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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARYAN BROKPAS



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By
His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Tinley Lhundup

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By

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वर्गे'नहेंदा

 शुःनर्ग्वान्यःबिनाःधेनःनुन्। र्श्वेनःब्रेनःक्षे। श्वेःव्यः १०११ व्यवेःशःनेनामःनुन्। अह्नवःवर्श्वनाःवरेःव्यः सुमानवनःर्वेनःवनःवान्यःब्रेनःबुनःक्षे। श्वेःव्यः १०११ व्यवेःशःनेनमःनुन्यः अह्नवःवर्शेनाःवरेःव्यः शुःनन्नःबुनःवःवनःविनाःधेनःनुन्।

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Foreword

During my visit to Dirkung Kagyu Monasteries in Ladakh in the early 1980s, I was struck by the unique appearance, clothing, and dance styles of the Brokpas in the Aryan valley. This experience sparked my interest in their culture and history, and I have since made a concerted effort to meet and converse with Brokpas in their homes whenever possible. I also personally know Sonam Phuntsok, who taught in the Aryan valley for years and is knowledgeable about the Brokpas' culture, folk songs, and traditions. We had many conversations on this topic, furthering my understanding of the Brokpas.

In 2022, I came across Maria Angelillo's *History and Treasures of an Ancient Civilization*, which shed light on the origins of the Aryan race and their contributions to India's civilization. This sparked my interest in writing a short history of the Aryan Brokpas, despite the sparse literature available on the topic. Dr. Song recommended several important works that deepened my knowledge of the Aryans and the Aryan Brokpas. I completed the first draft in December 11th, 2022. Dr.Trinlé Dorjé Dampo, Acharya Tséring Wangyel translated the draft into English. Dr.Tashi Dorje polished their translation. Then, Dr. Song thoroughly edited both the Tibetan and English versions.

ন্দান'ভ্ৰন বৰ্ণ'নিৰ্ম্থ্য Foreword

श्चे चित्रायानम् न	3
Overview	4
জহব:য়৾ ⁻ ৼৢয়য় ⁻ য়ৢ ⁻ য়য়ৼ ⁻ ঢ়ৢ৾ৼ ⁻ য়৾	7
Arrival of the Aryans in India	
षद्भन्न से 'देन्य राज्य प्राच्य प्राचित्र स्था प्राच्य स्था स्था प्राच्य स्था स्था स्था स्था स्था स्था स्था स्	11
Arrival of the Aryans in Lower Ladakh	12
क्रॅं र्से (क्रुवर्से) श्रुव ख़्दे (र्दे र्वे व्या) तृश स्र्वा	20
Bonona: The Festival of the Grain Bearing Tip Deity	
(Chunpo Srubla)	21
জহ্ব-দের্রুনা-ম-ব্দ-দের-ক্রিম-র্মু-স-ন্বুনা-ম-মা 	25
The Introduction of Buddhism to the Brokpas	26
वर्चेनामवे से मेना अन्दर्भे अप्पें ना	31
The Brokpas' Native Language and Education	32
References	36







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Overview

The Aryans originated on the plains between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea at the intersection of Asia and Europe. The term Aryan is derived from the Sanskrit word "ārya," which translates to "noble" or "distinguished." In the beginning, the Aryans were nomadic groups that survived by herding. They arrived in the Indian subcontinent around 1800 BC and eventually transitioned from nomadic to an agricultural lifestyle around 1000 BC. Modern scholars receached consensus that the Aryans made significant contributions to the development of Indian civilization.

One subgroup of the Aryans, known as the "Brokpas," settled in Ladakh.

णर्कात्वे नार्गते ति क्वांत्रे महित्र मार्ग

The word "Brokpas" means "nomad" in Tibetan. The Brokpas are also referred to as "Dard," which comes from the Sanskrit term "Daradas," meaning "people who dwell in the mountains." Presently, it is estimated that approximately 6500 Brokpas reside in the Aryan valley in Ladakh, extending from the Dah Hanu valley to Garkon and Darchik. They are believed to be the last remaining descendants of the Aryan race.

