

## SOME THEMES IN THE ETHOS OF TRADITIONAL BUDDHIST LADAKH

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### SUMMARY

Seventy-two Buddhist children, women, men, and monks were interviewed in Ladakh. The interviews include Kohlberg's "moral reasoning dilemmas" and two of Selman's "social reasoning vignettes." Thirty-eight interviewees also responded to an abbreviated form of Fowler's "faith interview" and 16 interviewees were exposed to three "moral dilemmas" jointly developed by a Ladakhi and the author. The chapter is based on these interviews as well as participation in religious festivals, rituals, etc. In the interviews, respondents emphasize faith in their Buddhist religion, karma, merit and demerit, and the desire for a good reincarnation. Restraint, serenity, detachment, and quiet dignity rather than the free expression of emotions are admired. Feelings of shame provide some of the moral glue that keeps Ladakhi village society together, but guilt feelings are rarely shown or understood.

Self-esteem is interpreted as selfishness or undesirable pride. Concrete reciprocity and obedience take precedence over intimacy or romantic love in close relationships. Concrete goals for one's life include good health and long life, happiness, reasonable prosperity, and convivial relationships with others. In Ladakh's village community conflicts between people are de-emphasized and capital crimes are very rare. Cooperation and interpersonal trust are stressed, but are sometimes undermined by feelings of envy. The self is submerged in a network of interpersonal obligations that are clear to everybody. Feelings of envy, jealousy, and fear are disowned by the self and projected onto others or the ever-present demons. Ladakhi religious and moral beliefs reflect a unique amalgam of indigenous, animistic, demon-ridden Central Asian shamanism, the mystic, compassionate moral ideals of Vajrayana Buddhism, the relentless logic of the historical Buddha, and hard, pragmatic, adaptive strategies so necessary for survival in the high altitude mountain desert of Ladakh.

### RESUME

L'auteur a interrogé soixante-douze Ladakhi bouddhistes—enfants, femmes, hommes, laïcs aussi bien que moines. Les interviews étaient basés sur deux «dilemmes de raisonnement moral» de Kohlberg et sur deux «dilemmes de raisonnement social» de Selman. Trente-huit interviewés ont répondu à une forme abrégée du «questionnaire de foi religieuse» de Fowler, et seize autres ont été soumis à trois «dilemmes moraux» mis au point par l'auteur avec l'aide d'un Ladakhi.

Cette étude se base sur l'analyse de ces questionnaires mais aussi sur l'observation directe de certains comportements (participation aux fêtes religieuses, aux rites, etc.). Dans les interviews les Ladakhi interrogés mettent l'accent sur leur foi bouddhiste, sur l'importance qu'ils accordent aux notions de karma, de mérite et de démerite, et sur leur désir d'une «bonne» réincarnation. Ils admirent les attitudes réservées, la sérénité, le détachement, et la dignité et rejettent la libre expression des émotions. Les sentiments de honte aident à maintenir la cohésion de la société villageoise; les sentiments de culpabilité sont par contre rarement compris et encore moins montrés. Le respect de soi est appréhendé comme de l'égoïsme ou de l'orgueil. La réciprocité (des services, des obligations, des droits et des devoirs) et la soumission à la hiérarchie prennent le pas sur l'amour romantique ou les relations intimes. Parmi des buts concrets pour sa vie sont la bonne santé, une longue vie, le bonheur, la prospérité raisonnable et des parentés cordiaux avec autrui.

Dans les communautés villageoises, alors que les conflits de personnes ne sont pas montés en épingle et que les crimes graves sont très rares, la coopération et la confiance entre les personnes jouent un rôle important mais

sont quelquefois abîmées par des sentiments d'envie. Le moi est immergé dans un réseau d'obligations interpersonnelles évidentes pour tous. Les sentiments de joie, de jalousie et de peur sont désavoués et projetés sur les autres ou sur les démons toujours présents.

Les croyances religieuses ladakhies constituent un amalgame d'animisme—avec la croyance en toute une série d'entités surnaturelles, démons et autres—de chamanisme centre-asiatique et de bouddhisme vajrayana—avec son idéal moral de compassion et ses tendances mystiques, reposant sur le modèle du Bouddha historique; le tout dans un contexte d'adaptation, voire de survie, au sein d'un désert de très haute montagne.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Es wurden 72 buddhistische Kinder, Frauen, Männer und Mönche in Ladakh interviewt. Die Interviews umfassten Kohlbers "Moraldilemmas" und zwei "Dilemmas" von Selman. 38 der Befragten beantworteten ausserdem Fowlers Interview nach dem religiösen Glauben und 16 der Befragten nahmen Stellung zu drei moralischen Dilemmas, die vom Author und von Wangchuk Shalipa neu entwickelt wurden. Der Artikel stützt sich ausserdem auf Beobachtungen bei religiösen Ritualen, Tänzen, usw. Die Befragten betonten in ihren Interviews ihren Glauben an ihre buddhistische Religion, ihr Karma, Verdienst und Nicht-Verdienst. und ihren Wunsch nach einer guten Wiedergeburt. Bewundert werden Eigenschaften wie Zurückhaltung, innere Ruhe, Ausgeglichenheit, Würde, gleichmütige Nichtgebundenheit, jedoch nicht starke Gefühle oder Gefühlsäusserungen.

Das Gefühl der Scham ist ein starkes, moralisches Bindemittel in der Dorfgemeinschaft der Ladakhis. Schuldgefühle jedoch werden nur selten gezeigt oder verstanden. Selbstwertgefühle werden als Egoismus oder Stolz interpretiert und abgelehnt. Persönliche Beziehungen beruhen auf konkreter Gegenseitigkeit und Gehorsam und nicht so sehr auf romantischer Liebe oder Intimität. Konkrete Lebensziele beziehen sich auf gute Gesundheit und langes Leben, Zufriedenheit, heitere Beziehungen zu anderen Menschen und annehmbare wirtschaftliche Verhältnisse. In Ladakhs Dorfgemeinschaften wird auf Kooperation und zwischenmenschliches Vertrauen Wert gelegt wenn auch manchmal Neidgefühle dieses Vertrauen zu untergraben drohen. Konflikte kommen relativ, Kapitalverbrechen äusserst selten vor. Das Selbst ist in ein Netz gegenseitiger Verpflichtungen verwoben die allgemein bekannt sind. Neidgefühle, Eifersuchtsgefühle und Angst werden aus der Definition des Selbst ausgeklammert und auf Nachbarn oder die allgegenwärtigen Dämonen projiziert. In der Glaubenswelt der Ladakhis vermischen sich in einzigartiger Weise der altüberlieferte, animistische Dämonenglaube und Schamanismus Zentralasiens mit den mystischen, Mitleid betonenden moralischen Idealen des Vajrayana Buddhismus, der klaren Logik des historischen Buddha Shakyamuni und pragmatischen, harten Anpassungsstrategien, die das Überleben in der hoch gelegenen Bergwüste Ladakh überhaupt erst möglich machen.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan folk religion and the Bon tradition have been studied from a variety of viewpoints both in Tibet itself and in neighboring societies such as Ladakh.

