

## **An experiment in story-telling: reassembling the house in Ladakh.**

Sophie Day, Goldsmiths, University of London

### **Abstract**

In 2013, my friend from previous periods of fieldwork, Deen Khan, suggested we photograph some of his favourite belongings and the few packed-away memories that he had managed to retrieve from one of his stores at the time. Other Ladakhis were puzzled by Deen's extensive and haphazard collection but he and I made a small 'storyboard' from some of the objects, which I explore in relation to Deen's unfolding biography from 2013-2017. The storyboard, as a collaborative endeavour, becomes a mechanism that foregrounds the material moorings of both biography and ethnography, brings them together in unanticipated ways and illuminates their many connections. In illustration, I show how references to partition drew connections between the state and its frontiers, relations among Buddhist and Muslim Ladakhis, and patterns of familial inheritance.

**Key words:** Ladakh, biography, ethnography, house, composition

### **Introduction**

I met Deen Khan in the 1980s during my doctoral studies in Ladakh and we resumed our friendship more recently (2005-present) when I was working with visual material that I brought back from earlier research. This later project emerged in response to requests from a younger generation, educated outside Ladakh, who wanted to explore material about the region.<sup>1</sup> Ladakh is a high-altitude desert within the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It sits to the

west of Tibet, to the south of Chinese Central Asia and the southeast of Pakistan. It is heavily militarised and sees regular outbreaks of warfare along its disputed borders. Reliant on agriculture, small-scale and long-distance trading in the past, Ladakh now depends on the army, tourism and public sector employment, with some private enterprise and farming. Approximately half the population is Buddhist and half Muslim, with a large Shia majority in the west towards Kashmir and a small Sunni group, to which Deen Khan belongs, in the capital, Leh, towards the east of the region.

Deen had been a Tourist Officer in the 1970s when Ladakh's borders were re-opened and he still has two thousand of his own slides, some in good condition. I digitalised a selection and produced a small photobook (2010-11) for Deen. We thus shared an interest in photography and discussed many of Deen's images as well as my own. Ladakhis in general are far more immersed in photography today and interested in looking at and discussing images (xx 2012) although few shared Deen's interest in the objects, papers and ephemera that he kept in several stores. Kath Weston gave me the term, storyboard, for the process of collaboration that emerged in making, talking about and subsequently revising small books of image and text for a number of individuals, households and other institutions. Normally, storyboards are understood to plot a story ahead of time and they are discarded before the real work begins. In my research, however, the storyboard is not purely a technique for collaborative scripting but also a field experiment or intervention that produced unexpected ethnographic material (Toren 2007, Kajanus in press). We gathered together and discussed material that I returned in book form, and these books were generally kept, circulated and then revised. I found that most participants preferred such evolving photobooks to digital images and prints and to more public displays such as the exhibition I held in Leh (which is also available digitally, [www.xx](http://www.xx)). Some books were abandoned but others became tokens and memoirs of an older generation or practice; some also served as historical records. Many

were valued as keepsakes, stored with other objects in the traditional kitchen cabinet and shared selectively.

This article is based on a photobook that Deen and I composed during the summer of 2013 in Ladakh. I brought the finished product back in 2015 and follow its history to 2017. In what follows, I select a few details and vignettes attached to the objects we explored so as to show how they evoked a sense of Deen's house that was as much ethnographic as biographical. After his parents died, the house was divided between Deen and his siblings. Deen explained how his brother insisted on demolition so as to make a 'modern' home for himself and so the family seat was lost. In popular opinion as well as an extensive literature (for example, Dollfus 1989, Kaplanian 2008, Mills 2002, Srinivas 1998), the house composes a specific and valued shape to Buddhist Ladakhi life. The Buddhist house is permanent. Property ideally remains undivided from one generation to the next along with the house name that you carry, analogous to a surname in the English-speaking world. In consequence, only one marriage is to take place in the house each generation (xx 2015). Muslim Ladakhi houses have appeared less substantial in comparison. Their houses seem more temporary because property is divided, 'partitioned' in Ladakhi English, each generation and, it is said, because they look less impressive. I show how Deen argued with stereotypes of the Muslim house and considered more positive future directions. In my reading, partition provides a key trope for Deen that indexes also the precarious position of Ladakh, following the Partition of India and Pakistan and the unresolved frontiers between India, Pakistan and China, and the threat of communalism (that is, antagonism between different groups) within Ladakh itself. Deen's memories, I suggest, are intimately tied to the historical and social context that frames them.