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The Aryans' language Vedic Sanskrit is identified as the most archaic form of Sanskrit. It is a spoken language found in Rigveda, the earliest attested Sanskrit text which is believed to be composed by the Aryans. The Rigveda consists of 1028 hymns and is considered as one of the most important texts of the Hindu tradition. Although no consensus has reached regarding the composition date of Rigveda, philological and archaeological evidence suggests that the bulk of the text was composed between 1500BC to 1000BC.

The Aryan language is well-documented in the Kangyur (The Words

णर्मात्वे नागते।लेक्नुगविमार्भावस्थाणा



of the Buddha), known as brushalanguage, which includes texts such as the "Exceedingly Expanded BuddhāvataṃsakaSūtra" found in Kangyur section Cha, and the "Vajra Arrayed Tantra" found in Kangyur section Dza. One of the Sutras translated from Aryan to Tibetan isthe "SarvatathāgataCittajñānagu hyārthaGarbhavyūhaVajraTantraSiddhi YogāgamaSamājaSarvavidyāSūtraM ahāyānāBhisamayadharmaParyāyaVyūhaNāmaSūtra."

অন্তর্'ঐ'^ন ব্যান্ত্'ব্যান্ত্'ব্যান্ত্'ব্যান্ত্

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Arrival of the Aryans in India

According to Maria Angelillo's *India: History and Treasurer of an Ancient Civilization*, the Aryans arrived in the India subcontinent around 1800 BC. They first settled in northwest India, then gradually moved to the alluvia plain between the Ganges and the Yamuna River. In 2018, a study analyzing ancient DNA found genetic evidence that supports Maria Angelillo's claim. Collaborating with 92 scholars around the world, geneticist David Reich discovered that the Aryans migrated from the Eurasian Steppe and arrived in northern India around 2000 BC to 1500BC.

During that time, the Aryans lived a nomadic lifestyle. Each tribe's male members elect a chief and follow his lead. Maria Angelillo pointed out that the Aryans also innovated spoked wheels and introduced this new technology to

णर्मात्वे नार्गते ति क्षुमाने मान्यापा



India. Until 1000 BC, the Aryans gradually transitioned from nomadic to an agricultural lifestyle. Between 1000 and 500 BC, the Aryan settlements moved to the upper and middle Ganges Valley.

स्वित्रश्चेत्रभ्वत्त्वः क्ष्यात्त्वः क्ष्यः वित्रभ्वतः क्ष्यः वित्रभ्वतः क्ष्यः वित्रभ्वतः क्ष्यः वित्रभ्वतः क्ष्यः वित्रभ्वतः वित्रभवतः वित्रभवत

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ब्र.क्र्र्य.क्रे.क्र. २०० ट्रेश.शे.क्रि.वोर.लेक.ट्रेश.शे.वैर.लेवोश.वोश्वाश.क्रे.टेश.र्यश.ही.

The Aryans were known for their frequent conflicts both amongst themselves and with other non-Aryan tribes. However, as they transitioned into a more settled way of life, as Maria Angelillo documents, urban civilization began to flourish, and their power expanded. This led to the emergence of sixteen Mahajanapadas along the Ganges around 600 BC, which are considered to be the earliest kingdoms of ancient India. Of these sixteen, three were clearly led by the Aryans:

- 1. Anga: According to the revered Jain text Prajnapana Sutra, the Angas were one of the first Aryan ethnic groups. The Anga kingdom was located in northern Bengal (Allchin and Erdosy 1995).
- 2. Kuru: The Kuru tribe was one of the oldest and most prominent Aryan tribes, emerging in the middle Vedic period (1200-900 BC). They later went on to rule the Kuru kingdom, which encompassed

णर्कात्वे नार्गते ति क्वांत्रे महित्र मार्ग



- present-day Haryana, Delhi, and western Uttar Pradesh (Allchin and Erdosy 1995).
- 3. Matsya: Another Aryan tribe of Vedic India, the Matsya Kingdom was established around 700 BC in central India (Allchin and Erdosy 1995).