Tucci (1970) and Ekvall (1964) have published valuable overall interpretations of Tibetan religious beliefs, practices, and institutions. Tibet's and Ladakh's religious art, including paintings and sculptures, have been studied from historical, artistic, and technical perspectives (Snellgrove and Skorupsky, 1977; Genoud and Inoue, 1982). Anthropologists such as Aziz (1978), Fürer-Haimendorf (1964), Kaplanian (1981), Brauen (1980), and others have delineated some of the social structures and cultural belief systems within which Tibetan Buddhism and folk religion have developed. However, only a very limited amount of work has been published concerning the psychological aspects of Tibetan and Ladakhi belief systems (Lichter and Epstein, 1983). Perhaps the most important psychological studies of a Tibetan society are the recent psychoanalytic interpretations of Tibetan Buddhism by Paul (1982) and Ortner (1978). Their interpretations are in large part based on their fieldwork among the Sherpa of Nepal and on Paul's readings of traditional religious literature, such as the well known biographies of Milarepa (Evens-Wents, 1969) and Padmasambhava (Toussaint, 1933). While their psychological perspective adds an important dimension to the study of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan societies, it should be kept in mind that their interpretations remain within a traditional Freudian framework. Consistent with such a framework, Paul and Ortner emphasize the prevalence of traditional Freudian themes such as status

rivalry, envy, greed, stinginess, fear of pollution, hostile joking, fear of demons and the forces of anarchy and destruction, Oedipal attachments of monks to their mothers, father-son conflict, etc., in the rituals, religious myths, and worldviews of the Sherpa. We may note, however, that the works of Ortner and Paul describe inner psychological preoccupations, impulses, and anxieties that only rarely make their appearance in the attractive and quite typical anthropological portrait of Sherpa life as given to us by Fürer-Haimendorf (1964).

In the following, a psychological study is reported that is based on interviews with 72 Buddhist children, women, and monks from Ladakh. The methods and the theoretical framework of the study derive in the main from cognitive-developmental psychology (Kohlberg, 1984) though a few psychoanalytic terms have also been cautiously introduced. Cognitive-developmental psychology focuses especially on the underlying structures of thought processes, and in context, the theories of Kohlberg (1984) and Fowler (1981) provide descriptions and explanations concerning the individual's development of moral reasoning and faith. In the present chapter, however, the emphasis is not on individual development, but rather on the content and structures of moral and religious conceptions as they are shared by many Buddhist lay persons and monks from Ladakh (1). It is assumed that these shared conceptions will have an important influence on the worldviews and personality characteristics of many Ladakhis.

Foreign observers of Ladakh have sometimes commented on the character or psychological traits of Ladakhis. Drew (1875), a representative of the British government in Ladakh, had this to say: «The Ladakhis are cheerful, willing and good-tempered; they are very ready for a laugh; they are not quarrelsome, unless it be when excited by their intoxicating drink, chang (chang), and if over that they do get to wrangling or fighting, no bad blood remains afterwards. They are by no means ingenious; simplicity and clumsiness are characteristics of them... They are not muddle-headed, however, and much given to truth-telling... The Ladakhis are one of the hardiest of races...» In his dealings with the Chakzot (chakzot) («business managers» of monasteries), he found them to be «men of genial and amiable disposition, of refined and dignified manners» (Drew, 1875: pp. 239-240, 248, 256).

Ramsey (1890), who functioned for several years as Commissioner in Ladakh, claims that «the ordinary Ladakh Buddhists are as nice a race as one could find anywhere, they are a cheery, simple, honest, easy going people, but they must ever remain a subject race, for they are not clever, and they are cowardly and unambitious... Their one desire is to be left in peace to live on the land.

They have no desire to be rich, and so long as they have enough to live upon, they strongly object to earning money by the sweat of their brow... they have no commercial instincts or aptitude... When left to themselves, the Ladakhis were free from religious bigotry» (Ramsey, 1890: pp. 56-57).

Foreign missionaries have also left us their impressions of the very people they attempted to convert to Christianity. Though these missionaries were often good observers of certain behavior patterns and customs found in Ladakh (Friedl, 1984), they were on the whole poor psychologists. Since their missionary activities were frequently unsuccessful, and since their firm Christian convictions set them at variance with the very spirit of the popular Buddhism and folk religion, these missionaries have sometimes given us unsympathetic portraits of Ladakh's inhabitants, and especially so of the monks. In his «novel», the missionary Ribbach (1940) describes a monk of Lamayuru as being utterly greedy, dishonest, superstitious, and given to bouts of indiscriminate drinking. Ribbach and the Hebers (Heber and Heber, 1903/1978) also emphasize that a certain tough, pragmatic, and utilitarian approach to life prevails among many of Ladakh's peasants.

One may object to these impressionistic and seemingly stereotypical descriptions which are not always consistent with each other. In the context of the present paper, we may note above all, that the assumed personality traits of Ladakhis are not connected to their religious conceptions and their Buddhist faith. Drew and Ramsey give us sketchy descriptions of external behavior patterns, not of inner feelings and meanings. In the following, an attempt will be made to integrate the religious conceptions, worldviews, and thought processes of traditional, Buddhist Ladakhis with various «personality traits». The research is based on interviews conducted in 1980 and 1981.

The interviews focused on social, moral, and religious patterns of reasoning. It was hoped that the interviews would reflect some of the underlying themes that characterize psychological thought processes among Ladakhi laypersons and monks. In the interviews, a respondent was told a series of decision dilemmas in which the interests of various people conflicted with each other. The dilemmas were often simple in nature, since they had to be understood by both children and adults. However, the questions following the dilemmas were adjusted to the reasoning capacities of the interviewee and were often quite challenging in nature. In addition, broad

questions about a person's life history, the purpose of life, the importance and meaning of religion, etc. were addressed to a subsample of 38 interviewees. Based on these interviews, themes that were felt to reflect the prevailing ethos of traditional Ladakh were identified. By ethos is meant here the characteristic spirit or «genius» of a people that distinguishes them from other people. This includes characteristic value systems, attitudes, and the overall worldview of a people. In addition, an attempt was made to identify special styles of thinking that became visible in the interviews, but that can also be detected in Ladakh's religious heritage, mythology, folksongs, and poetry (2). In the following, we will first discuss the methodology underlying this project. Subsequently, an overview of the worldviews, ethos, style of thinking, and personality characteristics of mature Ladakhis will be presented. There follows a short section pointing out some of the limitations of the present research as well as some afterthought that were formulated 17 years after the initial version of this chapter was published in 1987. A glossary at the end of the paper defines some of the psychological terms used in this paper. Throughout the paper the reader is asked to keep in mind that the interviews mostly focused on ideal moral and religious conceptions. In Ladakh, as everywhere else, ideal conceptions are not always translated into actual behavior.

