

Leh Heritage Walk

Map by Pimpin de Azevedo with A. Alexander, J. Niewoehner, ©THF

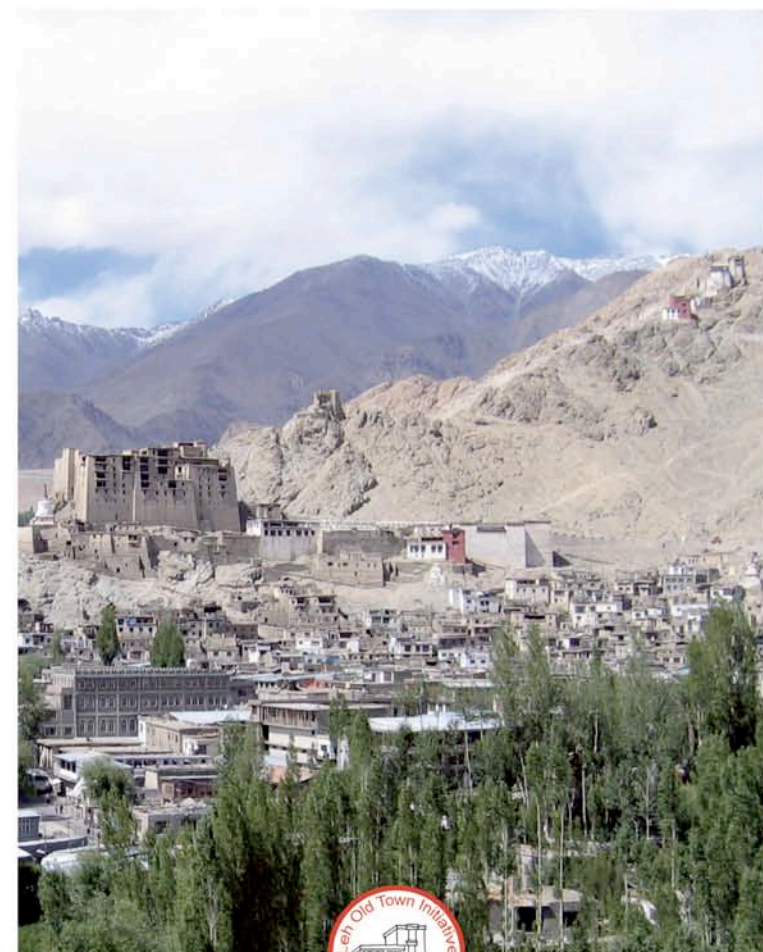
After several decades of neglect and degradation, things are finally improving in old Leh. In 2003 the German NGO Tibet Heritage Fund (THF) listed 180 historic structures in Leh (see website: www.tibetheritagefund.org). THF had previously conducted a five-year conservation and upgrading project in historic Lhasa. With that experience, THF thought it possible to preserve old Leh and make it liveable again. Problems there are many. Leaking roofs, abandoned and dilapidated houses, unpaved (or badly paved) alleyways that are full of puddles for weeks after every rain, and insufficient water supply. In 2004-2005, as a pilot project, the Guru Lhakhang shrine, high on a ridge next to the palace, was restored, and the local group L.O.T.I. (Leh Old Town Initiative) was set up.

In the old town several house owners took up our offer of 50% co-financing for restoration of historic residential buildings. The Sofi House in the Stagopilog area (near Old Ladakh Guesthouse) was the first to be rehabilitated. THF/LOTI then paved the alleyway leading from Old Ladakh

