentse's expertise was focused on this activity, which as stated above, was done in accordance with the Pema Karpo text in his possession. The srog shing, which is the core of the chorten, must be made from wood, preferably sandalwood. If that is not available then juniper wood is used, as in this case. If there is no other possibility then the wood from a fruit tree can be substituted. The tree was whittled to form a square at the bottom, which tapered, with a four-sided pyramid creating a point at the top. The srog shing was then painted red, with a sticky mixture of red powder, milk and honey. As mentioned previously, no animal fats, which otherwise may be used to make paint, can be used in the preparation of any part of the chorten.

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56 The body of the yogic practitioner, which is in complete balance, is described as having the stability of a mountain due to the broad base created by the crossed legs and the straight back (see diagram, p.267).

57 The srog shing used in the Buddha statue which provided the impetus to Gyalzur and Verwey's exegesis was 70 centimetres high and the statue 102 centimetres. As mentioned above, that srog shing was prepared according to a Gelugpa text (1983:171-173). Schwalbe does not state the height of the chorten made in Serlo Gompa, but it was made from clay to sit permanently indoors (1979:8). For details of the preparation of that srog shing see Schwalbe (1979:37, 43).
One unit to the parasol layer
One (section) to make up a (whole) unit
This layer is 3 units

1/2 to the layer:
1/2 units
2 upper layers as per the 2 lower layers
1 unit to the layer
This layer is 1/2 of a unit

Pot layer — 12 units

Layer of the pot, stand — 1 unit
4th layer — 2 (units)
3rd layer — 2 units
2nd layer — 2 units
First layer — 2 units

Step out up 1 to the layer of the "ten virtues" by 1/4 of unit (with overall height of) 1 1/2 units.
7 units to the "Noble House" — 1 unit
3rd layer — 3/4 unit
2nd layer — 1/4 unit

This layer 1/4 of the layer
The layer contacting ground 2 units

3 — 13 wheels, male wheels 1/3
2 — 2 for the female
From the root of H.D. 3 out to 3 1/2
4 — H.D. of 4
H.D. 2 1/2
8 — H.D. 3
8 — Eight
Round off the 10 shape from the bottom (of the pot) to ten units from the equatorial line (at the base) to the (point) above eight (units out).

8/1 units
H.D. 8 1/2
10 — H.D. 10
11 — H.D. 11
12 — H.D. 12
13 — H.D. 13
14 — H.D. 14
14 — 1 1/2
15 — H.D. 15
16 — H.D. 16

Male wheels/circles
Female wheels/circles

1 — Noble House
H.D. 15
14 — H.D. 14
15 — H.D. 15
16 — H.D. 16

Horizonal Displacement
HD = Horizontal Displacement
The srog shing was carefully empowered with the three Vajra syllables, plus another two syllables for the other places, and several mantra. With regard to the lettering, if gold ink or paint is available this is the best, if not silver, and then black; and if possible the elaborate lantsa (lan tsha) script is used, otherwise the Tibetan Uchen (dbu can). In the srog shing for the Kardang chorten, lantsa was used for the five principal syllables (OM AH HUNG SWA HA), and Uchen for the mantra, for which black ink made from chimney soot was used.

The red overlay to the Diagram shows the placement of these syllables. This is how Lama Paljor explained the diagram of the srog shing, which he prepared for me:

OM is written at the top, representing Body. AH represents Speech and HUNG — Heart/Mind. This is the trikaya — the three bodies of the Buddha, the Three vajra. Then SWA is four fingers below the navel — this is the union, and HA is the secret place which is trinley ['phrin las], activity. You see the srog shing is the central channel [tsa uma, rtsa dbu ma, avadhuti Skt.].

I can explain a little by talking about a statue, which is prepared similarly before rabné. Sometimes a rupa has the right and left channels, the tsa roma [roma, rasana Skt.] and tsa kyangma [rkyang ma, lahana Skt.], made respectively out of bamboo and kusha grass. This was the tradition according to Karma Pakshi [pak shi, Karmapa II]. This is not absolutely essential. Of course the central channel must be there, and in the Buddha both these side channels have entered the central channel. The Buddha has no attachment or grasping, and no aversion. The Buddha’s energy moves only in the central channel, the uma. That is why the srog shing is the central core of the chorten.

Then also on the srog shing at the pyramid peak at the top are written these syllables. HUNG is the peak. It seems to be upside down [on the diagram], and it represents the essence of all. OM in the East, South is DANG, West is HRI and North is AH. This

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58These correspond to the other two chakra of the yogic body, according to the Anuttara tantra. If a small srog shing is being prepared it is sufficient to use only the three Vajra syllables, also used in Anuyoga tantra.

59See Lauf (1976:81-84) for a discussion of these scripts.

represents the opening of the central channel — the chakra. You understand?

If it is a small srog shing then this is enough, but if there is room then there are many mantra to be written, and you write the mantra as many times as you need to cover the whole srog shing. I think even if I tell you everything you cannot make a chorten without someone like Gegan Rinpoche, as you must have a rabne, and for that you need someone who really has wisdom.

So I will tell you so you understand a little. Between OM and AH, here at the top you write the mantra of the Rigdzin [rig 'dzin, Vidhyadhara Skt., awareness holders]. Then in the other four directions you write the mantra of the Buddhas. In the South is Drimé Od [dri med 'od] Stainless Light; in the West is Sangwa Rinchen [gsang ba rin chen] Secret Jewel; in the East is the Namgyal [nram rgyal] the All-Conquering; in the North is Changchub Gyanbum [byang chub rgyan 'bum] one thousand ornaments of Bodhicitta.

Then there is the mantra ‘to bless [chinlab, byin rlab] the materials of the chorten of stainless light’. This mantra can be written anywhere there is space on the srog shing, circling in a clockwise direction, and its purpose is to request and make blessings.

The other mantra which you write wherever there is space is for confession and purification, the mantra ‘causing the stainless light to reside in all the four directions of the srog shing’.

With these two mantra you must write in balance. If you write one on the front side then you also write on the back side, all the way around. As in the ngöndro practice of the Mandala Offering, the east direction faces you.

Then the mantra of the interdependent origination of all things, ‘Om Ye Dharma ...’ [Ye Dharmah Gatha]61 is also written in the same manner, clockwise. The Buddha was liberated from all attachment, including attachment to all Dharmas.

Then at the base, underneath there is a short mantra, which again you write to entirely cover the area. It is an indestructible offering.

Any ringsel, the special relics from the bones of realised beings are placed near the OM. You carve out a hole in the wood, and place the ringsel in, and then plug the whole with that same piece of wood. This

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61See discussion above, and footnote 26, in relation to sutra style rabne.
represents the Body of the Buddha, and the first of the Three Vajras.

Then the second is the AH, speech, which is the throat. For this you use texts which are the words of the Buddha. In this chorten we used Sangye Do tri nyi [Sangs rgyas mdo khri gnyis], which is a collection of the sutras, the words of the Buddha in twenty thousand verses. You place the text inside the chorten here. With such a big chorten these things have to be placed inside as the chorten is made, and then the walls are continued up.

The zung which have been prepared are attached, bound to the srog shing. Those with the names of the Buddha you place at OM, the head; the mantra, Buddha's speech at the AH; and at HUNG which is the Heart/Mind are the mantra of all the Buddhas and the Bodhisattva, such as Guru Rinpoche, Chenrezig, Vajrapani and Manjusri [Skt]. You write these mantra on the wood and also bind the zung in place. Also if you have relics such as the heart of a lama, a realised being or small statues which have come from the bones you place them here.

Once the srog shing has been prepared in this way, with great attention to detail and maintaining purity, it is wrapped in yellow silk, to completely cover it. For this large srog shing Rs.200 of yellow silk was purchased. Then when it is all ready, it is firmly embedded upright in the centre (of the chorten), and you add the spire, and the sun and the moon united at the top, with the drop. (Lama Paljor Lharje, transcript October 1983).

After the chorten was built, it was painted with white paint, and the outer male rings of the spire were painted yellow, while the inner rings were painted red.62 It stands between thirty-six and forty feet in height (about twelve metres). When finished the effect was quite stunning — the massive structure gleaming in the sun.

The rabné was performed on the 11th August 1983. The ritual chosen was Lama Chodpa (bla ma mchod pa) the basis of which is making offerings to the Lama in order to receive the blessings and wisdom of the Lama. It was an all day

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62Cf. Schwalbe (1979:47-48). One of the photographs included at the beginning of this chapter shows Lama Paljor assisted by other younger chöspa painting the spire of the Kardang village chorten (p.250).
event, starting at nine in the morning and continuing until four p.m. One thousand butter lamps were burnt, and prayers offered many times.

There are other rituals which could have been used, but whichever is chosen, the principle in a rabné is the same. It was explained to me that through the tantric ritual and the power of the master presiding, damtsig (dam tshig) or samaya (Skt.), a sacred bond or oath, is made with the yeshepa (ye shes pa), the Wisdom beings. They are like the enlightened essence of all the Buddhas, and they are invited into the form, in this case the chorten, and become united inseparably with it. The srog shing, although correctly prepared in the ritual manner outlined above, does not have the intangible wisdom of the Buddha, of the enlightened essence of everything. This is spoken of as yeshepa, wisdom beings, and can be placed in the object only through the rabné.

This process of ritual transformation was described to me in some detail, through a parallel example of the transformation the meditator makes during the Vajrasattva purification practice, which is the second segment of the ngöndro. It was further explained that as the enlightened essence is compassionate, this connection made with the construction and the rabné of the chorten, or other statue, will ensure that the requests made will be fulfilled, and that all the manifestations, the protectors and elemental energies and so on, will preserve the chorten.

Before describing the celebrations in Kardang village on this day, I will briefly outline the events which resulted in the third chorten being built. During the summer while the Kardangpa and Gozzangpa were busily engaged in building the village chorten, disaster struck at Labchang Gonpa. An older practitioner was doing a long retreat. He was seen to leave his house, which in itself was irregular, and didn’t return. Later some of his clothing was found near the river, and it was understood that he had drowned, probably committing suicide. Such an event is great cause for concern, and a very infrequent occurrence. Because of the Buddhist injunction against the taking of life, suicide is practically unheard of, especially involving a practitioner.

I was told that over the years there had been disturbances at Labchang Gonpa, and a few practitioners had ‘gone mad’, and about seven or eight, who were in their forties or fifties, had died suddenly. This was attributed to some negativities
attached to the place itself. Everyone remembered the warnings Dudjom Rinpoche
had given about the gonpa when he visited, saying that its aspect was
inauspicious.\textsuperscript{63} Everything they had done to attempt to overcome the obstacles
associated with the place had clearly been unsuccessful. The other practitioners
from Labchang, including the son of this older practitioner, decided to abandon the
gonpa, and left.

The villagers from Labchang were distraught at this development. Not only
had disaster struck one of the practitioners at their village gonpa, but they were left
with no gonpa. Gegan Khyentse was staying at Kardang Gonpa, and it was decided
to seek his assistance. After some consideration he counselled that it was possible
to end these disturbances by performing a very specialised ritual in which the
energies involved were captured, and buried beneath a chorten. This would ensure
that they were contained and thus replace the negative influences with the radiating
wisdom essence of enlightenment.

It was crucial to proceed quickly, and complete the project as soon as
possible. So Gegan Khyentse moved to Labchang Gonpa, and preparations were
made. The chorten built was much smaller than that in Kardang village (about
twelve feet or four metres) and cost about Rs. 1000. Apart from the actual costs
of the structure, considerable donations which were placed inside the chorten were
made by all the Labchang households. Due to the delicate nature of the rituals
involved I was asked not to visit Labchang, nor to ask questions and talk about it.
Lama Paljor explained that only a great master could successfully accomplish the
desired outcome in this case, and that it was therefore very important to assist by
not creating any possible negativity. Talking about the occurrences at Labchang,
and the ritual procedures being employed was to be avoided by all. Understandably, the villagers from Labchang were also very sensitive about their
predicament, and although I occasionally observed some preparations being made
at Kardang Gonpa, I refrained from further enquiry.

Much later when I had returned to Apo Rinpoche Gonpa, well after the
rabné, and the resumption of normal activities in Labchang Gonpa, with an

\textsuperscript{63} As mentioned in Chapter 5, Dudjom Rinpoche had performed some rituals which had
alleviated the problem for a time.
apparently very successful outcome to the ritual procedures employed, some explanation was offered to me.

Gegan Khyentse had diagnosed that ghosts (dré, 'dre) were caught near Labchang Gonpa. He therefore made effigies of all the people who had died, and wrote their names. Each person's name was written twice — the female aspect was written on willow and the male on silver birch bark. One person at a time, these two pieces of bark were placed in a large goatskin bag. Through the process of tantric transformation, in the ritual of the Chöd (gcod),6 which enables the practitioner to cut through all attachments, Gegan assumed the power of the dakinis of the ten directions in all their manifestations, peaceful and wrathful, and called to these dré, each in turn. He told them he had power over them and they must come to the bag. He told them if they attempted to hide in any of the five elements it would be to no avail as the elements are the five yums (female consorts) of the Buddhas: earth, water, fire, air and sky, represented by the five colours.

The bag was carried by an assistant, and once it was thought something was captured, it was shut and brought to Gegan Khyentse who had a large pot placed in front of him, such as is used to roast barley. Three swords had been placed across the top, in a triangle. One was removed, and the other two held blade up, and the skin bag emptied into the pot. If the female willow landed on its back, with the letters face up, this signified that the mind (sem, 'sems) is controlled. If the male birch bark landed face down, with the letters on the underside, the consciousness (Dushe, 'du shes) is controlled.65

At the site chosen and previously prepared, a stone triangle was made on the prepared ground. The walls were built up with earth. That which was captured was placed in this, and covered with stones. It is held by a phurba (phur pa, ritual dagger) which is embedded in a container of barley placed on top of the stone lid.66

6The Chöd ritual is said to have originated with a female Tibetan practitioner, Maecig Labdron (ma gcig lab sgron). See Allione (1984:141-204); Gyatso (1985); and Tucci (1980:87-92).


6For information about types of phurba see Huntington (1975).
The chorten was then built on top of this triangle, with the phurba firmly pinning the troublemakers. The rabné was performed on the 19th of September 1983, and was the first occasion that many of us actually saw this new, gleaming white chorten. A canopy had been set up just in front of the chorten, as had been done for the rabné at Kardang. Gegan Khyentse and the other senior practitioners sat facing the chorten, and the rest of the practitioners sat in rows on either side.

The ritual chosen on this occasion was that of Vajrasattva, Dorje Sempa, which is particularly associated with purification. As with all rabné, the principle was to invite and bind the yeshepa, the wisdom beings, into the structure of the chorten.67

The two rituals chosen for the respective rabné were in accord with the motives behind building the chorten. Because of the adverse circumstances at Labchang, and the complicated ritual procedures involved which only a master could successfully perform, considerable emphasis had been placed on maintaining purity and avoiding any further inauspicious conditions and negativities. At the Labchang chorten rabné, the atmosphere was a little subdued, although there was awakening optimism among the villagers, who visited the ritual proceedings for a while, sitting quietly at the side, but otherwise went about their own business. The practitioners, inspired by Gegan Khyentse, were quietly confident. The son of the recently deceased practitioner, who was a disciple of Gegen Khyentse and had assisted in the chorten construction, erected a large prayer flag in the initial stages of the rabné. Later he told me that during the rabné he felt that the anguish of the preceding weeks caused by the suicide of his father and the abandonment of the gonpa, was replaced with spiritual purification and deepened understanding.

A month earlier, in Kardang village, the rabné had been an occasion of celebration and festivity, in contrast to the more subdued tone of the rabné in Labchang. All the villagers from Kardang and Gozzang were present, dressed in their best clothes, and greatly satisfied with the months of hard work and the donations they had contributed to the chorten project, now coming to completion.

67The ritual employs visualisations and the hundred syllable mantra used in the Vajrasattva meditation of the ngöndro. See discussion above and footnote 53, Chapter 6, and cf. discussion of the rabné, which employs a Dzogchen ritual from the Rinchen Terzod (Rin chen gter mdzod) collection, in Schwalbe (1979:48-55).
with this last day of ritual. The village Jabjez Gonpa was open, and many of the one thousand butter lamps being burnt as part of the offerings were alight.

The practitioners were dressed in their finest robes, with the chöspa sitting under the canopy, playing the ritual instruments and chanting, while the chösuma served endless cups of tea, and attended to the many offerings. A table had been placed in front of the chorten, and many thangka, rosaries, small statues and so on were placed on it, so that they too would receive the empowerment and activation of the rabné. Elaborate torma and butter sculpture formed part of the offerings. In the ritual arena the emphasis on purity and focus of attention was maintained throughout, with the practitioner attending the offerings wearing a scarf over his nose and mouth at critical points during the ritual, so that he did not inadvertently breathe on the offerings. At one stage the entire group of practitioners donned their large red ritual hats and accompanied by the drums and the blowing of horns, slowly wound through the village and around its perimeter before settling back to their position in front of the chorten.

The organisers, Sherab and Angrup, spent some time sitting in a room with a good view of the entire proceedings, checking the monies and lists of expenses and donations, ensuring everyone had been paid, receiving last minute offerings and generally finishing the business. At the completion of the ritual, the offerings to Gegan Khyentse of a silk khatag, money and tsampa would be made, for his role in the project, not only in the guidance given for the correct construction of the chorten, but also his ability as a yogic practitioner which at this time was transforming the concrete structure into the enlightened essence of the Buddha. Much smaller offerings would be given to all the chöspa who were assisting him. The organisers would be honoured and the role in initiating the project recognised, and the tsog offering, the blessed food, would be divided and eaten by all.

Later, when the ritual had finished, the village men sat together, and drank chang and joked, discussing with satisfaction the outcome of their endeavour (photograph, p.251). They all agreed that over the past few months Kardang village had really changed. Everyone, even the younger folk, had remembered their

Photographs taken of some of the practitioners during this rabné are included at the beginning of Chapter 8 (p 295).

See discussion above and the photograph at the beginning of this chapter (p.250).
Buddhist traditions, and had worked together for the good of all. Everyone had worked hard, they had all cooperated, and in the process they had overcome petty differences. They had been too busy to spend much time in Kyelang, gossiping or watching the Hindi videos. Instead they had generated a feeling in the village more like the ‘good old days’. The women too, chatted and laughed. Food was prepared, and later the music of their dance and songs floated up to the gonpa, where the practitioners were in their gonpa houses, quietly practising.

Earlier in the day, there had been a disturbance, which in some ways typifies the trends in the process of change encountered in Karzha, which at least for the time being, was remedied by the chorten project. Several people from Kyelang and elsewhere had heard about the rabné which was to be performed in the village. Some, such as the daughters of Kardang who were now married into other households came for a while to make their offerings, though many were busy with their own activities.

Three westerners who were staying at the Tourist Bungalow in Kyelang had heard about an important celebration, and decided to come to see the event. Two were tourists, and the third was engaged in private research intending to publish further recordings of folk songs or write a book about the culture and music of the different peoples from Himachal Pradesh, and Ladakh. He had been talking with the local expert on village customs, who had twenty years before been of similar service to the then District Commisioner, M.S. Gill. He decided to take this opportunity to visit Kardang village. This party arrived when the rabné was already well underway. At that time some village boys were minding the offerings in Jabjez Gonpa. The ‘researcher’ had a new Polaroid camera which produced photos in a few seconds. He offered to take photos of these young boys, out in the courtyard, and then left them to admire the magic of western technology and their own images.

Shortly after, a chösma ran to where the practitioners were engaged in the rabné, and whispered to Lama Paljor Lharje. He quietly left the gathering, and hurried to Jabjez Gonpa. Noticing this, and sensing the concern, I followed.

The ‘researcher’ was in Jabjez Gonpa, with tripod and flash, busily rearranging images for his photographic session. A few village women, and some

70See discussion in Chapter 3.
of the boys, still admiring their photographs, had gathered but none dared confront the intruder. Lama Paljor demanded to know what was going on, and asked the 'researcher' to leave immediately. The photographer said he had permission from the Deputy Commissioner to take photographs, which overrode the Police Order against photography inside the gonpa of Lahul, and pulled out a piece of paper.\footnote{Several valuable images and thangkas have been stolen from Lahul, particularly in the years following Independence. As a result, the Police have placed restrictions on photography inside any of the gonpa, as it is thought that these photographs are used by the unscrupulous to identify and sell items to collectors. See discussion in Chapter 3.}

In the next ten or fifteen minutes, Lama Paljor became exceedingly wrathful. He told the ‘researcher’ that the District Commissioner might lift these restrictions, but that the final authority remained with the people themselves — a matter which they had discussed with the authorities in the past. To come without invitation to such an important event as a rabné was one thing, but to come without the correct attitude, and then to break into the village gonpa, touch the images and offerings, and begin taking photographs was inexcusable.

The ‘researcher’ for his part, threatened to tell the authorities about this unwelcome reception, which he was encouraged to do. He then threatened to publish in his book information about Kardang telling the world how impolite and rude they all were. He was encouraged to do this also. Meanwhile, Lama Paljor, and a small crowd of onlookers, were shepherding the irate cameraman clutching tripods and cameras towards the village boundary, and he was banished. Breathing freely again, we returned to the rabné. Gegan Khyentse presided over the chanting, calm and composed as ever. He watched Lama Paljor return to his seat, and nodded his head slightly at him.

The other tourists meanwhile had sat to watch the rabné for a while, and chatted and smiled at some of the village children. They left a little later, unaware of the ruckus that had taken place at Jabjez Gonpa.

I later asked Lama Paljor about the incident, and his responses to threats that had been made.\footnote{I had previously met this ‘researcher’ in Dharamsala and Manali, and felt compromised by the situation which had developed. This incident therefore led me to closely examine my own actions and responsibility as a fieldworker, similarly engaged in research. For instance, several gonpa had placed their trust in me and allowed me to take photographs of their images. I have made a complete set of these to be held by the gonpa and used to identify images if any are stolen, as my discussions with the Superintendent of Police revealed that} He explained that the District Administration was there to

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help the people. In the past, the people had felt small and without authority, and regarded the British rulers and the Indian government's District Commissioner as people like the Thakurs, who simply did as they wished. Now that Lahul was part of India, they had learnt that they had rights to their culture, and their heritage, and that respect was due to them. They had a village panchayat which made decisions about their village, and its well-being. The Sarpanch was Lama Paljor's elder brother, the Doctor, and so Lama Paljor was well aware of village politics. Too many things had been stolen from their gonpa. The police prohibitions were placed at the peoples' requests. If this man published things that discouraged other tourists with 'small minds' who had no respect from coming to Kardang, this was in fact a blessing. When he spoke about the village boys who had so easily been bribed with magic, photographs which appeared instantly, he seemed a little sad.

There are so many things, not only videos, and cassette players and Levi jeans, but these cameras... Really, there are so many things we do not understand. We are swayed by these appearances so easily, and lose our understanding of our real nature. What to do?
(Transcript, August 1983.)

The analysis of the construction and consecration of these three chorten has discussed the manner in which the tantric master, who has gained control over the functions of the mind-body complex through meditation and retreat involving the inner yoga practices of the Naro Chödrug, symbolically manipulates the universe in the process of constructing and consecrating a chorten, and in so doing affects the healing and balance required within the community and in the community's relationship with the Indian nation.

The five elements, represented by the five colours which have been used in binding the zung which are positioned at the relative places within the chorten, are also associated with the five chakra within the yogic body, which are represented

investigations are severely hampered by the difficulty of identification.

The symbolic correlations may be schematised as follows: srog shing is to chorten as central channel to yogic body. For a discussion of the general principles in this relationship between the yogin (microcosm) and the external world (macrocosm) see Snellgrove (1987:170, 296).
on the srog shing. Once purified through the rabné and ritual transformations, the elements contained within the chorten, which is regarded as a microcosm of the universe, are considered to harmonise and balance the external elements of the surrounding environment. At this level of analysis, the healing process occurs ritually through the chorten, which is invested with powerful spiritual and symbolic associations both in Karzha and more generally in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

At another level of analysis, which is also investigated, the cooperation between the gonpa members and the villagers entailed in building and then ritually consecrating the chorten realigned social relationships within the community, creating greater social cohesiveness and bolstering ethnic identity. Concerns about the agricultural, economic and social changes taking place within Lahul were restructured into a positive spiritual framework, the mundane requests to be met as a result of the offerings made in the building of the chorten. Consequently, the specified goals were achieved in the social processes involved in constructing the chorten, which symbolically mirrors the realignment of order and balance.

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74The actual geometric constituents of the stupa: the cube; sphere; cone; semicircular cup; and jewel or flaming drop; are also symbolic representations of the elements. For a discussion of these correlations in Shingon Buddhism, see Snodgrass (1985:372-377), and also Govinda, who extends this elemental correspondence to the Indian and Tibetan stupa (1976:93-98). In the Tibetan tradition, spiritually accomplished practitioners dissolve and purify the elements of the physical body, which reportedly disappears. With the Dzogchen methods, the practitioner's recognition of the true nature (see footnote 10) the purification of the elements is said to result in the manifestation of the rainbow body (ja' lub) of light after death, in which the elements constituting the body gradually dissolve into their pure form, light. It is reported that in cases when this occurs, only the clothes, and the hair and nails of the practitioner remain. Accomplishment of the Naro Chödrug practices, and their implementation at the time of death, particularly of the gyulu, the 'illusory body' practice (see Chapter 6) can have similar results, although the methods are different. There are reportedly degrees of accomplishment, with corpses sometimes merely shrinking to about a third their size, rather than actually disappearing. Such meditative processes are said to be taking place while the body maintains its elasticity after death, thus the injunction not to cremate the body until it loses this elasticity (refer Chapter 6 with regard to Apo Rinpoche's death). Note also that ringsel, the relics which are found in the ashes of the cremation of an accomplished practitioner may emanate the five colours (see above and Allione 1984:192-193 note 42, and 202 note 140; Namkhai Norbu 1986:124-129; Thondup 1986:98-99; Tucci 1980:86). Also see Martin's discussion of signs of a saintly death (1985:20-22).

75This is one level of analysis pertinent to the understanding of the symbolic manipulations which are thought to be taking place. Although appreciated by the practitioners, it is not likely to be understood in more than a general sense by the non-practitioner. Refer above to the elements which were said to be the consorts of the Buddhas in the ritual Gegan Khyentse performed to capture the dré or ghosts; and the understanding that terma can be hidden in any of the five elements.
SECTION IV

Some of the old men tell of how Gyalwa Gotsangpa was living in the cave near Sila gonpa. One day he saw a very nice woman shovelling the snow from the top of that Thakur house which adjoins the tower at Gundhla — you know the place. There was too much snow so she had to clear it from the roof. But then as she was working, she dropped her shovel from the roof and it fell all the way to the ground. She looked around and saw that there was nobody around, not realising that Gyalwa Gotsangpa was watching her from his cave. Then she just quickly reached with her hand and picked up her shovel. Immediately Gyalwa Gotsangpa understood that she was a Khandroma, a very nice woman, you understand? ...and he thought "Ah, maybe I will love her!" Then he flew there to her, but the Khandroma took to the air and flew this way towards Kardang, with Gyalwa Gotsangpa flying after her. The Khandroma changed to stone right here in the middle of the village, and when Gyalwa Gotsangpa landed, he left his knee prints, so that is why we call it Jabjez. [Transcript, Lama Paljor Lharje, September 1982.]
Nyerpa and Lama Sidji during Kardang village chorten rabné or ritual consecration.

The senior Chöspa from whom much of the biographical data on Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche was collected.
GONPA Picnic

Kardang gonpa and Lama gonpa practitioners lunch informally with Gegen Khyentse in the meadows above Lama Gonpa.

Light rain - an unusual experience in Lahul
Lama Paljor Lharje in foreground.

Some of the older female practitioners

and some of the younger female practitioners.
Chapter Eight
Namthar and the Oral Tradition of Gotsangpa in Karzha Khandroling: Women and Practice

The ethnography of Karzha, which has explored the relationship between Kardang Gonpa and Kardang village has been presented in the preceding three Sections of the thesis. In this ethnographic history I have explored the growth of Kardang Gonpa from its founding in 1912, until the period of my fieldwork, and in so doing I have examined the importance of the teachers in the spiritual lineage of the Drukpa Kargyu, who in teaching, transmitting and ritually transforming create the continuity of practice through which the Tibetan Buddhist culture is renewed.

This revitalisation of the Buddhist culture was brought into sharp focus in Section III, which explores the events in Karzha following the closure of the border with Tibet, and the subsequent arrival of Apo Rinpoche, a member of Togdan Shakya Shri’s ngagpa lineage, and his family, at Kardang Gonpa. The intertwining of lineages — genealogical (ngagpa), reincarnation, teaching and transmission — are integral to the continuity of practice. The physical remains of the members of these lineages, particularly the dung or ringsel of Shakya Shri and his descendant Apo Rinpoche,¹ and of his disciples, Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche are important ingredients in the chorten built in Kardang, as revealed in the discussion on the construction and contents of these chorten. In the case of the kuten chorten in the gonpa courtyard, it is the cremated remains and dung of the members of Jampha Mémé’s ngagpa lineage which are encased.

The analysis of the construction and consecration of the chorten in Karzha in 1983 explored both the co-operation between the gonpa practitioners and the villagers, and the social processes through which a reinvigorated Buddhist identity was created. In order to provide a symbolic analysis of the chorten and its contents, and the ritual transformations of the rabné, several concepts embedded in the

¹The quality of the Rus or bone, which is passed patrilineally and imbued with considerable spiritual power in the case of ngagpa lineages, is clearly associated with the ringsel, dung and peldung or increasing bone, which is found in the cremated remains of these spiritual practitioners.
ideology of Tibetan Buddhism and communicated within the tradition through its spiritual practices were introduced.

