



## Ladakh, INDIA

### チベット文化「最後の秘境」を守る人びと

旅の筆者が訪れたのは、インド北西部のラダック地方の州都レーです。ヒマラヤ山脈とカラコルム山脈に囲まれ、海拔3千メートル以上の土地にあるラダック地方は、中国とパキスタンとの国境紛争のため、1974年まで観光客が入れませんでした。そのため、「最後の秘境」とも呼ばれます。

この地には、要塞（ようさい）を思わせる石造りの大きな寺院、ストゥーパと呼ばれる仏塔、干ししのレンガや石で造られた民家が並び、チベット仏教文化が色濃く残っています。文化大革命や開発により、古い町並みが消えてしまったといわれる中国・チベット自治区のラサに比べ、昔ながらの町並みが残るレーの旧市街は「チベットよりもチベットらしい」といわれることも。

ただ、その町並みさえも、近代化の波に押されつつあるのです。筆者はラダックに残る建造物の修復・保存を行う団体「チベット・ヘリテージ・ファンズ」の平子豊さんらの活動を見学させていただきました。

伝統工法を用いて、建築物を保存しつつ、下水道などインフラの整備に努めているそうです。近代化の生活と伝統的な文化とのバランスをとりながら、古民家を残そうとする平子さんたち。活動が実を結ぶことを期待します。（桐）

By Oliver Raw  
Photojournalist

In northwestern India lies the mountainous province of Ladakh. A sparsely populated, high-altitude desert, it is often called the “last Shangri-la” on account of its authentic Tibetan culture. Grand monasteries dot the barren landscape. In the capital of Leh, narrow passageways snake through the Old Town. Here an old man spins a prayer wheel and a woman sits at a loom on the flat rooftop of her home. It's as if life has never changed.

Once a thriving trading center, Ladakh was visited by people from as far afield as Afghanistan. The impressive 17th-century Leh Palace attests to the wealth and importance of its former rulers.

These days Ladakh's main trade is tourism and numerous hotels and lodges have sprung up in Leh, with names such as “Hotel Shambala” and, inevitably, “Hotel Shangri-la.” Ladakh is also one of India's most heavily militarized areas, having borders with Pakistan to the west and China to the north. The pressures of modernization mean that much of the region's medieval architecture is under threat.

With the rapid degradation of Tibetan culture, the preservation of Ladakh's traditional buildings has become something of an international mission. A number of organizations are involved in the effort, including Swiss-based Achi Association, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), the Archaeological Survey of India, and Tibet Heritage Fund (THF), a non-profit organization based in Hong Kong and Germany.

Yutaka Hirako leads THF's Indian



operations. I met Hirako and his team in October, just as the nights were getting cold and their operations were winding down for the season.

A new structure — the Central Asian Museum — is nearing completion while several projects are ongoing. These include mural conservation at a small country temple and housing restoration projects in the Old Town. So far, THF has



restored some 20 buildings in Leh.

“We use only traditional materials,” Hirako said. “And where possible we try to use as much of the original timber as we can.”

Originally from Saitama Prefecture, Hirako joined THF in 1998, and has worked on numerous projects in Tibet. In many ways Ladakh is familiar terrain.

“The language takes some getting used to,” Hirako said he's had to adapt his spoken Tibetan to communicate with his team.

As with most traditional Tibetan architecture, Ladakhi homes are made from granite, wood and various mixtures of mud and clay. Materials are locally sourced and THF relies on traditional methods and craftsmanship, thereby rejuvenating ancient skills that might otherwise fall into disuse.

“It is important to involve local people,” Hirako said. “It is their heritage. Plus they might offer up new

approaches.”

必要に応じ現代的な設備も

Restoration costs are shared with the building's owners. Occasionally some compromise is required, as peoples' needs have changed over the centuries. Ceilings may need to be raised, or the house owner might request installation of new drainage systems.

“But we try to keep things as close to the original as we can,” Hirako said.