1. Namgyal Tsemo tower and chapel, built by king Tashi Namgyal (r. ca. 1520-1540).
2. Tsemo Lhamo Goenkhang (protector temple), built by king Tashi Namgyal after victory over an invading army from Yarkand in 1532.
3. Tsemo Chamba Lhakhang (Maitreya Temple), built by Tragspa Bumde (r. ca. 1400-1440).
4. Leh palace, Leh-chen Pel-khar, built by king Senge Namgyal (r. ca. 1616-1642); since the overthrow of the dynasty in the mid-19th century vacated, currently owned by the Indian government, restored by the Archaeological Survey of India.
5. Namgyal Choerten, a Buddhist stupa built to protect the palace.
6. Guru Lhakhang, a Buddhist shrine built in the early 17th century and operated by 44 Buddhist families of Leh, restored 2004-2005 by THF/L.O.T.I.
7. Lonpo House, formerly the residence of one of the king's ministers, presently owned by Chemrey monastery.
8. Gonpa Soma, built in 1840 by lama Tashi Tenpel above the old royal stables.
9. Gonpa Soma's chamra courtyard; here the Ladakhi group LASOL perform traditional songs and dances.
10. Red Chamba Lhakhang; the "red temple of Maitreya", was built by king Tragspa Bumde (ca.1400-1440); it was restored in the 19th century after a Dogra invasion, and again in the late 1950s, when it was partly rebuilt. In 2005 THF/L.O.T.I. discovered underneath whitewash remains of the original 15th century wall-paintings. These were brought back and conserved by a group of Romanian, German, Belgian, French and Ladakhi restorers and restoration students.
11. Chenrezi Lhakhang (temple of Avalokiteshvara), built in the 17th century as main monastic assembly hall for Leh.

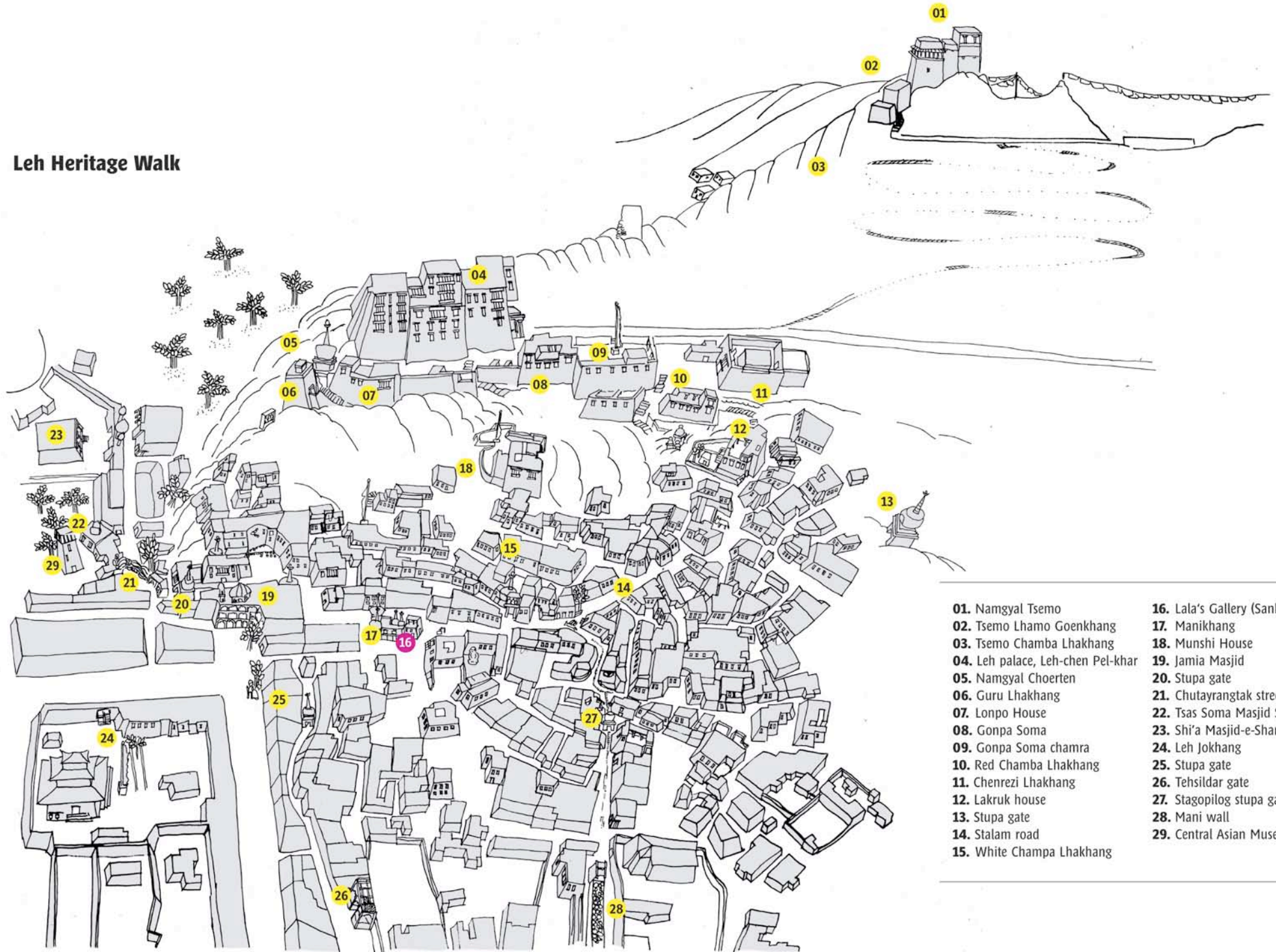
Guesthouse up to the Stalam road with slate stone, and built a drain covered with removable metal grilles. For this work we received a UNESCO award and a UN Habitat Dubai Best Practice Award. Since 2006, THF/LOTI have completed the rehabilitation of numerous historic residential buildings, and restored the Tsas Soma Masjid Sharif and the courtyard of Buddhist Gonpa Soma. THF/LOTI have also conserved the wall-paintings of the Red Chamba in Leh and at Tsatsapuri in Alchi, and are involved in the design of two museums and a library for Leh, including the Central Asian Museum at Tsas Soma. The Sankar Labrang at Manikhang was converted into a permanent exhibition room, where local Ladakhi artists can show their works. THF/LOTI offer guided Heritage Walks through the old town, please ask at Lala's Gallery. There is some hope, but a sustainable turn-around of the old town will require the sustained efforts and cooperation of everyone concerned. THF / L.O.T.I., Lakruk House, upper Stalam, Leh