It may also be noted that the contents of the chapter have been influenced by the spirited and often sceptical discussions that followed the author's presentation of his research at the «Deuxième colloque sur le Ladakh». Especially useful in this context were the comments of Kaplanian (1986).

## METHOD

### Respondents:

The sample of 72 respondents included 8 boys and 8 girls, age 10-12, 8 boys and 8 girls, age 14-16, 10 men and 10 women, age 25-73, and 20 monks, age 20-72. All respondents were Buddhists and came from Leh and surrounding villages such as Stok, Saboo, Gompa, Chanspa, and others. The 20 monks were affiliated with a wide variety of monasteries throughout Ladakh such as Sankar, Spituk, Likir, Lamayuru, Thikse, Hemis and Phyang. Their educational attainments and ranks within their monastic communities varied considerably, and some of the monks had in the past gone to Tibet for higher religious studies. Four rinpoche (rin-po-che) were included in the sample. A large majority of the interviewees spoke little or no English. They came from a considerable variety of backgrounds and included farmers, village workers, shopkeepers, small government officials, etc., and their wives and children. Some prominent citizens from Leh were also included in the interviews. Educational levels of respondents varied from no schooling at all to college education. All in all, the sample included a highly varied cross-section of Ladakhis from Leh and surroundings, but compared to the rest of Ladakh the sample was better educated, had been more influenced by exposure to the «modern world», and included a smaller percentage of farmers.

### Questionnaire:

The questionnaire included two moral decision stories taken from Colby and Kohlberg (1987) and two social reasoning dilemmas taken from Selman (1979). The author presented to his Ladakhi informant, Mr. Nawang Tsering Shaksपो, J & K Cultural Academy, Leh, a selection of moral and social decision stories and asked him to select those stories that appeared to him to be especially appropriate for Ladakhi settings. The stories were translated into Ladakhi, and some of their details were changed. Each of the four stories described a hypothetical dilemma where the actions and expectations of fictitious adults and children clash with each other. The four stories were as follow:

- (1) Should desperately poor Stobdan steal dakjun (3) from a doctor-druggist in order to save his deathly ill wife? (An adaptation of Kohlberg's story.)
- (2) Fourteen-year-old Rinchen works hard and saves money for a camp. Should he give the money to his father, though his father had promised him the money? (Kohlberg's camp story.)
- (3) Tondup is a young troublemaker and gets into a flight. Should his sister Angmo tell on him to their parents? (Selman's flight story.)
- (4) Tsering gives Nawang a new dog as a birthday gift, though Nawang does not want a replacement for his lost old dog (Selman's puppy story.)

The four vignettes were followed by an extensive series of standard questions that attempted to elicit the

reasoning behind the interviewee's decisions. The questions were designed to raise (supposedly universal) issues such as the value of life, property, theft, mutual role-taking, interpersonal expectations and duties, punishment, guilt, promise and trust, conceptions of the subjective nature of persons (thoughts, feelings, motives), self-awareness and self-reflection, personality traits, self-esteem, dyadic relationships, anger and friendship. Depending on a person's answers to these questions and issues, numerous additional questions were introduced. In addition to the decision stories described above, three new dilemmas were constructed with the help of Mr. Wangchuk Shalipa. Sixteen interviews included the three new dilemmas. The three stories described a son who wanted to become a monk against the wishes of his mother, a young couple who got married against the determined opposition of the husband's parents, and a woman who felt heated after buying a shawl from a Kashmiri shopkeeper. Thirty-eight respondents were also exposed to an abbreviated version of Fowler's (1981) faith interview. In this interview, a person was asked about his (or her) life story, about the meaning of his/her life, about the meaning of his/her religious commitments, and about various values and attitudes that constituted the person's faith. The faith interview included a wide variety of broad, open-ended questions that were used to elicit a person's overall outlook on life.

#### The Interview Situation:

The interviews took place in schools, monasteries, the author's guesthouse and hotel or, occasionally, in the fields. They usually lasted between one and a half to three hours and were tape-recorded. The interviews were conducted by the author and by Mrs. Donna Chirico-Rosenberg, a counseling psychologist from New York. Several interpreters were used throughout the research. The interviewees were typically unfamiliar with the whole interview procedure and some among them, especially children, made comments about the difficulty of the questions. Many of the children, particularly the younger girls, proved to be shy, and a few interviews had to be broken off on this account.

Thus a balance had to be struck in the interviews between asking demanding probing questions on the one hand, and respect and consideration for the considerable cognitive and social strains these questions caused for the respondents, on the other hand. In traditional cultures such as Ladakh, older male authority figures are often assumed to possess religious and moral knowledge, and children are rarely asked their detailed opinions about such matters. In addition, respondents sometimes asked whether they had given "the" right answer. They seemingly believed that there existed an objectivally moral reality certainly known to rinpoches, and perhaps the interviewers and other authority figures. At the end of the interviews, respondents received Polaroid pictures of themselves. In addition, adults received small amounts of money and/or a picture of H. H. Dalai Lama.

As in other Buddhist societies, there exists in Ladakh a major division between the «great» literate tradition of a small group of reflective, highly trained upper-strata monks, and the «small», illiterate or semi-literate traditions of Folk Buddhism. This Folk Buddhism is lived rather than systematically analyzed. The lower ranks of monks are often closer to Ladakh's folk Buddhism than to the abstract speculations of the trained geshe (ge-se) or rinpoche. The division between the great tradition of higher Buddhism and the intuitive tradition of Folk Buddhism was clearly reflected in our interviews. The present paper will focus mostly on interviews with less educated, traditional, mature villagers and lower ranking monks.

## RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes some of the themes that were identified in the interviews of traditional, mature Buddhist Ladakhis. The Buddhist religion was almost universally accepted as a guiding light for one's life journey. Older respondents, especially, emphasized that religion showed them the way to a better reincarnation and thus to a better future. Only rarely did the interviews reflect a deliberate, self-conscious, ideological concern with religion; rather, the respondents seemed to live «in» their religion. Religious meaning was considered to exist objectively as an intrinsic aspect of all existence, not as a subjectively chosen worldview. While the large majority of laypersons were not involved in high-level meditation they nevertheless acknowledged that mystic contemplation as practiced by high lamas leads to ultimate truth beyond all conceptualization. However, the exact nature of this truth remained vague and unclear to them. Systematic doubt about the validity of (Vajrayana) Buddhism was almost never expressed, though a few of the younger respondents acknowledged that they lived a carefree life in which religion played only a limited role. A retired farmer and guide expressed some of these themes as follows: «When I was a young man, I enjoyed myself very much and cared about nothing, I was strong and used to go to the high mountains with the horses and the yaks...I never used to pray, but now I

realize my situation. Now that I am 72 years old, I am thinking for my future only. For the future I want to pray, for my reincarnation and for all good persons. Only the God and the high lamas are important. HH. «Bakula Rinpoche gives me good advice, and I follow the teachings of the God. Without faith there is nothing and our hearts are dead. Without religion a person thinks of himself only, and his heart is dead.»

In most interviews, karma, merit and demerit, and the importance of avoiding sin were much emphasized. Though respondents often found it difficult to express their conception of karma, they seemed to look upon it as an impersonal, all pervading, objectively existing system of moral retribution for evil actions. In many interviews, a major emphasis was placed on the avoidance of concrete sins such as killing, stealing, and lying in order to avoid a future subhuman reincarnation or punishment in the Buddhist hell-purgatory. Other respondents discussed more abstract and internalized moral conceptions. They emphasized the importance of moral purity in the form of a «clear heart» (4). Moral relativism was absent, while systematic ideological reflection about ethical systems was found only among a very few educated persons who had had considerable contact with other cultures and worldviews. No religious fanaticism appeared in the interviews. There was very little indication of anomie as understood by the French sociologist Durkheim. Anomie denotes a state of normlessness in a society. In such a society, social and moral norms are weak and often contradictory, leading to a loss of moral conviction and sense of purpose among many members of that society. In stable, traditional societies, where religion provides a comprehensive framework for understanding one's life, anomie and identity conflicts appear to be rare

In the interviews, a considerable number of questions focused on a person's conception of guilt and other moral feelings. As understood in this essay, guilt feelings refer to negative feelings shaped by self-blame and self-condemnation for moral shortcomings. When experiencing guilt, a person compares his/her actions, feelings or thoughts against his/her own moral standards, conscience or ego-ideal and perceives that he falls short of his internalized moral values. In the interviews, Ladakhi respondents rarely mentioned or understood guilt feelings, nor did they have a clear understanding of the concept of conscience. However, there probably exists in Ladakh's village societies a strong concern for feelings of shame, though our interviews, unfortunately, did not focus on notions of shame. Shame feelings may be defined as fears caused by imagined or actual disapproval by significant others. They reflect a person's social anxieties and concerns about public self-presentation, while guilt feelings are more likely to reflect a person's inner preoccupations with moral inadequacies of the self. In daily living, then, Ladakh's village culture appears to function mainly as a shame culture rather than a guilt culture.

This conclusion is strengthened by additional information gleaned from the interviews. The interviews reflected little concern for or understanding of, inner psychological processes such as self-esteem or change in the inner structure and nature of the self. When directly asked, respondents were generally unable to give a clear definition of the concept of self-esteem. Instead, they claimed that high self-esteem reflects a person's excessively «big ego», selfishness, or undesirable pride. They admired quiet dignity, restraint, serenity, and a certain detachment from one's emotions, from other people, and from the illusions of this world. Interpersonal assertiveness and aggressiveness, impulsivity, inner restlessness, and emotional expressiveness were all considered undesirable. Introversion, shyness, and timidity are personality traits fairly commonly encountered among Ladakh's Buddhist inhabitants. The quiet control of inner emotions may be helped by, and sometimes hidden by, a distinct sense of politeness, discretion, and privacy. Undesirable emotions such as envy, jealousy, and fear are disowned by the self and projected outwards onto ghosts, spirits, demons, la (lha), village neighbors, or outgroups such as Kashmiris through gossip, defensive religious rituals, and other means. Within the context of interpersonal relationships, respondents stressed concrete reciprocity, obedience, and avoidance of violence. Relationships between husbands and wives often appeared to reflect a similar concern with fulfilling concrete obligations, while romantic love and intimacy were much less emphasized or valued. The possibility that emotions may be ambivalent was almost never recognized by interviewees. (Ambivalent emotions are contradictory feelings such as love and hate that are combined into a new, differentiated, contradictory amalgam of emotions). Feelings of dependence upon authority figures such as rinpoches and other religious leaders were easily expressed, providing the respondent with a sense of security and connectedness. Feelings of deep, inner resentment or impulsive rebelliousness against authority figures were absent, though a quiet sense of humor about human foibles was much in evidence. Respondents in most cases expressed a considerable degree of satisfaction with their lives. Diffuse feelings of depression, «malaise», and discontent with one's achievements were only rarely seen in the interviews, but some respondents, especially women,

pointed to concrete sources of unhappiness in their lives. These included unhappy marriages, abandonment by a husband after many years of marriage, death of a parent, or extreme poverty.

Interpersonal relationships in Ladakh appear to be characterized by a rather high level of synergy. Synergy refers here to perceptions and feelings by persons or a whole culture that actions helpful to others frequently are also helpful to the self. In such situations, egoism and altruism are to some degree fused with each other. Life is then seen in noncompetitive, holistic terms. In Ladakh, Mahayana Buddhism attempts to create such perceptions. Altruistic actions of compassion help a person to accumulate merit and thus increase a person's chance for a better reincarnation. But the person's desire for merit (and thus for a better reincarnation) can in itself be quite egotistical. It is just this fusion of egotism and altruism, then, that provides some of the glue for interpersonal bonds in Ladakh.

The fusion between egoism and altruism may be seen in the interview of the retired farmer as quoted above. The farmer emphasizes that he prays both for himself and for others («For the future I want to pray, for my reincarnation, and for all good persons»). He recognizes that Vajrayana Buddhism creates this fusion between selfishness and altruism («Without religion a person thinks of himself only, and his heart is dead»), and he considers high ranking lamas to be spiritual advisors and even models of perfection («H. H., Bakula Rinpoche gives me good advice...»).

In Ladakh, the synergy between egoism and altruism both creates and reflects a considerable emphasis on cooperation, and yet there exists in the interviews and in daily interactions an undercurrent of envy and occasional «toughness» against others and the self. But at the same time, Ladakhis generally avoid serious sins such as killing, stealing, rape, systematic deception, etc. because they are often convinced that the inevitable consequences (karma) of such actions will lead them to hell and to inferior forms of reincarnation. In general, Buddhism in Ladakh has been very successful indeed in suppressing the major forms of antisocial behavior. It has succeeded in controlling and channeling some of the basic human drives such as greed and selfishness without, of course, being able to ultimately get rid of them.