In this final Section of the thesis I further elucidate some practice related concepts, before the presentation of the narrative of how Togdan Shakya Shri acquired his Karzhapa disciples and inspired the founding of Kardang Gonpa. The relevant historical details surrounding the establishment of Kardang Gonpa have been presented in the ethnographic history, and interpreted in accordance with the structural framework introduced in Chapter 3. With reference to the diagram (page 94), I have examined some of the relationships between the black and the white threads, exploring the effect of social relationships and household structure on the development of the gonpa, for instance. Although this level of analysis goes beyond the interpretation that the Karzhapa give to the establishment of the gonpa, there is general agreement between my analysis and their interpretation.2

However, I have been selective in the details presented. For instance, a considerable amount of information pertaining to Gotsangpa Gonpa Dorje, the thirteenth century Drukpa yogi, has been discussed. In Chapter 2, I note the importance of the caves in which he is said to have practiced and their significance in the sacred landscape of Karzha Khandroling. Further, I point out that his historical presence in Karzha is verifiable from his namthar, of which there are several versions. I also mention (p.66) the episode from the local oral tradition which introduces this Section and tells of Gotsangpa’s encounter with the dakini and the origin of Jabjez Gonpa. In Chapter 5 (p.199), I mention that the hermitage of Lama Gonpa developed around a cave associated in the local tradition with Gotsangpa, known as Gotsang Ritro or Gotsangpa Drupdé, and that Kunga Rinpoche, who played an important role in the shift of spiritual practice from Jabjez Gonpa in Kardang village, which enshrines the rock imprints of Gotsangpa’s body, to Kardang Abhi Gonpa, was regarded as a reincarnation of Gotsangpa.

Despite my discussion and analysis of the importance of Gyalwa Gotsangpa to the spiritual practice tradition of Karzha, it is only through actually engaging with the stories, as they are told in the local tradition, that we are able to appreciate the type of figure Gyalwa Gotsangpa is for the Karzhapa.

2See comments made in Chapter 3, for instance with regard to the reaction to the Moravians.
In Chapter 2, I discussed how the oral version of Gandhapa's experiences differ from the textual biographies, with the significant differences empowering Drilburi, the self-created stupa at the centre of the mandala of Karzha Khandroling. For Gotsangpa, too, it is these oral stories, rather than the written namthar,\^3 which make up the Karzhapa's knowledge of his activities. There are only a few practitioners from Kardang Gonpa who actually know that there is a namthar for Gotsangpa.\^4 There are fewer practitioners who have read this namthar, though a few thought they might, one of these winters. However, they all know many stories about Gyalwa Gotsangpa, and his activity in Karzha.\^5 So do all the lay folk. They have all visited the several caves in the area in which he lived and practised. They have all seen his knee prints in the rock at Jabjez Gonpa in Kardang village, and know the details of his encounter with the dakini or khandroma\^6 which resulted in these imprints in the rock. These stories are told and retold, particularly in the context of undertaking the khora around Drilburi, or when visiting any of the sites associated with Gotsangpa. On some occasions they are told more elaborately and with more detail than at other times.

For Gotsangpa, as for Ghandapa, the stories told in the local oral tradition differ from the literary versions of his namthar in that they are grounded in the

\[^{3}\text{Thirteen different well-known namthar for Gotsangpa are listed by Topden Tsering in his printed edition of three manuscripts from Gemur Gonpa in Lahul (1974a). He includes another, of unknown authorship, which makes the total number of namthar fourteen. The namthar by Sangye Darpo (sangs rgyas dar po), which Tucci (1971) has used, is the twelfth on this list. The full title is rgyal ba rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje'i rnam thar mthong ba don ldan nor bu'i phreng ba.}\]

\[^{4}\text{Kunga Rinpoche is said to have possessed a copy of a Gotsangpa namthar, obtained in Tibet. It is still kept somewhere at Lama Gonpa, the small hermitage above Gozzang village.}\]

\[^{5}\text{Milarepa is perhaps the best known example of an historical spiritual practitioner, whose activity is known not only from a namthar, but also, and for many primarily, from a dynamic oral tradition of story telling, in which is revealed a cultural hero of mythic proportions (Lhalungpa 1979:vii–viii). But Milarepa is by no means the only such culture hero (see preceding footnote). There are several local oral traditions surrounding spiritual practitioners. Dowman notes that:}\]

Drukpa Kunley has become more than an historical figure. In Bhutan he is a culture hero around whom a web of stories and legends, facts and fictions, have been spun... But in the abundance of authentic tales told of him, he is the archetypal divine madman, whose personality is formed by the imperatives of the mythic hero of this mode of spiritual being... (Dowman 1980:14)

\[^{6}\text{Ma (ma) is a suffix denoting female gender, which is used in some contexts with khandro (see discussion below).}\]
immediate features of the sacred landscape of Karzha Khandroling, and that one of their main functions is to validate and empower that sacred landscape and the practice tradition of Tibetan Buddhism that flourishes there today. This is a major function of most namthar, written or oral, because a namthar is told or written for a purpose, and that purpose is normally the onward continuance of the spiritual lineage with whom the namthar’s subject is associated. Namthar (in which I include here oral stories about past lamas and teachers) thus differs from familiar Western literary forms, even from the superficially similar Western genre of hagiography, since Christian saints are not in general links in the onward lineage of spiritual practice in the same way as Tibetan lamas.

There has been considerable attention in recent academic literature on namthar, and a continuing re-evaluation of the nature of this genre’s usefulness to the western scholar. An example of the earlier approach to namthar by Western academics is found in Tucci’s treatment of the namthar of both Gotsangpa and Orgyanpa, which was originally published in 1940, and again in the collection Opera Minora in 1971. Tucci extracts the relevant geographical and historical data from the namthar, confirming Gotsangpa’s residence in Karzha on his pilgrimage during the first quarter of the thirteenth century (Tucci 1971:376-382), and likewise that of his disciple, Orgyanpa (Tucci 1971:410-411), for Karzha is the place of pilgrimage preceding entry into Oddiyana, identified by Tucci as the Swat Valley. Tucci mentions that the namthar are full of ‘magical details’ but does not elucidate these, deciding that they are not relevant to the western scholar (Tucci 1971:375, 383-384).

The ethnographic history of Karzha Khandroling has indicated both something of the nature of these details and their relevance for an anthropological

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7Most of the stories about Gotsangpa and his disciple Orgyanpa are firmly associated with specific places in Karzha. For instance, there is the story which explains the presence of a tall piece of wood, sticking out of the rock at Yurdzong, which was thrown across the valley by Gotsangpa in anger when he was unable to light a fire because the wood was wet. There is a story to explain Gotsangpa’s body prints in Gotsangpa Drude, now known as Lama Gonpa. Above Lama Gonpa there is a tall rock plinth rising vertically from the ground, which was placed there by Orgyanpa. Much explanation and interpretation of these various stories are possible. Further, a very considerable research project could explore the relationship between the local oral tradition of Gotsangpa and his numerous namthar. Aziz’s work on Padampa Sangye (pha dam pa sangs rgyas) in Dingri (ding ri) well illustrates the wealth of material available when the local traditions surrounding a spiritual practitioner are explored. We learn not only about the Indian siddha himself, but much about the people of Dingri and their lives (Aziz 1979:19-37; 1980).
understanding of Karzha Khandroling. In order to further this analysis it is necessary to look to the oral tradition surrounding Gotsangpa, which is largely constituted of the 'magical details', as evidenced by the story which introduces this Section.

This particular story about Gotsangpa pivots about an apparently magical encounter with a dakini. Indeed this in an important ingredient in the oral tradition of Karzha Khandroling, 'Land of the Dakini', a name which, I was told, was bestowed by Gotsangpa himself. Gotsangpa recognised that Karzha was inhabited by many special women.

This Gotsangpa episode is probably the most important one for the Kardangpa, since it explains and empowers Jabjez Gonpa, in the centre of their village. Through this story we learn much about the nature of Karzha, and the exemplary practice of the yogin who travelled through there on his spiritual quest which led him ultimately to Oddiyana. Jabjez Gonpa which has been visited by countless pilgrims since that time is understood and explained in a way meaningful to the people living in Kardang, and to the pilgrims who visit on their own spiritual quest. Such pilgrims may or may not have read one of the Gotsangpa namthar. Certainly their pilgrimage is enhanced by the stories the locals tell about this great Drukpa yogi.

As I gradually entered into the world of the Karzhapa, such stories also became meaningful to me, and the places that I visited became alive with the telling and the retelling of these stories of Gotsangpa's spiritual quest. It was during my initial visit to the new Thakur house in Gondhla as a member of the all male wedding party of Prabhat Thakur (see Section I and Chapter 2), while we were collecting the young bride, that I first noticed the large cave further up the hillside and enquired about it, learning a little about Gotsangpa amidst the wedding festivities, drinking and dancing. I had wandered through the ruins of the old Thakur house, which had been attached to the multi-storeyed tower.\(^8\) Later, I heard the story of Gotsangpa's encounter with the dakini from that place, and the

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\(^8\)I was told that this tower at one time marked the border between Western Tibet and India. There is a question as to the historicity of this claim (see Chapter 2), though the tower, which commands a good view of the Chandra valley, may have been built for defence purposes. It is said that it was on top of Gondhla Thakur's house, which had in the past joined this tower, that Gotsangpa had found the dakini, shovelling snow.
ruined house through which I had wandered took on a new significance. The most elaborate version recounted to me occurred within the context of undertaking the khora around Drilburi.

Before looking more closely at this one Gotsanga episode, I will direct attention to the re-evaluation of namthar, mentioned above, as this pertains to the ‘magical details’ which largely constitute the stories told in the local tradition. In one of his numerous “English Prefaces”, published in 1969 Gene Smith indicated the potentiality of a more productive treatment of namthar:

The traditional Tibetan scholar now seems gradually beginning to manifest an interest in the historical and critical approaches that we so esteem; likewise, I would hope that western Tibetologists might begin to appreciate a work of tibetan literature not simply in terms of biography or history or liturgy but rather with an esteem for the insights into eternal psychological truths that are often to be found therein. Then we might see the beginning of a genuine dialogue between the two cultures. (Smith, 1969a:2).

That such a dialogue has begun is evidenced by several recent translations of Tibetan namthar.9 These translated namthar maintain their integrity as "liberation life-stories" (Willis 1983:22), with respect for their function and use within the Tibetan tradition as, "ultimately a practical instruction, a guide to the experiences and visions of one developed being" (Smith 1969a:2). The last chapter from Allione's contribution, "The Biography of A-Yu Khadro, Dorje Paldrön", is of considerable interest10 and as Allione notes:

9Several publication have appeared within the last ten to fifteen years. To name but a few: Dowman's Sky Dancer (1984) and The Divine Madman: The Sublime Life and Songs of Drukpa Kunley (1980); Douglas and Bays' The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava (1978); Tarthang Tulku's Mother of Knowledge (1983); Allione's collection, Women of Wisdom (1984); Lhalungpa's The Life of Milarepa (1979), (although Milarepa's biography was first translated into French in 1925, and English in 1928), and the Nalanda Translation Committee's The Life of Marpa the Translator (1982). Apart from the last chapter in Allione's contribution (see below), all the these individual are famous and not contemporary. While not biographies of contemporary individuals, Snellgrove's translation of four namthar, Four Lamas from Dolpo (1967), reveals information about individuals known in their own locality, rather than throughout Tibet, while Macdonald's presentation of the namthar of a twentieth century Sherpa lama provides the biography of a contemporary individual with a local reputation (Macdonald 1980a, 1981).

10Not only is Áyú (a ū, a yo) Khadro a female adept but she is also more or less contemporary, as she died in 1953 at the age of 115. Her life was simple and she was not famous in Tibet, nor was she a recognised reincarnation. However, her story is inspirational precisely because of these qualities. Only a dozen or so women have risen to eminence in
Through [Namkhai] Norbu Rinpoche's description of how the biography came into being we can see the process of the making of a Namthar very vividly. We can see that what she selected would be relevant for another practitioner to know. (Allione 1984:235).

Concurrent with the re-evaluation of the namthar genre, there has been a growing interest among Western scholars in the lives of very ordinary individuals whose experiences reveal much about the society although lacking the qualities that would warrant a namthar (Aziz 1976b; 1987b: esp.77-78; Willis 1983, 1984) and in the dynamic oral traditions (Macdonald 1980b; Jackson, D. 1984; Oppitz 1974; 1983; Strickland 1983). Aziz's recent contribution, "Moving Towards a Sociology of Tibet", raises several worthwhile issues. She suggests that with the sophisticated social analysis now developed after two decades of women's studies, a real understanding of Tibetan society is possible through an examination of women in society, a study which naturally includes its complement, the study of men (Aziz 1987b:72-86; also Aziz 1988).

As mentioned previously, I discovered that when I collected family genealogies there was a tendency for people to forget the sisters and father's sisters who had become practitioners, while remembering details about the fathers (and father's brothers) and brothers who had done so (Chapter 5). I also noted a greater tendency for people to forget the names, household and Rus affiliations of women from previous generations, while remembering these details of the men.12 I collected short life stories for the practitioners from Kardang and Lama Gonpa, Tibetan Buddhism and they are historical/mythical figures such as Yeshe Tsogyal (eighth century) and Machig Labdron (eleventh century), as well as the other women whose biographies Allione has compiled together. Although their lives provide inspiration they are somewhat distant and remote figures (Allione 1984: Dowman 1984:xiv; Gross 1986, 1987a, 1987b; Gyatso 1985; Klein 1985a, 1985b, 1987a; Willis 1984:15).

11Ayu Khandro's account of her life to the young Namkhai (nam kha'i) Norbu Rinpoche took place within the context of her transmission and teaching to him when she was 113 years old. The selection of details and events from her life story as she told it places great emphasis on the teachings she had received, and from whom; the places she had visited and the practices she had done; and other practitioners she had met and with whom she had travelled. She presents the story of her spiritual development and path, which certainly serves as an inspirational instruction for other practitioners (Allione 1984:236-257, and see comments below in text).

12For instance, the differences between details remembered for Jampha Mêmé and Abhi have been discussed in Section II.
and generally found the chödsa more reticent than the chöspa to speak at length about themselves.

However, all practitioners seemed more comfortable and talked at greater length about their teachers, than about their own life experiences. For instance, Abhi Tsenku delighted in recounting anecdotes about Kunga Rinpoche, whom she had served for several years at Lama Gonpa, whereas she found it difficult to describe much about her own activities. For some practitioners, such as Lama Paljor Lharje for whom a short biography has been given in Chapter 6, a more detailed life story was possible. The stories told by the practitioners consist of information pertaining to their interest in the spiritual path, meeting their teachers, pilgrimages, and retreats. Childhood memories, if mentioned at all, related to their interest in the teachers and teachings.

The relationship between the genre of namthar and biography collected orally is of particular interest to the anthropologist and other researchers who rely on oral biographies and histories as a source of information, as it is useful to establish the cultural models (if any) which are employed by individuals presenting details of their life.

Janice Willis collected details of the life of Chongru (skyong ru) Tulku as he narrated it in a series of interviews (Willis 1983). Willis found unexpected correspondence between the written genre and the oral biography, particularly as the latter were also filled with the uncanny and fantastical, though she also

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13 Aziz found similar enthusiasm among the Dingriwa: "Once a devotee gets to know his lama, he seems to take much personal delight in recounting intimate details of the master's life" (Aziz 1978:224, and Aziz 1976a:163–164).

14 Lama Sangye Tenzin, a Sherpa, composed his own biography in Tibetan, at the request of his student and collaborator, A.W. Macdonald. Sangye Tenzin discusses the larger framework which guided his autobiography, which he was reluctant to write. The namthar and its presentation in English provide an interesting and useful example of the genre of namthar and considerable insights into the life of a contemporary individual expressed in the exemplary biographical framework appropriate to a spiritual practitioner, and namthar (Macdonald 1980a:124; 1981). See also Heather Karmay (1985) on the making of modern biography.

15 Unlike Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche who recorded the details of Ayu Khandro's life, Willis is not a disciple of her subject but a western academic researcher and Chongru Tulku’s account of his life contained many details of miraculous events which Willis found unsettling. For instance, Chongru Tulku not only transported her back to mythic time in order to relate his life history, but also recounted several "miraculous feats" as his own, even as a child, in a matter of fact manner.
suggests that the recent social and political upheaval in Tibet may result in a "change in content and form of the traditional biographical mode" (Willis 1983:33).\textsuperscript{16}

Her treatment of this material provides a provocative and useful analysis\textsuperscript{17} which sheds light on the disjuncture of our rational academic tradition with the apparently fantastic reality of the spiritual practitioner, and she certainly furthers the dialogue Smith hoped for, noting as Crapanzano had done in 1980, the distinction between the reality of personal history and the truth of autobiography (Willis 1983:29-31; Crapanzano 1980:4-5).

The former (personal history) rests in the presumption of a correspondence between a text, or structure of words, and a body of human actions; the latter (autobiography) resides in the text itself without regard to any external criteria, save, perhaps the I of the narrator (Frye 1976). Their equivalence is, I believe, a Western presumption. (Crapanzano, quoted from Willis, 1983:31)

This biographical data based on recently collected materials, and Willis' treatment of it, is in many ways more tantalising than her later treatment of written namthar,\textsuperscript{18} in which the differences and similarities between namthar and the sacred biographies or hagiographies of early Christian saints are examined. The conclusion drawn is that Buddhist mam-thar differ from Western hagiography in at least one important way: unlike most hagiographies, mam-thar do more than just inspire and edify, they instruct as well, setting forth, albeit in veiled language, detailed descriptions of practice and

\textsuperscript{16}The biography recorded by Willis in an interview with a female practitioner is much shorter, and is considered in relation to published biographical material of four other women practitioners (including two brief accounts from Aziz's material), demonstrating the various lifestyles available to female practitioners (Willis 1984).

\textsuperscript{17}Willis introduces her essay with a short discussion of the academic study of biography cross-culturally, noting that more attention has been given to the study of secular rather than religious persons, except by historians of religion. She identifies the two major anthropological contributions as the 'cultural models' approach (e.g. Bateson, Geertz), which sees biography as an expression of a cultural ideal, and the 'life history' approach, which emphasises individual diversity in contrast to cultural patterning (Willis 1983:20-22).

\textsuperscript{18}Willis' evaluation of the namthar genre is based on the examination of six biographies from the Gelugpa Mahamudra lineage, originally composed on the eighteenth century. Her published assessment of this genre focusses particularly on the life of one Chokyi Dorje.
instructions for future practitioners of the path. (Willis 1985:308).19

Although recognising the relevance of namthar to the practitioner, Willis has overstated the role of namthar.20 Namthar supplement the specific teachings on the practices, rather than "providing detailed descriptions of practice and instructions" as Willis puts it, which suggests that the namthar is a "practice manual" and that through reading the secret biography one would know how to practice. Quite simply namthar is not, and one does not.21

Decler has considered namthar genre in relation to another genre from the Tibetan tradition, that of the Dharma Histories (chos 'byung). Such a comparison reveals much about the nature and function of both genres. He suggests that generally namthar instruct a practitioner about the types of practice, the nature of the path and in the case of the particular namthar he examines, the order in which practices from a particular tantric cycle should be sought (Decler 1989:26-27). Moreover, he finds that, "the two presentations complement one another, are equally necessary, are each 'superior' in their own way, all depending on what one is after at the moment." (Decler 1989 unpub:11) Specifically,

the chos 'byung-s illustrate/prove the uninterrupted transmission of the teachings in Guru-disciple line, with indications of their individual contributions. They are a concern for scholars keen on knowing who authored which commentary, on the basis of what, and who translated it and who improved upon an earlier

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19Willis again states her position a few pages later, "...one of the main functions of rnam-thar is the imparting of actual descriptions of tantric practices...providing detailed practical instructions to persons..." (Willis 1985:311).

20Her overstatement is in part a result of her methodology, that of comparing and contrasting two apparently similar genres from different cultures. But see also Decler's footnote in a recent paper presented at the International Seminar of Tibetan Studies in Japan, in which he suggests the way in which Willis's interpretation of the namthar she uses is overstating the type of instruction offered (Decler 1989:35). This weakness in Willis's analysis results from an insufficient involvement in practice context of the Tibetan traditions. See also footnote 60 below.

21Occasional namthar, such as the life of Naropa translated by Guenther (Guenther 1963), may include practice instructions in a concise form. However they are not, and are not regarded as, detailed practice manuals. Within the Vajrayana one requires transmission or empowerment, wang (dbang), permission to study the text lung (lung) as well as precise instruction, tri (khrid), before one is able to engage in practice. Refer discussion on Wang and Tripon in Section III. In Dzogchen one similarly requires transmission known as Direct Introduction (rangshupa, rang shes pa) from the Master, as well as oral explanation (see Namkhai Norbu 1986:15-17, 21, 63).
translation; also what commentary became standard and why, at the cost of which others fell into oblivion and for what reason, — whereas the "mam.thar" directly evokes, by glimpses 'shows us the mystery'. (Decleer 1989:15.)

As Decleer further explains, by this he means that the function of namthar is to "EVOKE a way of seeing and to awaken the same experience in the reader" or to communicate the "feeling tone of how it works, and how to go about asking instructions, or become efficient in altruistic endeavours" (Decleer 1989:10-11).22

The strength of Decleer's analysis lies in his consideration of the complementarity of two genres from the Tibetan tradition. What emerges is a partial understanding of how namthar is used by practitioners and scholars from within the tradition.23 Extending this methodology, namthar can be examined in relation to the actual teaching and practical instructions given to the students of the meditative and contemplative traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.24 This investigation requires a broad understanding of the tradition, both practically and textually, as well as specific and detailed analysis of a particular practice lineage in which to ground the discussion.25 The result is an understanding of namthar in its social context. The biographies presented later in this section, on Kardangpa Norbu

22This relates to Crapanzano's distinction used by Willis between the truth of personal history and the truth of autobiography, see above.

23The Dharma histories are naturally considered in relation to the namthar by scholars, see, for instance, Dowman (1984:xx). Decleer's contribution is that he has analysed the relative function and use of two genres. The collaboration between Sangye Tenzin and Macdonald into the history of the Sherpa people has resulted in a namthar of Sangye Tenzin; a "chos 'byung", which relies on the oral traditions of Sherpa history and includes in the third section a history of gonpa founded since 1936; and a "mes rab", which traces the succession of ancestors. The third section of the "chos 'byung" and the namthar are complementary (Macdonald 1980a, 1980b, 1981). Several issues also relevant to the Karzha material, concerning historicity, oral traditions and the social function of these genres within the society in which they are used are raised by this Sherpa material. See also Smith (1971a).

24Anne Klein notes that the genres of namthar and liturgy (sadhana, Skt.) along with the commentaries on the liturgy, are complementary, in her examination of the liturgical literature focused on Yeshe Tsogyal (Klein 1987a). See also Decleer (1978).

25By combining methods usually considered the prerogative of the historian of religions, for instance, with those usually considered the prerogative of the anthropologist, a greater understanding of the namthar genre can be gained. Goodman's dissertation on the Lonechen Nyingnik (klong chen snying thig) clearly demonstrates the interrelationships between the Mannagadé (see footnote 42 below) and associated namthar, although his study does not attempt to provide the larger detailed social and historical context of the terma cycle (Goodman 1983).
Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche, when considered in relation to the material in the first three sections of this thesis, are intended to help generate such an understanding.

However, before presenting these biographies, I wish to examine more closely the nature of the instruction offered in namthar, which lies with our ability to decipher the deeper meaning of "veiled language", if present (Decleer 1989:esp. 25-27). I contend that this ability is dependent upon the reader's familiarity with the ideological framework, particularly the teachings and practice lineage to which the subject of the namthar belonged.

A three-fold division within namthar, made on the basis of level of meaning is recognised within the Tibetan tradition:26 1) chi (phyi'i) namthar, or outer biography, which contains the more mundane biographical details of birth, early life and meetings with teachers; 2) nangi (nang gi) namthar or inner biography, which includes details about the types of practice and the specific meditative cycles and initiations;27 3) sangwa'i (gsang ba'i) namthar or secret biography, which describes the meditative experiences and visions of the practitioner.

This level is the most problematic within the genre. Some, like Tucci, have simply omitted it from their translation on the basis of its assumed irrelevance. Willis has drawn attention to the importance of this level of namthar, and its relationship to spiritual practice.28

As mentioned in Section III, particularly with regard to the instructions given by Gegan Khyentse on making a shrine, this three-fold division applies to the Refuge, the apparent object to which practice is directed.29 Engaging actively with

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27 As Decleer noted with regard to the namthar he studied (see above) information imparted included the order in which practices from a particular tantric cycle should be sought, a useful guide to the path for the practitioner.

28 But note qualifications, mentioned above.

29 The distinction between chi, nang(i) and sang(wa'i) can be applied to many aspects of Tibetan practice. Sometimes, as in the Anuttarayoga and Anuyoga Tantras, with their characteristic four-fold distinctions, a fourth level, that of 'very secret', is added. Levels of meaning are revealed with progression of practice within the practice paths. See footnote 32.
and understanding the Refuge is the crux of the path of practice. Further, levels of Refuge are correlated to the Kaya or ku (sku), the various aspects or states of Buddhahood; and to the different Yana or tegpa (theg pa), the paths of practice. Such correspondences are made systematically with variances depending upon the level of teaching, within either of the two main methods of practice, Chagchen or Dzogchen. As such, these correspondences constitute a detailed philosophical system or view of understanding, which the practitioner embraces or enters into progressively. It is not my intention to elucidate these correspondences except in so far as they assist in indicating the way in which the third level of meaning within the namthar genre may be deciphered.

Briefly then, the Outer refuge consists of the Three Jewels or Kunchog sum: the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; the Inner Refuge of the Three Roots or Tsawa sum: Guru, Deva and Dakini, or Lama, Yidam and Khandro; and the Secret Refuge refers to the Nadi, Prana and Bindu (Skt.) or Tsa, Lung and Tiglé (rtsa, rlung, thig le), the constituents of the Yogic Body which the practitioner uses and develops in specific yogic practices. It is the practitioner actively engaged in this


31This corresponds to the differences between the New translation schools and the Old translation schools, see footnote 00 Chapter 7. Whichever method of practice is used, either Chagchen or Dzogchen, the result - enlightenment or realisation or Buddhahood - is the same. Normally a practitioner follows one method as her or his practice path. As mentioned previously, Togdan Shakya Shri used and taught both methods, as consequently did the teachers of the Drukpa practice lineage with whom I studied. Therefore I discuss both methods and their systems of teaching.

32There is a huge body of teachings in which these systems of correspondences are encoded and presented symbolically. Teachings explaining these are given to the practitioner, who gradually learns the significance of the distinctions made e.g. Sutrayana — Mantrayana; Hinayana — Mahayana — Vajrayana; the path of renunciation — the path of transformation — the path of self liberation; Rupakaya — Dharmakaya; Nirmanakaya — Sambhogakaya — Dharmakaya — Svabhavikakaya (Skt.); Body — Speech — Mind (see previous chapter); and so on. Elucidation is beyond the scope of the present discussion. See Dilgo Khyentse 1988; Namkhai Norbu 1986; Thondup 1986:15-42; etc.

33This formulation of the refuge is from the Longchen Nyintik ngöndro system, on which this is a commentary:

the subtle veins (Tib. rtsa), in which circulate the various energies (rlung) of the body, energies that carry along these veins the...essences (thig-le). In the deluded state these three are related to the three poisons, attachment, hatred and ignorance; in the wisdom state they are related to the three kaya (Dilgo Khyentse 1988: 103, footnote 26).

In the Drukpa Kargyu ngöndro commentary by Apo Rinpoche, the third level of refuge is explained as subsumed or embodied within one’s tsawe lama. Within this practice lineage such a teacher is an adept of the inner yoga practices of Naro Chödrug, the Six Yogas of
level of practice for whom the secret biography will have meaning. Alternatively, an understanding of the philosophical and symbolic systems contained within the practice are necessary to reveal the meaning behind and significance of the "magical details", "veiled language" and "mystical and visionary experiences" of the namthar. It is only when one already knows that the meaning is apparent, and as one's understanding and familiarity with the symbolic system employed increases, so does the meaning that may be found. In this way understanding is developed, and in this way namthar may instruct the practitioner.

Furthermore, if one does not know how to practice, then one does not know the meaning, nor can one translate authentically. This certainly applies to some attempts that have been made at translation, for as Declerq points out, difficult passages have been frequently omitted or glossed over in translation, and frequently the omission is justified by saying that the material is of no interest to the scholar, and so on. Often, it is the Songs of Experience (mgur), which contain the visionary insight in the namthar that are passed over in translation, although it is

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Naropa. In these Completion Stage (rdzogs rim) practices, one works with the yogic body (see Section III).

This correspondence is well understood within the tradition as indicated by Tulku Choegyal Gyamtso's comments: "The 'internal biography'...describes spiritual evolution in terms of veins, subtle energies, and the essential, elemental body (rtsa rlung thig le)" (Dowman 1984:7-8). See also Dowman (1984:xiii, 217-252); and Klein (1985a:125).

This "self-secrecy" is discussed by Trungpa (e.g. 1972) and also by Gross, one of his students (1985, 1987b). See also Anderson (1980), who uses the term "open secret".

See comments in Chapter 1. The art of translation is complex. Reading English translations from the Tibetan can often create confusion for the reader as one struggles with the sense, or lack of it, that the translator found in a text, particularly if the text under consideration involves complex philosophical material, multi-valent symbols, and is practice related. See comments by Chogyam Trungpa (1982:xiv); Gross (1987a:1-2), Lipman (1987:xvii-xxv). Within the tradition, textual study requires the appropriate lung. Gene Smith has observed,

What we are likely to see is the growth of a scholarship of the gifted amateur...Research in the areas of Tibetan religion and philosophy may well become the preserve of believers and practitioners of the tradition. This trend may well break new ground in widening our understanding of Buddhist philosophy as well as more mundane subjects such as Tibetan linguistic skills...In the future a far greater percentage of research on Tibetan religion is likely to have an experiential dimension (Smith 1985:x-xi).

