

## **Monasteries in Ladakh: Witness of cultural peace and war**

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Ladakh has been one of the beautiful landscapes with the combination of desert, grassland, mighty Himalayan mountains with the live streams of Indus river from which India received its glorious name. With the arrival of Arahata Majjhantika Thera, under the command of Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan Dynasty, it became a Buddhist state under the patronage of different empires like Mauryas, Kushana and Tibetan Empire. For Chinese travelers, it was a region of Theravada Buddhism which was soon reformed into Mahayana Buddhism. There were various peace and conflicts from Mongolia, Tibet, Central Asia and Nepal in the form of cultural exchange as well as conflicts like war. When in the year 1834, Ladakh was invaded by General Zorawar Singh under the command of King Gulab Singh, he was deeply awestruck by the cultural exchange in the Leh city (the capital of Ladakh). The city market was full of merchants from different countries of the world. One of the biggest reasons was the presence of the Silk Route which connected Ladakh around the world. And the great Bactrian Camel which can be seen still today used as the major domesticated carrier of goods between the countries during those times. All of these were majorly witnessed by the major Monasteries in Ladakh. Therefore, the research will dwell on the different cultural exchanges in the form of peace and conflict among the countries. Monasteries will be studied and the different cultural exchanges in the form of material and tradition will be explained among the readers and viewers to get a glimpse of the Heritage of Ladakh as a soft power in ancient times. Today, the silk route festival is also celebrated once in a year in Ladakh. The paper will also focus on the silk route festival through which one can understand the rich ethnicity fulfilled with various forms of cultural exchange among the different Asian Countries.

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