स्वयः सह्ना हु । स्व ची । स्व न्या ने । स्व ने । स्





Arrival of the Aryans in Lower Ladakh

Eventually, a subgroup of the Aryans settled down in lower Ladakh and is still living there. Today, they are known as the Brokpas or Dard Aryans. They claim to be the last descendants of the Aryan race. It is unclear when this subgroup of Aryan race settled down in Ladakh. Their folklore claims that they came from Gilgit. In fact, the Brokpas' language Brokskat is a divergent variety of the Shina language spoken in Gilgit-Baltistan today. One theory claims that the Dards settled down in Gilgit around 300 or 200 BC (Francke 1999; Petech 1977). However, no consensus has reached regarding who the Dards are as no one in the Gilgit-Baltistan region use the name "Dard" to refer to themselves.

णर्कात्वे नार्गते ति क्वांत्रे कार्यावे नार्या



श्राक्तवार्षः भ्राप्ता विकानित्रा विकानित्र व

The Gilgit valley, situated in northern Pakistan and bordering with Baltistan to the east, is known as Brooshal in Urdu, the national language of Pakistan. In early 7th century, Bolor, which corresponds to today's Baltistan, was occupied by the Tibetans and was referred to as Balti (spelt as *sbalti* in Tibetan) by them. The defenders fled to the west and established Drusha (spelt as *bru sha* in Tibetan) in the region of Dardistan and Gilgit. During that time, the Chinese also had their eyes on the Gilgit-Baltistan region. In Chinese history, the Tibetan-occupied Balti was known as "Great Bolor (大勃律)", while the defenders' Drusha was referred to as "Little Bolor (小勃律)".

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARYAN BROKPAS

ने हे अन् अन्यक्षा विवासें हिन्सी अन्य कुर्ति कुर्यापय है हिन्स कुर व्यक्त कुर कुर कुर कुर कुर कुर कुर कुर कि स्थित कुर कि स्थित कुर कि स्थित कुर कि स्थित कि स्था कि स्थित कि स्था कि स्थित कि स्था कि स्था कि स्थित कि स्था कि स्था

र्वे न्नर्न् न्यस्य स्तु भूतें दरः क्रिंश्चर न्या न्यस्य म्या है। हे न्या वि स्वा न्यस्य म्या न्यस्य म्या है। वि स्व न्या न्यस्य म्या है। वि स्व न्यस्य म्या है। वि स्व न्यस्य म्या है। वि स्व न्यस्य स्त्र न्यस्य है। वि स्व न्यस्य स्त्र स्त्र न्यस्य स्त्र न्यस्य स्त्र न्यस्य स्त्र स्त्र न्यस्य स्त्र स्त्य स्त्र स्त्य स्त्र स



णर्कात्वे नार्गते ति क्वांत्रे महित्र मार्ग



On their way to capture Bolor, the Tibetans crossed the Indus River via a wooden bridge located in today's Ladakh village of Alchi, which is only 323 km southeast of Skardu, the largest city of Gilit-Baltistan. Even today, remains of the Tibetan military camp of King Songtsen Gampos' era can still be found there. Carved names of the great Tibetan minister Gar Tongtsen and generals who led this invasion are also visible on the boulders near this bridge. One of the carved scripts read, "Written by minister Tongtsen in the Bird year". The spelling is consistent with how it's written in *Old Tibetan Annals* found in *Dunhuang Manuscripts*. The *Old Tibetan Annals* also recorded what happened in that year, "In the Bird year (661), the emperor resided at Merke, and Chief Minister Gar Tongtsen traveled to Azha (PT1288 0039)."