## **Khan House (Khan Manzil<sup>2</sup>)**

As we looked once more through Deen's albums in the house of a mutual friend in 2013, we paused over a picture of Deen's mother in the old Khan Manzil at the stove surrounded by her pots, as I had known her in the 1980s. 'This pot is still with us and we still make pilau sometimes. Tomorrow, come to my house and you will see this in my kitchen.' I had been complaining once more that Deen had not shown me the turban his father wore to his wedding, the pictures of the old house that I knew thirty years ago and his trunks full of heirlooms from Yarkand (Xinjiang). I was long accustomed to the anticipation of meeting some precious object only to learn that Deen could not find it in his stores. On this occasion, however, Deen had managed to retrieve a few packed-away memories and suggested we photograph them as well as the kitchen pots. We duly reconvened the following day in Deen's kitchen where the old pots were arranged with the new, dusted every day by Deen's wife and used regularly, unlike the hats pictured below. 'This *momo* [dumpling] pot, I got that but, later, my brother wanted it. This is an exact copy that I had made in Kashmir. Dumplings taste quite different than from an aluminium pan as there is no residue.'<sup>3</sup>



I heard about other pots, cups, plates and pans. The plates, for example, came from Yarkand, Kashmir and Ladakh: ‘This here, the plate with the cover, is what we used to take food to our neighbours. Still we do this do at Ramadan during *iftar* [the evening meal].’ Ladakhis who grew up in Deen’s section of town mixed constantly with the Hor, as Ladakhis call those from the north, shared their lodgings and played alongside each other in the street. Several learned to speak Hor and to love Yarkandi food. Now, said Deen, he no longer heard the sweet language or came across the foods and dress as he went about the bazaar. Yarkandi residents had become refugees when the border closed behind them; a few stayed in Leh until they died.

A new Central Asian museum was slowly taking shape in this section of town and Deen was not very happy with its management in 2013 as he was constantly approached for information and exhibits. How did the family’s two *serai*<sup>4</sup> look? Deen showed me this hat (below), black with white fish, when he could not find the turban that his father wore to his

wedding and I asked, ‘Why don’t you wear that one?’ ‘Because they wanted it for the museum; they said, “Give it to us”.’ Deen’s father and then Deen used to wear the hat every time they went to the mosque but now Deen would only wear it once a year at *Eid*.



Deen collected hats, and showed me several from Yarkand, Afghanistan and Russia as he explained their significance. ‘This unused fur hat in the box with flaps to keep your ears warm belonged to my grandfather; it’s so precious that I don’t use it. My grandfather was very friendly with the Resident Commissioner you know and they always competed over the newest things. One would bring something from India and say, “Have you got this? Look what I’ve got.” The other would say, “Look, I’m the first to have this thing”.’ Deen’s grandfather had been *aqsaqual* (Persian, ‘white beard’), a minor political post representing trade interests for the government of Khotan in Leh during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. He joined a handful of big traders dealing with Chinese Central Asia, Tibet and Kashmir and the family

came to direct trade between Leh and Khotan.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes, it was the pastor who featured as friend, ‘They were very competitive. It was my grandfather who brought the first petrol lamp and Peter Sahib<sup>6</sup> who brought the first radio. ... I heard many stories about these two.’

Deen has featured in the literature on Ladakh, for example, in a wonderful tour of what Jacqueline Fewkes (2009, 2012) calls the Khan Archives. Fewkes explores the personal and business papers of Deen’s family from 1904 to 1948 concerning dyes, medicines, drugs, weaponry and household items as well as the more familiar carpets, cloths, jewellery and clothing. The documents deal with transport, taxation and the sale of goods and Fewkes demonstrates the international dimensions of trade, focusing particularly on documents from the 1930s in Tibetan, Urdu, Persian, Uighur and English as well as languages not yet identified. The archive provides evidence of connections throughout the region and, indirectly, with Europe, the Americas and Japan. As we looked through one such book from the 1940s in 2015, Deen paused at the sight of an invoice from Calcutta for polo balls and shoe polish, exclaiming at the waste of money and recalling the boots that his father always kept immaculately clean.