With its flat-roofed homes, white-washed stupas and Himalayan backdrop, the Old Town might look like a lost Tibet. The worry is that without intervention it, too, will be lost.

Due to territorial disputes with India, China closed the border in the 1960s, and many of the former trading families, no longer bound to Leh, moved out of the Old Town. Nowadays, the occupancy rate for Old Town buildings is about 60 percent, Hirako said. Many buildings have fallen to disrepair.

Meanwhile, the local government's “Leh Beautification” project has already turned the city's once tree-lined market street into a construction site. The government is now proposing a “slum development scheme” which could mean half of the Old Town will be rebuilt.

How this scheme will be implemented is understandably a concern

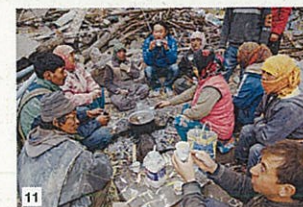
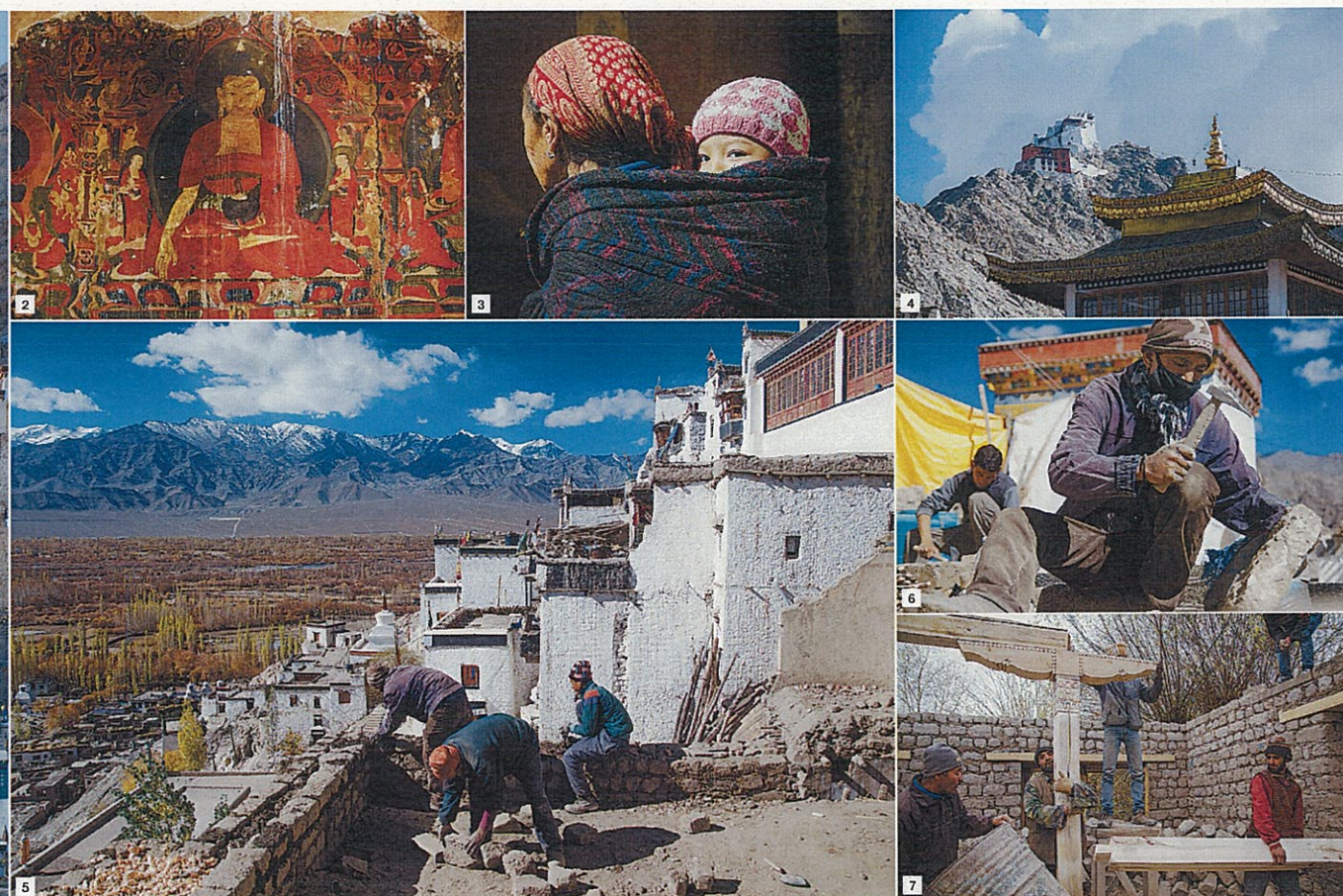
for Hirako, who fears many of the original structures — which are hundreds of years old — will be replaced with concrete ones. Cement is not simply the material of choice for developers however; often the building's occupants prefer it.