A century later, in 740, under King Thride Tsuktsen's era(reign: 712-755), the Tibetans eventually captured Little Bolor Drusha and married ThrideTsuktsen's younger sister to the king of Little Bolor. The *Old Tibetan Annals* clearly



documented thismarriage, "In the Dragon year (740), the emperor resided at Ngangmoling in Tsarbu Na in summer. Jewa Thrimalo was sent as a bride to the Lord of Drusha. In winter, [the emperor] resided at Palace Drakmar. Zhang Thrinye Monzung died (J750, 0232)."

याबुशःक्याम्। "बुशःचीरः।

स्वान्त्रः विवाः त्याः विवाः त्याः विवाः विवा

Scholar Sonam Phuntsok believed that the Aryans were driven out of Gilgit-Baltistan because of the power struggles between Tibet and China over Gilgit (i.e., Drusha the little Bolor). In *Ladakh Annals* he writes, "In the late

णर्कात्वे नार्गते ति क्रुमां वे कार्याव स्थारा



seventh century, the powerful invasion of Tibet and China led to the decline of the Gilgit state and forced the Aryans to flee. Despite their deep attachment to their homeland, the three brothers, Galo, Melo, and Dulo took it upon themselves to lead hundreds of reluctant Aryans out of Gilgit. They eventually settled in the upper valley of Dah in lower Ladakh."

स्ताल्य विश्वालिय स्वाल्य स्वालय स्वा

Before settling down in the Dah Hanu valley, the Aryans survived by hunting ibex, as described in their folksong like this: "Where did Ghil Sing (Melo's descendent) live? Ghil Sing lived in a slate house. What did he eat?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARYAN BROKPAS

He ate ibex's meat and turnip....." During a trip to Darchik thirty years ago, I visited Tsering Pel, a blind elderly man who could memorize the lyrics of many Aryan folksongs. I personally heard him sing the lyrics.

क्ष इत्र से निया प्रति क्षित्र प्रविष्ठ क्ष व्याप्त क्षेत्र क

Today, Aryan valley still exists in Ladakh. It locates 160 kilometers northwest of the capital of Ladakh-Leh and stretches along the downward-flow of Indus River from Hanu village to the Pakistan border. Aryan valley encompasses over ten villages, including Hanu Gongma, Hanu Yogma, Hanuthang, Dah, Biama, Garkon, Darchik, Simo, Chulichan, and Batalik, all of which are situated in the western region of Ladakh within Indian territory. The valley's altitude ranges from 2730-3000 meters above sea level.

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In Ladakh Annals Sonam Phuntsok recounts how the Aryans settled in the Aryan valley, "According to the Aryan's folklore, the descendants of Galo settled in Hanu valley; Melo's descendent Ghil Sing shot an arrow to determine where they would settle and



ब्रेयाक्षराची अन्ययम् अवे गात्रका कीं।



named the place 'Dah' (because 'da' means arrow in Tibetan). The Melo branch therefore settled down in Dah and its neighboring village Garkon. Achi Horimo and her seven sons from Garkon built the village of Darchik, while descendants of Dulo built Ganokh and Simo." Today in HanuGongma, there is still a senior leader whose name is "Galopa" (Kloos 2012).

ळॅ'सॅ'(ख़ॖॖॖॖॖज़'सॅ')सून'ख़्ने'(नॣॅ'कॅ'ज़।)नुस'ऄॢज़।



णर्नात्वे नाग्रीले क्रिम्बिम्विन्तारा



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Bonona: The Festival of the Grain Bearing Tip Deity (Chunpo Srubla)

The Bonona festival is an annual 5-day celebration held in the Aryan valley. As per traditional customs, Dah, Garkon and Ganokh (in Pakistan) were expected to take turns in hosting the Bonona festival. However, in 1933, an investigation revealed that Brokpas in Ganokh no longer celebrate Bonona. As a result, Dah and Garkon have since been taking turns hosting the festival every alternate year, with a gap year where no celebration take place.