While respondents often emphasized synergistic life goals, they also showed a considerable interest in very concrete ego oriented life goals and attainments. These goals became sometimes visible in informal discussions and included concrete desires for long life and good health, happiness, reasonable prosperity, acceptance from others, and convivial relationships with others. This emphasis on tangible goals and interpersonally mediated happiness was sometimes, though by no means always, accompanied by a concrete, utilitarian, pragmatic, and occasionally rather «tough» style of thinking. We may note in this context that on their discussion of Tibetan notions of the good life, Lichter and Epstein (1983) describe a similar emphasis on health, long life, and interpersonally mediated happiness. However, such an emphasis is probably prevalent in a wide variety of societies. The emphasis reflects general human tendencies and not merely an ethos specific to Tibetan societies. We come now to the general nature of thinking about people and the self as it is reflected in the interviews and in Ladakh's poetry, literature, and mythology (Brauen, 1980; Francke, 1905/1941; Mutup, 1983). Much of the thinking in the interviews was relatively concrete, action oriented, diffuse, and global. The thinking often reflected an intuitive synthesis of perceptions and thoughts. The perceptions and thoughts were not systematically and logically analyzed and compared to each other. Thus, systematic hypothetical thinking and formal operations as described by the Swiss psychologist Piaget (Glossary: Formal operations) were only infrequently found in the interviews of villagers though these forms of thought made their appearance in the interviews of highly educated laypersons and monks. When asked about unconscious meanings, village respondents almost universally denied that they exist, though higher Buddhism is quite familiar with the concept of the unconscious. Undesirable feelings such as envy, jealousy, or hostility were only rarely attributed to the self. Instead, in an unconscious process of ego-defense such emotions and thoughts were externalized and projected onto demons, ghosts, other people, cultural outsiders, etc.

One of the most interesting psychological aspects of Ladakhi thought patterns concerns the frequent mixture of mythopoeic and primary process thinking with secondary process thinking (Glossary). Mythopoeic thought is based on the inner visions, images, and archetypes of the collective unconscious (Jung, 1968). In Ladakh, intuitive, unconscious or semi-conscious creative images of this type make their appearance in dreams, in the Kesar epos (Francke, 1905; Mutup 1983), in poetry and wedding songs (Brauen, 1980), in striking religious paintings (Genoud and Inoue, 1982), in religious rituals, chahm (sham) dances, meditation practices, hagiographies (Evens Wentz, 1969; Paul, 1982; Tucci, 1970); in the bardo (bardo) state after death (Freemantle and Trunzpa 1975), in states of possession by lha, and in the frequent reliance upon oracles, astrologers (on po),

omens, etc., Mythopoeic thinking reflects inner truths that lie outside the normal categories of «objective time and space.» Frequently, this truth is externalized and expressed in symbolic forms. Secondary process thinking, on the other hand, refers to rational, conscious, logically organized thinking under the control of the ego. It is directed towards the external, tangible world in the service of adaptation to practical tasks. The boundary between the dreamlike world of mythopoeic thinking and the mundane world of secondary thinking is quite permeable in the minds of many traditional Ladakhis, and more generally, in the traditional Tibetan symbolic world (Paul, 1982). It is this special mixture of an archaic, animistic imagination with the moral world of Vajrayana Buddhism and the concrete, action oriented world of everyday adaptation to difficult high-altitude living conditions that gives the ethos of Ladakh its special qualities.

## LIMITATIONS

In a short paper such as this one, it is only possible to highlight a very few aspects of the methods and findings on which this research is based. Consequently, it becomes necessary to point out some of the limitations, assumptions, and problems that are built into the present research project. First, we may note that the emphasis throughout the paper has been mainly on interviews and not so much on the observation of behavior patterns in day-to-day living. Inevitably, such an approach tends to paint an excessively positive picture of a culture. Respondents in interviews like to present themselves in a good light and will tend to emphasize ideal rather than real life patterns. Second, we may note that this chapter stresses the special ethos of Buddhist Ladakh. This implies an relative emphasis upon all those psychological aspects of Ladakhi thought that make it unique and give it its special character. Universal aspects common to thought in all cultures as well as individual differences within Ladakh have been discussed in a more cursory fashion. A third problem encountered in this chapter concerns its pioneering character. It appears to be the first study of its kind in Ladakh, and the author was unable to check his observations against the findings of other psychologists or psychological anthropologists. However, the anthropologist Kaplanian (1986) has recently commented on the author's research in Ladakh. He compares the present findings with his own observations and remarks that «le discours que les Ladakhi ont tenu à Uwe Gielen coïncide à 80% avec le comportement réel tangible tel que j'ai pu l'observer quotidiennement pendant neuf ans. Et ce pourcentage est assez remarquable.» (Translation: «The interviews which the Ladakhi held with Uwe Gielen coincide with 80% of the actual, concrete conduct which I have been able to observe daily over a period of nine years. And this percentage is rather remarkable») (Kaplanian 1986: p. 44). So the agreement between his observations and the results of the present interview study is surprisingly good. Nevertheless, there are some discrepancies between his observations of daily behavior in Ladakh and the present findings based as they are on a somewhat artificial interview method. In Kaplanian's view, the Ladakhis are «beaucoup plus possessifs, avides, égoïstes, jaloux qu'ils veulent bien le dire». (Translation: The Ladakhis are «much more possessive, greedy, egotistical, and jealous than they are willing to admit»). Kaplanian emphasizes especially a strong tendency toward envy among the Ladakhis he has observed. The discrepancies between the author's observations and Kaplanian's observations should perhaps not come as a surprise as they reflect a long-standing debate among anthropologists. The present research centers on selected themes in the ethos of traditional Buddhist Ladakh. These themes frequently possess a distinct religious and moral quality. They may reflect more or less idealized patterns of behavior and thinking that Ladakhis try to strive for. In real life, these ideal patterns must surely be less visible than they are in our interviews. Seen in this light, it is in fact surprising that Kaplanian finds an agreement of about 80% between his own daily observations and the interview data presented here.

It is of interest to compare this situation to a longstanding, well-known dispute in American cultural anthropology, Benedict (1934), in her famous book «Patterns of Culture», described America's Pueblo Indians as being mild mannered, cooperative, nonaggressive, ceremonial, and oriented toward happiness. Other anthropologists, though observing the same people, stressed covert tensions, anxiety, and manifestations of suspicion visible in daily life and on projective personality tests (Bennett, 1946; Barnouw, 1985). My own approach, then, is closer to Benedict's «organic» approach with its emphasis on «the integration of the culture with its 'sacred' values and its ideal type of the nonaggressive, cooperative individual» (Barnouw, 1985 p. 66). Kaplanian's Freudian interests lead him to pay much closer attention to id-related themes such as envy, jealousy, greed, and egoism. His approach also agrees well with Foster's (1965) suggestion that in many peasant communities feelings of envy, underhanded competition, pessimism, fatalism, and more or less submerged aggression are rampant.