### **The old Khan Manzil**

Deen’s father had died in the 1970s and his mother in the 1980s. How lucky I am, said Deen,

“Both parents, I myself put them with this hand into the grave ... and I feel very lucky in that way that I was able to put them to rest, wash and dress them. ... One thing my father always used to say, especially to me, I don’t know why, I couldn’t understand, ‘Never go after money. Never go after money because money is the thing that makes life difficult. And I have gone through that and I don’t want to see you people having that trouble.’”<sup>7</sup>



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Deen's father married into a Buddhist family, recently converted to Christianity. His mother then became a devout Muslim but her sister, who still lives with Deen, remained Christian and belongs to a dwindling generation who congregate at the Moravian church in Leh. Deen spoke of his mother, depicted below with her granddaughter in the 1970s, as an extraordinary



woman: “She rebuilt the house, totally from nothing. We lost everything [at Partition]. Only one thing was left, my mother’s jewellery. *Abi Amin* was there, from Chushot. She took that jewellery and dropped it into the toilet so something was left and of my great-grandmother too.” Deen’s mother had explained that grandmother Amin was the elderly woman he vaguely remembered who used to sit in the sun on the roof; she stayed in Khan Manzil until she died.

I was struck by the fact that Deen was yet to be born when the events of Partition occurred and looked over my old notes from 1982. These described how Buddhist neighbours hid his mother and, ‘The only thing saved was an ivory box with some jewellery which a servant threw down the toilet.’ I had forgotten hearing that Deen’s sister, the first Muslim woman to go to college, was considered a revolutionary at the time. Jewellery generally travels between women’s hands and I learned that the box was with this sister and not in his store, as Deen thought. He had lost the key and, as there are no locksmiths in Ladakh, he wondered how he was to open the one-kilogram lock and recover his precious belongings.

This Partition story had companions, two of which I found particularly moving. The first concerned another servant, a Yarkandi who had lost his legs through frostbite crossing to Leh. In consequence, he became a gatekeeper for the family’s *serai*:

“They just came and took away everything. My father was not in Ladakh, he had gone for some work to India... He couldn’t reach here. There were only a few women, and servants ... They say he [the servant] was killed by one of them [soldiers] at the gate ... [because he offered] resistance. He said, ‘You can’t come in, there are only women here’ and then they shot him. They entered the house. We used to have a *godown* (warehouse) on the ground floor. That was emptied, everything – carpets, cloth [a particular cotton; thick and very soft which Ladakhis liked], dried fruit.... That’s what I am told.”

Muslims sheltered Buddhists during the first invasion from Pakistan. An irregular force assembled for the defence of Ladakh arrived after the Pakistanis were defeated just short of Leh.<sup>8</sup> This second ‘invasion’ had more serious consequences for Muslims, who were now staying with their Buddhist neighbours:

“That time, a lot of problems happened in Leh, especially to Muslims. That time, Buddhist people gave shelter to Muslims and protected everybody ... Especially one of my neighbours, just across the street, the family hid there and here for a few months. They did everything until the regular army came and took control. ... There was not much killing in Leh but there was a lot of looting... Oh yes. We lost everything. They just came and took away everything. ...

... My father was not there. Everything collapsed. Then, [this was the] biggest crisis for my family. We were at the bottom; nothing was left. My father had to re-start. My father and my mother.”

After Partition, Deen’s mother began to cultivate the land and grow vegetables, knit and embroider and she earned a little money until Deen’s father managed to obtain a government job. Deen remembered how he and his sister would sit in the bazaar after school selling her pickles and return home with three or four rupees.