See Tucci on the namthar of the Drukpa Yogis, Gotsangpa and Orgyanpa, mentioned above.
these that a practitioner (and possibly most Tibetans) would consider most essential and most interesting. Moreover, it is these songs and the details of visions that largely constitute the secret biography (Decleer 1989:10-12, 15-16, 24-27).

With regard to the oral tradition in Karzha which is associated with Gotsangpa, these three levels have a physical reality associated with pilgrimage sites (see Map 3 and Diagram 1, Chapter 2). The outer khora is undertaken, travelling in a clockwise direction, through following the Bhaga valley upstream, crossing the Baralacha, and descending the Chandra valley. The inner khora departs from this main route, and entails visiting the caves associated with Gotsangpa. The secret khora takes one to Drilburi, the self-created stupa. As mentioned above, the degree of elaboration of the episodes of Gotsangpa’s life, as told orally, is correlative with the level of the khora undertaken, which physically is associated with vertical ascent, from the valley floor to the mountain peak. Symbolically, this ascent is from the base or foundation of the chorten to its apex, or from the outer gates of the mandala to its centre. Furthermore, the meaning contained in these stories from the oral tradition is elaborated upon and revealed in conjunction with progression on the path of practice.38

The following discussion is but an indication of the potentiality of this direction of research which provides the fundamental social context necessary for a penetrating analysis of namthar, and the oral traditions associated with figures such as Gotsangpa. It will, however, demonstrate more about both the instructional component of namthar and these oral traditions, and how they are used.

The principle of the practice lineage, such as that of the Naro Chödrug, is that through precise transmission and oral instruction, and the accomplishment of the particular practice by the disciple who may then be authorised to transmit, the wisdom or experiential benefits of the practice continue through time. Generally speaking, the teachings are transmitted through two major systems: via a long lineage of transmission, known as ring gyud (ring brgyud), in which the originator of the practice is many generations away from the practitioner today; or via a short lineage, known as nye gyud (nye brgyud), which occurs when an exceptional

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38On levels of meaning associated with another pilgrimage site, that of Halase, Solo Khumbu, see Macdonald (1985:8-11).
practitioner originates a practice lineage through a process of ‘direct revelation’. A further distinction is made within the close lineages. For instance, in Chapter 6 I have explained that with regard to the Naro Chödrug, the teachings of the Six Yogas have a longer transmission lineage which is derived from Naropa. However, there is one special teaching, which Togdan Shri received directly from Tilopa, and so this practice teaching has a much shorter lineage of transmission.

Consequently, these recently originated lineage teachings parallel the terma teachings in the Dzogchen tradition. One of the advantages of these direct revelations which are said to become available when appropriate is that they are considered to have particular potency and applicability at a certain time, whereas in the past and/or in the future they may not be efficacious. It is also considered that such revealed teachings have an authenticity resulting from the shortness of the lineage of transmission which may not be the case with teachings which have been transmitted through many generations (Thondup 1986:62; Dowman 1984:274-304 esp 286; Goodman 1983 unpub:1-10). Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter 7, terma are significant with regard to the revitalisation of the spiritual tradition, which implicitly is a dynamic process.

Ultimately all practice originates from the principle of enlightenment, the (Buddha) Dharmakaya and is communicated appropriately via the Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. Siddhartha Gautama, Garab Dorje and Padmasambhava are three Nirmanakaya manifestations originating major lineages. In the case of the Mahamudra transmission of the Drukpa Kargyu, the Siddha Tilopa is the originator of the close lineage, with the long lineage connecting him to the Sambhogakaya Buddha Vajradhara (see lineage teaching received from Gegan Khyentse and Lama Paljor Lharje in Appendix).

Clearly lineage length is relative. Note that these teachings, which Shakya Shri received directly, are called the oral lineage or nyen gyud (snyan rgyud), which Paljor Lharje, Angrup and Ngawang Rigzin received during their three year retreat from T'ukse Rinpoche, after Apo Rinpoche's death (Chapter 6).

The terma tradition is generally considered to be the province of the Nyingma school and the occurrence of terma is correlative with Dzogchen method, and Padmasambhava in the case of Buddhist teachings. Terma also occur among the modern Bon, again correlative with Dzogchen method. Although the terma tradition is strong among the Nyingma, revealed teachings may occur within any Dzogchen practice lineage, and great Dzogchen practitioners have existed/exist in all major schools. Tsangpa Gyare, the founder of the Drukpa Kargyu was a tertön, as was Gyalwa Gotsangpa (See Tulku Thondup 1986; Hanna n.d.; and discussion in Chapters 6 and 7). Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 6, the teachings of ronyom kordru, which Khunu Rinpoche gave to Paljor Lharje, Angrup and Ngawang Rigzin during their Naro Chödrug retreat, had been hidden by Rechungpa and discovered by Tsangpa Gyare, and Kunga Rinpoche had discovered teachings hidden by Gotsangpa.
The namthar of masters who have received teachings directly in visions (terton), and of those teachers who have originated specific teachings based on their personal meditative experience, provide the context of these meditative experiences and spiritual insights; and also the conditions under which teachings were discovered. As such, namthar are invaluable as an aid to the practitioner who has received the relevant transmission and teaching. These teachings based on the meditative experiences of the master are regarded as extraordinary, and transmission for these occurs orally, and in conditions which are limited by secrecy, as is the case with the nyen gyud or spoken lineage teachings of Togdan Shakya Shri on the Naro Chödrug.42

The value of reading the namthar as Decléer has said, lies in its ability to evoke and to communicate the "feeling tone of how it works, and how to go about asking instructions..." (Decléer 1989:10-11). More specifically for a practitioner, the value of the namthar is in its capacity to elucidate the nature of spiritual achievement, accomplishment and realisation in terms of experience and expected results in terminology specific to the level of practice, either at an exoteric level for practitioners of the Outer Tantras, or at an esoteric level with specific references to the yogic body for practitioners of the Inner Tantras43

The manner in which namthar come into being further substantiates the nature of their use. A namthar of a teacher, a terton or lineage holder, is usually written by a very close disciple who is quite familiar with the significant spiritual experiences of their teacher through several hearings in the normal course of teaching and practical instruction. The master's personal written records of meditative experiences and visions are frequently used as a primary source; and these may also contain the specific instructions based on personal experience that

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42See previous two footnotes. The corpus of Dzogchen teachings are organised into three series: Semde (sems sde), the series on the Nature of Mind; Longde (klong sde), the series of Space; and Manngagde (man ngag sde), the Essential series. Each series is a complete path in itself but all are usually taught together. Within Manngagde (Upadesa Skt.) teachings are condensed by masters according to their experiences and the discovery of terma (Namkhai Norbu 1986:23-25, 80-82; Thondup 1986:239 note 138: Goodman 1983:3-4). All terma cycles, or nying thig, constitute the Manngagde of which there are over one hundred volumes consisting of teachings which are the advice of masters on practices, based on the masters' experiences. These are transmitted secretly.

43See Chapter 7, footnote 19.
constitute the Manngagdé class of Dzogchen teachings, or the nyen gyud teachings. Sometimes more than one namthar exists for a particular individual, in which case there may be an 'outer' biography and an 'inner' one. In this case, it is likely that the outer namthar will be more widely read. The inner biography, full of details and references to practices, will be of interest to practitioners actually engaged in the practice lineage. However, different levels may exist within the one namthar.

This scenario pertains to traditional Tibetan society. As Willis has suggested, recent social and political upheaval is likely to be associated with changes in content and form in the traditional mode of biography (see above). Willis' account of Chongru Tulku's life, with his strong political emphasis on the Chinese presence in Tibet, suggests a likely area of change in content. Not only is there change in content, but the biographer is a western academic researcher, collecting life details and oral histories on a Uher tape recorder, interviewer-style, with intent quite different from the traditional disciple-biographer (Willis 1983:22-24, 31-33).

Another recent spiritual biography, that of Ayu (a yu, a yo) Khandro, mentioned above, is non-traditional in many ways, further indicating changes that result from rapid and extreme social disruption. Her biographer, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, was her disciple, though he spent only two months with her towards the end of her life, in 1951. Unlike most Tibetans, he was in the habit of taking notes so he was able to construct this biography in some detail thirty-one years after he had talked with her about her life. He initiated these discussions, asking her questions "for example, about her birth and childhood, and she replied..." (Namkhai Norbu 1986:238-239).

Circumstances have resulted in her biography coming into existence in both Italian and English, primarily for the benefit of Westerners. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is Professor of Oriental Philosophy at Naples University and has been teaching and conducting research in Tibetan cultural history since 1964. He has

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44See footnote 42.

45Klein has incorrectly given the year 1945 for this meeting (1985a:116), which by the Tibetan calendar occurred in an Iron Rabbit year or 1951 (Allione 1984:236, and personal communication Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche). Elsewhere Klein gives Ayu Khandro's year of death as 1947 (1985b:77), whereas she died in 1953, a Water Serpent year.

46See Chapter 2 with regard to research on pre-Tibetan kingdom of Zhang Zhung.
many students in Italy and elsewhere. Many of these are women, at a time when Western society has been involved with a strong feminist movement and the reassessment of gender roles. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche regards the teachings and transmissions he received from Ayu Khandro as very significant for him, considering her as one of his two main masters. At this time, there is no namthar for Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s other master, Changchub Dorje, who was a male practitioner, in a western language.

However, Namkhai Norbu’s Western disciples have a great interest in this female practitioner and have requested details of her life story, hence this biography, which was written, originally in Tibetan and then translated orally into Italian, and simultaneously into English by Barrie Simmons for an American audience. This was transcribed, edited and footnoted by Allione, an American, and published in a collection with the translated namthar of five well known Tibetan female practitioners (Allione 1984:xxxii).

Ayu Khandro’s biography has never existed as a Tibetan woodblock text, and indeed Ayu Khandro was not famous in Tibet nor recognised as a reincarnation, although she had a reputation as a practitioner around Dzongsar, where she spent the second half of her life. She was simply a dedicated practitioner, one among

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47Recently scholars have investigated the emergence of Western Buddhism coincidentally with the growth of feminist studies, and explored the feminine principle within "traditional" Tibetan society and textual material, assessing the implications for the development of feminist perspectives. See Aziz (1987b); Gross (1984, 1985 unpub, 1986, 1987a, 1987b); Gyatso (1987); Klein (1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987a, 1987b); and Willis (1987). While several issues are raised in this material which I could address using the field data from Karzha, within the context of this dissertation my focus is on the position of women, particularly chöasma, in Karzha and on Karzha as Khandroling.

48During Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s first visit since the events of 1959 to the community of practitioners established by Changchub Dorje in East Tibet in 1988, he learnt of the details of this master’s death. There may be a namthar. If so this will no doubt be translated into English and Italian in due course. If not, one may be written for the benefit of western students.

49The details included in this biography refer principally to the outer life story, and the inner biography, with details of her practice path, which provide much needed inspiration and a role model for Western female practitioners. It is certainly possible for Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to write a secret biography for Ayu Khandro, as she left him a volume on her terma of the dakini Simhamukha (Skt.), her writings, advice and spiritual songs (Allione 1984:257).

50I am indebted to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for clarification about aspects of Ayu Khandro’s life, as well as to Dzongsar Khy entse Rinpoche. Aziz suggests that Ayu Khandro was or is famous (1987b:73). Tashi Tsering drew my attention to the fact that Ayu Khandro
many about whom we know little. Such portraits reveal more about the nature of the religieux in Tibetan society than what we learn in the namthar of the exceptional individuals whose biographies are recorded.

The way in which the biography of Ayu Khandro came into being has more in common with Chongru Rinpoche’s biography collected by Willis than is at first apparent. Neither Chongru Rinpoche nor Ayu Khandro were particularly famous in Tibet, and without the political disruption since the fifties would probably not have had namthar written about them. The method of collection of biographical detail is similar, with an "interviewer" asking questions and recording the replies, and both biographies were written for non-traditional audiences, Western practitioners and scholars such as historians of religion, anthropologists and Tibetologists. These circumstances provide further indications of the changes in the form and content of biographies emerging consequent to the extreme social and political upheaval in Tibet.

The fieldwork methods and domains of interest of the 'new ethnography' which focus on oral history and biography (Chapter 1), indicate an analytic and methodological framework which might productively be applied to the details of the life stories of spiritual practitioners, whether famous teachers, tertons or reincarnates, or more ordinary spiritual practitioners. However, this analysis is hampered without due consideration of the genre of namthar: their structure, levels of meaning and social uses. When these dual perspectives of analysis, each of which derives from a distinct cultural tradition, are used in conjunction, a more powerful assessment of orally collected spiritual biography is possible, whether episodes from the oral tradition associated with historical figures such as Gotsangpa, or the life stories of ordinary practitioners such as Lama Paljor Lharje (see Chapter 6) and Lama Sidji (see below), or more exceptional practitioners such as Kardangpa may well be famous in the West, but in traditional Tibetan society her renown was local.

51In the case of Norbu Rinpoche in note form, and in the case of Willis, on reel to reel tape.

52Sangye Tenzin’s namthar (Macdonald 1980a, 1980b and 1981) provides an interesting comparison: he himself wrote the text in Tibetan, rather than the biography being the result of the researcher's interviews; the social and political turmoil caused by the Chinese are a significant element in the biography; and the audience for whom the biography was written are both traditional, the Sherpa people, and non-traditional, Western academics.
Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche, whose biographies are now both held in cassette form in Karzha dialect at Kardang gonpa, as well as existing in English translation.\(^{53}\)

There are no Tibetan namthar for either of Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche. Those who remembered the stories about these two men were extremely busy during the summer months when I was active in Karzha. I also found that my attempts to ask questions of them, interviewer-style, elicited poor response. The solution was to leave recording equipment with Lama Paljor Lharje, who had become enthused with the project. During the winter months when such storytelling usually takes place, perhaps over a cup or two of chang, the recordings were made, in the peoples’ own dialect, on a small cassette recorder. The results are authentic—namthar in the form of oral biography in a society which has no written form for its language. The following summer, Lama Paljor and another experienced linguist and practitioner assisted me in translating the tapes from Karzha dialect into Tibetan and English, with much cross-checking between languages.\(^{54}\) Using these methods I was able to collect data in a culturally relevant form that would otherwise be inaccessible.

I present some of this material in the next chapter, but before doing so return to the discussion of the episode from Gotsangpa’s story, which introduced Section IV. As mentioned, the dakini or khandroma features not only in this particular episode, but in several told about Gotsangpa and his sojourn in Karzha Khandroling.

As the stories were told, I noticed that at no time did the Karzhapa seemed surprised that Gotsangpa should encounter a dakini, apparently living as a normal woman who shovelled snow off the roof of the Thakur house, for instance. Many miraculous events were told to me. Furthermore, I was told that such events occurred not only in the mythic past, but also in the lives of the people with whom I was living. For instance, when the three young men from Kardang Gonpa, including Lama Paljor Lharje, performed the practice of répu in the final months

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\(^{53}\)Cf. the collaborative work of Sangye Tenzin and Macdonald, mentioned in footnotes 9, 14, 23 and 52.

\(^{54}\)I am indebted to both Lama Paljor Lharje and Elizabeth Harper for their considerable assistance on this project.
of their three year, three month and three day Naro Chödrug retreat, the snow melted and it 'rained blossoms'. This was told to me by several different people on several occasions, all of whom had actually witnessed this 'miracle', and attributed it to the blessing and power of the practitioners. Unlike Willis, who had similarly found the miraculous and fantastical in the biography of Chongru tulku, I was not interviewing a refugee in a displaced position, but living with people in their traditional environment; and somehow such stories were not so unsettling to me, but instead seemed to be very much part of the reality the people lived.55

That many of the women of Karzha are special in some way also seemed part of the underlying reality, though they all appeared to be simple, ordinary people. However, as discussed in the ethnographic history of Karzha, there are several anomalies in the position of the women, and particularly of the chösma. It did not occur to anyone to question Karzha as a place of dakini or khandroling, and it is an expectation that for the strong practitioner this underlying reality could manifest, albeit in a manner not apparent to all. The perspective of the Karzhapa on their homeland as a mandala, and an empowering place of practice has been discussed in Chapter 2. The concept of dakini is current throughout the entire Tibetan Buddhist world and is intrinsically related to spiritual practice.

Willis who has made a recent relevant contribution on the nature and meaning of dakini (1987:56-71). I quote:

In the literature and tantric practice contexts of Tibetan Buddhism, the term dakini (Skt.; Tib., mkha' 'gro ma) is fairly ubiquitous. Indeed, it occurs so often these days in western translations of tantric texts, that one expects that it will soon be appearing in The American Heritage Dictionary along with other recently incorporated common places as satori, zen, and mandala. Still, apart from the quite literal definition of the term — i.e., as a feminine noun meaning 'one who goes in the sky' — there remains little consensus about its meaning and... little precision in the various

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55See discussion in Chapter 9, and cf. footnote 15 above, and Willis (1983:27-31). There were many such stories that I heard from numerous sources. The one included in the text is similar to events that one might read about in a namthar, or hear about one's teacher. Cf. Macdonald (1981:67). The correspondences between microcosm and macrocosm, discussed in Chapter 7, are thought to account for such occurrences. In this case the inner, purified, elemental body of the yogic practitioner is the microcosm which affects the surrounding environment, the macrocosm.
attempts to further delineate and characterize its nature and function.

Without doubt, *dakini* represents one of the most important, potent and dynamic images/ideas/symbols within all of Tantra. Yet, precisely owing to such dynamism and power, and to the all-encompassing nature of this symbol, it is almost impossible to pin it down or limit it to a single definition. (Willis 1987:56.)

In the story of Gotsangpa’s encounter with the khandroma, an apparently normal woman was shovelling snow from the roof of a house. Her ability to pick up the dropped shovel from the height of three stories revealed her identity as a dakini. When pursued by Gotsangpa, who had decided to "love her", she literally "flew through the air" with the yogi in hot pursuit. This is the outer level of meaning contained in this episode. That Gotsangpa landed in Kardang leaving the imprint of his knees there in the dakini-turned-into-rock might be taken to imply a rather ungainly result to an unsuccessful chase. But what meaning is found when we understand more about the dakini, and apply the principles of deciphering levels of meaning in namthar discussed above?56

Klein has anchored her analysis of dakini in the figure of Yeshe Tsogyal, as revealed in her namthar, in the liturgy or sadhana (Skt.) in which she is a central figure from a particular revealed cycle of teachings within the Nyingma tradition, and commentaries on that practice.57 Consequently, she has developed a penetrating symbolic analysis derived from the practice context, which focuses on the figure of Yeshe Tsogyal, rather than on the broader dakini symbol. Khandro (*mkha’i gro ma*) ...is a contraction for *mkha’i khams su khyab par ’gro ma*, ‘a lady who journeys pervasively in the element of space’ (Klein 1985b:80), with the implication in terms of practice "to attain the sky-like wisdom; thus the 'body', or wisdom-dimension, of a Sky Woman is a place of refuge" (Klein 1987a:35 note 14).58 This explication of the dakini pertains to the third level of meaning of

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56 After I had learned much and become less naive in the eyes of the Karzhapa, this particular episode was elaborated somewhat, clearly revealing more of the inner meaning.

57 The cycle of teachings is the Longchen Nyintik, the sadhana has been translated by Tulku Thondup and published (1982), and the commentary was written in the eighteenth century by Ngawang Tenzin Dorje (Klein 1987a:20, 33–34).

58 This explication is in terms of Dzogchen meditation techniques, and is informed by reference to the purification of elements discussed in Chapter 7.
namthar, the secret; and with regard to Refuge and spiritual practice, it addresses the relationship between the second and third levels.

Nathan Katz has explored the dakini concept more generally, and summarised the major functions of the dakini in the tantric siddha biographical tradition, to which Drilbupa belonged (see Chapter 2), as follows:

1) inspiring and directing the dr'ub-t'ob (grub thob, siddha Skt.); 2) directly or indirectly initiating the dr'ub-t'ob; 3) the patron of the dr'ub-t'ob...; 4) the source of power of the dr'ub-t'ob; 5) guardians of the ter-ma; and 6) biographers of the dr'ub-t'ob. The k'a-dro-ma may appear in visions, dreams, meditations and as actual women. They are also revered as preceptors of particular yogic practices (i.e., Chö, gCod; Tum-mo, gTum-mo) and may be demonic as well as beneficent. (Katz 1977:28).

Gotsangpa's determination to love this "nice woman" (yet another indigenous gloss for khandroma!) is to be understood relative to tantric practice: he wishes to take initiation with her, taking her as his consort, working at a very advanced level with the subtle yogic body of psychic veins and winds.

Gotsangpa's behaviour is exemplary, as he siezes the opportunity to embark upon such difficult and dangerous practices as soon as the opportunity presents itself. That Gotsangpa has power in this encounter can be understood from his ability to fly through the air with the khandroma. Furthermore, that Gotsangpa

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99See also Willis (1987:64–65). This analysis of the dakini in the siddha namthar by Katz occurs within the framework of a comparison between this Tibetan concept and the Jungian concept of anima (Katz 1977).

98Willis's naivete and lack of practical understanding is revealed in her description of how the dakini "functions within the contexts and symbolism of tantric ritual and practice, itself." She equates enlightenment (bodhi) with, "the perfection of sexual union, simultaneous orgasm (!), (which) is a familiar and direct symbol for the loss of 'self' - what might be called a readily understandable description of sunvata.(!) During such orgasm, both partners experience the 'transcendent emotion' called in the Tantras, samarasa or 'one taste.'(!) Here, neither partner is distinct. It is impossible to distinguish where one ends and the other begins. This experience of 'wholeness' and 'sameness' is accompanied by intensely blissful feeling (!)" (Willis 1987:65).

96Within Vajrayana Buddhism a practitioner is frequently warned of the increasing dangers of the higher tantric practices. The Anuttara yoga and Anuyoga practices are regarded as the most dangerous, and yet the swiftest for achieving siddhi, both relative and absolute. Hesitancy on the part of the would-be siddha, or failure to recognise the dakini, who may be in the guise of an old woman, for instance, is an indication of incomplete development of the yogic practitioner (cf. Willis 1987:62).

95Refer to discussion of Klein's analysis above.
was able to leave an imprint in the dakini/rock is a further indication of his developing siddhi whereby the apparently concrete nature of reality dissolves, resulting from successful dzog rim (rdzogs rim) or completion stage practice.63

Once again, I offer Willis:

And most inclusive of all, within Buddhist tantric contexts, dakini is viewed as the supreme embodiment of the highest wisdom itself. Embracing such wisdom, one becomes Buddha...For in the ultimate, absolute, and final sense, ‘she’ stands for ineffable reality itself. In a tantric universe replete with symbols, dakini...is the symbol par excellence; and being preeminently, constitutively, and inherently symbolic, the dakini always remains a symbol within ‘The Tibetan Symbolic World’. As such, ‘she’ serves always only to represent and suggest — even for the tantric adept — other and deeper, non-discursive experiential meanings. Inevitably, then, ‘she’ remains elusive to academic or intellectual analyses. (Willis 1987:56-57).64

Agreeing with Willis on this point, I offer no attempts at intellectual analysis of "the dakini symbol", and have preferred to quote selectively in this elucidation of the significance of Karzha as Khandroling, indicating salient features particularly in the context of one key encounter which occurred in and between Gondhla and Kardang village.

However, for the people and practitioners of Karzha Khandroling, the accepted reality is experiential spaciousness. When one embarks upon a pilgrimage to Oddiyana, and so travels to Karzha,65 one is endeavouring somehow to escape from linear, historical time and to connect with spiritual practitioners who have frequented the area, notably Padmasambhava,66 Drilbupa, and Gotsangpa. In the case of Kardang, and Karzha, it is Gyalwa Gotsangpa’s ‘presence’ (and not only

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63We know from Gotsangpa’s practice lineage that he was engaged in Anuttara yoga practices.


65Note, as do Snellgrove and Willis, that dakini are especially associated with Uddiyana (Snellgrove 1957:175; Willis 1987:57). See also comments re the Cakrasamvara tantra in Chapter 2.

66I was told that it was the dakini Mandarava, who came from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh, rather than Yeshe Tsogyal, who accompanied Padmasambhava during his stay in Karzha.
his) which imbues the landscape with value as a place of pilgrimage, and a place for spiritual practice within the Tibetan tradition. Indeed, it is an accepted notion among practitioners that one's practice is empowered and energised by practising in places used by great practitioners, and that visions or dreams can occur which connect one directly to teachers separated by historical time. This limitation of linear time is one of the constraints of relative existence which can be overcome through the meditational practices of the Tibetan tradition, according to its exponents, and is regarded as one of the relative realisations, powers, accomplishments or siddhi.

Upon first hearing the story about Gotsangpa, recounted above, I asked how long ago it was that Jabjez, the imprint in the rock, was made. The reply was made with surprised laughter:

Maybe two hundred years — no, five or six hundred years ago that was. Gyalwa Gotsangpa is very old you know. Perhaps even sixteen hundred years ago — a long time, who knows?" (Transcript, Lama Paljor Lharje, September, 1982).

Then, rather like Willis collecting the data on Chongru Tulku, I attempted to impose linear historical time on these wondrous events, referring to information mentioned to me earlier. I asked if it was indeed Kunga Rinpoche's grandfather's grandfather, Jampha Mémé, who was responsible for the gonpa at Jabjez, to which I received the affirmative. Patiently I continued to attempt to unravel the events: Gotsangpa's knee prints, then the actual building of a gonpa to house such important features, and the invitation issued to Jampha Mémé and Abhi to care for the gonpa. The only date I was able to establish with certainty was that the extant building, which has a tin roof, was built about 1978 (four years previously), as the previous gonpa building had been in poor repair.

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67See the above discussion on transmission lineage and the terma tradition. The cave of Maratika in the Everest region near Tholu Gonpa, where Padmasambhava practised with Mandarava is an example of a site which empowers practice. Any site particularly associated with a particular practice or a tantric cycle can be used by a practitioner to enhance the appropriate practice, such as Maratika, with Padmasambhava, the dakini Mandarava and with Long Life practice of Amitayus (Namkhai Norbu 1986:126 and photograph 28; see also Macdonald 1985:9-11); or Driburi with Cakrasamvara (see Chapter 1).

68Linear historical time is considered to be an aspect of apparent concrete reality, see comment above with regard to Gotsangpa's siddhi.
During the course of my fieldwork I came to understand that for those relating these events to me, my queries about timing were largely irrelevant and meaningless, and somewhat amusing, though with great patience questions were answered. The only sense of historical time that could be successfully explored had to depend upon reference to generational forebears, but as the kinship terminology used in Karzha does not differentiate beyond two generations, and so allows one generation to be collapsed into the next, much of the history of Karzha is experienced in mythic time, which is essentially, timeless.69

All the spiritual practitioners at Kardang learn enough Tibetan to read the religious texts, though there are few who are really literate in Tibetan. Some might consider obtaining and reading Gotsangpa's namthar "one of these winters". However, most practitioners spend the winter months involved in meditational pursuits, actually performing the practices that Gotsangpa practiced in these places. Consequently, the transmission of these practices and the continuity of the practice lineage is assured, as vital today as in the thirteenth century. Moreover, the oral tradition associated with Gotsangpa is both strengthened by, and strengthens, the practice lineage.70 The oral traditions, both of practice lineage and biography,71

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69Nyima fed Lhatse, the pyramid shaped mountain behind Kardang Gonpa was traditionally used to tell the time (Chapter 4). There are stories of the sun being held above the peak miraculously, through the power of practitioners, in order to allow harvesting of crops before the snow, late in autumn. Anthropological literature is full of examples of generational collapsing and cultural devices which enable comparatively recent events to be incorporated into the "mythic past" of a culture in a relatively short time. Terma, the tradition of revealed teachings, allow the interpenetration of past and present.

70In his work on the Mollas of Mustang, Jackson makes some pertinent points about the oral traditions of Tibet, noting how the sacred origin of things are affirmed and established in the present through current performances, which preserve and transmit culture (Jackson, D. 1984:esp.84). Refer also Chapter 1.

71There would have been no doubt as to how long ago Gotsangpa made his pilgrimage through Karzha to Oddiyana if the people of Karzha relied upon written texts, especially the Dharma histories, as then events would become fixed in linear time, at least to a degree. Timelessness is often maintained in the written namthar, which often prove difficult to date except with reference to Dharma histories, or other external evidence. Consequently, namthar are sometimes misdated by their Western translators, for instance, Jackson has corrected some dates for namthar of the Dolpo group by one sixty year cycle, see Snellgrove (1967) and Jackson, D. (1984:143 note 67), while Guenther (admittedly writing almost thirty years ago) attributed the life of Naropa he was translating, written in c.1500, to the late twelfth century (Guenther 1963:xv, cf. Smith 1969b:26).
maintain and enhance the quality of timelessness, and the practitioners' connection
with the empowered features of the landscape.72

Symbolically, it is the khandroma, with her ability to move through space
beyond time, who embodies the essence of the practice lineage, which is
transmission.

I have frequently pondered the position of women in Karzha and more
generally in Lahuli society, a theme explored throughout this thesis. In this context,
it is particularly relevant to assess whether the concept of dakini elevates the
position of women in Karzha vis-à-vis the rest of Lahul, and Tibetan society
generally. As Aziz has commented, the sociological data available for such
comparisons are limited (1987b:esp. 84-85; 1988).