The Bonona festival is an occasion for the Brokpas to express gratitude to their crop deity *Srubla*, which translates to the deity of grain-bearing tip. They seek blessings for bountiful crops and prosperity in their community. As the millet harvest season approaches in October, the Brokpas come together to gather the very first portion of millets, which they then offer to the village deity. Additionally, they bind a bunch of millets to the pillars of their homes as an offering to the household deity. Harvest festivals akin to the Bonona festival are celebrated across Tibet and Himalayan regions. In *Ladakh Annals* So-



nam Phuntsok traces the origin of Bonona to the memorization of Ghil Sing, "Ghil Sing, the son of Melo, died in Dah. The *Chunpo Srubla* festival was initiated to memorize him."

णर्कात्वे नार्गते ति क्वांत्रे महित्र मार्ग



सरे 'इ 'बेश' मंदे 'म्बूब' द्वार द्वार दुर 'द्वार दुर द्वार हुव 'से 'सुन 'सुव 'द्वार हुव 'द्वार हुव

In the early morning of the first day of the Bonona festival, two Lhabas, adorned in white head wraps and clothing, arrive from Dah and Garkon. Lhaba refers to a person who can act as a medium for deity spirits and become possessed by them. The Lhabas proceed to sacrifice a goat at the designated "duhiya" location. The Brokpas welcome the Lhabas with a grand reception. Men carry containers for smoke offering, while women hold wine vessels in their hands. This joyous reception marks the commencement of the Bonona festival.

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वृत्त्रिं ने में राह्ने र दुवा में वा युर्ग राया या ये यय स्वानी ह्या यय युर्ग स्वान है । ये वा ये वा युर्ग स्व

"During the Bonona festival, a total of twenty-one songs and dances are performed over the course of five days. These songs are categorized into different themes, including three songs for calling upon the deity, seven songs about traders, five songs about goat herding, five songs about hunting, and one farewell song to bid farewell tothe deity. During these five days, it is believed that the deity and humans unite as one with great joy." It is said that men and women can openly express their feelings to the ones they love during this festive occasion. On the concluding day, locals wear tattered clothes and remove their hats as they sing a melancholic song tosadly say goodbye to the deity.

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णर्कात्वे नार्गते ति क्वांत्रे महिन्द्र पार्ग



The Brokpas believe that they have a direct connection with the divine deities, hence seeking protection from them in all their endeavors. Thirty-year ago, During my visit to Darchik, I was invited to a single house located on the eastern side of Darchik, at the base of the Indus River. The head of that household confided in me: "My wife descended from heaven, but few years ago, she disappeared." This account exemplifies the Brokpas'faith in their direct connection with the deities.

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The Introduction of Buddhism to the Brokpas

Prior to the arrival of Buddhism in the Aryan valley, the Brokpas followed indigenous Bon religion, which is deeply rooted in shamanistic and animistic beliefs. According to these beliefs, everything - whether it is an object, a place, or a living creature - possesses its own distinct spirit. The Brokpas would offer supplications to deities in the heaven, pray to powerful spirits residing in rocks and trees, and worship the nāga spirits that reside in the underworld.

Sonam Phuntsok recounts how protective spirits accompanied the Aryans as they migrated from Gilgit to Ladakh in *Ladakh Annals*. "The seven heavenly sisters," he writes, "arrived in Ladakh alongside the Aryans. They settled in seven different villages and became the patron deities of each one.

णर्नात्वे नाग्रीले क्रिम्बिम्विन्तारा



The eldest sister, Draknang Jomo, settled in Khaltse; Shukpa Jomo in Hemis-Shukpachan; Hangla Jomo in Skingdiyang; Yakra Jomo in upper Damkhar; Urbi Jomo in Takmachik; Hagnis Jomo in Hagnis; and Phokar Jomo in Phokar. Even today, the Brokpas - who live in the Aryan valley all the way up to Baltistan - continue to engage in similar spiritual practices."