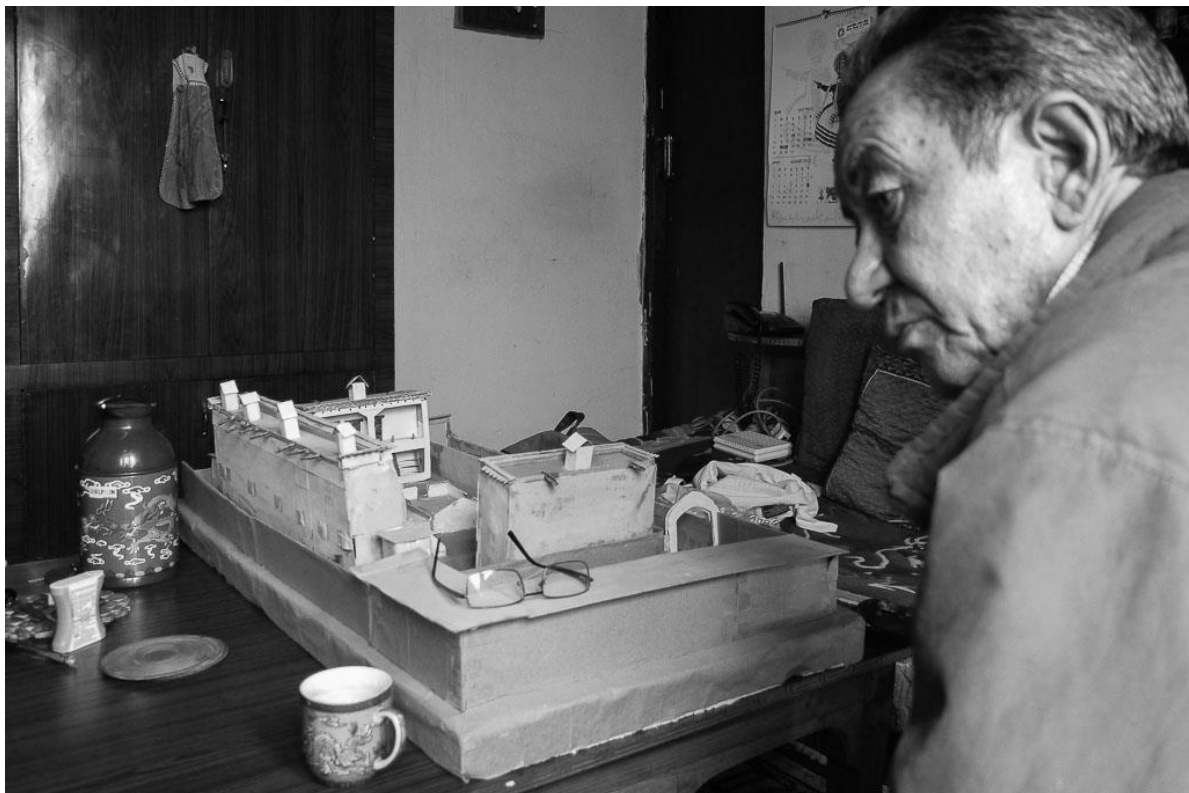
The third constant element in these accounts of Partition told how Deen’s father stopped riding. Of the polo horses taken by the invaders, just one returned, “This was a year before I was born but my mother told me, suddenly one day out of the blue, his favourite white horse reached home alone. It had run away from wherever, we don’t know. When he reached here - his stable was here on the ground floor - he couldn’t get in. He just fell down in the courtyard and died there. That’s when my father stopped riding ...”

The white horse, the amputee and especially *Abi Amin* wound their way regularly through Deen’s stories, often without explicit reference to Partition and the division of what

had been Ladakh into two parts. Events, themes, people and objects have receded and drawn near over the years for, as Veena Das has noted, “the social [is] the domain of unfinished stories that can lie undisturbed for many years ... (Das 2012: 137, referring to Das 2007). It seemed to me that Partition along with subsequent outbreaks of ill feeling between Buddhists and Muslims were remote to Deen as they were to myself in the early 1980s, but they have become more vivid since, especially in situations of uncertainty such as the 1989 agitation and subsequent boycott on interaction between Buddhists and Muslims (described below).

Before we visited Khan Manzil, Deen had brought a cardboard model of his family’s upper *serai* to show me, a little the worse for wear:

‘It was so beautiful, made of clay, not pure white, with the water down here from the canal. The camels stayed here [but] not for more than a day or two when they were used for riding or for the caravan chiefs. ... Until Class 5 or 6, we used to play there; and we’d come away with our pockets stuffed full of dried fruit and nuts. Some



children stayed; they came with the caravans and maybe they went to Kashmir or on the hajj....’

Two Yarkandis who had travelled with the last caravan in 1957-58 told Deen that the smallest had at least 130 camels, 70 horses and mules and 50 donkeys. There would be four caravans at a time crossing one way or another according to their own calendars. Deen described lovingly the transit goods in their two *serai*, established by his great-grandfather in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and mused, ‘It wasn’t so long ago that the trade grew and then it diminished even before the borders closed.’<sup>9</sup> It wasn’t until my father and uncle married Ladakhis, that we stopped being pure Turkic.’ The family’s lower *serai* was the last standing in Leh; it was demolished in the mid-1980s.