“People think cement is modern and therefore better,” said Kunchok, a Ladakhi, who oversees INTACH's local conservation projects. “We tell them mud is best. Mud is warm.”

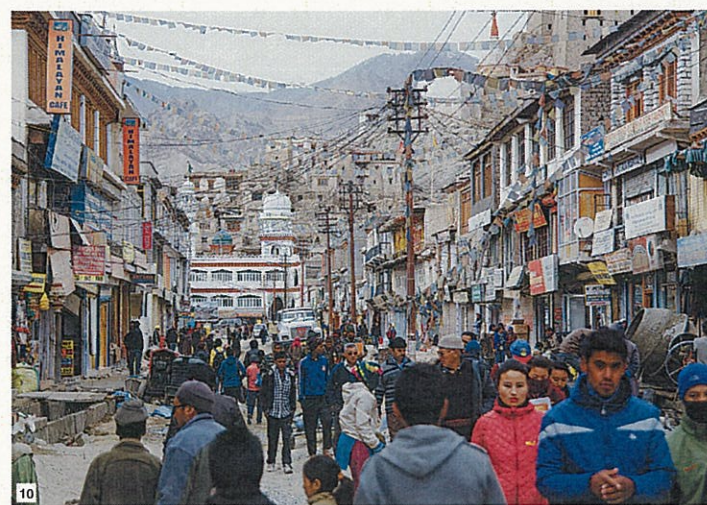
But at what point should a site's historic value take precedence over the benefits of modernization? Hirako said there is no easy answer. Working alongside other organizations, THF hosts symposiums promoting the benefits of heritage conservation (tourism being the obvious one). Yet a lack of transparency can be testing for Hirako and his fellow conservationists and when I asked him about future projects in the Old Town he said that he is waiting to hear confirmation on the city council's development plans.

Hirako's third season in Ladakh is coming to an end. He hopes to put up the beams and rafters on one of the museum buildings before returning to Hong Kong — where he lives — for the winter. While he enjoys the mountains and working with his team, he is looking forward to getting back.

“I miss seafood,” he said. Operations will begin again in the spring, when the quest to save Ladakh's heritage continues.



1. 丘の上にそびえるレー宮殿は、ラダック地方のシンボリック存在
2. 美しい曼荼羅（まんだら）が描かれた壁画
3. レーの旧市街で出会った女性とその孫
4. 町を囲むのは険しい岩山。頂上に見える建物は僧院のナムギャル・ツェモ
5. 僧院の屋根の修復作業を行うインド人作業員
6. 伝統的な手法でレンガをつくる作業員
7. レーに新しく建てられる博物館も、伝統的な工法を用いる
8. 店先で数珠するイスラム教徒の男性たち
9. 屋根に敷くために使われる草を運ぶ女性
10. レーの目抜き通り。後ろに広がるのが旧市街
11. 食事をする「チベット・ヘリテージ・ファンズ」の人びと。中央の青い服の人が平子豊さん



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