क्री क्रिंग्यं १२०१० (इसायावि से प्राप्त प्राप्त प्राप्त प्रिंग्यं प्राप्त प्र प्राप्त प्राप्त प्राप्त प्राप्त प्राप्त प्राप्त प्राप

According to Sonam Phuntsok, in 1779, Lama Aro, Lama Téné, and Lama Rompo travelled to Dahfrom Baltistan and converted few villagers into Buddhism. They established a Buddhist temple and commissioned the creation



of statues of Buddha Maitreya and Atisha. The construction of the temple and statues was completed with the assistance of Ali Senggé, a skilled carpenter and Sengkar Mönkyi, an experienced builder.

In 1853, Senior monk Sampel from Skurbuchan village built a temple for each village from Hanu to Darchik. This effort played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism throughout the Aryan valley. To ensure these temples were well-maintained, His Eminence Konchok Tenzin Rinpoche, the previous incarnation of Kyabje Togdan Rinpoche, sent monks from Lamayuru Monastery to oversee them. As a result of these efforts, the Brokpas in the Aryan valley began to adopt the Drikung Kagyus chool of Buddhism.

In August 1985, His Holiness Drikung Kyabgön Chokyi Nangwa paid a visit to Ladakh from Tibet. Together with myself and His Eminence Kyabje Togden Rinpoche, we visited the Aryan valley and were warmly welcomed

णर्कात्वे नार्गते ति क्रुमां वे कार्याव स्थारा



with a grand reception followed by the playing of newly made spiritual drums. We also gave teachings to the Brokpas.

यानि अड्ठ त्र्र्च न्या स्त्रे त्या स्त्र स्त्र त्या स्त्र स्त्र स्त्र त्या स्त्र स्त

During our visit, we observed that although each village in the Aryan valley had its own temple, most of the temples did not even have one resident monk. This was insufficient to meet the demands of the villagers for rituals and prayers, and the monks were struggling to receive consistent provisions, making it difficult for them to remain in their villages. To address this issue, we advised that offerings received from deceased villagers be divided into three portions: one third to be offered to the resident monk, one third to be reserved for temple renovations, and one third to be saved for the community.



त्रियान्त्री त्रम्भ क्षेत्र क

This strategy proved to be successful, as it led to an increase in both the number of monks in the temples and their activities. Now, more than fifty Brokpa monks are studying or working in several monasteries, including Lamayuru monastery and Phyang monastery in Ladakh, as well as Jangchubling in Dehra Dun and Rinchen Palri Monastery in Nepal. Later, the Brokpa Monks established Drikung Kagyu Aryan Sangh Community.

णर्नात्वे नाग्रीले क्रिम्बिम्विन्तारा



मधे खें खें निर्क्ष कर न श्रुभ न्वा में श्रेवाय गावर यह निष्ट्रीय विश्व यथ श्रुभ खें निर्वे श्रुर श्रुभ निष्टे

A few years ago, Drikung Labrang began sponsoring an annual thousand offering to Uṣṇīṣavijayā in the village of Dah, with the goal of supporting the practice of Buddhism in the Aryan valley. Starting in 2023, His Eminence Gar Namrol Rinpoche will sponsor the annual thousand offering to Uṣṇīṣavijayā for three consecutive years. In addition to covering the expenses for food and drinks for all participants during the three-day puja period, he will also donate the complete set of all necessary ritual instruments. Following the three-year period, Drikung Labrang will resume its sponsorship of the annual thousand offering to Uṣṇīṣavijayā in the Aryan valley.

वर्त्रेन'यदे'श्रे'नेनस'न्नक्षांभ्रा

देट:चर:दुवर:वर्चेना:यायवाळे:चर्यावर्चेना:खुवा:दुव्वेना:भ्रम् चेन्:श्चेन्:चेन्-वेन्वेनःखेन्। भ्रम् धेनान्देःने से:न्दर्से: Brokskat बेर्यायःवे:न्द्र Shina खुव्य:भ्रम्:चेन्:श्चेनाःधेन:यान्देन:भ्रम्ययः खु:कुन:न्दर:भ्रव्य:हेवे:खुव्य:भ्रम्:ने:धेन् ने:ब्र्म्सःखर:न्द्रन्वेन्टर्वेना:स्यान्देना:स्यान्नेन्यःचेन्।भ्रम्