Ladakh was a trading state and suffered when borders closed for a while or became unpredictable through burdensome taxation or unusually arduous conditions of travel (Rizvi 1999). A public narrative about the loss of regional self-sufficiency and autonomy following Partition (1947) and the war with China (1962) circulates widely today and evokes collective nostalgia. Deen’s stories share common ground with this narrative but privilege a Ladakhi Muslim - and a Sunni - history. From Deen’s perspective, these events did not only shut Ladakh’s borders permanently but also divided his family down the middle, impoverished the Ladakhi branch and left him an outsider at home. As Butalia (2015) has argued about the Partition of India and Pakistan, the exploration of memories can never be finite: the more you search, the more that opens up. Her questions about ‘postmemory’ (Hirsch 2012) are directly relevant to Deen, who was recounting what he heard from and experienced through his parents. Postmemory originally described the relationship between the children of Holocaust survivors and the memories of their parents but has come to describe how we know and relate more generally to other people’s traumatic experiences through stories, images and other cultural practices. Memories and postmemories have changed over the decades (Siddiq

Wahid 2015) and Deen merged a number of distinct events as he concluded, “My father and mother were very lonely; everyone was in Kashgar or Lahore. ... The family fortunes were lost with Partition. Worse, though, it was not possible to travel to the paternal home.”

Talk of trade on this occasion led back to a discussion of family history. Deen’s grandfather had a brother who was stationed in Lahore, still alive when I was living near Leh in 1982. Ninety-eight years of age, he was head of house in Lahore and had re-invested the family’s trading money in textiles and cars. Deen met this man in London - ‘a proper Pathan, with his beard down to here and traditional full robes and turban’ – but declined to take over the business. As Deen emphasised so often, he could not travel to Pakistan in case of difficulties re-entering India, and so the Lahore family’s extensive property reverted to the state when this man passed away.

Still with the cardboard model between us, Deen recalled another *serai* in Kashmir, currently hosting Tibetans but once the home of Yarkandi refugees. Deen used to visit his milk sister [*oma cig*, fed at the same breast] regularly at the *serai* when he was a student in Srinagar. This woman’s family accepted the offer of citizenship in Turkey, where the girl married another Yarkandi and the couple moved to Iraq. All Yarkandi were offered citizenship in Turkey but Deen’s family decided to stay in Leh. They frequently attended family events in the diaspora and our conversation reminded Deen that he had promised to visit his milk sister and the holy sites on Umrah.<sup>10</sup>

### **Looking over the photobook**

In 2015, I gave Deen the photobook we had prepared. ‘Oh my god’, he said as he took it away, explaining that we would talk after Ramadan. We postponed discussion repeatedly as members of Deen’s family took the book to show their friends, leaving Deen unable to read it himself. I learned that Deen’s son was becoming interested in his father’s collection and

would help sort the stores. Deen's opinions of the still-to-be-completed Central Asian Museum had changed. He now thought that he might loan some items and was less concerned that the images of hats and the model of the *serai* in the storyboard remain private. It may have been our collaboration that also prompted Deen to begin a more systematic exploration of his documents, images and objects.



Eventually, we sat with the storyboard in Dolma's kitchen. Dolma is a Buddhist, an ex-colleague of Deen's and of much the same age. I met her in 1981 and we have spent significant periods of time together. I had also brought her a photobook about the recent construction of a memorial and I encouraged Deen and Dolma to swap their books. Puzzled that objects had taken the place of people, Dolma began to tease Deen: 'That's very common', she said, of a teapot made in Kashmir. Following some disagreement, she conceded that many of the objects she recognised came from her mother's sister, who had converted to Islam at marriage. This aunt lived in Kashmir and her husband had been a trader.

As we talked about the histories that both joined and divided us, we were reminded of the conflict that erupted between Muslims and Buddhists in 1989 (van Beek 2000, Smith 2013) and its consequences. Deen rarely visits Delhi now because he feels uncomfortable there as a Muslim while, in Ladakh, regulations have tightened in response to the situation in Kashmir. For example, only state residents can register a mobile phone number today and must produce their identification card in evidence.

Dolma reminded me that her Muslim aunt had adopted one relative after another when she was widowed since she had no children of her own. The adoptions went badly for the girls left. Some remained Muslim but, after marriage, set up home independently; others were encouraged to convert back to Buddhism and leave. Dolma herself was adopted informally but her mother took her home almost immediately. Ultimately, this aunt agreed that Dolma's nephew could take care of her without moving into her home or converting. Sadly, her last days were coloured by the 1989 troubles and the subsequent boycott. In summary and drawing on various versions of events:

There was a ban. Buddhists could have nothing to do with Muslims but Tsewang, Dolma's nephew, had to buy *masi* (maternal aunt) meat and all the butchers are Muslim. Every time, he was fined and called to account by the Buddhist Association. But he carried on and he explained how he had to look after his 'mother'. ... When she died, it was very difficult. Tsewang went to the Muslim Association to ask them to come to the house but they said, 'No, it will cause problems for you, bring her to the mosque.' Tsewang would not do that. To him, it would be shameful not to bury your relative from her own home. As Tsewang was so adamant, they eventually agreed to come to her house to bathe her and afterwards they went to the mosque. 'Of *masi*'s relatives,' noted Dolma, 'only Angmo and I came, no one else.'