Klein has explored the interplay between spheres of symbolic and social
reality, examining female religious imagery and the social roles of Tibetan women
(1985a). In her analysis she differentiates between the "inner ...aspects of a tradition
directed toward personal or spiritual transformation; [and] outer ... aspects primarily
enmeshed with or influenced by sociopolitical variables" (Klein 1985a:114). She
develops this analysis using the biographical details available on Ayu Khandro
(mentioned above), who was born in East Tibet (Klein 1985a:115-118), with
particular focus on the somewhat limited ethnographic data available on the Kham
and Amdo regions of Tibet prior to the Chinese takeover (Klein 1985a:118-124),
and consideration of the symbolism of the female as revealed through the
previously mentioned figure of the dakini Yeshe Tsogyal (Klein 1985a:124-133).73
Klein finds that the manifestation of the egalitarian vision of Buddhist philosophy
fails with regard to the position of women in Tibetan society, as the inner religious
vision of non-duality fails to translate into social egalitarianism, noting particularly
the exclusion of women from positions of power. With regard to the outer religious

72Cf. with Macdonald's comments on oral Sherpa history:
Chos is, in essence, a message which comes from the past; it is relayed
through language; it motivates and gives direction to human behaviour. In
a word, it is lived...(with) social force as a dynamic and highly adaptable
system of beliefs (Macdonald 1980b:140).

73Klein's analysis of the symbolism associated with Yeshe Tsogyal as nurturer and
protector of the teachings of Padmasambhava is insightful in relation to the role dakini play
as custodians of terma (see Chapter 7 and point 5 made by Katz, above).
institution, "women in convents ... were socially subsidiary to men in monasteries" (Klein 1985a:120-121, 133-135).

In a recently published survey, "Tibetan Nuns and Nunneries" (1987:87-99), Karma Lekshe Tsomo summarises the traditional situation:

For the most part, monasteries for men and those for women were distinctly separate in Tibet. In exceptional cases, particularly in the rNyingma tradition, communities of monks and nuns would be located nearby one another, studying together with the same teacher and gathering for assemblies in a common assembly hall. There were also cases of nuns staying in retreat communities or in caves with one or two nuns as companions; others stayed with relatives who provided them with daily necessities, leaving them free to attend to their spiritual practice. (Karma Lekshe Tsomo 1987:87-88).

This description of Tibetan religious institutions, which focuses on the options available to female practitioners, contrasts with the situation encountered at Kardang Gonpa, and in Karzha. As is apparent form the ethnography in Section II, Kardang Gonpa today is comprised of both men and women living together in the one complex. Furthermore, residence at the gonpa is determined by one's household affiliation, not on the basis of gender, as was the case in many Tibetan institutions. Each family from Kardang village had a small gonpa house, and all family members interested in the spiritual life lived in that house, with no discrimination or bias with regard to gender. The often reported hierarchical ranking of male above female was lacking in the actual physical housing

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There is a growing body of data on the outer religious institutions of female practitioners, and the lives of female practitioners, see Aziz (1976a, 1976b, 1988); Fürer-Haimendorf (1976); Miller (1980); Ortner (1983); Willis (1984); and other material mentioned in this chapter.
arrangements at Kardang Gonpa. Thus it can be said that the physical structure of gonpa in Karzha manifests as non-dual, with respect to gender.

However, differentiation on the basis of gender does occur in some activities at the gonpa. Perhaps most importantly in the consideration of Karzha as Khandroling, is the exclusion of the chölsa from the Naro Chödrug practices, although as discussed in Chapter 6, female practitioners learn to read the Tibetan scriptures, undertake a complete meditation programme which includes the ngöndro, shiñé, lhagt’ong, and Chagchen meditation as well as chöd.

With regard to the division of labour within the gonpa, the ani-la usually cook meals and prepared tea in the gonpa kitchen when communal rituals are performed on special days of practice, and generally the younger male practitioners play the accompanying musical instruments during the rituals. This does not exclude the chölsa from the performance of ritual. They can and do participate fully in ritual performances, reciting from the texts, performing mudra (Skt; symbolic hand gestures) and playing the instruments on some occasions, albeit sometimes between visits to the kitchen. Participation in these various activities seemed to some extent a matter of personal preference, as is the case with recruitment into the gonpa, although even the younger chöspa did not engage in communal kitchen duties.

During ritual performances and communal meals, seating arrangements are made on the basis of both gender and age. Although these seating arrangements can be seen to be indicative of relative status, and as such remain fairly stable for gonpa members, I found that on different occasions I was asked to sit in different positions, depending upon the situation. At times I was placed by age in the male

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75See Klein, above, and also see Gross's discussions on Buddhism and feminism, and her observation that the absence of gender based hierarchy, which is a duality, is overcome in the complementarity and balance between male and female (Gross 1984:esp. 184-186; 1986). As mentioned in Chapter 5 footnote 39, the only description of a "combined monastery/nunnery" is of Choslin, in Solukhumbu. It is not clear from this description if there were two gender-based housing complexes at some distance from each other, which Karma Lekshe Tsomo's survey seems to indicate, as the physical layout of the gonpa and housing arrangements are not discussed, although we learn the the female practitioners engage in kitchen activities, join the ritual performances, and undertake solitary retreats (Aziz 1976:155-167).
practitioners’ line, sometimes at the end of this line, and at other times in the female line, either with the new recruits, or with those women of my age.76

At Apo Rinpoche Gonpa, the seating arrangements during ritual were made on relative status, with mixed gender. Ama-la sat after Gegan Khyentse, although she sometimes asked visiting practitioners to sit higher than her. Ama-la did not visit Kardang Gonpa during my fieldwork, but I expect that she would have been seated in a position which reflected her relatively high status as Sangyum of Apo Rinpoche. This is a practice associated status which can be seen to derive from the status of the male practitioner, and the advanced inner yoga practices engaged in.77 That this status derives from the male can be associated with the relative importance of the dakini in spiritual practice, and the lack of emphasis placed on her male counterpart, the daka. Klein comments that

In Tibet, the doctrinal and iconographical usage of the dakini has vastly upstaged that of its male equivalent, the daka. It is difficult to say why, or to fully assess whose interests are most served by such images. (Klein 1985b:81.)

I can only suggest that if the methods and techniques (skilful means) of the Naro Chödrug were transmitted from female to female, that the symbolic importance of the daka (as the complement of wisdom in emptiness?), would be elaborated upon. However, due to fundamental physiological differences between males and females, there are aspects of this complementarity which appear to be inherent, suggesting that some assignations can not be switched. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that an active female practice lineage is possible within the context of these deeply reflexive practices, and as mentioned in Chapter 6, the Naro Chödrug is taught to some female practitioners. However, it is taught by male teachers, thus the control over the knowledge rests with males, rather than females.78

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76This of course indicated my uncertain and very contextual status at Kardang Gonpa. For the practitioners, their relative status and seating position was stable.

77See discussion in Chapter 6.

78As indicated in Chapter 6, my knowledge is limited to parts of Himachal Pradesh, and to the transmission lineage derived from Shakya Shri. A more detailed analysis is impossible without discussing particular practices which are subject to restrictions of secrecy. However, see discussion of the assignation of polarities within the yogic body, mentioned in Chapter 2. Allione discusses some of the implications of some of these issues in the
I have indicated matters which pertain to the consideration of Karzha as Khandroling, and the position of women in Karzha. However, the task of ascertaining the translation of the symbolic imagery employed in spiritual practice to social experience, or the relationship between inner to outer, using the analytic framework employed by Klein (above), is, as she suggests, highly problematic (Klein 1985a:132-135).

A thorough sociological study of the position of women in Karzha might consider comparative material from the rest of Lahul, including the Hindu communities in the Pattan valley. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis. Details of Kardang village rituals, particularly the Gotsi, performed after Halda and celebrating the birth of village sons, and the much less elaborate Tsemed Gotsi celebration for daughters, clearly indicate the higher secular evaluation of males, as does the Raldax ritual for the first male born to a household (Chapter 4). This higher evaluation is born out in the much greater educational and business opportunities currently available to young men. As I have indicated in the discussion of polyandry in Section II, as Lahul becomes increasingly integrated into the larger Indian polity, the position of women is affected. Moreover, this is reflected in concomitant changes in the position of men.

Perhaps this is reflected in the lack of any equivalent to the khandroma stories of Gotsangpa in tales of more recent practitioners, such as Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche or Kunga Rinpoche. There are no namthar for these two recent lamas, though sometimes those who knew them reminisce about the past. Such stories however do not constitute an oral tradition such as that found associated with Gotsangpa. While several of the episodes about Gotsangpa pivot on his encounter with khandroma, the stories told about Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche do not. However, as the stories told about these recent teachers constitute the outer and inner levels of biography, rather then the secret level, which, as discussed above, is directly related to meditative experience and realisation, this further explains the lack of episodes relating to khandroma, rather than any shift in the Karzhapa belief that their country remains Karzha.

I do not know how much of the secret biographies of these teachers is still known, particularly of Norbu Rinpoche, who died twenty years before Kunga Rinpoche. Kunga Rinpoche, who died in 1967, has several disciples who share memories and discuss the spiritual practices. Lauf visited Kunga Rinpoche in 1965 and 1967, and informs me that as well as texts and information already published, he collected data unsuitable for academic publication (personal communication, 1971 and 1976).
Shakya Shri’s Disciples
and three of his sons, at Bodhnath Stupa in Nepal

Drugu Lendarub
Servant of
Drug' Gonpo
Khenpo
(with rosary)

Se Ngawang
(Son of Shakya Shri)

Tsewan Rinchen
(Son of Shakya Shri)

Grandson of
Shakya Shri

Elders brothers of
Pal den Tsero
(Anzin Khenpo’s
mother)

Lope Sonam
Zangpo

Se Pugchog
(Son of
Shakya Shri)

Gyagar Tubten

Unidentified

Karzha Narbu

Tseten Dorje

Karzha Kunga

Unidentified

Unidentified
Chapter Nine
Shakya Shri and his Karzhapa Disciples: Founding
gonpa in Karzha, or the Story of Kardang Gonpa

In the previous chapter I discussed one key episode from the life of Gyalwa Gotsangpa, which not only explains the imprints found in a rock around which Kardang Jabjez Gonpa was built, but also empowers the site as a place of pilgrimage, instruction and practice. This site continued as the spiritual focus of Kardang village until the current Kardang Gonpa, initially called Abhi Gonpa, was built early this century. Although the Kothi or village gonpa no longer functions, Jabjez Gonpa continues to be an important place of pilgrimage in Karzha, particularly for those following the yogic path. Gotsangpa’s imprints in the rock are the physical evidence of the fruit of the path, while the oral retellings of the episode continue to strengthen the significance of the Jabjez site, although the deeper yogic teachings hidden within the episode are the preserve of the practitioners now residing above the village at Kardang Gonpa.

In this chapter, I present the narrative of Kardang Gonpa from the perspective of the Karzhapa, amalgamating the information I collected from several sources. From Gegan Khyentse Gyatso, and Imi Tubten, two Khampa at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa, I have collected oral biographies for Togdan Shakya Shri (1853-1919), Tripon Pema Chögyal (1878-1959), and Apo Rinpoche (1925-1974), three practitioners who also feature in the narrative of the Drukpa in Karzha, although none of them come from there, and only Apo Rinpoche visited there, staying at Kardang Gonpa for about five years. There are written namthar for the first two of these men, and Apo Rinpoche’s namthar is being prepared. These namthar were used by the Tibetans with whom I worked (Gegan Khyentse and Imi

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1In contrast, there is no set story from the traditional oral history validating or empowering the site of the current Kardang Gonpa, a half hour’s walk above the village. Yet the two sites are connected in so far as it was Abhi who mediated beside the chorten containing the remains of the Zangskarpa Jhampa Mémé after her husband’s death and gave her name to the new Gonpa. See discussion of this transition in Chapter 5.

2All the transcripts used in this section are from 1983.

3See ethnography in Section III.
Tubten) to verify information which was included in the collected biographies, rather than simply relying upon the stories that they have heard and their memories. The Karzhapa do not use namthar in this way, instead relying upon their local oral traditions, as discussed in the case of Gyalwa Gotsangpa.

In collecting this data, particularly that which relates to Shakya Shri, it emerged that there may be both an unofficial account of certain matters, and the official account recorded in the namthar, a situation recognised by the Tibetan storytellers. Since this evidence emerged as data was being collected from the direct patrilineal descendants of Shakya Shri and those associated strongly with this ngagpa and transmission lineage, it is possible that this is a determining factor, a matter requiring further comparative research. That all of the events and

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4The namthar for Togdan Shakya Shri (1853–1919), "The Flower Garland, the Life Story of Jetsun Lama Dorje Chang, the great Shakya Shri" (rje btsun bla ma rdo rje 'chang chen po sakyasrijnana'i rnam thar me tog phreng ba zhes bya ba, abbreviated as 'The Flower Garland') was written by the Katog Situ Xth, Chökyi Gyatso (kah thog si tu X chos kyi rgya mtho). (Situ VIIIth had two rebirths, one who remained at Paluang (dpal spungs), and the other who established Katog. Our author was the latter's tulku and a nephew of Khyentse Wangpo (Smith, E.Gene 1968a:22). A xylograph edition was published in Gangtok in 1980. This namthar is the source for Khetsun Zangpo's Biographical Dictionary (1981 Vol. VIII:478–500). Chökyi Gyatso used Shakya Shri's diary as the main source for 'The Flower Garland'. The text was corrected by Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodro. The original blocks were carved in Bhutan under the guidance of Lopon Sonam Zangpo, and were sent to Kyiphug, and are assumed to be lost. I obtained a copy of the blockprint from Apo Rinpoche Gonpa. There is a brief biography of Tripon Pema Chögyal (1878–1959) in English and a photograph of him included in Tibetan Frontier Families (Aziz 1978:215–217). The information was gleaned from the namthar, which was being carved in 1975. Tripon Rinpoche established himself at Tsibri (rtsibs ri), the Gotsangpa site in the Dingri area in 1934, and most of the material pertains to this later phase of his life. Thanks are due to Elizabeth Harper whose skills as a translator and long association with Apo Rinpoche Gonpa were greatly appreciated in collecting this material.

5As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are local traditions about Drilbupa, Guru Rinpoche and Rinchen Zangpo in Karzha. As with Gotsangpa, the namthar are not studied.

6The comparison between written namthar and oral biography is one facet of this exploration. In order to undertake this project thoroughly it is necessary to collect more oral biographical details from any remaining practitioners who were disciples of Shakya Shri as well as from his descendants, and also to translate the namthar. There may not be any direct disciples of Shakya Shri still alive. There are none in Karzha. Silverstone (1973:9–10) gives a brief autobiographical sketch of Choda Lama, The Labrang Gomchen of Sikkim, whose first teacher was Togdan Shakya Shri, and after his death Ladakh Tripon Rinpoche (Pema Chögyal), though she does not mention the Gomchen's age nor year of birth. A disciple of Shakya Shri was active in Kutang, Nepal, another avenue of research (Aris 1975, and see Chapter 5 footnote 4). It should certainly be possible to collect biographies from both Pema Chögyal's and Lopon Sonam Zangpo's disciples, not only about these two masters but also about Shakya Shri. It is also possible to collect more data from the family lineages of Shakya Shri and Sonam Zangpo. In August 1990, Samuel and Tashi Tsering undertook research with descendants of Shakya Shri from Chandragiri, Orissa (personal communication).
anecdotes of such a practitioner’s life are not recorded in a namthar, but many are instead remembered and told orally, and perhaps elaborated upon by those for whom it is relevant, parallels the existence of the ongoing oral traditions surrounding Gyalwa Gotsangpa, for instance, which includes material not found in written namthar.

In the context of this thesis, the material on Shakya Shri, Tripon Pema Chögyal and Apo Rinpoche provides information which broadens the framework of the narrative of the Drukpa in Karzha and of Kardang Gonpa’s existence, relating the activities of the practitioners from Karzha to the larger Tibetan arena, for these three men earned considerable recognition throughout Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal; and in Ladakh, Pangi, Kinnaur and Sikkim (India). Although I indicate areas of cross-cultural concern placing events within context of the broader Tibetan and Central Asian arena, this study is preliminary in this regard. Reflexively, the material on the Karzhapa disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri is one indication of the manner in which the efflorescence and melding of the lineages of transmission and teaching in Kham in the nineteenth century, which is retrospectively called the Rimé movement, has had and continues to have far reaching effects.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Shakya Shri’s patrilineal great grandson, Sé Rinpoche, is the tulku of Tripon Pema Chögyal, who was one of the three holders of Shakya Shri’s transmission lineage. Sé Rinpoche also received the complete lineage teachings from Lopon Sonam Zangpo, who was another of Shakya Shri’s lineage holders. The coalescing of genealogy (ngagpa lineage), transmission lineage and reincarnation lineage within the one person contributes significantly to the continuity of the practice lineage. Sé Rinpoche is now responsible for contributing to the continuation of the practice lineage of Togdan Shakya Shri at Kardang Gonpa, as the tulku of Shakya Shri’s third lineage holder, Norbu Rinpoche, the founder of Kardang Gonpa, was detained in Tibet. He is assisted by one of his teachers, Gegan Khyentse, who was his father’s tripon.

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In Chapter 8, I mentioned the conditions under which the oral biographies were collected. My questioning provided a catalyst, increasing interest in these stories about Kunga and Norbu Rinpoche. Younger practitioners in their thirties, such as Lama Paljor Lharje, had no trouble telling me about the wondrous activity of Gyalwa Gotsangpa, and yet had to rely on the few much older members of the community for details about the man who established their gonpa, only seventy years beforehand. They were somewhat surprised by this, and saw the implications in terms of cultural loss in the face of greater Indian influences, conjecturing that in the past they would have spent more time reminiscing about such things with the older practitioners over winter months particularly, rather than watching videos in the township of Kyelang in summer, and reminiscing about these in the winter!8

I have already presented the ethnographic history of the founding of Kardang Gonpa and its growth up until the period of my fieldwork. However, I have been quite selective in the presentation of this data, in a manner comparable to that discussed in Chapter 8 with regard to the material on Gyalwa Gotsangpa. In this chapter, my intention is to further develop the perspective of the Karzhapa on the founding and growth of Kardang Gonpa.

I have transcripts of conversations with several of the practitioners from Kardang Gonpa and some villagers on these topics, as well as the oral biographies resulting from the recordings Lama Paljor Lharje made with the elder Lama Paljor Dangrapa from Lama Gonpa, and with Lama Kanjur Manepa from Kardang Gonpa. These two texts have greater integrity than the other transcripts, as they were created by the Karzhapa, rather than formed by the ethnographer out of interviews, and they have completeness as a biographical text, the understanding of which is enhanced by the evaluation of the Tibetan written namthar genre, presented in the previous chapter.9

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8I am not totally convinced by this argument, as the analysis of the oral traditions, and the evidence which remains over three generations about Jhampa Mémé and Abhi indicates. However, the greater Indian preoccupations certainly could increase the speed at which information is lost when its preservation is reliant upon an oral tradition.

9No namthar or sacred biographies have been written, despite the obvious importance of these two men in the locally acknowledged revitalisation of the teachings and practice of the Drukpa Kargyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, particularly the advanced Naro Chödrug, the Six Yogas of Naropa, and the equally obvious devotion of the students of these men, from whom these oral accounts were collected. See photographs at beginning of Chapter 8 (p.295).
The method used to record this data proved most satisfactory, eliciting qualitatively different information from that which I myself could collect. Not only were the practitioners extremely busy during the summer months, when I was able to talk with them, but my social role was without precedent. In so far as it was accepted that my intention was to study the Dharma, my interests were assumed to parallel theirs. However, it was also apparent that I wished to understand matters that the people themselves regarded as insignificant. These men and women were uncertain about the type of information I wanted, and so rather than relaxing into their narrative, continually asked me to clarify with them what I wanted to know. The resulting conversational interviewing method interrupted the flow of information, although I did record a considerable amount of data in this manner.10

I was able to collect information about all Kardang family members who had participated in the life of Kardang Gonpa since its beginnings, though the effort of memory was for most considerable, especially when precise dates, for example of birth and death, and age at joining the gonpa, were requested. Explaining my intention to create a story of Kardang Gonpa and its inhabitants helped create a willingness by most to assist as best they could, though clearly such information was not generally regarded as important, nor worth holding in one’s mind. It is this data which forms a substantial part of Chapter 5 and 6.

10 A good interviewer should be a chalice in which oral history transforms itself into a chronicle. Our research must distal from the raconteur the most meaningful things in her life and they must excite into recall, details and persons forgotten long ago or absorbed into the general cultural idioms. This is what I had to learn to be a true biographer. (Aziz 1978:x.) Aziz’s comments about her research methods in Dingri are pertinent, both because she has focused her research in a particular community to produce a great depth of field and has carefully considered change through time, collecting many oral biographies. A very significant difference between Aziz’s research and my own is that she essentially was reconstructing life in Dingri society from between 1885 and 1959, working with refugees now living in Solo Khumbu, Nepal. A rough estimate of the population in Dingri in 1959 is 12,000 (Aziz 1978:13). Therefore her focus is both broader: 12,000 Dingriwa compared with 200 Kardangpa or even 750 Karzhapa (on the left bank of the Bhaga River — see Census data Chapter 4); and narrower: 1885-1959 for Dingri, that is for seventy-four years, and for a century from the mid-1880’s up to 1984 for Kardang, with particular emphasis on the events of my field period 1980-1984. Moreover, my approach is somewhat different from that of Aziz, yet we each explore the rich fabric of the lives of the people of the community, and our ethnographies — our profiles or portraits of the respective communities, are complementary. Aziz’s attention is to the secular, and mine to the social context of the spiritual (Aziz 1978:ix).
Even when talking about years for the birth and death of Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche, the Tibetan year in animal and element was not given and the founding date of Kardang itself, 1912, was generally not known. It was commonly said to be "about a hundred years ago". The year 1912 was established because it had been painted on a sign in Hindi which used to hang above the doorway to the Lhakhang. This sign is no longer to be found, however, some remembered that it said this.\(^{11}\) This year also suits the chronology of events painstakingly established by cross-checking all the collected data. It must be understood that for the majority of dates given in the following narrative, and indeed throughout the thesis, based as they are on oral biography, oral history and many conversations, there may be some error, though this is likely to be of the magnitude of only a year or two.\(^{12}\)

Although everybody could appreciate why I might be interested in information about their founding teachers, Kushog Norbu and Kushog Kunga, few remembered very many of the details of the tales told by these men and their Karzhapa Dharma brothers (\(?chodru\)) about their lives and meetings with Togdan Shakya Shri, and so on. Of course, they remembered from time to time hearing these tales. Kunga Rinpoche died in 1967, and among the Karzha group of Shakya Shri disciples, he was outlived by two men (from the Khyemches and Thogmes households), both of whom died in the early 1970's. Consequently, the younger gonpa members had not heard these stories at all from those actually involved, although they had heard tell some incidents from time to time from other senior practitioners, who obviously enjoyed spinning a yarn whenever there was a willing ear.

Lama Paljor Lharje became very enthusiastic about the project, my interest sparking in him a greater appreciation for the old peoples' tales and the understanding that as these stories were simply held in living memory they were in danger of being lost with the passing of the older gonpa members. Lama Paljor was

\(^{11}\)This is also the year given in the Gazetteer for the 'restoration' of Kardang Gonpa (Government of H.P. 1975:55), and see Chapter 3.

\(^{12}\)The people of Karzha generally follow their own calendar, beginning the New Year at the winter solstice, although this is used in conjunction with the Tibetan calendar which is used at the gonpa. See discussion in Chapter 4. In either case, every child born during the year turns two at the New Year, and most people do not know which month nor even the season in which they were born.
eighteen (Tibetan) when Kunga Rinpoche died and in his early thirties during my fieldwork. As the short biography given for him in Chapter 6 indicates, he is a dedicated practitioner with a considerable interest in many facets of his cultural heritage. He is quite sensible to the changes that are occurring rapidly in Lahul, especially since the road over the Rohtang was built, and happily took the opportunity to record what he could over the winter months.

Lama Kanjur, Lama Paljor Dangrapa and Lama Paljor Lharje are all keen practitioners, who usually spend much of the winter involved in personal retreat, as is the custom in Karzha. During such retreats, one usually does not receive visitors, nor visits others. Lama Kanjur rarely attended communal ritual performances, even in summer, preferring to remain in retreat. However, both senior practitioners were happy to arrange visits in their winter retreat schedules in order to pass on their lineage stories to Lama Paljor, an activity appropriate to the winter months when outdoor movement is limited.

The recording equipment was left with Lama Paljor, and the narratives from two of the few older practitioners who seemed to remember the most, through their habit of telling such stories, were recorded over a cup or two of chang during the winter months, when such story telling and reminiscing usually occur, and in an unambiguous social situation, practitioner to practitioner. The two older practitioners include substantially different material in their narratives, centreing on the lineage connections each has with his respective teacher: the elder Lama Paljor with Kunga Rinpoche and Lama Kanjur with Norbu Rinpoche. The result,

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13The photograph of some of the gonpa houses in Chapter 6 shows Lama Kanjur meditating on his roof (p.153).

14A retreatant usually sets aside a period of time during which she or he will not be disturbed. This may be for a few days, and in the case of the Naro Chödrug is for three years, three months and three days. In practices such as the ngöndro, breaks may be taken between each practice segment, and it is appropriate at such times to discuss practice and lineage stories with fellow practitioners (see Chapter 6). During the winter, travelling out of doors is quite dangerous due to avalanche risk. At such times there is little movement between villages, or between the gonpa and the village. Lama Paljor went to Lama Gonpa in a relatively safe time and remained there for a few days in order to record the material from Lama Paljor Dangrapa.

15Of course, it was known that the recorded tapes were to be available to me, and there are a few places in the recordings where Lama Paljor laughs and before stopping the recording tells me that more secret matters are about to be discussed. This supports my argument of the relationship between biography or namthar and the practices engaged in by the subject of the biography, and levels of meaning (see previous chapter).
oral biographies and history recorded on cassettes in Karzha kha, is authentic namthar in a society with no written form to its language. Moreover, both documents function well as oral namthar, with integrity as 'liberation life-stories'.

The elder Lama Paljor provides an anecdotal biography for Kunga Rinpoche with particular emphasis on information useful to other practitioners: about the teachings he had received and from whom; the places he visited and the practices he did; and the other practitioners whom he met and with whom he travelled. Further, details are given at a very parochial level about the Karzhapa disciples of Kunga Rinpoche, and which teachings were given to whom. Thus we are told which practices and transmission lineages are active today in Karzha and which have been broken.

Lama Kanjur's account contains more anecdotes illustrating Norbu Rinpoche's life, and generally the comments made about Kunga Rinpoche's life story apply equally to Norbu Rinpoche's biography. While both oral biographies contain elements essential to written namthar and so can be examined in relation to the Tibetan genre, they also contain material which is peculiarly about 'Karzhapa-ness' and are statements about the people's identity as Karzhapa vis a vis other peoples, both Tibetan and Bhutanese Drukpa. Some of this material is presented here. In particular, mention is made of drinking customs and food, and the overt display of emotion. Also there are several references to the devotion and quality of the Karzhapa disciples.

I suggest that if the biographies were recorded in written form, it is likely that some of this material would be lost, as it appears to be part of the oral fabric of the narratives, from one Karzhapa to another, which also explains appropriate behaviour and expectations when travelling. The Karzhapa are very parochial,

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16Please refer to the general overview and analysis of namthar in previous chapter.

17Cf. comments in Chapter 6 about crying when Apo Rinpoche died.

18Since the period when fieldwork was conducted, Lama Paljor Lharje went on an extensive pilgrimage to Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, places which he had not previously visited. He had mentioned to me after collecting this material that he hoped to have the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to the eastern Himalaya, as did the Karzhapa disciples of Shakya Shri. As mentioned previously, the Karzhapa had become quite skillful in the past at appropriate behaviour in both Hindu and Tibetan society through their trading operations. A village-based research project may well reveal similar information which used to be passed on in stories told by the traders of the past.
many of them having little idea of the possibility of life in a vastly different type of society.\textsuperscript{19}

This parochial tendency is strong even within Lahul. People from the other side of the valley were largely an unknown quantity, although Kyelang, as district headquarters, has become familiar to most. The majority of marriages occur between households from Kardang, Gozzang and the other neighbouring villages, and rarely with villages from the other side of the river.\textsuperscript{20} It is rare for a Karzhapa to venture to Miyah Nallah and the Pattanam valley, for instance. Moreover, each gonpa serves its local village or villages, and as described within the ethnography, gonpa form local networks which also tend to run along one side of the valley. The very local nature of social relationships is reflected in identities of the group of eighteen men who became disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri. Eleven were from Kardang and Gozzang, while another four were from nearby villages. One was from Kyelang, another from Bokor, and the other from Miyah Nallah.

Most of the information on the Karzhapa disciples of Shakya Shri presented below comes from the oral biography of Norbu Rinpoche, for his story, as the founder of Kardang Gonpa, is most closely related to the narrative of the founding of Kardang Gonpa. The oral biographical material is supported by the data collected from those eleven households in Kardang and Gozzang whose previous members included a disciple of Shakya Shri. Through the young practitioner, Ngawang, from Bokor Gonpa, mentioned in Chapter 6, I was able to establish good relations with individuals who remembered stories about Bokor Betsering, the disciple of Shakya Shri, which provides supplementary information.

The two biographical texts are too lengthy to present in full in the present context, so I have condensed Kunga Rinpoche's biography considerably, thus avoiding repetition of information.\textsuperscript{21} I have amalgamated information in places,

\textsuperscript{19}Thus my writing a thesis about them for a university took some explaining! See also comments in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{20}Refer discussion in Section II and III.