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12. Lakruk house, one of the best-preserved old Leh mansion houses, currently the office of THF/L.O.T.I.
13. Stupa gate.
14. Munshi house, formerly home to a royal secretary, is being converted into an art center by Mumbai-based group Lamo.
15. Stalam (horse road), a pathway leading up to the palace.
16. Lala's Café & Gallery, formerly Sankar Labrang, the home of the keeper of the white Maitreya temple, now a gallery-cum café operated by THF/L.O.T.I.; in the groundfloor is a chapel room with stone carvings, and upstairs are exhibitions about the history of Leh and art by Ladakhi artists. At the entrance stands a Buddhist stone carving dating ca. to the 10th century, which was recovered from nearby.
17. Manikhang, a group of stupa-s close to the now-demolished main entrance gate to old Leh town.
18. White Champa Lhakhang, the white Maitreya temple, also credited to king Tragspa Bumde in the 15th century.
19. Jamia Masjid, Sunni mosque, founded around 1666/7
20. Stupa gate to old town.
21. Chutayrangtak street, where bread is freshly baked.
22. Tsas Soma Masjid Sharif (Sunni) and Central Asian Museum.
23. Shi'a Masjid-e-Sharif.
24. Leh Jokhang, the new main Buddhist temple for Leh built in 1957-1962 by the Ladakh Buddhist association.
25. Stupa gate.
26. Old carved gateway to the former Tehsildar office.
27. Stagopilog stupa gate, THF/L.O.T.I. paved the alley with slate stone, built a drain, and restored the Sofi and Hor Yarkandi houses
28. Mani wall.



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| 01. Namgyal Tsemo | 16. Lala's Gallery (Sankar Labrang) |
| 02. Tsemo Lhamo Goenkhang | 17. Manikhang |
| 03. Tsemo Chamba Lhakhang | 18. Munshi House |
| 04. Leh palace, Leh-chen Pel-khar | 19. Jamia Masjid |
| 05. Namgyal Choerten | 20. Stupa gate |
| 06. Guru Lhakhang | 21. Chutayrangtak street |
| 07. Lonpo House | 22. Tsas Soma Masjid Sharif |
| 08. Gonpa Soma | 23. Shi'a Masjid-e-Sharif. |
| 09. Gonpa Soma chamra | 24. Leh Jokhang |
| 10. Red Chamba Lhakhang | 25. Stupa gate |
| 11. Chenrezi Lhakhang | 26. Tehsildar gate |
| 12. Lakruk house | 27. Stagopilog stupa gate |
| 13. Stupa gate | 28. Mani wall |
| 14. Stalam road | 29. Central Asian Museum |
| 15. White Champa Lhakhang | |