While I do not believe that such a description properly reflects the prevailing ethos of Buddhist Ladakh, it is nevertheless clear that such feelings sometimes exist in Ladakh's villages as they do in other peasant communities. Still, the typical villager in Ladakh knows quite well that such feelings and desires, though thoroughly human, act like mental poisons and will surely send him or her into the lands of hungry ghosts, demons, and other evil beings (5).

I would like to conclude my chapter on a personal note. I first visited Ladakh for a few days in 1977 and sensed then that Ladakh radiated a special quality. My research constitutes a preliminary attempt to grasp just what this special quality might be. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to visit Ladakh four times, and would like to express my special thanks to Mr. Wangchuk Shalipa, Mrs. Donna Chirico-Rosenberg, Mr. Nawang Tsering Shaksपो, Mr. Dilli Rigzin, Mr. Tashi Rabgyas, my sister, Mrs. Odina Diephaus, and many others for their help and support throughout my stays there.

#### SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS IN THE YEAR 2000

Patrick Kaplanian kindly invited me to update and revise my chapter in light of subsequent developments in Ladakh studies. Rather than reformulating my essay, I decided that it would be better to leave my original conclusions intact and instead to share with the reader my thoughts about their possible validity 15 years after they were written.

It is now 19 years ago that I concluded the interviews on which this research report is based. In the meanwhile, I visited several areas of potential comparative interest to Ladakh researchers: Baltistan, the Hunza Valley, the Kashgar area in China, Tibet, Lahoul, and Spiti. In addition, I revisited Ladakh in the summer of 2000 after an absence of 19 years finding it both remarkably changed yet in other ways much the same. Although I did not undertake any formal research, my subsequent remarks are influenced by my observations during these travels. I also continued to write about Ladakh including further interpretations of the interviews described in this essay (Gielen, 1995, in press-a; and Chirilo-Rosenberg, 1993), accounts of gender roles in Ladakh and Tibet (Gielen, 1985, 1993), and a description and interpretation of Ladakhi conceptions and rituals related to death (Gielen, 1997).

A perusal of the scientific literature on Ladakh indicates that no psychologist other than Crook has undertaken systematic psychological research in Ladakh or Zangskar since 1981. For the present purposes, the most important scientific literature pertaining to social psychological questions includes are the interesting social-psychological observations by Crook (1994a, 1995b), an important anthropological study conducted by Srinivas (1998) in the Nubra Valley, a somewhat romantic interpretation of Ladakh's Buddhist society by Norberg-Hodge (1991), studies of Ladakhi shamans (Schenk, 1994) and other healers (Kuhn, 1988), studies of gender roles (e.g., Hay, 1999), and others. Crook and Osmaston's volume on life in Zangskar contains some useful chapters describing Zangskari child-rearing practices, attitudes in daily life, conceptions of identity, religious beliefs, and yogins (see especially Ch. 15-17, 22, 24).

In the following, I will briefly comment on some possible criticism of the conclusions contained in this essay, discuss the impact of modernization on Ladakh's traditional ethos, and compare Ladakh to Baltistan.

#### Is it Possible to Construct a Unitary Ethos?

Postmodern researchers in, for instance, cultural anthropology (Srinivas, 1998) may be skeptical about the broad and sometimes sweeping conclusions contained in this essay. In this context, I remember especially some contributions to the discussions taking place at the 7th Colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies in Sankt Augustin, Germany. Guided by a postmodern framework, some participants, for instance, emphasized the importance of local differences in ritual practices between the Nubra Valley and other regions in Ladakh. They showed a noticeable reluctance to look for similarities and shared value systems throughout Buddhist Ladakh. In a similar vein, postmodern social scientists have generally argued that gender, social class, ethnic, and other differences lead inevitably to competing identities, interests, customs, worldviews, values, and attitudes within any given society. Seen in this perspective, it must appear spurious to try to construct an overall, relatively uniform account of the ethos of a complex society such as Ladakh. In contrast to such a position, I believe that the postmodern perspective tends to lead its adherents to focus on "individual trees"

rather than on the overall forest: By looking at too many details they will miss the big picture. I wish to add in this context that my account of Ladakh's special Buddhist ethos can account for a considerable amount of individual and group differentiation. I found, for instance, that some individuals demonstrated both in the interviews and in their daily lives a considerable concern for utilitarian and pragmatic considerations while others were more guided by cooperative or even altruistic concerns. This difference did not at all coincide with the dividing line between laypersons and monks. Two prominent monks, for instance, exhibited a surprising degree of utilitarianism whereas some of the older (and more religious!) lay persons were much more interested in prosocial feelings, thoughts, and actions. At the same time, the four rinpoches I interviewed exhibited not only quite distinct personalities, but they also advanced surprisingly different religious justifications in the moral dilemmas as well as arriving at different decisions for the fictive actors in the decision stories. In spite of these and other variations, however, I believe that a distinct and coherent spiritual ethos governed Ladakh at the time of the interviews. The forces of modernization are now transforming this ethos, but they are not destroying it.

### Buddhist Ladakh and Modernization

Ladakh has undergone trenchant economic, political, sociocultural, and psychological changes during the last 20 years. The change agents include, in no particular order, rapid economic development, a much greater presence of the Indian government, population increases, political unrest and dramatic political changes in and around Ladakh the widespread introduction of modern schooling, the massive presence of the Indian Army, the influence of the mass media, a rapid decrease in the practice of polyandry, and the often culturally disruptive influence of tourism.

The influence of these change agents has been especially massive in the Leh area but can be observed in other areas of Ladakh as well. It is not difficult to perceive how they may have influenced Ladakh's ethos as described in this essay. Traditional Ladakhis were "embedded" in collectivistic social structures and worldviews that asked the individual to give priority to family and village interests and to cooperate in collective institutions and activities. In contrast, processes of modernization and conflict tend to "disembed" the individual thereby both liberating and alienating him or her from networks of social constraint and support. Young men especially, may grow to be more assertive, self-oriented, individualistic, and even impulsive. Such processes are supported by the employment of young men in or in the service of the Indian Army, in support services offered to the tourists, new job opportunities in Leh and surroundings, etc. By taking men (and some women) more or less temporarily away from their original villages, such opportunities lead to a new kind of individualism, increase a person's self-consciousness and awareness of cultural differences, increase the likelihood of involvement in ideologically political-religious movements, and make traditional culture more problematic. This ongoing process has also supported the rise of religious "identity politics" which intensified during the late 1980s and 1990s.