\textsuperscript{21}In future I intend a more complete presentation of the oral biographies, a project beyond the scope of this thesis. That several segments of the biographies, especially those parts concerned with the birth and youth of Kushog Kunga and Kushog Norbu, as well as the opposition with which they met, and their accomplishments, are parallel, suggest that their life stories are being told in a culturally constructed form.
and use segments direct from the oral biographies where appropriate. Throughout, my intention is to draw out the Karzhapa interpretation of the events associated with establishing the connection with Shakya Shri, and founding Kardang Gonpa, a ‘high’ point in the process of Drukpa revitalisation, which feature many details of the life stories of both Kushog Norbu and Kushog Kunga. The narrative is continued with a short biography of Lama Sidji Yangkyepa, a disciple of Yongdzin Rinpoche, who spent much time with Norbu Rinpoche tulku, in Karag, before the closure of the border with Tibet. The subsequent developments at Kardang Gonpa, following the detention of this tulku, and the implications from the perspective of the Kardangpa, are explored by a short comparative history with Chukta Gonpa. This chapter, and the final section of the thesis conclude with a brief summary of events subsequent to my fieldwork.

Lama Kanjur begins:

Before Norbu Rinpoche was born, his mother had a dream that a rainbow shone over Drilburi. His father’s name was Tsering Tashi and his house name was Khyemches. Now nobody knows his mothers’ name anymore. His rus was khyung (khyung), Garuda.  

From Abhi Tsenku, born in 1901, and from another younger chôsma, Dechen Palmo (bde chen dpal mo), the daughter of one of Norbu Rinpoche’s brother’s sons, I learnt that Norbu Rinpoche’s mother was from the Tholakpa household, Gumling village, and that Norbu Rinpoche was born in the year of the sheep, element unknown. It seems most likely that the element was Water, giving the year 1883.

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22The Khyung lineage or rus is renowned for producing many famous meditators, perhaps the most famous being Milarepa. Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye (’jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’yas), one of the great masters of the Rimé, gives a long account of the Khyung po lineages in his autobiography (Smith, E.Gene 1970a:28-29). The mythical ancestor to the Khyung lineages is the Great Eagle (Khyung chen), an emanation of a mythical Buddha of the Upper Realm (Aris 1975:55; Jackson 1984:109-112, 137-138 footnote 11; Karmay 1972:11-13; Smith, E.Gene 1970a:28-29 footnote 57). The capital of the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung was khyung lung dngul mkhar — the silver palace of the Garuda Valley, which lies in ruins in the Sutlej Valley, to the south west of Kailash (see Chapter 2). As the Garuda flies, this is very close to Karzha.

23See genealogy chart in Chapter 5.
There were four brothers in the Khyemches family from Kardang. Norbu, the third brother, worked as a shepherd, although he had a strong inclination to study Dharma, which his father discouraged.

The young Norbu was very good friends with Kunga, whose father Norbu was one of the memé caring for Jabjez Gonpa. The most likely date for Kunga's birth is 1884. He had no siblings, and later inherited the position of Jabjez memé.

Meanwhile in Kham Sutikha, in east Tibet, Togdan Shakya Shri had a dream which indicated that he had several disciples in Karzha. He therefore sent Atsa (a tsar) Rinpoche, one of his disciples, to India to collect them, via the lake at Tso Pema, where a Drukpa gonpa and hermitage have been built around the caves where Padmasambhava meditated. Atsa Rinpoche arrived there on the first or tenth day of Losar, the Tibetan New Year, as instructed, and there met Kushog Karpo. They spent the winter together at Tso Pema and then both travelled to Karzha in the Spring. This was probably in 1908 or 1909.

There, Atsa Rinpoche stayed at the Kothi Gonpa near Jabjez, and taught the ngöndro to those interested, gathering together eighteen individuals who later became disciples of Shakya Shri, among them Kardangpa Norbu Khyemches and his two brothers, Rigzin Dorje (1880 - 1963) and Tsondru (brtson grus) Dangrapa (1860 - 1934), who was the elder Lama Paljor's father's brother. Kardangpa Ngawang Manepa (1890 - 1950), who was Lama Kanjur's father's brother and Kardangpa Gatug (ga sprug) Dangrapa (1860 - 1934), who was the elder Lama Paljor's father's brother also became disciples. Both of our oral biographers therefore heard stories from their awatsi (paternal uncle). The other disciples were Gozzangpa Sherab Chözang Timorpa (1872-1928);

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34Previously, Shakya Shri had been a monk at Drugu Gonpa. He left and took a sangyum, living at Kham Sutikha (su ti kha or perhaps siddhi ka). See Chapter 5.

Tso Pema means Lotus Lake, and is well known as the site where the King of Zahor attempted to burn Padmasambhava alive. Guru Rinpoche transformed the fire into the lake thus establishing the Dharma in Zahor and took Mandarava, the princess, as his consort. Tso Pema is near Mandi, H.P.

There is a discrepancy in the various accounts of this story as to whether Atsa Rinpoche was instructed to reach Tso Pema by the first or the tenth day of the New Year. The tenth day of the first Tibetan month is an important celebration at Tso Pema, and many pilgrims came from all over the Himalaya to this sacred site for these religious celebrations.

See Chapter 5, footnote 4 and Chapter 6, footnote 36, on the honorific title sku shogs.

Whose chorten was damaged by snow and rebuilt early in 1983 (see Chapter 7).
Kardangpa Sonam Rigzin (d. 1953) and his brother's son, Namgyal Thogmes (1886-1970); Kardangpa Duk Namgyal Yuwas (1883-1957); Gozzangpa Norbu Yarpa (Lama Paljor Lharje and Angrup's maternal grandfather); Kyelangpa Zopa Trinley Thamas; Sonam Tenzin from Pasparag village; Gyatrak (skya sprug) from Cheling village (1868-1926); Gyatrak Palapunga; and Chözang from Piaso village. Eleven of the eighteen men were from Gozzang and Kardang, with another four were from nearby villages. Mémé Betsering was from Bokor village and Mémé Patta was from Miyah Nallah in the Pattanam valley (refer Map 3).

After some time (probably the following year, as most of the practitioners had completed their ngöndro presumably during the winter, and it can be done in four to seven months) Atsa Rinpoche returned to Shakya Shri in Kham accompanied by eleven of the new-found disciples. Kunga Rinpoche's father would not give permission for Kunga to go to Tibet, as Kunga was his only son. Neither Norbu Rinpoche's father nor his paternal grandfather would give permission for Norbu to leave. Nevertheless, these two, who were close friends, became part of the party, travelling firstly to Manali, thinking they would travel only this far. However, they continued the pilgrimage to Mandi and Tso Pema, and on to Amritsar. Then the group visited several pilgrimage sites in India and Nepal and also travelled to Bhutan, where they stayed as a guest of the King, who took a particular liking to Kardangpa Norbu, thereafter sponsoring all his travel.

While they were staying with the King in the Dzong (rdzong), the palace attendants would provide the Karzhapa with a 'palang' [a large container] of chang which was supposed to last them for three days, but of course it barely lasted them for a day. When the Karzhapa complained to the attendants, they were told that they couldn't be given more as the King had given the instructions. So Norbu Rinpoche mentioned the

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^Sonam Tenzin later married Yangkin, Kunga's daughter as a magpa, and subsequently moved to Nepal (see Chapter 5).

^Lama Kanjur provided the complete list of men, confirmed from the information collected in household genealogies, which also provided the approximate dates I have given.

^The other seven met Shakya Shri in subsequent trips to Kham.

^Sir Urgyan Wangchuk (o rgyan dbang phyug), the first hereditary King of Bhutan, came to the throne in 1907 and reigned until 1926. The current King Jigme Senge Wangchuk (’jigs med seng ge dbang phyug), the fourth in the line, took office in 1972 (Aris 1980:266-269, 274).
matter to the King, who then ordered that they be supplied with all the chang and arak that they wanted! Now when the Bhutanese drink, they hold the cup in their lap and cover it with their hand. Rigzin Dorje [Norbu’s eldest brother], who was a bit of a joker, would always put his cup on the floor, Karzhapa style. The King used to admonish him saying that he could behave how he liked in Karzha but that while he was there he should at least drink properly as the Bhutanese did! (Transcript, Lama Kanjur and Lama Paljor Lharje.)

Many pilgrimage sites were visited en route to Kham where the Karzhapa finally met Shakya Shri, who was about fifty-seven. During this lengthy journey Atsa Rinpoche was quite stern with the group, requesting that they perform many prostrations while doing khora (clockwise circumambulations) of the sacred sites, and continually testing them.

...Then they went to Kham Sutikha to see Shakya Shri, who had foreknowledge and had told his people to prepare things for his disciples from Karzha who would soon be arriving. After they arrived, Atsa Rinpoche went in to see Shakya Shri and report to him about these disciples that he had brought from Karzha. He had tested their minds on the journey with scoldings and so on, and assured Shakya Shri they were good disciples. Shakya Shri told him not to bother with a long report as he already knew that they were good, just as he knew that they were about to arrive... Shakya Shri immediately gave all of them the teachings on Naro Chödrug, Rigzin Dorje included, although he hadn’t done his ngöndro in Karzha before leaving, as had the others. (Lama Kanjur and Lama Paljor Lharje.)

Frequently the teacher requests that the disciples complete several ngöndro before they are given further teachings, but in this case the training the disciples had undertaken whilst travelling to Kham ensured their readiness for higher teachings. A practitioner called Lama Mindrol (smin grol) was with Shakya Shri at that time and it was he who was responsible for giving the group the Naro Chödrug Tsa Tsig (rtsa tshig) - the root text teachings. Shakya Shri transmitted his nyen gyud teachings to Norbu Rinpoche and to Kunga Rinpoche, together with another Bhutanese disciple Monlam Rabzang (smon lam rab bzang). Shakya Shri did not give these secret oral teachings to any other of the Karzhapa, and they were not transmitted by Norbu Rinpoche nor Kunga Rinpoche in Karzha. Some of the
practitioners at Kardang gonpa and Lama Gonpa did receive these teachings more recently from Apo Rinpoche, who received them from Tripon Pema Chögyal; and from Tüksé Rinpoche.\(^{33}\)

Shakya Shri received the Naro Chödrug teachings from Drukwang Tsognyi [grub dbang tshogs gnyis]\(^{34}\)... Later on he went to Jamyang Khentse Wangpo to request the Dzogchen teachings, which he also received from Adzom Drukpa [a 'dzom 'brug pa], who was a tulku of Drukchen. There were two tulku. The Drukchen line continued, and then also Adzom Drukpa, who transmitted the Dzogchen lineage. Adzom Drukpa spent most of his life in a tent made out of yak felt, and never went inside a house. Adzom Drukpa and Shakya Shri lived at the same time, but Shakya Shri died when he was sixty-eight, and Adzom Drukpa when he was eighty-four.\(^{35}\) But they were very close friends and Dharma brothers... To some students Shakya Shri would give the Chagchen path, and to others Dzogchen, depending on the capacity of the student. (Gegan Khyentse and Elizabeth Harper).

Most of the Karzhapa received the Naro Chödrug teachings.

So while they were taking these teachings and doing the exercises and yoga, they were feeling hungry and their bones were cracking. Norbu Rinpoche claimed that until they returned to Karzha they would never have good food. Bokor Betsering agreed saying that their stomachs would never be filled until they again returned to Karzha!

Rigzin Dorje was known as Khyemches Mémé, and he died not long after Paljor [Lharje] became a practitioner. He was cremated at the big tree just below the gonpa [where the rebuilt chorten now stands], and rainbows shone around Drilburi on that day, which we all saw and can remember well. Rigzin Dorje used to say to us that all the Chagchen practitioners were on the slow path, while Dzogchen practitioners quickly reach the cloud of light and go immediately to Buddhahood. He used to tease the

\(^{33}\)Shakya Shri’s principal Chagchen teacher was the VIth Khamtrul Tenpé Nyima, however the Naro Chödrug was transmitted by Drukwang Tsognyi, as mentioned in Chapter 6.

\(^{34}\)See Khetsun Sangpo (1981, Vol.VIII:458-477), who gives dates of 1789-1844. Presumably, it is the tulku of this lama, or these dates are wrong by a sixty-year cycle.

\(^{35}\)See Appendix. Here the ages are given according to Tibetan reckoning.
other Karzhapa like this, as most were Chagchen practitioners.

When the Karzhapa did their répu in Kham they did the practice in a yak tent, wetting their robes and using tummo to dry them. The next morning when the sun rose it was surrounded by rainbows and snow fell in a cloudless sky. (Lama Kanjur and Lama Paljor Lharje.)

At this point the narrative is interrupted, and Lama Kanjur discusses with Lama Paljor the similar events at Kardang when Lama Paljor and two other practitioners performed répu during their three year retreat. The three practitioners in retreat were unaware of these auspicious signs, until Mémé Wangchuk wrote them a letter, thanking them. These apparently miraculous events in Kham in 1910 or 1911 and similar occurrences just ten years before right here in Kardang demonstrate the vitality of the transmission and practice lineage for the practitioners.

Norbu Rinpoche was not a good scholar as far as reading and writing Tibetan texts was concerned, but his actual meditation was extremely good. One time Shakya Shri gave all his disciples an oral exam concerning their meditation, and Shakya Shri said that Norbu Rinpoche was like the ‘top of the tsog offering’ and had definitely understood the point of realisation where there is no more meditation, and that there was no going back from this realisation [i.e. it was stable].

There were three ‘heart sons’ — holders of the lineage of Shakya Shri: Lopon Sonam Zangpo from Bhutan, the Ladakhpa Tripon Pema Chögyal; and Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche. Kunga Rinpoche was not a full lineage holder. Probably all of

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36 In this letter, Mémé Wangchuk (whose transmission lineage was not from Apo Rinpoche) addressed the three practitioners as his Dharma Brothers, congratulating them on their accomplishment.

37 Please see comments in previous chapter.

38 The tsog is the ritually blessed food which is shared after the ritual (see Chapter 7). In a more familiar idiom, "The cream of the milk".

39 As mentioned, the Karzhapa do not use texts, such as namthar, but instead perform the practices, becoming accomplished practitioners. See discussion in Chapter 8.

40 Lopon Sonam Zangpo was born in 1893 and died in 1983. His daughter married Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, son of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche. Their eldest son is Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse, the tulku of Chokyi Lodro.
these three had the same realisation, and so it just depends upon your faith [as to which lineage you follow]. (Lama Kanjur and Lama Paljor Lharje).

On this occasion Norbu Rinpoche stayed in Kham for three years before returning to Karzha. Altogether he made four journeys to Tibet in order to visit his teacher Shakya Shri, who had asked him to build a small gonpa at Kardang when he departed for the first time.

Before Kardang Gonpa was built, there were only two chorten up here. No one stayed here. There was a small Kothi Gonpa, a village gonpa, beside the Lharje family's house, as well as Jabjez gonpa. When Atsa Rinpoche came to Kardang, he stayed in the Kothi Gonpa.

A lama from Zangskar, we call him Jhampa Mémé, came to Gondhla village and stayed there for quite some time. At a time when there were no chöspa living there. No-one knows quite how long ago that was, nor for how long he stayed there at Gondhla, living near the confluence of the Chandra Bhaga Rivers, which is an important place for practice, one of Guru Rinpoche's cremation grounds, you know. As there was no-one looking after Jabjez Gonpa in Kardang village, where Gyalwa Gotsangpa left his knee prints, one man from Kardang Kyelepa house suggested that Jhampa Mémé should come and care for this gonpa. He agreed on the condition that he was given forty kilos of barley each year, on which he could live. So he moved to Kardang, and remained there to care for the Gonpa. Jhampa Mémé had a wife, also a practitioner — maybe she was also a Zangskarpa, maybe from Gondhla — we're not so sure. She was called ‘Abhi’, just the name we use in Karzha kha for older female practitioners — like ‘mémé’.

When Jhampa Mémé died a chorten was built for his cremated remains above the village. Then Abhi spent most of her time practising up there beside the chorten. When Norbu Rinpoche returned from Kham, with instructions from Shakya Shri to build a small gonpa, he chose this site where Jhampa Mémé's chorten was, where Abhi used to meditate. So at first the gonpa was called ‘Abhi Gonpa’. Now the Kothi Gonpa is finished in Kardang, and this is Kardang Gonpa. (Lama Kanjur and Paljor Lharje.)

Norbu Rinpoche travelled through Bhutan on several occasions visiting the King, who continued to be very hospitable, and further sponsored his travel. The King of Bhutan also presented a full set of the Kangyur to Norbu Rinpoche which
is now kept in Kardang Gonpa Chöskhang. Norbu Rinpoche requested this gift for
the new gonpa he was about to establish when travelling back to Karzha on this
first occasion.

On one occasion, Norbu Rinpoche carried with him the bones of Shakya
Shri’s first wife, who had recently died. Shakya Shri had requested that they be
cremated at the famous cremation ground in Karzha at the confluence of the
Chandra and Bhaga Rivers.\[41\]

Kunga Rinpoche did not return to Karzha until a year later, when Shakya
Shri, who had foreknowledge of a bad epidemic that was to strike Karzha, sent
Kunga Rinpoche to perform the appropriate rituals to avert the epidemic.

On two occasions Shakya Shri sent three of his sons and some of his other
disciples to the stupa at Bodhanath in Nepal, to repair it. On the first occasion
Shakya Shri sent his three elder sons to repair the stupa, and on the second
occasion, which was just after he died, he sent his three younger sons.\[42\]

According to the official namthar and other sources, Shakya Shri had two
wives, six sons and four daughters. The names of the six sons, in order are: Rinchen
Kunden, Tsewang Jigme, Kunzang Tenzin (Kunlha), Tsewang Rinchen, Sé (Apo)
P’achog Dorje,\[43\] and Ngawang Lama (Ngawang Chöying). The two wives were
Ama Adrok and Ama Lochuk; and the four daughters Achi Lhunchö, Achi
Drönkar, Achi Apé and Achi Bola.\[44\]

Both Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche were
among the disciples who made the pilgrimages to
repair the stupa.\[45\] Kunga Rinpoche was the

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\[41\]There is no indication in the narrative as to which of the four return journeys this was,
and there is little linearity in this regard.

\[42\]There is a small booklet, *The Restorations of the Three Great Stupas of the Valley of
Kathmandu* — an account of Togdan Shakya Shri’s restorations, by Katog Situ Chokyi
Gyatso, published in Gangtok in 1980. The text is an excerpt from the namthar.

\[43\]*Sras ’phags mchog rdo rje* was recognised as a thugs sku (mind emanation) of Khyentse
Wangpo I. There is a tulku, whose name is unknown. There are several emanations of
Khyentse Wangpo, including Dilgo Khyentse and Dzongsar Khyentse (Smith, 1970:74).

\[44\]This woman was the mother of Drukpa Tukse Rinpoche, who passed away in 1983. His
tulku was enthroned in Sikkim in 1988.

\[45\]The photograph at the beginning of this chapter was given to me at Apo Rinpoche
Gonpa, and is of one of the groups, the second which included the three younger sons, who
were sent to repair the chorten at Bodhanath. I gave a copy of this photograph to Tashi
messenger, travelling back to Shakya Shri at Kyiphug, to inform him when the repairs were done. When Shakya Shri performed the rabné the rice, which he threw in the air, landed on the stupa at Bodhanath.\textsuperscript{46} It was on the second pilgrimage to Bodhanath, with the three younger sons, not long after the party had left Bodhanath, that Lama Ngawang fell ill with a very high fever. He died in Dingri. Subsequently he was reborn to Kunzang Tenzin, who was also known as Kunla, and his wife, Sonam Palzum. This child was Apo Rinpoche who was therefore the grandson of Shakya Shri as well as the tulku of the son of Shakya Shri.

When Apo Rinpoche was born there were earth tremors, and rainbows in the sky, witnessed by many people. He was born with long matted hair, like a yogi. (Gegan Khyents and Imi Tubten.)

Shakya Shri was residing at Kyiphug when Norbu Rinpoche visited him for the last time. After Shakya Shri died there were many earthquakes and rainbows in the sky.

When Norbu Rinpoche learnt of Shakya Shri’s death, he cried a great deal, as is the custom in Karzha. Shakya Shri’s children, who called Norbu Rinpoche ‘chojo’ meaning ‘little brother’ in Karzha Kha,\textsuperscript{47} begged him not to cry in this way — especially Pagchog Rinpoche, who said that if you really have faith in your Lama then you are inseparable from him.

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Tsering, who is currently engaged in a research project using old photographic sources. I am indebted to Tashi Tsering and Geoffrey Samuel for identification of some of the individuals.

\textsuperscript{46}See Chapter 7.

\textsuperscript{47}Refer Kin terms, Chapter 4.
wherever you are, even if he is dead. (Lama Kanjur and Lama Paljor).

The family asked Norbu Rinpoche to stay with the body and to examine his dreams in order to determine where the tulku would be found. During this time of tugdam (thugs dam), Shakya Shri’s body became very small, and his hair which he had worn knotted on his head seemed to form an even larger pile. Norbu Rinpoche ascertained that the rebirth would return to Kham. Shakya Shri had said prior to his death that his rebirth would not be recognised. It is said that there are two rebirths of Shakya Shri, one born in Kham and the other elsewhere in Tibet. (Lama Kanjur and Lama Paljor Lharje.)

One of these tulku now lives in Dharamsala, but nobody recognises him as anyone special. Before his death, Shakya Shri said that he would simply work wherever there was benefit in his next life.

There were many truly amazing signs when Shakya Shri’s body was cremated. Ringsel was found in the ashes. There were some statues of Dorje Chang, as well as white ringsel and some radiating the five colours. There was one piece which was pure white and the size of an egg, which later came into Apo Rinpoche’s possession. He had a statue of Shakya Shri made and place this ringsel inside. It was peldung, increasing bone, and ringsel continually fell from within the statue. When Apo Rinpoche fled Kyiphug, we carried this statue on our backs for some time, fleeing from the Chinese. Things were very difficult, and we had to abandon this statue and left it hidden in a tree, with the ringsel still falling from it. (Gegan Khyentse and Elizabeth Harper).

After Shakya Shri’s death people asked Norbu Rinpoche to teach such things as Naro Chödrug, and Norbu Rinpoche became quite well known in Tibet. At first Norbu Rinpoche said he had no realisation and couldn’t teach. Apo Tsewang,48 Shakya Shri’s son, said to Norbu that if he didn’t hold the lineage, then who could, and begged him not to refuse to teach. Patta Mémé heard this conversation, and although he previously had had more faith in Bokor Betsering, he became very devoted to Norbu Rinpoche and

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48Two of Shakya Shri’s sons had the name Tsewang, Tsewang Jigme and Tsewang Rinchen. It was probably the latter who was involved in this conversation.
remained so when they returned to Karzha. (Kunga Rinpoche and Lama Paljor).

Both Lama Kanjur and the elder Lama Paljor explained that Norbu Rinpoche felt that most Karzhapa didn’t really appreciate that he had become well known in Tibet and was highly regarded as a practitioner and heart son of Shakya Shri. In spiritual matters, there is a tendency to evaluate ‘Tibetan’ more highly than Karzhapa. The focus on the superiority of some of the Karzhapa practitioners is in part a reassessment of this evaluation.

Later when Norbu Rinpoche returned to Kardang he explained that he had built Kardang Gonpa in the hope that in the future the Rus of Shakya Shri would come there. This indeed happened later when Apo Rinpoche came to Kardang Gonpa.49

Norbu Rinpoche had many disciples in Tibet and Karzha, though he didn’t remain at Kardang Gonpa, where he fashioned a small house in a cave at some distance from the gonpa for his use. The Karzhapa say that he built another Gonpa in Zangskar, Dzonkhul Gonpa, bringing the wood from Pangi, after spending a year meditating in a Naropa cave in Pangi, and also visiting sites associated with Naropa in Kashmir. This statement again provides evidence of the parochial nature of Karzhapa knowledge. By local Zangskarpa tradition the two caves at Dzonkhul Gonpa, ten minutes walk from each other, are associated with Naropa, the India Siddha of the eleventh century (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980:55), whose yogic practice lineage, the Naro Chödrug, was mastered and transmitted by Togdan Shakya Shri, Norbu Rinpoche, Kunga Rinpoche and others. Although this gonpa is not dated, it has existed at least since the seventeenth Century. It seems Norbu Rinpoche undertook repairs or extensions at Dzonkhul, rather than establishing the gonpa, as asserted by the Karzhapa, and he continued living there until his death in 1947.50

When Norbu Rinpoche was cremated, neither his head nor his heart burnt. These were placed in a silver chorten, which is now kept in the dukhang at

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49 See Chapter 7.

50 Refer Chapter 5, footnote 20, with regard to Dzonkhul, and a Lama Norbu(k) credited with renovations there (Shakspo 1983:45-46). Snellgrove and Skorupski have published a photograph of a statue kept in Dzonkhul Gonpa of ‘Lama Norbu’, otherwise unidentified (1980:56-57). Further research at Dzonkhul is required to clarify this identification.
Kardang Gonpa. Ringsel comes from this chorten. Before he died, Norbu Rinpoche had said that he would not return to Karzha when reborn.

I continue the narrative with a condensed presentation of Lama Paljor Dangrapa’s biography for Kunga Rinpoche.

Kunga Rinpoche returned to Karzha after Shakya Shri’s death, staying at Guru Ghantal for eight summers, sometimes with some of his disciples. He spent the winters either at Lama Gonpa or Kardang Gonpa. The small cave at Lama Gonpa which Kunga Rinpoche used previously belonged to Gyalwa Gotsangpa. It was repaired by Kunga’s family, and Kunga Rinpoche thereafter stayed there. During this remodelling of the cave, some statues and other items, believed to have been hidden by Gyalwa Gotsangpa, were found in the blasting.

Kunga Rinpoche is revered in Karzha and sometimes spoken of as a terton, as he is said to have found some other terma hidden by Gotsangpa. Kushog Kunga had a close connection with Gyalwa Gotsangpa, and locally was recognised as a reincarnation of the same. The XIth Drukchen is said to have recognised Tripon Pema Chögyal as a Gotsangpa tulku. Clearly Gotsangpa is an inspirational figure in the Drukpa lineage, especially associated with strong and diligent practitioners who enjoyed solitude, qualities shared by both Tripon Pema Chögyal and Kunga Rinpoche.

Kunga Rinpoche continued to teach and practice in the remodelled cave, which became known as Lama Gonpa. In 1966, Kunga Rinpoche visited Dudjom Rinpoche who was at Labchang Gonpa and requested a particular teaching and text on p’owa, the transference of consciousness at the time of death. He received some teaching, but the text was unavailable. It was sent to Kunga Rinpoche who received it just prior to his death. He died during a session of this practice.

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51See discussion in Chapters 5 and 7.

52There are about ten typewritten pages to this text. As mentioned above, fuller presentation of Kunga Rinpoche’s biography is planned in the future.

53In Karzha, they jokingly talk a little about the ‘terton’: the carpenter and Norbu Mémé, father of Kunga, who were involved in the repairs to the cave.

54For information about the Drukchen lineage see Appendix.

55See Chapter 5 footnote 56, and Chapter 6 footnote 13.
Kunga Rinpoche fell ill in the tenth Tibetan month, 1967. He again told his disciples that he would not have a tulku, and died on the 22nd day of the eleventh Tibetan month. Although it was the middle of winter and difficult to travel, people from all over Karzha came to the cremation. Many rainbows appeared over Drilburi, and that night there was a very strange, very bright light shining like a gigantic torch beam from Drilburi down onto Lama Gonpa. This was witnessed by many who clearly remember.

The story of Kardang Gonpa is continued by Lama Sidji, who was born in 1910, and is one of the older generation of practitioners residing at Kardang gonpa. His family is from Gozzang village. I include a brief biography for him here, both because it clearly demonstrates some of the diversity among the lives of the individual practitioners from the gonpa, and because of his association with Karag (Drukpa) Yongdzin Rinpoche and the young tulku Norbu Rinpoche.56

In the Earth Ox year 1949, Karag Yongdzin Rinpoche and his wife Kutima became parents of a young son, Gonpa Dorje, who was recognised as the reincarnation of Norbu Rinpoche. On several occasions while very young, the boy had claimed to be a Karzhapa in his play. By this indication, confirmed with an oracle to determine rebirth, Drukpa Yongdzin Rinpoche established the boy's identity. Ngawang Tenzin Jigme was the name given to him when he was officially recognised.

Lama Sidji's tsawé lama was Yongdzin Rinpoche, whom he met when travelling around Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarovar as a young man of twenty-five. Up until that time Sidji had been working as a servant. He decided to study Dharma with Yongdzin Rinpoche and stayed with him for two years. Then he came to Kardang Gonpa and became the disciple of Norbu Rinpoche, receiving the teachings of the Naro Chödrug. Thus Lama Sidji considers that he has two tsawé lama, having received transmission from both complementary practice lineages.57

He left Kardang and went to Zangskar with Norbu Rinpoche, staying at Dzonkhul gonpa. After Norbu Rinpoche's death, he firstly returned to Kardang

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56 This information was collected in a series of interviews with Lama Sidji. I have further condensed this material in the ethnography (Chapter 5, p.202 and Chapter 6, p.216).

57 As mentioned in the ethnography, it is quite normal for a practitioner to have more than one tsawé lama. Usually these teachers will belong to practice lineages that are interconnected, and the transmissions and teachings received will be complementary.
Gonpa and then went to Tibet, to stay with Yongdzin Rinpoche. When he arrived, Kutima was pregnant. Lama Sidji began his three year retreat, meeting the young tulku at the completion of this. Lama Sidji then wrote to Kardang Gonpa informing them of the identity of Norbu Rinpoche tulku, and Lama Ngawang Thogmes and Ani Kunzom (Lama Kanjur’s sister, deceased by the time of my fieldwork) went to Karag to help care for the young boy. Mémé Wangchuk went to visit later, and Lama Sidji returned to Kardang for a while, bringing the sixty volumes of the Rinchen Terzod, now kept in the Dukhang.