The Brokpas' Native Language and Education

Even nowadays, most of the Brokpas in the Aryan valley continue to speak their native language Brokskat, which is a divergent variety of the Shina language. However, there is one exception: Brokpas in the Hanu village only speak Ladakhi. According to Stephan Kloos' essay *Legends from Dha-Hanu: Oral Histories of the Buddhist Dards in Ladakh*, this is because the Brokpas in Hanu were forced to stop speaking their own language and switch to Ladakhi by king Tsewang Namgyal because they resisted the king's demand for forced labor. With the Hanupa's staunch resistance, they were exempted from taxes and forced labor but lost their right to speak their native language.

णर्नात्वे नार्गते ति क्वांत्रे महिन्द्र पार्ग



षड्व'र्णुवार्क्केंदेर्श्वेश'र्षेद्र'श्चीश्चेंद्र्या 1945 व्यम्क्कि'ग्नर'ग्विर'द्रश्चान्द्र्याश्चित्र'र्घेत'श्चेर'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'श्चेत्र'र्घेत'रघेतेत्र'र्घेत'रघेतेत्र'र्घेत'रघेत'रघेतेत्र'र्घेत'रघेतेत्र'रघेत्र'रघेत्र'रघेतेत्र'र

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Regarding education in the Aryan valley, the Indian government established the first primary school up to eighth grade in Hanu in 1945, which



was subsequently followed by the establishment of schools in all other villages. Remarkably, even a village with only three households has its own primary school today.

In the 1990s, the Swedish Tibetan Society for School and Culture, along with Mr. Human Konchok Norbu, a follower of Drikung Kagyu, supported the remodeling of the Droc Yul Lhéding Dekyi Middle School for Brokpas as well as the construction of new dormitories for students who live far away. In line with my suggestion, the Brokpas established the Aryan Welfare Society in 1998 to promote the welfare of the Brokpas in the Aryan valley. Former monks came together to form the All Aryan Dazoor Association UT Ladakh with the same goal in mind.

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ABrief History of the Aryan Brokpas was completed n December 11th 2022 by Konchok Tenzin Kunzang Tinle Lhundup, the one blessed with the name of "Gyalwa Drikungpa".





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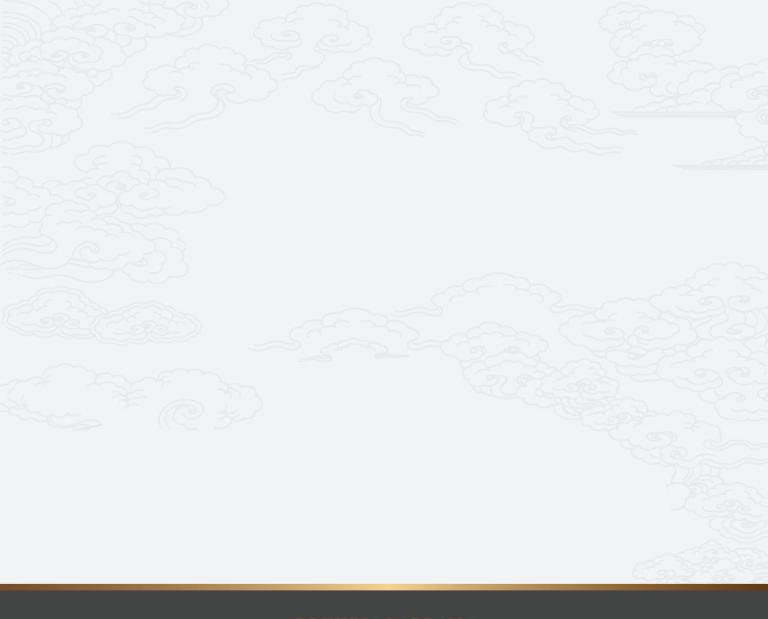
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