Culture change often increases differences in worldview between the generations, a tendency that is furthered by the introduction of modern schools that mostly teach knowledge created in the outside world rather than in the local society. In this context, some younger Ladakhis may be tempted to reject some of the beliefs and customs of the older generation, perhaps seeing them as outdated and even superstitious. Others may learn to look down on traditional economic activities, perhaps seeing them as drudgery, confining, and non-lucrative by comparison with more exciting opportunities presented by newly created institutions.

Modern individualism also supports the rapid decline of the practice of polyandry. The practice of polyandry was originally driven by the desire not to divide up a family's land between the children. It demanded emotional sacrifices especially from younger brothers who were asked to set aside some of their own interests in the service of family welfare and family unity. The system began to decline as new economic opportunities arose especially for the younger men but, at the same time, the practice of polyandry is also at variance with newer attitudes asking for more free choice and for less sacrifice and submission to collective family interests. The forces of modernization, then, may be expected to increase individualistic attitudes, a greater self-awareness, a greater awareness of Ladakh's place in its political and cultural surroundings, a more systematic awareness of one's religious and sociopolitical identity, a decline in mythopoeic thinking and imagination, less belief in some of the more supernatural aspects of folk religion, an increase in attitudinal and belief system differences between the generations, a greater exposure of the younger generation to India's youth culture (which, in turn, is influenced by international trends), and rising economic expectations and desires. These

changes are transforming Ladakh's Buddhist ethos as described in this essay by taking away some of its more diffuse manifestations, but at the same time the ethos continues to exert a powerful influence on Ladakh's Buddhist inhabitants. This influence becomes especially visible if we compare Ladakh to its Muslim neighbors.

#### Buddhist Ladakh in Cross-Cultural Perspective

I was originally attracted to a psychological study of Ladakh's Buddhist ethos because my travels in other areas of Asia (especially Hindu India and some Islamic countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan) had convinced me that by comparison, there was something truly unique about the religious and cultural worldview and values I had encountered during my first, brief visit to Ladakh in 1977. My subsequent visits to modern Pakistan, modern China, Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand and other Asian countries have only reinforced this conviction. Of special interest in this context is Pakistan's region of Baltistan. Baltistan shares a similar ecology with Ladakh, as well as many historical contacts and considerable linguistic similarities. Indeed, the Baltis were converted from a Tibetan form of Buddhism to Islam as late as the ... century. But whereas the ecological and early historical circumstances were rather similar for the Baltis and the Ladakhis, their modern psychological and cultural adaptations differ considerably from each other. The often dour but emotional Shias of Baltistan (and the Suru Valley in Ladakh) distrust strangers, see themselves as victims of the outside world, assign an inferior place to women, look upon life as a harsh experience, and preach an emotional and puritanical form of religion that is directed against drinking, dancing, and having fun. All this stands in contrast to the more cheerful, easygoing tolerance and geniality seen in much of Buddhist life in Ladakh. The Baltis' passions are more easily aroused than those of the Buddhist Ladakhis, resulting in their greater readiness for violent action. By comparison, the situation in Baltistan and in (Buddhist) Ladakh resembles almost that of a natural historical experiment: Whereas the ecological and early historical circumstances are similar for the two peoples, the prevailing ethos differs sharply between the two societies.

In conclusion, I would like to state that some 19 years after my initial experiences in Ladakh, the conclusions of the present essay still seem valid to me—especially for Ladakh as it existed then. At the same time I very much hope that some other psychologists will be prepared to conduct future research in Ladakh to either verify or refute some of the conclusions presented here.

It should not be forgotten that at present, we do not have a single representative survey assessing some of the basic attitudes, values, and beliefs to be found among Ladakhis of various backgrounds. In the same vein, we have almost no systematic observational studies of socialization practices, psychopathological manifestations, or attitudes about matters of daily life. From the point of view of psychology at least, we continue to know far too little about Ladakh's people.

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Buddhist Ladakh, Ethos, Morality, Faith, Karma, Detachment, Mythopoeic Thinking, Restraint, Synergy, Non-assertiveness, Shame.

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TABLE 1  
 WORLDVIEWS, ETHOS AND PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONAL MATURE  
 LADAKHIS

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ULTIMATE MEANING OF LIFE AND ROLE OF RELIGION IN PROVIDING MEANING:

Religion universally accepted. Life means suffering, but is only a dream—Death is relative, not final—Not harming others leads to good reincarnation—Meaning exists objectively and has been revealed. Why

questions and doubt are rare—Mystic contemplation leads to ultimate truth beyond all conceptualization.

#### NATURE OF MORALITY:

Morality is an objective reality, facts, and rules revealed to rinpoches, saints, etc.—Part of an impersonal system of retribution (karma) and reincarnation—Embedded in religion—Do not cause people and animals to suffer—Moral relativism, self consciousness, ideological reflection on ethical systems are rare.

#### GUILT AND SHAME FEELINGS:

Unclear conception of guilt feeling—Guilt feelings rare or deeply submerged—Little self-blame—Tolerance for other people and worldviews—Strong feelings of shame when breaking interpersonal norms or religious prescriptions.

#### CONSCIENCE:

Unclear or no conception of conscience. Correctly analyzed actions rather than conscience are emphasized.

#### DRIVES:

Greed, selfishness, lust, ignorance are basic cause of suffering and lead to bad reincarnation—Conflict between id and superego fairly low—Expression of drives is muted.

#### EMOTIONALITY, ASSERTIVENESS, DEFENSIVENESS:

Generally low levels—Emphasis on quiet dignity, detachment, serenity—Assertiveness, aggressiveness, impulsivity, inner restlessness, emotional expressivity all considered undesirable—introversion, shyness, timidity fairly common—Distinct sense of privacy and discretion with correlative lack of intrusiveness.

#### INTRAPERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS—COOPERATION:

Avoidance of conflicts strongly favored—Little interpersonal violence—interpersonal conflicts not common—Emphasis on cooperation but undercurrent of envy and occasional «toughness» against others and self.

#### CONCRETE LIFE GOALS:

Long life, health, reasonable prosperity, happiness, acceptance from and convivial relationships with others.

#### SYNERGY (MASLOW):

High level of synergy: Altruism is seen as leading to merit and better reincarnation (counteracted by pragmatic concern for immediate self-interest).

#### ANOMIE AND DEVIANCE:

Very low levels of anomie and deviance.