Lama Sidji spent most of the time at Karag with the young tulku until 1958-1959, when Mémé Sherab Tholakpa, the previous nyerpa of Kardang, with his brother Mémé Lobsang went to collect the boy. At that time Yongdzin Rinpoche and family were in Lhasa, and while they were there, fighting broke out, for three days. They had to remain in Lhasa for two months, returning to Karag as soon as the Chinese allowed travel. Yongdzin Rinpoche died a week later (1959).

The Kardangpa waited at the border for about a month, attempting to get a passport for the young tulku so that they could return with him to India. At first they thought this would be possible as they told the officials that the boy belonged to Karzha. However, Kutima also wished to travel with her son, and permission was refused for both her and young Norbu Rinpoche, then aged eight. The Chinese threatened to detain the Kardangpa, who then fled back to Karzha, leaving their reincarnate Lama.

For many years, the practitioners at Kardang Gonpa knew nothing of the fate of Norbu Rinpoche tulku. They had only one photograph of the young boy, whose long hair was knotted atop his head in the style of a yogi, which they kept in the main shrine at Kardang Gonpa.

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58This compilation of the major Termas of the great Terton was made by Jamgon Kongtrul ('jam mgon kong sprul) in sixty volumes. The full title is Rin po che gter gyi mdzod (see Thondup 1986:62, 186-188, 224-225 note 225). Refer Chapter 7 footnote 67.

59This photograph, along with others of Shakya Shri and Tripon Pema Chögyal I photographed, making multiple copies which I distributed to all gonpa members. Such small gestures were greatly appreciated, and small repayment for Kardangpa hospitality. They are reproduced at the beginning of Chapter 6. Long uncut hair, usually worn piled on top of the head is indicative of a practitioner skilled in the practice of inner yoga. See comments in Chapter 6.
Early in 1983 a lama, a disciple of Karag Yongdzin Rinpoche came to Kardang Gonpa via Dharamsala, where he had been living for a year or so. He had left Tibet for a while as a result of the easing of the restrictions placed upon the Tibetans by the Chinese. Because he did not understand Hindi it had taken him some time before he learnt where Lama Sidji from Kardang, whom he had known previously, resided. He came with the news that Norbu Rinpoche tulku has been living in isolation in Karag somewhere, as a poor farmer with a small field. His mother, Kutima, had died, and the young tulku had been prevented from studying the Dharma. This lama who came with this news had been able to visit Norbu Rinpoche tulku, who lived in an adjoining valley, only twice during the past twenty odd years, due to the severity of the Chinese impositions against movement and religious pursuits.

Although the Kardangpa were greatly relieved to receive this news of their tulku, there is great concern for the continuation of this reincarnation lineage, for they believe it unlikely that Norbu Rinpoche tulku had received enough transmission and teaching prior to his father’s death in 1959 to make a successful transfer of consciousness at the time of his death.60

They were loath to discuss the implications of this situation. Kardang Gonpa’s lama is Norbu Rinpoche tulku. Another lama cannot be installed to take over full teaching and administrative responsibility for the gonpa, although lamas with the appropriate lineage connections and with the capacity to transmit and teach can be invited to visit. It is recognised that without a strong spiritual figure to inspire and teach the people, that the transmission of the lineage will decline. It is regarded as extremely fortuitous that Gegan Khyentse and Sé Rinpoche have been able to come to Kardang, and that Gegan Khyentse has been able to return each summer.

Kardang Gonpa’s administration was given to Lama Sherab Tholakpa when Norbu Rinpoche went to Zangskar. He continued in the position of nyerpa or manager until his death early in 1978, when the position was taken over by Lama Gyaltsun Timorpa, the current nyerpa. With this arrangement, the day-to-day

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60The ability to transfer consciousness at the time of death using the practice of p’owa is the mark of an accomplished practitioner, practising the path of the Bodhisattva. See Chapter 5.
administration of the gonpa, the use of gonpa funds, and the like, are the responsibility of the nyerpa. This managerial position differs significantly from that of 'Head Lama' or teacher, who in giving teachings and providing transmission ensures the continuation of the practice lineage.

In order to demonstrate to me the importance of a reincarnate Lama and lineage holder at a gonpa, the practitioners spoke to me about the situation at Chukta Gonpa in Peukor, providing me with a brief story, which I extended through interviews with individuals at Chukta Gonpa. This is presented here for comparative purposes.

When Chukta Gonpa was first established about 1915-1917, the Head of the Gonpa was a mémé, Amchi Dorje Zangpo, who died about 1945.61 Dorje Zangpo was quite well known in Karzha as he was a Doctor (amchi, am chi, em chi) of the Tibetan tradition, with good knowledge of the use of medicinal herbs found growing in the region. He did not travel to Tibet with Atsa Rinpoche and the Karzhapa disciples of Togdan Shakya Shri.

Prior to the return of these Karzhapa disciples from Tibet there were a few village practitioners, among them Amchi Dorje Zangpo, residing in their family homes, performing basic and simple rituals as required in Peukor village. After Kardang Abhi Gonpa was built, marking a new era of religious fervour in Karzha, and Kunga Rinpoche also returned to Karzha, assisting in stopping the virulent epidemic as instructed by Togdan Shakya Shri, the people from Peukor who had faith in Kunga Rinpoche decided to build a village gonpa in order to improve opportunities for teaching and practice.

Chukta Gonpa was never considered to be Kunga Rinpoche's place, whereas Kardang Abhi Gonpa is regarded as Norbu Rinpoche's gonpa. Kunga Rinpoche always insisted that he would not return as a tulku to continue teaching responsibilities at any place. He did not request the construction of a gonpa, unlike Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche, for he was not instructed to so do by Togdan Shakya Shri.

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61Chukta Gonpa's full name is Nelug Osal Phug (gnas lugs 'od gsal phug), however, this is not generally used.
All the practitioners at Chukta Gonpa were disciples of Kunga Rinpoche, and although Kunga Rinpoche visited from time to time, staying for a while to teach, he chose to reside at the Gotsangpa cave known as Lama Gonpa.

This cave is isolated, well above the village of Gozzang, unlike the gonpa at Peukor which sits only a little above the village. Lama Gonpa is a yogi’s hermitage, even now. There is no communal shrine room. Kunga Rinpoche’s room, which was previously Gotsangpa’s cave, is kept as it was when Kunga Rinpoche was alive. Such is the devotion of the people to this teacher that whenever tea is made, some is poured into Kushog Kunga’s cup and offered before his empty meditation seat.

On the other hand, Peukor Gonpa, which is where the majority of Kunga Rinpoche’s disciples resided, continues to function as a village gonpa.

After Amchi Dorje Zangpo’s death, during Kunga Rinpoche’s lifetime, there was no Head Lama appointed at Chukta Gonpa. I was told that this was because all other practitioners were ‘small’ in comparison to Kunga Rinpoche.62 In 1967 Lama Sangye, the elder brother of Lama Wangchuk from Kardang Gonpa, was asked to be Head Lama. He held this position for two years before he died. For a period of about five years there was no real Head Lama, until the current Mémé Gyaltsun took on this responsibility. Mémé Gyaltsun was born in 1933 as was Ani Palmo, Amchi Dorje Zangpo’s daughter, and both began studying with Amchi Dorje Zangpo when quite young. Mémé Gyaltsun began training as a doctor, and continued his studies with Lama Paljor Lharje’s father, who was also a doctor.

Mémé Gyaltsun is now regarded as more of a village mémé, rather than a teacher in the style of Kushog Kunga or Kushog Norbu. He is capable of performing the appropriate ceremonies when someone in the village dies, for instance, and continues to collect herbs and practice as a doctor, but the practitioners from Peukor Gonpa look elsewhere for their spiritual instruction. This village gonpa has no reincarnating teacher to consolidate and guide the people, and there have been long periods when no villagers felt inspired to join the religious community. For instance, from about 1955 to 1971, there were no new recruits at

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62 There were no other Karzhapa practitioners thought to have the same qualifications and accomplishment as Kunga Rinpoche.
Chukta Gonpa, and consequently the Gonpa membership began to decline over this seventeen year period.

In Karzha, Kardang Gonpa is seen as different from such a village gonpa, for it had a lineage holder, the heart son of Shakya Shri, as its founding teacher. Although Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche reincarnated and was born to a father who was himself a Drukpa lineage reincarnation, the continuity of this reincarnating lineage is currently under threat, and thus concern for Kardang gonpa's strength and continuity exists.

However, as discussed in Section III, the events of 1959 have brought benefit, as Apo Rinpoche came to reside at Kardang gonpa, fulfilling Norbu Rinpoche's intention to bring the Rus of Shakya Shri to Kardang Gonpa. Now Sé Rinpoche, the lineage holder in whom the genealogical, transmission and reincarnating lineages coalesce, lives in Manali where a small gonpa has been built on the land donated to his father by the Kardangpa. With Gegan Khyentse's guidance and assistance, Sé Rinpoche is responsible for the continuation of the lineages of Shakya Shri.

Before leaving the field, I heard that Apo Rinpoche tulku was born in Dharamsala, to a nephew of Apo Rinpoche, a practitioner who had died at about the time the boy was born. To my knowledge there has been no enthronement. In 1985, Ama-la died, after firstly returning to Kardang Gonpa for a retreat, performing the practice of Tara. Sé Rinpoche continues to reside at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa and has married a young woman from Kardang village, the daughter of Mipham Ram from Manepa household, and in 1988, the year of the Earth Dragon, they had a son, who may continue the ngagpa lineage of Togdan Shakya Shri. In 1990, a new Lhakhang was completed at Apo Rinpoche Gonpa.

Four practitioners from Kardang Gonpa have died in the past seven years, but the Drukpa practice lineage of Togdan Shakya Shri is strong, and its continuation seems assured. The practitioners who began their three year retreat in 1983 successfully accomplished the Naro Chödrug practices, and in 1990, another group of yogis, including the practitioners from Tayul Gonpa, completed their Naro Chödrug retreat. The young women have taken ordination, and have completed the ngöndro, and taken more teachings on meditation. Gegan Khyentse has visited Kardang Gonpa each summer, and continues to inspire the people of Karzha.
Clearly, the continuity of the practice lineage rests with the individuals who take up the lifestyle of a practitioner. Individuals are inspired to do so by other practitioners, and by their teacher, whose accomplishment and mastery of the inner yoga practices is evident in the transformations wrought, whether through founding gonpa or constructing and consecrating chorten.
Conclusion

Several of the themes explored throughout the ethnography have been addressed in Section IV. The role of the teacher, and the intertwining of lineages which derive from Shakya Shri — genealogical, reincarnation, teaching and transmission — are found to be major factors in the continuation and revitalisation of the Drukpa lineage in Karzha. These lineages coalesce in Sé Rinpoche, who with Apo Rinpoche's tripon, Gegan Khyentse Gyatso, visited Kardang Gonpa in 1981, further stimulating the gonpa community's relationship with their spiritual lineage.

As told by the Karzhapa, the story of Kardang Gonpa emerges out of the details of the lives of the individuals who take up the spiritual path. This story complements and is complemented by the ethnographic history. Once the gonpa was founded and the Lhakhang built, representations of the Three Jewels were acquired, small houses were built by those who wished to practice at the gonpa, and rituals were performed, both in the village and at the gonpa, as the need and opportunity arose.

This information, from which the ethnographic history is constructed, emerges incidentally from the stories told by the Karzhapa, which focus on the lives of the teachers, whose inspiration, transmission and teachings ensure the continuity of the Drukpa practice tradition. However, each image of a teacher, whether a statue or a thangka, each representation of the Refuge, each chorten, has its story, too, which the practitioners remember in some detail and can relate, usually with reference to the artisans, who carried out the project, and the teacher, who inspired their making, directed the filling of the three-dimensional objects and performed the rabné. The details thus compiled have been amalgamated and structured into the ethnographic history which constitutes Chapter 5.

The teachings which both Norbu Rinpoche and Kunga Rinpoche taught and transmitted had been received from Togdan Shakya Shri by several Karzhapa who travelled to Kham in order to meet this master. However, these two men emerged as teachers in this tradition, each fulfilling a role in the revitalisation of the spiritual practice and the associated social changes in Karzha. Norbu Rinpoche was a lineage holder who founded the new gonpa and attracted disciples from throughout the Himalayan region. Thus considerable sponsorship and donations
were received by Norbu Rinpoche which facilitated the material growth of the gonpa. In Kardang, the focus of spiritual activity moved from within the village to this new establishment.¹

The transition from Jabjez, the Gotsangpa pilgrimage site in Kardang village and the Kothi Gonpa where the village mémé and the ani, the unmarried sister's and father's sisters, retired for ritual and meditation, particularly in the winter, to the new gonpa, built some distance above the village, seems to have occurred smoothly. The site chosen was where Kunga Rinpoche's great great grandmother, Abhi, meditated beside the chorten of her husband, the Zangskapa caretaker of Jabjez, who established the ngagpa lineage which Kunga Rinpoche inherited, but did not pass on, as he had one daughter and no sons.

Kunga Rinpoche chose to live in another cave which was empowered for practice by Gotsangpa, rather than at the newly established gonpa, or in Kardang village as the caretaker of Jabjez, as did his father and the preceding members of his ngagpa lineage. He was an accomplished practitioner, a terton, an inspiring teacher, and moreover regarded as a reincarnation of Gotsangpa. A few disciples gathered around him in this small hermitage known as Lama Gonpa, which continues to have a close relationship with Kardang Gonpa. The practitioners of Chukta gonpa, built in Peukor village a few kilometers up the Bhaga valley, sought instruction from Kunga Rinpoche until his death in 1967, and now look to the Gegan Khyentse for spiritual advice and transmission. The activity of this teacher has resulted in new recruits to this village gonpa.

Kardang Gonpa has become the most active gonpa in Lahul, and although this gonpa continues to function as a village gonpa, with a strong relationship between the members of the households in Kardang village and the gonpa.

¹Comparison between my presentation of the ethnographic history of Karzha and the recently published ethnographic history of the Sherpa in East Nepal by Ortner is theoretically interesting, as our approaches contrast significantly (Ortner 1989a, 1989b). Ortner has explored the history of Sherpa monasticism, and seeks to elucidate the 'Cultural Schema' of Sherpa society which informs the founding of temples and monasteries, particularly the celibate institutions of Tengboche in 1916 (and its sister nunnery Devuche in 1925) and Chiwong in 1923. Her analytical framework expands upon her previous use of Practice Theory, seeking to discern cause and effect in the establishment of celibate monasticism, an historical innovation in Sherpa society (Ortner 1989a:3-18). Although a thorough comparison of our approaches, and the different societies involved (especially as there are a substantial number of ethnographic and textual sources available for the Sherpa) is beyond the scope of the present discussion. However, I indicate some key interpretive points in footnotes.
practitioners, the sphere of influence of the teachers associated with Shakya Shri's lineage and Kardang Gonpa has spread, extending not only from Lama Gonpa to Chukta Gonpa, but also more recently to Labchang Gonpa, on the pathway from Kardang to Peukor, and Tayul Gonpa, on the other side of the Bhaga river. Both of these gonpa had been affiliated with another practice lineage (Lho Druk, although the main practitioner from Labchang is a disciple of Dudjom Rinpoche), and both were adversely affected by the lack of an accomplished practitioner and teacher to guide the community.

Although Shakya Shri transmitted and taught Dzogchhen, his transmission lineage is particularly renowned for the Naro Chödrug and Chagchen teachings. These practices are transmitted orally, and are learnt and perfected in a three year retreat. Before entering the retreat, the practitioner abstains from sexual activity for a lengthy period, a necessary requirement for the individual who aspires to accomplish these inner yoga practices. With the increasing importance of this practice lineage at Kardang Gonpa, there has been a concomitant and gradual change in gonpa membership. Whereas part-time married male practitioners used to form part of the gonpa population, it is now expected that new male recruits will take ordination and remain celibate, a prerequisite to receiving the Naro Chödrug.2

2In Ortner's analysis the change from non-celibate to celibate is critical. She examines this process at Thami Temple, one of the three original non-celibate temples in Khumbu, probably founded in the late seventeenth century (1989a:188–192).

The conversion of Thami as a result of the active efforts of the celibate monks can be fairly described as a revolution, in the sense that the attempted changes were symptoms and instruments of a transformation of the whole purpose of the institution. (Ortner 1989a:188.)

Although Thami Gonpa may now be referred to by the Sherpa as a "labtsang" ( bstshang), denoting or connoting "a place of celibate practitioners", it was a gonpa before the 1950's, and is still a gonpa — a place of spiritual practice. In all likelihood it is called "Thami Gonpa" by most. That there was no formalising ceremony (such as a rab gnas or consecration, or renaming, etc) and there is no formalising charter (stating rules etc such as a chad yig) indicates that the change is not a "revolution", at least from the perspective of the Sherpa, nor that a "transformation of the whole purpose of the institution" has taken place. It seems however, that it did come under the sphere of influence of Dzarong/Rumbu Gonpa in D'ingri. In 1979 there remained three married lamas at Thami, and a few more living down in the village. Ortner anticipated resentment and hostility from these married lamas:

I confess I expected to hear tales of resentment at their loss of status, and at having been marginalized within the institution to which they had contributed so much. Instead I heard a relatively consistent tale in which was evident the power of monastic ideology and monastic values to revolutionize not only the institution, but even those who were displaced by the change. (Ortner 1989a:191.)
Female practitioners also take ordination, although they are not taught the Naro Chödrug. They receive instructions in the ngöndro, the preliminary practices, which are taught to all practitioners when they decide to join the gonpa community. Usually several ngöndro are completed by both male and female practitioners before further instruction is given. Yidam practice, shiné, lhagt'ong and chagchen meditation is progressively taught to all practitioners. Several also learn the chöd.

Although the female practitioners are not admitted to the practice lineage of the Naro Chödrug, for which Shakya Shri is renowned, they nevertheless receive a thorough spiritual training and fully participate in gonpa activities. I have discussed the practice related concept of khandroma or dakini and its importance in Karzha Khandroling, and indicated some of the anomalies associated with the position of women in Karzha, particularly as practitioners, in Chapter 8.

Female practitioners are not segregated from the male practitioners, and do not live in separate establishments in Karzha. Consequently, I use the word gonpa when referring to the institution, rather than the often used translations of monastery, or nunnery, with the cultural specific connotations of single gender establishments. Furthermore, both monasteries and nunneries are institutions of celibate inhabitants, whereas the members of a gonpa are not necessarily celibate.3

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3I have once glossed gonpa as monastery, in the Introduction, and otherwise used monastery and nunnery only when referring to the other people's research, maintaining there usage. Ortner glosses gonpa (dgon pa) as "temple" or "monastery" (1989a:222). She clarifies this usage using the translation "chapel" with the implication that these institutions were part of private homes, whereas "Temples" were established outside private homes explicitly drawing a non-kin clientele (1989a:42). By usage it is clear that "temples" are the gonpa of married practitioners, and "monasteries", the gonpa of celibate practitioners. Although reasonable to differentiate gonpa according to social function, from the large monastic universities through to the small hermitage, Ortner's insistence on applying essentially western concepts to the phenomena of gonpa in the Tibetan cultural milieu confuses rather than clarifies. "Monastery" denotes chastity of its inhabitants. That it is necessary to refer to a "celibate monastery" (my emphasis), qualifying that which is already defined, surely indicates some conceptual unclarity. However, Ortner has her reasons for pivoting her analysis on celibacy. It seems she is trying to uncover some deeper level of social change, in which the insistence on celibacy at the local gonpa is a means of preventing fraternal rivalry by effectively repositioning one (or more) brother into a social role which is respected but requires minimal economic support. Celibacy (in theory) ensures that a brother will produce no offspring nor require land and wealth to maintain himself and his family, nor his status. That the increase of celibate practitioners in Solo Khumbu is bound up with changing relationships between brothers, inheritance practices and so on seems to be a thoroughly defensible position upon examining the data with economic and political interests foremost in one's mind. However, celibacy per se is not a revolutionary development within the Tibetan/Sherpa religious system of spiritual practice.
In the past, some of the practitioners at Kardang Gonpa, such as Lama Paljor Lharje's father, combined the life of a householder with spiritual practice at the gonpa. The significant economic changes, which have occurred in Lahul with the development of a cash economy, have provided more individuals with the choice to pursue a full-time career at the gonpa. Thus the practice path of the yogi, the Naro Chödrug, which requires full-time participation and celibacy, has become standard for the male practitioners.4

Sé Rinpoche is an accomplished practitioner of the Naro Chödrug, and holds the transmission lineage of his great grandfather, Shakya Shri, which he received from Lopon Sonam Zangpo, and of his father, Apo Rinpoche, which he received at conception and Tripon Pema Chögyal, of whom he is the rebirth. His responsibility to this ngagpa lineage has contributed to his decision to take a sangyum and to pass on the Rus of Shakya Shri. He is gradually assuming greater responsibility in teaching and transmitting this practice lineage. For those practitioners who have mastered the inner yoga practices of the Naro Chödrug, there is the possibility of furthering the path of practice with a sangyum, although this option is taken by exceptional practitioners only, and many highly accomplished yogis prefer to remain unencumbered by family life.5

4 Ortner similarly argues that it is the accumulation of wealth resulting from the introduction of the agriculturally productive potato and through trading opportunities (largely arising as a consequence of the presence of the British in India) which provides the necessary wealth for such activities as building monasteries, and also changing demographics which means that all Sherpa are no longer required for wealth producing work (agricultural and trading) that combine to produce celibate monasticism (Ortner 1989a:30, 99-123, 150-167 esp. 151, 158-9).

5 During the 1950's the married Lama Tundup presided over the community at Thami. "By most accounts, by around 1950 there were more celibate monks living in the Thami community than there were married lamas (23 to 12, or 18 to 9 at the time of conversion). It was the celibate monks who began to make the move towards conversion. They approached Lama Tundup, head of the temple, about converting, and he said that he thought it would be a good thing to do. Although it might appear anomalous to have a celibate monastery with a married lama as its head, Lama Tundup recalled that there was at least one such monastery in Tibet, and there was some sort of ritual way in which the anomaly could be handled" (Ortner 1989a:189). There is, however no anomaly in having a married lama as the head of a gonpa with practitioners who have taken ordination. There are countless instances in the literature on Tibetan social institutions where such is the case. Perhaps the Khon family lineage of the Sakya is the best known example. Various options to accomplish a conversion from non-celebate to celibate were apparently considered, including buying out the married lamas and building a new celibate monastery. In the end, the transformation was allowed to occur quite naturally following the recommendation of Tushi Rinpoche, a refugee reincarnate newcomer to Thami (Ortner 1989a:189-190). Consequently, "The actual date of the conversion is hard to pin down...It does not seem that..."
The development of a cash economy has led to the accumulation of wealth. This has not only provided individuals with the possibility of undertaking a full-time career at the gonpa, but has also contributed to the physical growth of the gonpa, the acquisition of religious objects, and the sponsoring of rituals. The building of Kardang village chorten, a substantial project, was a response to these changed conditions and the experience of political encapsulation. The chorten project enabled the Kardangpa to assert their identity as Tibetan Buddhists and redefine social relationships. The construction of the chorten involved all the villagers from Kardang and Gozzang, and the practitioners from both Kardang Gonpa and Lama Gonpa. Through the entire community’s participation in this project, the harmony represented symbolically in the chorten was brought about.

The construction of the Kardang village chorten may be considered from a perspective developed by Ortner in her treatment of another Tibetan Buddhist region:

Cultural politics are the struggles over the official symbolic representations of reality that shall prevail in a given social order at a given time. One could argue that they are the most important kinds of politics, for they seek to control the terms in which all other politics, and all other aspects of life in that society, will take place. (Ortner 1989b:200.)

The Karzhapa have chosen the chorten, the ubiquitous symbol of Buddhism, which expresses the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm, and the transformational power of the spiritual teacher who embodies the path of practice, as their symbolic representation of reality.

This symbolic representation, and the practice and transmission of culture involved in its construction, affirms their identity as Buddhists, and as Karzhapa, incorporating and integrating the experience of social and economic change into there was a formal ceremony, just an agreement that henceforth no non-celibate candidates would be accepted" (Ortner 1989a:190). There were changes in Thami’s religious programme with the introduction of a specific summer retreat for celibate practitioners, and the addition of masked dancing to the Mani Rimdu festival "a festival normally associated only with celibate monasteries" (Ortner 1989a:188). The headship had previously passed through biological descent, but after Lama Tundup’s death in 1958 this changed, and the headship fell to his reincarnation, which positively affected the status of Thami. Although it may well be that the Sherpa place considerable emphasis on the advent of "celibate monasticism" in their region I suggest that the opposition which Ortner sees between "celibate monasteries" and "non-celibate temples" is largely a result of her perspective, and thus more (or less) apparent than real.
an appropriate cultural framework in which the encapsulating political arena is perceived as supportive and in a more harmonious relationship rather than as a threat to the people’s spiritual and religious traditions. This apparent cultural resilience seems attributable to the integrative capacity of the people, and their vital practice of Tibetan Buddhism.

Although the Drukpa lineage practised in Karzha has periodically received stimulation and revitalisation from Tibetan teachers, and as such must be considered in relation to the larger Tibetan cultural milieu, the social structure of Karzha, particularly the relationship between village and gonpa, seems to be a unique manifestation within this context.
Appendix

A Short History of the Drukpa Order

Drukpa¹ (brug pa) means literally ‘dragon one’ and is applied to the inhabitants of Bhutan, or Drukvul (brug yul), Dragon Land, which is the Tibetan/Bhutanese name. Most Bhutanese are adherents of the Drukpa Kargyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Both adherents of the Drukpa Kargyu lineage, and the Bhutanese people are referred to as ‘Drukpa’. In this thesis I use the term Drukpa when referring to Drukpa Kargyu, and indicate when I am referring to the Bhutanese people.

Tibetan Buddhism today is conventionally divided into four main orders or traditions (chos lugs), the Nyingmapa (nying ma pa), Kargyupa (dkar or bka’ brgyud pa), Sakya (sa skya pa) and Gelugpa (dge lugs pa), but this suggests a tidiness and a unity to each of these traditions which is not really the case. Each is divided into several sub-orders based around a principal teaching lineage or group of lineages. Thus Drukpa Kargyu refers both to a teaching lineage and to a group of gonpa where those lineages are carried on. The Drukpa, like other sub-orders, have senior incarnation lines of great prestige and authority, such as the Drukchen, reincarnation of the Drukpa’s founding lama, Lingrepa Pema Dorje (gling ras pa padma rdo rje), and several others who are described below. Each gonpa nevertheless functions, in most respects, as an autonomous institution, not as part of a rigid hierarchical structure.

The Drukpa Kargyu is termed one of the ‘Eight Lesser’ Kargyu lineages (chung brgyad), but this refers primarily to its structural position as one of the eight lineages founded by disciples of Pagmo Drupa (phag mo gru pa), himself one of the four disciples of Gampopa (sgam po pa) and his successor who established the ‘Four Great’ lineages (che bzhi) (see below). In fact, the Drukpa Kargyu is one of the two strongest Kargyu orders today, the other being the Karma Kargyu. The Drigung (’ bri gung or ’ bri khung) and Taglung (stag lung) Kargyu are also of some

¹Tibetan terms are underlined and a Wylie romanization given on their first occurrence in the text of this Appendix, but they are not included in the Glossary of Tibetan and Karzha terms unless referred to in the main text. Names which occur only in the footnotes are generally given in Wylie romanization only.
importance. The remaining lineages deriving from Gampopa have been absorbed into larger Kargyu orders or survive as a small group of gonpa within a particular region. A further Kargyu lineage with a distinct history, the Shangpa (shangs pa) Kargyu, exists as an important teaching lineage within the Karma Kargyu, Gelug and elsewhere, and has been transmitted widely in recent years by Kalu (ka lu) Rinpoche (1906-89), a meditation teacher within the Karma Kargyu order.

This appendix gives a brief history of the Drukpa Kargyu order and some of its principal lamas, in order to orient the non-specialist reader and bring together in one place a body of material which is referred to constantly in the course of the thesis. I make use of the teachings on the Drukpa lineage I received from Gegan Khyentse Gyatso, and the commentary to these given by Lama Paljor Lharje, which enumerate the ‘Four Great’ and the ‘Eight Lesser’, as well as the branches within the Drukpa. Other sources include the writings of E. Gene Smith (particularly 1968, 1970b), Michael Aris (1979) and Luciano Petech (1977), and a recent cyclostyled history of the Drukpa lineage (Gyatso and Singh 1987).

Firstly, a note on the term Kargyu, which in Tibetan has two forms: bka’ brgyud (‘spoken lineage’) and dkar brgyud (‘white lineage’). Any oral transmission lineage on esoteric teachings from teacher to disciple can correctly be called bka’ brgyud. It has been argued that dkar brgyud refers to the white robes of yogic practitioners, and thus should be applied only to those lineages which did not pass through Gampopa, and are thus non-monastic (celibate) (See Smith E.G. 1969b:2 footnote 2). It was suggested to me at Kardang Gonpa that the only the Drukpa (middle branch) was correctly called dkar brgyud, in part because many of its great practitioners such as Togdan Shakya Shri (rtogs ldan shākya shri) wear white robes, but principally because the lineage passed through Pema Karpo (padma dkar po, ‘White Lotus’), the 4th Gyalwang Drukchen (rgyal dbang 'brug chen, see below), known by the epithet Kunkhyen (kun mkhyen) or ‘all-knowing’, and regarded as the greatest scholar of the Drukpa tradition and one of the greatest scholars of all time (Smith E.G. 1968). Whatever the case, both bka’ brgyud and dkar brgyud are used in the Tibetan, though in the Anglicised ‘Kargyu’ the distinction is lost.

The Kargyu lineages are traced back to the siddhas of 10th century India with whom the early Tibetan teachers studied. The lineage is said to have originated with the Indian Siddha Tilopa or Tillipa (?988-?1069), who received it
directly from Vajradhara (Dorje Chang, rdo rje 'chang), the Sambhogakaya manifestation of the Buddha. Tilopa passed the teachings to a second Indian Siddha, Naropa (?1016-?1100), from whom the Tibetan Marpa Lotsawa (mar pa lo tsa wa, ‘Marpa the Translator’) received the transmission (Smith 1970b). The Shangpa Kargyu traces its lineage from two female teachers (dakinis), Niguma, who was the consort or sister of Naropa, and Sukhasiddhi. Both of these two dakinis were taught directly by Vajradhara. The first Tibetan transmitter of the Shangpa lineage, Khyungpo the Yogin (khyung po mal 'byor) is said to have received the teachings from Niguma and Sukhasiddhi (Hanson and Hanson 1985, Smith 1970c).

The ‘translator’ Marpa Chökyi Lodrö (chos kyi blo gros, 1012-1097) passed the teachings to Milarepa (mi la ras pa) whose main disciple was Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (bsod nams rin chen, 1079-1153) from Dagpo (dwags po, from which comes his epithet Dagpo Lharje, dwags po lha rje, the Doctor from Dagpo). Another lineage emerged from a second important disciple of Milarepa, Rechungpa or Rechung Dorje Drag (ras chung pa, ras chung rdo rje grags, 1083-1161), and was elaborated into the Demchog Nyengyud (bde mchog snyan rgyud) by Tsangnyon Heruka (gtsang snyon he ru ka, 1452-1507), and then absorbed into other Kargyu traditions, particularly the Tod Drug (stod 'brug) (Smith E.G. 1969b:3, 1969c, 1970b, 1971a; see also Lhalungpa 1979).

What are commonly referred to as the ‘Four Greater’ (che bzhi) branches of the Kargyu all pass through Gampopa (or his nephew who succeeded him at the gonpa he established). They are:

I) the Tsalpa (tshal pa); II) the Kamtsang (kam tshang) or Karma (karma) Kargyu; III) the Baram (‘ba’ ram); and IV) the Pagmo Drupa (phag mo gru pa). Collectively they are known as the Dagpo Kargyu, or the Marpa Kargyu (Smith E.G. 1969b:3-5, 1968a; Karma Thinley 1980; Douglas and White 1976; Aris 1980:167-168).

What are now known as the ‘Eight Lesser’ branches or schools of the Kargyu, of which the Drukpa is one, derived from the Pagmo Drupa, the fourth of the ‘Four Greater’ branches. They are the 1) Drigung Kargyu; 2) the Taklung Kargyu, influenced by the Nyingma teachings since the 15th century; 3) the Trophu (khro phu) Kargyu, whose independent identity had ceased before the 17th century; 4) the Drukpa Kargyu also known as the Lingre (gling ras) Kargyu after Lingrepa
Pema Dorje (1128-1188); 5) the Marpa (dMar pa or sMar pa) Kargyu, also known as Martsang (sMar tshang) Kargyu, to avoid confusion with Marpa Lotsawa, with some teachings continuing until recently within the Nyingma Peyul (dPal yul) tradition; 6) the Yelpa (Yel pa or Ye phug pa) Kargyu, now merged with the Karma Kargyu; 7) the Yazang (g.Ya’ bzang or g.Yam bzang) Kargyu which operated until the 16th century; and 8) the Shugseb (Shug gseb) Kargyu which later merged with the Karma Kargyu (see also Guenther 1973:15-20); (Smith 1969b:5-8). These relationships are shown diagrammatically on Figure A.1 (p.369).

The Drukpa Lineages: Teachings of Gegan Khyentse Gyatso and Lama Paljor Lharje

The subdivisions within the Drukpa Kargyu itself are introduced by a short teaching given by Gegan Khyentse, incorporating a commentary by Lama Paljor. This teaching, with its elaborations upon the basic framework, provides some of the ‘flavour’ of the teachings on lineage (see Chapter 4, on namthar).

The Tathagata Pagmo Drupa had a major disciple, the Mahasiddha Lingre Pema Dorje whose ‘heart son’ (thugs sras) the king of teachings, treasure texts and oral transmission was Tsangpa Gvare Yeshe Dorje (gtsang pa rga ras ye shes rdo rje), recognised as a reincarnation of the Pandita Naropa, the protector of beings, and the glory of the Drukpa. This great and immanent disciple himself had about fifty thousand disciples, who travelled constantly throughout the world visiting the thirty-two localities, the twenty-four places, and the eight great cremation grounds. He made a second pilgrimage tour of these places, accompanied by most of these disciples. Then he made a third tour accompanied by Gotsangpa Gonpo Dorje (rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje), Sangye Onchen Repa Dharma Senge (sangs rgyas dbon chen ras pa darma sengge), and Choje Lore Wangchuk Tsondru (chos rje lo ras dbang phyug brtson ’grus), his main disciples [i.e. he transmitted the full teachings to these three who became his lineage holders].

At Tsari (rtsa ri) he had a vision of Heruka Cakrasamvara who predicted that the glorious Drukpa lineage would spread over the country that it would take a vulture eighteen days to fly over.
Figure A.1: Subdivisions of the Dagpo (Marpa) Kargyupa
(after Gene Smith 1970b)

N.B. Schools which are represented by major monastic orders today are indicated by double lines. Some minor traditions have been omitted.
The Dharma lineage later acquired the name of Drugpa, ‘dragon’, as when Tsangpa Gyare consecrated Ralung (rwa lung), he heard the thunder roll nine times. Thunder is regarded as the voice of the dragon, and thus the lineage became known as the Drukpa. Tsangpa Gyare made the prediction that in his main lineage there would be nine who took the names of an animal, and that after this he would return (take rebirth). These are the Nine Lions, those with the name ‘Senge’ (seng ge = ‘lion’), who continue the transmission lineage of the Middle branch, the Bar Druk (bar 'brug) beginning with Sangye Onchen Repa. In the Bar Druk there are as many disciples as there are blades of grass in the fields.

The Khamtrul (khams sprul) reincarnation lineage established in East Tibet belongs to this Middle branch, as does the Drukpa Yongzin (yongs 'dzin) reincarnation lineage. Togdan Shakya Shri, and those in his transmission lineage, including Ap ho (a pho) Rinpoche and Sé (sras) Rinpoche, and also Tuksé (thugs sras) Rinpoche, belong to this branch.

Gyalwa Gotsangpa Gonpo Dorje began the Upper branch, the Tod Druk. His main disciple was Orgyanpa Senge Pal (o rgyan pa seng ge dpal), and this lineage had as many disciples as there are stars in the sky. Both of these great siddhas travelled widely, and came on pilgrimage to Karzha. This lineage has been reabsorbed back into the Middle branch. Orgyanpa also received transmission directly from a dakini in Uddiyana or Orgyan, known as the Orgyan Nyendrub (o rgyan bsnyen sgrub) which he transmitted to the Karmapa III Rangjung Dorje (rang byung rdo rje), as well as in the Drukpa lineage, though this is not regarded as a separate lineage.

The Lower branch, the Me Druk (smad 'brug) was established by Choje Lorepa, and it had as many disciples as there are grains of sand in the Ganga. There is a very good story about Lorepa and his attendant, another practitioner, and how they went to live on this small island in the middle of a lake...

Divisions within the Drukpa: The Main or ‘Middle’ Lineage

Lingrepa, as we have seen from Gegan Khyentse’s account, passed the teachings to Tsangpa Gyare Yeshe Dorje (1161-1211), who is regarded as the
founder of the Drukpa and is counted as the first Drukchen. This lama founded the two original gonpa of the order, Nam Druk (gnam 'brug) near Lhasa from which the order took its name, and Ralung, further to the west, which became the major seat of the Drugpa.

Tsangpa Gyare had three main disciples who established the Upper, Middle and Lower Drukpa lineages. Gotsangpa Gonpo Dorje (1189-1258) founded the Upper Branch or Tod Druk. He and his disciple Orgyanpa Senge Pal (1230-1309) both visited Karzha and Gotsangpa is, as we see in the thesis, a very important figure in Karzha. The Medruk (Lower Drukpa), founded by Lorepa (1187-1250), are not directly relevant to this thesis.

The Bar Druk or Middle Drukpa derive from Tsangpa Gyare's nephew, Sangye Onchen Repa Dharma Sengge (1177-1238), who succeeded him as the head of the gonpa at Ralung, where the abbacy passed down through ten generations of his family, the House of Gya (rgya) or Ralung. Dharma Sengge and his successors are the Nine Lions referred to in Gegan Khyentse's account.

Ralung during the 13th and 14th centuries was therefore, like Sakya, Drigung and other major monastic centres of the period, under the authority of a hereditary lineage of lamas. By the end of the 14th century the system of succession through recognized rebirths had become established in the Karma Kargyu and was spreading to other Kargyu suborders. The lama who succeeded as prince-abbot of Ralung in the tenth generation, Gyalwang Kunga Paljor (rgyal dbang kun dga' dpal 'byor, 1428-1476), was recognized as the rebirth of Tsangpa Gyare, the founder of the Drukpa, thus combining the hereditary principle with the new system of recognized rebirths. He was also regarded as the rebirth of Naropa, the Indian teacher from whom Marpa had acquired the original Kargyu teachings, and of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Gene Smith has suggested that this provided the model for the later claim that the Dalai Lamas were emanations of Avalokiteśvara.

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2The previous births of the Gyalwang Kunga Paljor are given in the modern Drukpa tradition (Topden Tshering 1974) as:
A. Lokesvara (Avalokiteśvara, 'Jig rten dbang phyug)
B. Pundarika, the Kulika King of Shambhala
C. Chos rgyal Srong btsan sgam po
D. Santaraksita
E. Naropa
F. sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen (1079-1153)
G. gTsang pa rgya ras Ye shes rdo rje (1161-1211)
Kunga Paljor is now regarded as the second Gyalwang Drukchen, Tsangpa Gyare having been the first, and the lineage of reincarnate lamas has continued uninterruptedly since his time. Both the third Gyalwang Drukchen, Jamyang Chodrag (\textit{jam dbyangs chos grags}, 1478-1523), and the fourth, Kunkhyen Pema Karpo (1527-1592), were born outside the ruling family of Ralung. Relations between them and the Ralung family seem to have been friendly, but neither was invited to take over as abbot of Ralung, and each founded his own gonpa.

Pema Karpo was one of the greatest Tibetan scholars, and was responsible for systematizing the teachings of the Drukpa order. While he himself was a monk, he and his followers incorporated the lay yogi tradition of Tsangnyön Heruka and the other ‘crazy yogins’ of the 15th century into the Drukpa order. While lay yogins and yoginis are found in all Kargyupa and Nyingmapa suborders, they are particularly associated with the Drukpas.

After Pema Karpo’s death in 1592, there was a dispute regarding his rebirth, with one of the two main candidates being found in the ruling family of Ralung, and the other being the son of the prince of Chonggye (\textit{phyongs rgyas}). The ruler of Central Tibet at that time, the Tsang Desi (\textit{gtsang sde srid}) took the side of the Chonggye candidate, Pagsam Wangpo (\textit{dpag bsam dbang po}), and the Ralung candidate, Ngawang Namgyal (\textit{ngag dbang mam rgyal}) was forced in 1616 to flee to Bhutan, where the Drukpa school had many gonpas and important lay patrons. This marked the split between the Northern or Tibetan (\textit{Chang Druk}, byang ’brug) and Southern or Bhutanese (\textit{Lho Druk}, lho ’brug) branches of the Drukpa Kargyu. Teachers from both branches were later active in Karzha.

The Northern Drukpa (Chang Druk)

Pagsam Wangpo and his successors at the gonpa of Sanga Choling (\textit{gsang sngags chos gling}), founded by Pema Karpo, were the heads of the Northern (Chang Druk) branch of the Drukchen. The successive Gyalwang Drukchen in this lineage were

5. Pagsam Wangpo (1593-1641)
6. Mipam Wangpo (\textit{mi pham dbang po}, 1641-1717)
7. Kargyu Trinle Shingta (dkar brgyud phrin las shing rta, 1718-1766)³
8. Kunzuk Chökyi Nangwa (kun gzigs chos kyi snang ba, 1768-1822)
9. Jigmé Migyur Wangval ('jigs med mi 'gyur dbang rgyal, 1823-1883)⁴
10. Jigmé Mipam Chowang ('jigs med mi pham chos dbang, 1884-1930)⁵
11. Tendzin Kyenrab Gelek Wangpo (bstan 'dzin mkhyen rab dge legs dbang po, 1931-1960)⁶
12. Jigmé Pema Wangchen ('Jigs med padma dbang chen, bl963)⁷

The Northern Drukpa had several other important series of reincarnate lamas, of which two in particular are mentioned in Gegan Khyentse’s narrative and in the main text of the thesis. These are the Yongdzin and Khamtrul lineages. The first Yongdzin, Lhatsepa Chenpo Ngawang Sangpo (lha rtse pa chen po ngag dbang bzang po, 1546-1615) was a disciple of Pema Karpo and chief supporter of the

³Kargyu Thrinley Shingta had a close relationship with both the Gyalwa Karmapa and Tai Situpa, and incorporated the Shangpa Kargyu lineage (see above) into the Drukpa. Restorations of the three principal stupas in Nepal, Swayambhunath, Bodhnath and Namo Buddha, were made under his auspices as the spiritual advisor to the Nepali Raja. (Gyatso and Singh typescript 1987:5).

⁴On the relation between this lama and Adzom Drukpa, see below.

⁵Mipham Chowang mediated between the 13th Dalai Lama and the 15th Gyalwa Karmapa, between whom conflict had arisen. Unlike his predecessors, this Drukchen took a wife/consort (gsang yum), a daughter of Togdan Shakya Shri, see below (Gyatso and Singh, typescript 1987:6; research at Apho Rimpoche gonpa, Manali).

⁶Tenzin Khyenrab Geleg Wangpo received the teachings of the Drukpa lineage from Tripon Pema Chögyal (khrid dpon padma chos rgyal). He also studied under Dzongsar Khyentse Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö (rdzong gsar mkhyen brtse 'jam dbyangs chos kyi blo gros). In 1959 he fled from Tibet to Buxa, where he died (Gyatso and Singh, typescript 1987:6, Smith 1968b:4, research at Apho Rimpoche gonpa, Manali).

⁷Smith gives the name 'jigs med dbang gi rdo rje (1968b:4) as does the Drukpa Lineage chart included in Topdan Tshering’s edition of the Biography of the First Zhabdrung (1974b). This is the standard undated biography of the Zhabdrung, for comments on which see Aris (1980:203-205). According to the ‘official’ English History, the XIVth Gyalwa Karmapa gave the Drukchen the name 'jigs med mi gyur dbang gi rdo rje at his second enthronement in 1967 at Darjeeling. The Drukchen was recognised by the XIVth Dalai Lama (as has been customary) and enthroned by him and the Government in Exile in Dharamsala in 1966. The name which the Drukchen uses is the name that was given to him at birth, on the 10th Day of the First Tibetan month (a day particularly auspicious through its association with Guru Rinpoche) at Tso Pema (Rewalsar) in Himachal Pradesh, India (a site similarly auspicious), by Dudjom Rinpoche who was regarded as the most senior lama of the Nyingmapa (Gyatso and Singh typescript:1987:6-7).
claims of Pagsam Sangpo to be his rebirth. He founded the important gonpa of Dechen Chokhor (bde chen chos 'khor) in Central Tibet (Petech 1977:35, Khetsun Sangpo 1981: VIII, 427-445). His successors are consequently often referred to as the Dechen Chokor Rinpoches. As mentioned in the main text of the thesis, the eighth Yongdzin Rinpoche was the father of the rebirth of Kardangpa Norbu Rinpoche.

A disciple of the first Yongdzin, Karma Tenphel (karma bstan 'phel, 1548-1617 or 1569-1637) was responsible for spreading the Drukpa teachings in Kham (East Tibet). He and his successors are the Khamtrul Rimpoches of Khampa Gar (khams pa sgar) in East Tibet and now reside at the refugee settlement of Tashijong (bkra shis ljongs) in Himachal Pradesh.

Another disciple of Ngawang Sangpo has also been mentioned several times in the thesis. This is Taksang Repa Ngawang Gyatso (stag tshang ras pa ngag dbang rgya mtsho, 1574-1651), who was largely responsible for the present-day importance of the Northern Drukpa in Ladakh. While Gotsangpa and other

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6Successive lamas in this lineages (Khetsun Sangpo 1981:VIII, 445-7) are:
2. kun dga' lhun grub (1617-76)
3. dge legs bzhad pa (1677-?)
4. mi pham 'jam dpal dba' bo (1720-?)
5. ye shes grub pa (1781-1835)
6. nges don chos kyi rgya mtsho
7. shes bya kun mkhyen
8. ngag gi dbang po (1906-59)
9. ıshul khrims rgya mtsho (b.1960).

Lama Sidji of Kardang, a disciple of the Eighth Drukchen, provided the same series of names (without dates).

7Their names and dates according to Khetsun Sangpo (1982: VIII,640-652) and a booklet published at the refugee settlement, Tashijong, established by the 8th Khamtrul are:
2. kun dga' hstan 'phel (1639-1678)
3. kun dga' hstan 'dzin (1680-1728)
4. chos kyi nyi ma (dates uncertain)
5. sgrub brgyud nyi ma (1781-1847)
6. hstan pa'i nyi ma (1849-1907)
7. sangs rgyas hstan 'dzin (1909-1929)
8. don brgyud nyi ma (1931-80).

8Several gonpa in Zangskar and Lahul are, however, affiliated to the Southern (Bhutanese) branch of the Drukpa as a result of the activity of the great yogin (and friend of Taksang Repa) Dewa Gyatso. According to Petech, Dewa Gyatso founded Padam (bar gdan), the main gonpa of Zangskar, in 1618, and brought over the Lahuli gonpas of Shashur and Gandhola to the Southern Drukpa tradition (Petech 1977:35, 48, esp. note 4; see also Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980:43, 57). In Karzha, he is regarded as the founder of Shashur (see Chapter 2).
Drukpa yogins had visited and meditated in Lahul and Ladakh, and there are, as we have seen, many places associated with them, the main Kargyu tradition in Ladakh until the 17th century was the Drikung Kargyu. King Senge Namgyal (senge ge mam rgyal) of Ladakh (reigned 1616-23 and 1624-42) was a strong supporter of Taksang Repa, who was responsible for many religious establishments in Ladakh, including the important gonpa of Hemis (he mis) which became the royal monastery of Ladakh and the centre of Drukpa influence in the region.¹¹

The Southern Drukpa (Lho Druk)

In Bhutan, the Zhabdrung (zhabs drung) Ngawang Namgyal, the other claimant to be the rebirth of Pema Karpo, became in time the head of the new Bhutanese state, in association with a lay (occasionally monastic) regent, the Druk Desi (btag sde srid). The recognition of Ngawang Namgyal's successor was particularly complex, since Ngawang Namgyal's death, like that of the 5th Dalai Lama in Tibet, was concealed for many years under the pretext that the lama was in a prolonged retreat (Aris 1979:233ff.). He seems to have died in 1651, but the death was not made public until 1705. An official rebirth, Chogle Namgyal (phyogs las mam rgyal, 1708-36) was recognized and installed in 1712 but a civil war ensued from 1730 to 1746 and led to another lama, Jigme Drakpa (jigs med grags pa, 1724-1761) being accepted as the head of the Bhutanese state. Some years later the situation was explained on the assumption that Chogle Namgyal and his subsequent rebirths represented the speech aspect or emanation of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (the Sungtrul or gsungs sprul) while Jigme Drakpa and his successors were the mind-emanation Tugtrul (thugs sprul).¹²

¹¹The head lamas of Hemis are reincarnations of Taksang Repa, but the present one was in Tibet at the time of the Chinese occupation, and was not able to leave. In recent times Hemis has become the residence of the refugee Gyalwang Drukchen.

¹²The members of the Zhabdrung Tugtrul line, according to Aris (1979) are

2. jigs med grags pa (1724-1761)
3. chos kyi rgyal mshan (1762-1788)
4. jigs med grags pa II (1791-1830)
5. jigs med nor bu (1831-1861)
6. jigs med chos rgyal (1862-1904)
remained the heads of the Bhutanese state until 1907 when Orgyen Wangchuk (Ogyen dbang phyug), the head of one of the two leading aristocratic families of Bhutan, became the first hereditary king. The Sungtrul rebirths also continued, but did not have political power except on two occasions when they served briefly as Druk Desi.13

The Bhutanese monarchy, once established, tried to prevent the recognition of further Zhabdrung Thugtrul rebirths,14 but reincarnations have been recognized unofficially. At present there are at least two lamas who are regarded as reincarnations of the Zhabdrung Thugtrul line.15

7. 'jigs med rdo rje (1905-1931)

Topden Tsering 1974b gives somewhat different dates in some cases. Aris' study ends with the establishing of the multiple incarnation lineages of the Zhabdrung so there is scant information about the subsequent incarnations readily available to the Western reader.

13The Sungtrul rebirths after Choglé Namgyal are, following Aris 1979:

2. shakya bstan 'dzin (1736-1780)  
3. ye shes rgyal mtshan (1781-1830)  
4. 'jigs med rdo rje (1830-1850)  
5. ye shes dngos grub (1851-1917)  
6. 'jigs med bstan 'dzin (?-?)

Topden Tsering 1974b again gives somewhat different dates, and omits mention of the last rebirth.

14The 6th Zhabdrung died at a relatively young age, shortly before the establishment of the monarchy. He apparently was more concerned with spiritual matters than with affairs of the state. The British were involved in the establishment of the monarchy. Details of this period of Bhutanese history are minimal in the source material, but see Rustomji (1973:198, 246-247, 1978:16-18) who comments that "none (of the Zhabdrung reincarnations) were accorded official recognition or allowed to survive longer than could be helped" (1978:92).

15One of these is Namkhai Norbu (nam mkha'i nor bu, b.1938), who has also been recognized (see below) by His Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa and Tai Situ Rimpoché as a rebirth of the important Dzogchen teacher Adzom Drukpa. The other, whose claims are supported by the Indian government, lives in Manali, where a small gonpa has recently been built for him.
The Drukpa and the Rimé Movement

The so-called Rimé (Ris med) movement,\(^{16}\) which began in East Tibet in the mid-19th century, was in part a reaction against the sectarian tendencies of the monastic traditions of the previous centuries, particularly of the Gelugpa who had come to power in Central Tibet in the 17th century and had intervened in Eastern Tibetan politics during the Nyarong troubles of 1862-65. Its founding figures laid particular emphasis on the close equivalence between the Dzogchen and Chagchen (Mahamudra) teachings as a basis on which all paths could be seen as having a common goal. They belonged to all the major non-Gelugpa traditions of Tibetan Buddhism: of the three central figures, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po, 1820-92)\(^{17}\) came from a Sakya background, Jamgon Kongtrul (jam dbyangs kong sprul, 1813-99) was from a Bonpo family, and recognized as a Karma Kargyu reincarnation, and Chogyur Lingpa (mchog 'gyur gling pa, 1829-70) was a Nyingmapa. They brought together rare lineages of teachings into great compilations such as the Rinchen Terdzod and Damngag Dzod, and in many ways revitalized Tibetan Buddhist practice and scholarship through a return to its visionary roots in the terma teachings (see Smith 1970a, Samuel n.d. 1).

The rebirths of these three lamas, particularly those of Jamyang Khyentse Ongpo and Jamgon Kongtrul,\(^{18}\) were leading figures in the religious life of East

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\(^{16}\)Professor Norbu (personal communication) has commented that in Kham there was not a perceived social movement of religious revivalism taking place during the nineteenth century, but rather that the appellation of 'Rimé movement' has been applied in retrospect, to the blending of different lineages of teaching and transmission which took place at that time, particularly in the Dzogchen lineages.

\(^{17}\)Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo was a recognized rebirth of the great Dzogchen tertön Jigmé Lingpa, discoverer of the Longchen Nyingtik teachings. The two other recognized rebirths of Jigmé Lingpa, Do Khyentse (mdo mkhyen brtse, ?1800-?1859) and Dza Paltrul (rdza dpal sprul, 1808-87), were also significant figures in what was later described as the Rime movement (see Smith 1970a, Samuel n.d. 1).

\(^{18}\)Jamyang Khyentse Ongpo had at least eight recognized rebirths, of which the two most prominent were probably Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö (jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse chos kyi blo gros, 1896-1959), associated mainly with Dzongsar Gonpa (rdzong gser), and Dilgo Khyentse Rabsel Dawa (dil mgo or dis mgo mkhyen brtse rab gsal zla ba, b.1910), now resident in Bhutan and the most senior Nyingmapa lama since the death of Dudjom Rinpoche. Among the prominent rebirths of Jamgon Kongtrul were that of Palpung (dpal spungs) Gonpa (dpal ldan mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer, 1904-53), whose rebirth (b.1954) is one of the four regents of the Karma Kargyu order at Rumtek in Sikkim, and the Kongtrul
Tibet in the first half of this century, and their influence spread rapidly among all the non-Gelugpa traditions.

While none of the initial group of Rimé lamas belonged to the Drukpa Kargyu, the new approach rapidly spread among the Drukpa in Central and East Tibet. Lamas such as the 6th and 7th Khamtrul (b.1848 and 1908) and the 10th Drukchen (1884-1930) were deeply involved in the Rimé movement. Two Eastern Tibetan Drukpa teachers from Rimé circles are of particular importance within this thesis. These are Adzom Drukpa Drodul Pawo Dorje (a 'dzom 'brug pa 'gro 'dul dpa' bo rdo rje, 1842-1924)¹⁹ and Togden Shakya Shri (1854-1919). Adzom Drukpa

rebirth at Sechen (zhe chen) Gonpa (padma dri med legs pa'i blo gros, 1901-760).

¹⁹Smith suggests the dates 1885?-1924? for Adzom Drukpa, presumably so as to make him a rebirth of the Ninth Drukchen (Smith 1968b:3-4, and see folowing note). Other evidence supports a much earlier birth year for this great lama (1842).

In the several available accounts of the biography of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, an 'non-official' incarnation of Adzom Drukpa, the birth date of that master is given as 1842 (Norbu and Shane 1986:153, Norbu and Reynolds 1987:95). Norbu Rinpoché says he was recognised when two years old as a high incarnation of the Nyingma School (Norbu and Shane 1986:2). More details are provided in the Tibetan publication of "The Necklace of Gzi" (gzi yi phreng ba) by Namkhai Norbu, in which he states that he was recognised as Adzom Drukpa by both dpal yul kar ma yang srid rin po che kun bzang 'gro 'dul 'od sal klong yangs rdo rje (1898-) and zhe chen rab 'byams rin po che snang mdzad grub pa'i rdo rje (1900-) (in Goodman 1983:112).

Further, there is considerable biographical data available about the life of Adzom Drukpa which supports the earlier birth date: his son a' dzom rgyal sras 'gyur med rdo rje was born in 1895 (Tarthang Tulku 1977:302; Norbu and Shane 1986:155; Norbu and Reynolds 1987:97); Adzom Drukpa received teachings and transmissions from Dza Paltrul Rinpoche (Tarthang Tulku 1977:291, 294-295; Norbu and Shane 1986:153-154; Norbu and Reynolds 1987:95) who died in 1887 (Rigpa 1989); and he received teaching transmission on thirty-seven occasions from Jamyang Khyentse Ongpo, his principal guru who died in 1892 (Tarthang Tulku 1977:291-292,295; Allione 1984:254; Norbu and Shane 1986:153-154; Norbu and Reynolds 1987:95) so a birth date of 1885 is impossible. Khyentse Rinpoche recognised Adzom Drukpa as the Doctrine holder (chos bdag) for his Ter ice btsun snying ihig (Goodman, 1983 unpub:111).

Further substantiation can be found in the biography of Ayu Khandro (1839-1953) who visited Adzom Gar and met Adzom Drukpa for the first time when she was thirty years old, in the Earth Dragon year 1868. The young Adzom Drukpa (then twenty-six) reviewed teachings on Longde given by his uncle to a group of disciples before she arrived, and later taught more essentially on Dzog chen (Allione 1984:243). Ayu Khandro again received teachings from and practised with Adzom Drukpa at Adzom Gar in 1882, and with other disciples they both travelled to Dzongsar to receive teaching and transmission from Khyentse Wangpo in 1884 (Allione 1984:253). Further in this biography we learn that Adzom Drukpa also received teachings from Nyagla Pema Dudul who died in 1872 (Rigpa 1989-1990; Allione 1984:243). Tulku Thondup Rinpoche gives the dates for Adzom Drukpa as 1842-1925/6, a slightly later year of death than generally recorded (Thondup, 1986:199). A reasonable perspective from the Tibetan point of view on this apparent incongruity resulting from a linear time frame is to appreciate that it is possible for the 'wisdom mind essence'of a deceased lama to pass to another being at the time of death. For instance in 1959 when Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö of Dzongsar, the recognized 'action reincarnation' (phrin las sprul) of Khyentse Ongpo, died in Sikkim, it was said that such a
was held to be a parallel rebirth of the 9th or (more probably) the 8th Drukchen.\textsuperscript{20} The 10th Drukchen, Jigme Mipam Chöwang, succeeded at the Drukchen's gonpa of Sanga Chöling, but became one of the principal patrons of Shakya Shri, one of whose daughters he took as a consort. Their son, Tugsé Rinpoche (\textit{thugs sras rin po che}, 1916-83), was one of the greatest Drukpa teachers of recent times.

The close connections between Shakya Shri and his family and the people of Karzha are described at length in Chapter Nine of the thesis. Figure A.2 (pp.380-1) shows a selection of the lineal descendants of Shakya Shri,\textsuperscript{21} with particular emphasis on those significant for Karzha.