#### SELF AND SELF-ESTEEM:

Little focus on self—Self esteem seen as selfishness and undesirable pride—Self embedded in society—Few basic identity conflicts—Limited awareness of inner feelings and inner conflicts—Little awareness of inner personality change.

#### INDIVIDUAL CHOICE:

Not emphasized.

#### INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS - ROMANTIC LOVE - DEPENDENCE FEELINGS AND RELATIONSHIP TO AUTHORITY:

Concrete reciprocity and obedience—Ambivalence rare or not recognized—Little emphasis on intimacy and romantic love in husband-wife relationships—Dependence on religious leaders easily expressed with non-hostile belief in authority.

#### GENERAL NATURE OF THINKING ABOUT PEOPLE AND SELF:

Concrete, action oriented, diffuse, global, stationary non-experimental—Nonrecognition of ambivalence, multiplicity of motives, unconscious meanings—Concrete operations (Piaget) or early formal operations  
Imagination limited.

#### BOUNDARY BETWEEN PRIMARY PROCESS (MYTHOPOEIC) AND SECONDARY PROCESS THINKING:

Permeable boundaries—Reliance on dreams omens, augury, myth, possession by lha, etc.—Projection of anxieties onto ghosts, spirits, lha, etc.—External reality may be experienced as dreamlike—Inner thoughts projected outwards and experienced as concrete energies.

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#### HAPPINESS:

Frequent, though life is hard—Feelings of depression and tragedy rare.

#### FAITH, TRUST, TRUTHFULNESS:

Very strong faith, considerable interpersonal trust—«Naive» honesty and «innocence» combined with lack of ability to systematically manipulate others.

#### IDEAL THOUGH REMOTE MODEL OF PERFECTION:

Compassionate saint who has conquered his selfish passions (greed, envy, anger, hate, lust) and fears.

#### GLOSSARY

##### AMBIVALENCE OF FEELINGS:

Contradictory feelings are combined into a new, differentiated amalgam of emotions, found for instance in love-hate relationships.

##### ANOMIE (Durkheim):

State of normlessness in a society. Social and moral norms are weak and frequently contradictory, leading to a loss of moral conviction and sense of purpose among many members of that society.

##### ETHOS:

The characteristic spirit or genius of a people that distinguishes them from other people. Includes characteristic attitudes and value systems.

##### FORMAL OPERATIONS (Piaget):

Ability to systematically reflect upon one's own thoughts; construction of systems of thought including the ability to see the possible implications and interrelationships between the concepts of thought systems, systematic, hypothetical thinking.

##### GLOBAL, DIFFUSE THINKING:

Intuitive synthesis of perceptions and thoughts. Perceptions and thoughts are not systematically and logically analyzed and compared to each other.

##### GUILT FEELINGS:

Negative feelings based on self-condemnation for immoral actions feelings or thoughts. The self compares itself against its own moral standards and finds itself wanting.

##### ID (Freud):

Unconscious, unsocialized basic drives, especially uncontrolled sexual and aggressive impulses.

#### INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICTS:

Conflicts, especially of an emotional nature, within the self.

#### MYTHOPOEIC THINKING (Jung):

Intuitive, unconscious or semiconscious, creative, mythological, poetic thinking based on the inner images, visions, and archetypes of the collective unconscious, Outside normal time and space, Related to Freud's concept of primary process thinking which stresses the wishfulfillment oriented irrational, disconnected, primitive id and body oriented quality of mythopoeic thinking. The opposite of SECONDARY PROCESS THINKING.

#### PROJECTION (Freud):

Repression of undesirable feelings such as hostility, envy, jealousy. In an unconscious process of ego defense, these feelings and thoughts are externalized and then attributed to other people or beings (demons, witches, etc.).

#### SECONDARY PROCESS THINKING (Freud):

Rational, logical, conscious, organized thinking under the control of the ego and directed towards the external, tangible world; opposite of PRIMARY PROCESS THINKING.

#### SHAME FEELINGS:

Negative feelings about the self caused by imagined or actual disapproval by significant others.

#### SUPEREGO (Freud):

Mostly unconscious, relatively fixed, ego-alien judgmental structure of the mind. Includes the ego-ideal, conscience, judgments of self-blame, and aggressive feelings directed against the self. These are subjectively experienced as guilt and inferiority feelings.

#### SYNERGY (Maslow, Benedict):

High synergy refers to perceptions by persons or whole cultures that actions helpful to others frequently are also helpful to the self. Egoism and altruism are fused with each other. Life is seen in noncompetitive, holistic terms. Low synergy refers to perceptions that self-interest and the interests of others compete with each other and are mutually exclusive. Found in competitive societies that promote dog-eat-dog worldviews.

#### NOTES

(1) The theories of Kohlberg, Fowler, and Selman attempt to construct universal structural stages of moral reasoning, social reasoning, and faith. In this chapter, no attempt is made to establish the presence or absence of such stages in the interview material.

(2) Studies of "national character" or "modal personality" have been much criticized in recent years by psychological anthropologists and cross-cultural psychologists (Barnouw, 1985). Critics contend that such studies mistakenly assume that only a very limited range of personality types may be found in a given culture. However, the present research focuses on selected themes in the ethos of traditional Ladakh. Such a focus on ethos does not rule out the possibility that a considerable variety of "personality types" or "personality structures" may coexist with the predominant type.

(3) Dakjun refers to a kind of bitumen or tarlike substance that is secreted by rocks. Dakjun is found only high up in the mountains and difficult to obtain.

(4) Our interviews tended to reflect different levels or stages in the understanding of moral and religious concepts, norms, and principles. These stages of understanding appeared to agree well with the stages of reasoning as proposed by Kohlberg, Selman, and Fowler. This finding appears to be roughly in agreement with Buddhist teachings. These teachings have traditionally assumed that the understanding of moral and religious truths varies widely from person to person, and that there are higher and lower levels of understanding.

(5) This raises the question whether the present findings can be reconciled with traditional Buddhist philosophy and psychology. In my opinion, there are many interesting parallels between modern depth psychology and the

Buddhist conceptions of human nature as they are reflected, for instance, in the traditional Buddhist "wheel of life." The "wheel of life" can be found next to the entrance of many Ladakhi monasteries and is well-known to many Ladakhi villagers. The wheel is "driven" by mental poisons such as greed for life, aggressive assertiveness, ignorance, envy and jealousy. These "poisons" may also be found in Freud's conception of the id as the primary sources of psychic energy. The id contains the forces of Eros or libido (sexualized greed for life), Thanatos (aggressive and self-destructive tendencies), and repression (ignorance). Unlike Freud, however, Tibetan Buddhism believes that greed, sexuality, aggressiveness, etc. can be transformed into much more positive tendencies and forces.



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