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\textsuperscript{20} The ‘official’ history of the Drukpa lineage in English (co-written by one of the Drukchen’s assistants and received by me during the Drukchen’s first visit to Australia in December 1988–January 1989) states that the Ninth Drukchen, Migyur Wangyal predicted before his death that he would have two incarnations, one specialising in Maha Sandhi or Dzogchen and the other in Mahamudra or Chagchen. The former was later recognised as Adzom Drukpa whilst the latter continued the lineage of the Drukchen (Gyatso and Singh typescript 1987:5–6). In view of Adzom Drukpa’s dates (see previous note), however, it seems more likely that he was recognized as a rebirth of the Eighth Drukchen than of the Ninth.

\textsuperscript{21}This chart is drawn on the basis of my own research in Karzha and Manali and on the work of Geoffrey Samuel and Tashi Tsering in Chandragiri (Orissa) and Manali. All of Shakya Shri’s sons and daughters by his two wives are shown, although the birth order of the daughters in particular is uncertain. All known members of the next (second) generation are included. There are some omissions in the third generation, and no members of the fourth generation have been shown.
Descendants of Togdan Shakya Shri (Part I)
Descendants of Togdan Shakya Shri (Part II)
Glossary of Tibetan and Karzha Terms

Note Karzha pronunciation varies in a number of significant ways from the standard Lhasa pronunciation of Tibetan. Furthermore, there is some inconsistency in pronunciation of grammatically equivalent forms depending on whether a word has existed in the language for any significant period or has been imported from 'standard' Tibetan - an instance is laspa (las pa) so pronounced, while rékyang (re rkyang) reflects something closer to the Lhasa pronunciation. My phonetic rendering reflects these and other features of Karzha.

abhi ?a phyi (1) grandmother, (2) female spiritual practitioner (cf. mémé).
achi a che eldest sister
Adzhom Drukpa a 'dzom 'brug pa n. of lama (1842-1924)
ajang a zhang mother's brother
ajang(ji) apa sp. unknown mother's mother
ajang(ji) tété sp. unknown mother's father
ajo a jo eldest son, brother
Alchi a lei n. of gonpa in Ladakh
ama a ma mother
Angmo dbang mo n. of person
Angrup = Ngödrup dngos grub n. of person
ani a ne father's sister
apa sp. unknown father's mother
Apo Rinpoche a pho rin po che n. of lama (1925-74)
apu sp. unknown sister other than eldest
awa a ba father(s)
awatsi sp. unknown father's brother
bagh 'bag ritual mask
balu ba lu rhododendron
Baralacha sp. unknown + la rtse n. of pass in Lahul
Barbog bar 'bog n. of place
bardo bar do state between death and rebirth
berboo sp. unknown long draw-string trousers
beti sp. unknown child
Beyul sbas yul ‘hidden valley’
Bon bon non-Buddhist religious tradition of Tibet
brangyis 'brang rgyas (?) kind of torma
Brownmyozla sp. unknown n. of month
bumpa bum pa pot or vase
bumskor 'bum skor circumambulation with Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra
butsa bu tsha son
chagchen phyag chen system of Tibetan Buddhist teachings; central experience within those teachings (Skt. Mahāmudrā)
cham 'chams religious dances
chang chang fermented liquor
chang chub gyanbum byang chub rgyan 'bum mantra of Buddha of North
changchub byang chub Enlightenment
changma bhuta lcang ma + sp. unknown willow tree
changthang byang thang northern part of Tibetan plateau
Chenrezig spyan ras gzigs n. of Tantric deity (Skt. Avalokiteśvara)
Chering Dondrup Lharje tshe ring don grub lha rje n. of Kardangpa practitioner
chinlab byin rlabs blessing
chöd gcod Tibetan Buddhist meditation technique
chodpa mchod pa offerings
Chöje Rinpochechos rgyal rin po che n. of Drukpa Kargyu reincarnation lineage
chojo sp. unknown brother other than eldest
Choksikris sp. unknown village agricultural festival
Chökyi Lodro 'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtsechos kyi blo gros, n. of lama (1896-1959)
chorten mchod rtan symbolic representation of Buddha-mind (Skt. stūpa)
choschos Buddha teaching (Skt. dharma)
chöskhangchos khang ‘dharma hall’ in gonpa
choslinchos gling ‘a combined monastery/nunnery in Solokhumbu’
chosmachos ma female practitioner(s)
chospaschos pa male practitioner(s)
chubaphyu pa Tibetan garment
Chukta sp. unknown n. of gonpa in Peukar
da zla month
dakpo bdag po husband
dam-rdzas dam rdzas consecrated articles
dambargya dam pa rigs brgya n. of ritual (‘one hundred types of sacred things’) 
damtsig dam tshig sacred bond or oath
dang dang plain, grassland
darcha dar rtsi n. of place
Dechen bde chen n. of person
Dechen Chôkor bde chen chos ’khor n. of gonpa of Yongdzin Rinpoche
Dechen Wangmo bde chen dbang mo n. of person
Demchog Chusuma bde mchog bcu gsum ma n. of ritual
Dev Gyatso bde ba rgya mtsho n. of lama (early C17)
digs a sp. unknown brother’s wife
Dilgo (or Dingo) Khyentse Rinpoche dil mgo or dis mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che n. of lama (b.1910)
Do Khyentse mdo mkhyen brtse n. of lama (1800-?)
Dodrupchen III Jigme Tenpai Nyima rdo grub chen ’jigs med bstan pa’i nyi ma n. of lama (1865-1926)
Dondup don grub n. of person
Dorje Chang rdo rje ’chang n. of Tantric deity (Skt. Vajradhara)
Dorje Phagmo rdo rje phag mo n. of Tantric deity (Skt. Vajravarāhī)
Dorsem or Dorje Sempa rdo rje sms dpa’ n. of Tantric deity (Skt. Vajrasattva)
dré ’dre ghost
Drigung ’bri gung, ’bri khung n. of Kargyu order
Drilburi dril bu ri n. of mountain (= ‘bell mountain’)
Drimé Od dri med ’od mantra of Buddha of South
Drolma sgrol ma n. of Tantric deity (Skt. Tārā)
Drugu gru gu n. of region and gonpa of Chôje Rinpoche (in Kham)
Drukchen ’brug chen n. of Drukpa reincarnation-series; head lamas of Drukpa order (lit. ‘the great dragon’)
Drukpa ’brug pa’ (1) n. of Kargyu order; (2) Bhutanese (lit. ‘dragon one(s)’)
Drukwang grub dbang ‘lord of siddhas’; title for great yogi
Drukyl ’brug yul Bhutan (lit. ‘Dragon Land’)
Dubreyla sp. unknown month

Dudjom Rinpoche bdud 'joms rin po che n. of lama (1904-87)

dugpo dug po gown or coat dress worn by both men and women

Dukhang 'du khang assembly hall in gonpa

dung gdung bone (honorific); also 'ancestry, clan' (c.f. rus), and extended to mean 'remains'

dushé 'du shes consciousness

dutsi chöṣ men bdud rtsi chos sman 'amrita dharma medicine'

dzambhala dzam bha la wealth gods

dzogchen rdzogs chen n. of system of Buddhist teachings

dzogrim rdzogs rim fulfillment yoga

Dzonkhul rdzong khul n. of gonpa in Zangskar

dzopo and dzomo mdzo pho, mdzo mo, male and female yak-cow cross breeds, respectively

fekupa phyed + sp. unknown 'half'-household

fetsema sp. unknown wife of awatsi (father's brother)

fotsi sp. unknown small goat and sheep figures made from dough

ga'u ga'u small portable shrine box

Gangchen Tise gangs chen ti se Mt. Kailash

Gangri gang ri Mt Kailash

Gatok sp. unknown lower half of village

Gatug Dangrapa Mémé n. of person

ge chu dge bcu ten virtues

gegan dge rgan teacher

Gegan Khyentse Gyatso dge rgan mkhyen brtse rgya mtsho n. of lama

gelong dge slong 'monk' (Skt. bhikṣu)

Gelugpa dge lungs pa another of the main orders

Gemur dge smur n. of gonpa

Gepahn gye phan twin peaks near entry to Lahul from south

getsul dge tshul novice ordination; person with this ordination

gonpa dgon pa religious institution

Gotsangpa rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje n. of Drukpa lama (1189-1258)

Gotsi mgo rtse village ritual celebrating birth (of sons)
Grampu *sp. unknown* + *phug* n. of village (near cave)

Gumrang *dgung rang* n. of place

Gundzog *?dgung rdzogs* anniversary of lama’s death

Guru Dewa *gu ru bde ba* n. of terma of Shakya Shri

Guru Rinpoche *gu ru rin po che* ‘the Precious Teacher’, Padmasambhava

Gyaltsun *rgyal mtshan* n. of person

Gyalwa *rgyal ba* title of Buddhas and high lamas

Gyulu *sgyu las* the ‘Illusory Body’ practice, one of the six Yogas of Naropa

Halda *sp. unknown* Village New Year (solstice)

Hemis *he mis* n. of gonpa in Ladakh

Howa *sp. unknown* the open ground in the village

Imi Thubten *sp. unknown* + *thub bstan* n. of person

Jabjez *zhabs rjes* n. of place = foot (honorary)

Jamgon Kongtrul *'jam mgon kong sprul* n. of lama (1813-1899)

Jamphal Dorje *'jam dpal rdo rje* n. of person

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo *'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po* n. of lama (1820-1892)

Jarungkashor *bya rung bka’ shor, bya rung kha shor* n. of stūpa in Nepal

Jhampa Mémé *'jam dpal* n. of person

Jigme Dorje *'jigs med rdo rje* n. of person

Jomo *jo mo* mistress, lady

Jos *?jo bo* Thakur, local chieftain

Kanjur *bka’ gyur* the set of Buddhist scriptures

Kar *dkar* white

Karak *kha rag* n. of gonpa where Norbu Rinpoche’s tulku was born

Kargyu *bka’ brgyud* or *dkar brgyud* n. of order

Karzha *Gar zhwa; dKar zha; Gar sha; Ga sha; Gar za* Lahul (especially the region around Kardang)

Karzha Khandroling *dkar zha mkha’ gro gling* ‘Karzha, place of the Dakini’

Kham *kham* East Tibet

Khamtrul Rinpoche *kham sprul rin po che* n. of Drukpa Kargyu reincarnation lineage from Kham, East Tibet

Khang zang *khang bzang* ‘noble house’ (part of chorten)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khangsar</td>
<td>n. of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khata</td>
<td>offering scarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khenpo Shyenga</td>
<td>n. of lama from Dzogchen Gonpa in E. Tibet (1871-1927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khora</td>
<td>circumambulation (of temple, stūpa, pilgrimage site etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khorlo Demchog</td>
<td>n. of Tantric deity (Skt. Cakrasamvara)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khorlo</td>
<td>n. of Tantric deity (Skt. Cakrasamvara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khuizla</td>
<td>n. of month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khunu Rinpoche Tenzin Gyaltsun</td>
<td>n. of lama (1885-1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolong</td>
<td>name of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kubal</td>
<td>relic category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudung</td>
<td>stūpa for a lama’s bones or remains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulu Mémé</td>
<td>n. of person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunchog Sum</td>
<td>The Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; Skt. Triratna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunga</td>
<td>n. of person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunskizla</td>
<td>n. of month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunzang</td>
<td>n. of Tantric deity (Skt. Samantabhadra), and of person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunzom</td>
<td>n. of pass (= ‘where all meet’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kushog</td>
<td>courtesy title (‘sir’); honorific title for important lama; title of respect for religious practitioner in Karzha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuten</td>
<td>‘body receptacle’, container or support for religious practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutima</td>
<td>wife of Yongdzin Rinpoche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyangma</td>
<td>left channel of subtle body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kye</td>
<td>n. of gonpa in Spiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyelang</td>
<td>n. of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyiphug</td>
<td>n. of place in Tsari (‘happy cave’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la lags</td>
<td>suffix indicating respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labchi</td>
<td>n. of place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lama</td>
<td>teacher (Skt. guru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lama chodpa</td>
<td>offering ritual directed to lama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lamdan lam bstan ‘to show the path’; segment of ritual added to Dambargya and performed after death of a person
lantsa lan tsha ornamental script
laspa las pa worker
latse la rtse tip of peak
lhagt'ong lhag mthong insight meditation (Skt. vipaśyanā)
Lhakhang lha khang shrine room of gonpa or house
Lharje lha rje doctor
lhato lha tho (shrine for) housegods
Lho Druk lho 'brug southern Bhutanese branch of Drukpa order
lim bhuta sp. unknown pine tree
Lingshed lings snyed n. of gonpa
Lingshedpa pon lings snyed pa dpon ‘the master from Lingshed’
Lobzang blo bzang n. of person
Logtok sp. unknown upper half of village
Long chen nyintik klong chen snying thig n. of cycle of terma teachings
Lopon Sonam Zangpo slob dpon bsod nams bzang po n. of lama (1892-1983)
Losar lo gsar New Year; ‘farmer’s New Year’ (so nams lo gsar); ‘royal New Year’ (rgyal po’i lo gsar)
lung riung ‘inner air’ (Skt. prāṇa)
lung pa’i chos lung pa’i chos local cults (lit. ‘religion of the valley’)
magpa mag pa inmarrying husband
Mageg Labdron ma gcig lab sgron n. of female Tibetan practitioner
mannagadé man ngag sde class of Dzogchen teachings
Markula or Mrikula mar gul n. of place
mechung me cung wife of mother’s brother (ajang)
mémé mes mes (1) grandfather; (2) title of respect for spiritual practitioner; used in Karzha for practitioners of older generation
Mentogzla sp. unknown n. of month
mi-ser mi ser commoner
Midrukpa mi ‘khrugs pa n. of tantric deity, a form of Aksobhya
milam rmi lam (1) dream; (2) the ‘Dream Yoga,’ one of the six Yogas of Naropa
Milarepa mi la ras pa n. of lama
Mindus smin drug n. of lunar asterism (= Pleiades)
Minduzla smin drug zla n. of month
Mipham Rinpoche mi pham rin po che n. of lama (1846/48-1912)
mokhor mo 'khor female harm-doers
momo mog mog meat balls in very fine dough, either fried or steamed
Myoskizla sp. unknown n. of month
naljorma rnal 'byor ma yogini, female practitioner of yoga
naljorpa rnal 'byor pa yogin, male practitioner of yoga
nam mna' ma daughter in law
Namgyal rnam rgyal mantra of Buddha of East
Namsis sp. unknown small village ritual
namthar rnam thar story of lama's life; hagiography
Naro Chödrug nāro'i chos drug Six Yogas of Naropa
né gnas place; 'power place' or pilgrimage site
nékor gnas skor pilgrimage lit. circumambulation of power place
Ngagi Wangpo (ngag gi dbang po, 1906-1959) Yongdzin Rinpoche,
ngagpa sngags pa Tantric practitioner
Ngari mnga ris Western Tibet
Ngari Kor Sum mnga ris skor gsum (lit. 'the three regions of Ngari'); the Western
Tibetan Empire of the 10th and 11th centuries
Ngawang Geleg Namgyal ngag dbang dge legs rnam rgyal n. of lama = Sé Rinpoche
(b. 1961)
Ngawang ngag dbang n. of person
ngöndro sngon 'gro the tantric preliminary practice
Ngnyengazla sp. unknown n. of month
Niguma Chödrug ni gu ma('i) chos drug the Six Yogas of Niguma, which derive
from Naropa's consort, Niguma
nodchin gnod sbyin harm-doers
Norbu nor bu n. of person
Norbu Rinpoche nor bu rin po che n. of lama (1885-1947)
Nyagla Pema Dudul nyag bla padma bdud 'dul n. of lama (1816-1872)
nyangdé myang 'das = Skt. nirvāṇa
Nyarma nyar ma or myar ma n. of gonpa in Ladakh
nyen gyud snyan rgyud oral tradition
nyerpa gnyer pa manager
nyima nyi ma sun
Nyimafed Latse nyi ma phyed la rtse n. of mountain in Karzha
Nyingma rnying ma n. of order (old translation school)
Orgyanpa o rgyan pa n. of lama (1230-1309)
Osal 'od gsal the 'Clear Light' practice; one of the six Yogas of Naropa
Otang 'o thang n. of gonpa
P'owa 'pho ba the transference of consciousness at the time of death
Pakshi pak shi Mongolian title for Buddhist teacher (in ‘Karma Pakshi’) 
Palden dpal ldan n. of person
Palmo dpal mo n. of person
Palzum dpal mdzom n. of person
Patrul Rinpoche dpal sprul rin po che n. of lama (1808-1887)
pawo dpa' bo vira (Skt.)
pechung sp. unknown husband of ani (father’s sister)
peldung 'phel gdung a type of relic
Peukar sp. unknown n. of place
Phiyang phyi dbang n. of gonpa in Ladakh
Phugtal phug tal n. of gonpa in Zangkar
phurba phur pa ritual dagger
pilshing sp. unknown shrub used for firewood
pokhor pho ’khor male harm-doers
Puna sp. unknown n. of village ritual on 15th day of Punazla
Punazla sp. unknown n. of month
Puntsog phun tshogs n. of person
rabné rab gnas consecration ritual for stupas, images, paintings etc.
Raldax, Raldag sp. unknown: ??ral itag village ritual for first-born son in household
Réchungpa ras chung pa n. of lama (1083-1161), disciple of Milarepa
rékyang ras rkyang exercises associated with Naro Chödrug
Repag re 'phags n. of temple and pilgrimage site in Lahul (= Triloknath)
répu ras pu exercises associated with Naro Chödrug
Rigdzin *rig 'dzin* awareness holder; enlightened person (in Dzogchen teachings); mantra of Buddha of Centre

Rigzin Norbu *rig 'dzin nor bu* n. of Bhutanese craftsman

Rimé *ris med* Tibetan religious tendency, 19th century onwards (= ‘non-biased’; impartial)

Rinchen Terzod *rin chen gter mdzod* collection of terma texts

Rinchen Zangpo *rin chen bzang po* n. of lama (c.958-1055)

ringsel *ring brsel* relic

Rinpoche *rin po che* ‘precious’, a title for revered teachers

Ritro *ri khrod* mountain retreat

Rizong *ri rdzong* n. of gonpa in Ladakh

Rohtang *ro thang* n. of main pass leading to Lahul from Kulu Valley (= ‘plain of corpses’)

roma *ro ma* right channel of subtle body

ronyom kordru *ro snyoms skor drug* teaching hidden by Rechungpa

Rubshu *ru bcu* or *ru shod* area in Ladakh

Rus *rus* ‘bone’ or lineage

Samye *bsam yas* n. of gonpa in Central Tibet

Sanga Chöling *gsang snags chos gling* n. of gonpa in East Tibet, the seat of the Drukchens

Sangwa Rinchen *gsang ba rin chen* mantra of Buddha of West

Sangye Do tri nyi *sangs rgyas mdo khri gnyis* collection of sutras

sangyum *gsang yum* ‘secret mother, consort’

sarma *gsar ma* New translation school of Tibetan Buddhism

sarpa *gsar pa* new

sat bhuta *sp. unknown* ‘god’s tree’

Sé Rinpoche *sras rin po che* n. of lama (b. 1961)

sem *sems* mind (Skt. *citta*)

serkhyim *ser khyim* married practitioners

Serlo *ser logs* n. of gonpa in Nepal

sha *sha* meat, flesh

shagpa *bshags pa* confession

shakpo *sha pho* wife’s brother
Sherab shes rab n. of person
shiné zhi gnas single-pointed concentration (Skt. śamathā)
Shingo shing dkon ‘woodless’; n. of pass
shugpa shug pa juniper
Sidji ?dzi brjid or ?srid gzhī n. of person
sonam bsod nams merit; also a personal name
Sonam Wangyal bsod nams dbang rgyal n. of person
srog shing srog shing central wooden post placed in chorten
Sumda gsum mda’ n. of place in Zangskar
sung bsangs fire (smoke) offering to local deities
sungten gsung rten ‘receptacle/support for voice/speech’
t’ag pun or mapun khrag spun or ma spun ‘siblings through t’ag’ or ‘through mothers’
Tabo ta pho n. of gonpa in Spiti
Taksang Repa stag tshang ras pa n. of lama (1574-1651)
Tamdin rta mgrin n. of lama
Tandi ?tang ti n. of place
Tarchen thar chen n. of person
Tashi Namgyal bkra shis mam rgyal n. of person
Tashi Shuling bkra shis shugs gling n. of gonpa in Lahul (= Shashur)
Tashijong bkra shis ljongs n. of Tibetan refugee settlement in N. India
Tayul lta yul n. of gonpa in Lahul
ten rten the support, container or receptacle for the Refuge
tendrel nyingpo zung rten ‘brel snying po’i gzungs mantra of dependent origination
Tenpé Nyima bstan pa’i nyi ma n. of lama? (1849-1907)
Tenzin bstan ‘dzin n. of person
terma gter ma hidden teachings
Terton Dulzhug Lingpa gter ston ’dul bzhugs gling pa n. of lama (d.1960s)
tété sp. unknown father’s father
thangka thang ka painting
Thinley Chöden ’phrin las chos sgron n. of person
Tholing mtho gling n. of gonpa near Tsaparang
thugpa thug pa soup, broth made with flour noodles
Tod **stod** upper or higher
Togdan **rtogs ldan** person having spiritual insight; title for yogi
Togden Shakya Shri **rtogs ldan sha kya shri** n. of lama (1853-1919)
Tonba **ston ba** n. of gonpa
Torma **gtor ma** conical offering cake made from barley dough
Totup **?thu stobs** n. of person
Traba **grwa ba** novice (Karzha usage)
Trag **khrag** blood
Trinley **'phrin las** activity
Tripon **khrid dpon** the teacher who gives the oral explanation
Tripon Pema Chogyal **khrid dpon padma chos rgyal** n. of lama (1878-1959)
Trulkor **'phrul 'khor, 'khrul 'khor** physical exercises associated with yogic practice
tsa **rtsa** ‘psychic vein’ or channel of subtle body (Skt nādi)
ts'am **mthams** retreat for meditation practice
tsa-lung **rtsa lung** ‘inner yoga’ involving psychic veins and inner airs
tsa Uma **rtsa dbyi ma** central channel of subtle body
tsampa **tsam pa**, roasted barley flour made into porridge
Tsangkupa **sp. unknown** full household
Tsangpa Gyare Yeshe Dorje **gtsang pa rgya ras ye shes rdo rje** n. of lama (1161-1211), founder of the Drukpa lineage
Tsanizla **sp. unknown** n. of month
tsaow **sp. unknown** sister’s husband, but only if senior to speaker.
tsawa sum **rtsa ba gsum** the inner Refuge of the Three Roots
tsawé lama **rtsa ba'i bla ma** root teacher
tsemé **sp. unknown** daughter
Tsemé Gotsi **sp. unknown + ?mgo rtse** female equivalent to Gotsi
Tsenku **tsheng sku** n. of person
Tsering **tshhe ring** n. of person
Tso Mapampa **mthso ma pham pa** n. of lake (= Manasarovar)
Tso Pema **mtho padma** n. of lake (Lotus Lake, identified with Rewalsar, H.P.)
tsog **tshogs** offering ritual
tsog khang **tshogs khang** assembly hall of gonpa
tsogl'ag **tshogs lhag** remainder offering for preta (Skt.) or hungry ghosts
Tsondru *brtson grub* n. of person
Tsultrim Nyima *tshul khrims nying ma* n. of person
Tsusksizla *sp. unknown* n. of month
Tugten *thugs rten* the (honorific) Mind/Heart receptacle
tuksé *thugs sras* ‘heart son,’ close disciple of lama, lineage holder
Tuksé Rinpoche *thugs sras rin po che* n. of lama (1916-83)
tulkus *sprul sku* ‘reincarnation lama’
tummo *gtum mo* ‘psychic heat’, one of the six Yogas of Naropa (Skt. *caṇḍāli*)
Tupcheling *thub kyi gling* n. of gonpa
Twaesksizla *sp. unknown* n. of month
Uchen *dbu can* Tibetan writing style
Urgyan Chödron *o rgyan chos sgrom* n. of person
wang *dbang* ‘initiation, empowerment’ (Skt. abhiseka)
yab-yum *yab-yum* father-mother, the union of opposites
Yangkyin *yang bskyid* n. of person
Yangzom *dbyangs 'dzom* n. of person
yermé *dbyer med* non-dual realisation
Yeshe Tsogyal *ye shes mtsho rgyal* n. of consort of Guru Rinpoche
yeshepa *ye shes pa* the Wisdom beings
yidam *yi dam* Tantric (meditational) deity
Yongdzin Rinpoche *yongs 'dzins rin po che* n. of Drukpa reincarnation lineage in Central Tibet
Yontan *yon tan* n. of thangka painter
Yungdruk gu tseg *gyung drung dgu* (b)rtsegs)‘the Nine story Swastika mountain’ explain
Yurdzong *g.yu rdzong* n. of place
zan *gzan*, shawl worn over the left shoulder when performing rituals
Zhang Zhung *zhang zhung* region and ancient kingdom in Western Tibet
zi *gsi, dzi* agate beads of great age and magical potency
Zimchung *gzim chung* private quarters of head lama
Zomo Karag *zho mo kha rag* n. of gonpa (also Karag)
zung *gzungs* mantric formula
Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

Abhayadatta n. of person
Akṣobhya n. of deity
Anu Yoga class of tantra
Anuttara Yoga class of tantra
Ati Yoga class of tantra
avadhūti central channel of psychic body
Avalokiteśvara n. of deity
bhaga female organ
bodhicitta state which motivates attainment of Enlightenment
bodhisattva person or deity motivated by bodhicitta
Bṛhan Nīlānāṭra n. of text
cakra psychic centre in body
Cakrasamvara n. of deity
candāli n. of deity associated with inner heat practice
Caturāśī-siddha-pravṛtti n. of text
candra moon
Cariya class of tantra
caiṭya term for stūpa
citta mind, consciousness
dākinī physical or symbolic female being; see text
devī goddess
dhāraṇī ritual formula
dharma Buddhist teaching, etc.
dharmapāla Guardians of Buddhist teachings (deities)
Gaṇapati n. of deity
Gaṇesān. of deity
ghaṇḍha n. of offering
Ghaṇḍhapā n. of person (= Drilbupa)
ghaṇḍhe n. of offering
guru teacher (= lama)
harmika part of stūpa
Heruka class of Tantric deity
Hinayāna 'small vehicle'; class of Buddhist traditions and teachings
Jambhala deity of wealth
Jñānasattva 'wisdom being' ( = yeshepa)
Kailāsa n. of mountain
Kālacakra n. of tantra
kandakari n. of medicine
karma action; connection between action and consequences
kāya body
Kriyā class of tantra
lalanā psychic channel in body
maṇḍala diagram used in Buddhist practice
mahā-siddha great siddha
Mahā Yoga class of tantra
Mahāmudrā class of teachings ( = Chagchen)
Mahāmya pilgrimage guide
Mahāyāna 'great vehicle'; class of Buddhist teachings
Maitreyā n. of deity
mālā rosary
Manasarovar n. of lake
Mandāravī n. of person
maṇḍir temple
Maṇjuśrī n. of deity
mudrā gesture; seal
nāḍī psychic channel in body
Nāmaśṭottarasāta n. of text
Nirvāṇa freedom from samsara
Padmapāni n. of deity
Padmasambhava n. of teacher
Pañcakrama system of teachings
Pārvatī n. of deity
pīṭha Tantric site
prajñāpāramitā 'Perfection of Wisdom'; class of teachings
prāṇa  inner wind which flows in psychic channels
Prāṇaṭoṣanī Tantra n. of text
pratiṣṭhā-vidhi consecration ritual (= rabné)
preta  hungry ghost
rāṣa n. of offering
rasanā n. of psychic channel
rūpa n. of offering
śamatha type of meditation
samaya vow, commitment
Saṃbhogakāya form of manifestation of Buddha and tantric deities
saṃsāra ordinary state of being in world
Saṇcī n. of place
śakti force; female deity
śapta n. of offering
Śiva n. of deity
siddha realised being
sparśa n. of offering
stūpa Buddhist symbolic construction (= chorten)
svāstika Indian symbol
Tārā n. of deity
Uddiyāna n. of place where many tantras originated
Upāya means; class of tantra
vac speech
vajra Buddhist tantric symbol
Vajradhara n. of deity (= Dorje Chang)
Vajrakāya vajra-body
Vajrapāṇi n. of deity
Vajrasattva n. of deity
Vajravārahi n. of deity
Vajrayāna general term for Buddhist tantra
Vajrayoginī class of deities
Vid-ādhara realised being
vihāra temple, monastery
vinaya Buddhist disciplinary code
vipaśyanā form of meditation
vīra class of deities
Viṣṇusamhitā n. of text
viśva-vajra Buddhist symbol (crossed vajras)
yakṣa class of deities
yāna vehicle, path, class of teachings
Ye Dharmah Gāthā n. of verse
yoga methods for spiritual cultivation
yogin male practitioner of yoga
yoginī female practitioner of yoga
yoni female organ
References

Abbreviations
GRI = Geographical Review of India
IAIC = International Academy of Indian Culture
IATS = International Association for Tibetan Studies
IsMEO = Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente
J. = Journal
JAS = Journal of Asian Studies
JFSR = Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion
LTWA = Library of Tibetan Works and Archives
MRD = Mountain Research and Development
SER = Serie Orientale Roma
SF = Seeds and Farmers
SP = Sata-Pitaka Series
SSS = Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod
TJ = Tibet Journal
TR = Tibetan Review

Note
Tibetan names are indexed under first syllables (Karma Lekshe Tsomo; Nawang Tsomo), except where there is a recognisable surname or incarnation title (Shakspo, Nawang Tsering; Trungpa, Chögyam). Titles such as Khenpo, Geshe are ignored for alphabetizing.

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