Deen explained that it would have been better to hold the ceremony in the mosque: ‘It is the last prayer that is most important and it is best if maximum people are there both for the dead and for the good of the living. It is the last prayer for the body.’ The two friends agreed that the situation had eased, ‘Now, it is no problem at death, Muslims and Buddhists can mix easily at funerals ... [but] if a Buddhist and Muslim marry, they will be separated or they will have to leave Ladakh. Now, though, there are no big problems like before.’ Deen celebrated those Buddhist colleagues who had protected him at work across the region and he recalled how he used to eat from the same plate as his close Buddhist friends; ‘For me, now that my Buddhist friends will no longer eat from the same plate, it makes me feel that I am somehow unacceptable. ...’

As we looked at Dolma’s book, Deen too started teasing: how little she had known about preparations for the memorial. For example, Dolma was unable to find the juniper she needed at short notice but Deen managed to bring her 5 kg the next day. ‘How did you get that?’ asked Dolma. Deen would not say but conceded gracefully that no one had told her what to prepare. Apparently he also told Dolma that I had taped his life story in 2013, ‘but she [xx] didn’t ask me any questions so I just gave my personal story.’

### **A new ‘old’ Khan Manzil?**

Deen had described how the old Khan Manzil came down. The family began to divide their property after Deen’s father died and drew a line down the middle of the old house after Deen’s mother died. Two homes, hotels - cum - guesthouses, were built by the brothers<sup>11</sup> but Deen missed the old house where, to paraphrase Patrick Joyce (2014: 66), everyone found themselves not only in places, but of them. Deen told me, ‘If I build another house, I will make the old one in miniature’, and explained ‘I won’t need much land....’; ‘You are leaving? Tomorrow I will bring sketches of the other *serai* and the house. It will be a rough



sketch but you will get the idea...I can draw a plan.' Deen has one small empty plot where he wants to make a replica of the old Khan Manzil on a smaller scale. As with the cardboard model, this project constitutes a form of miniaturisation, which Susan Stewart (1993: 69) has presented in terms of a longing for intimacy, possession or control that creates an interior temporality (see Carsten, this issue). But these miniatures also provided Deen with a mnemonics of the past in the present as he thought about his own life in relation to others, considering how, in Patrick Joyce's words, "I lived what they survived, at least a part of it." (Joyce 2014: 67)<sup>12</sup>

I consider these models also as interventions in the sense of prototypes, which build a trajectory towards a particular future. The new 'old' house speaks to new conditions, such as the shrinking of the family domain, and to Ladakhi stereotypes. According to Deen, the 'capture' of land as well as widespread government distribution began with regional autonomy in 1995. As we were surveying the number of new houses across the Leh landscape one day, Deen emphasised the dissolution of the traditional Buddhist household form,

'Around Leh at least, almost everyone separates in Buddhist families, partly because it's so easy to do. You put some bricks and a marker down wherever and then the Hill Council will encourage [you]; they want your vote. Today it's the Buddhists who divide and the Muslims who stay together. We [Muslims] live in joint households; one brother upstairs and one downstairs.'

Deen, I suggest, is arguing against negative evaluations of the Muslim in relation to the Buddhist house.

Deen's plans speak too to experiences of biographical disruption. Deen is not in exile and he is not a refugee in any normal sense of the term but his family are gone. His sense of loss is acute at home in the place where he and his parents were born and grew up. The

material I have discussed therefore suggests a large common territory relating to longing and loss among those who stay and those who leave. Furthermore, it draws attention to non-territorial concepts of home. Deen's home was constituted previously by and in the constant traffic of a large family who interacted as they moved. With the rebuilding project, Deen acknowledges that his home is now defined in different terms, aligned with national borders, but he also seems to anticipate positive developments. Reassembling a version of the Khan Manzil that he remembers from his childhood, he will be able to house his artefacts appropriately at last. This project will produce material and visible evidence to passers-by and visitors alike of the value of Muslim as well as Buddhist Ladakhi houses, histories and ways of life.

## **Conclusion**

Povinelli (2011) has asked about the difference between an archivist, a collector and a hoarder. Deen, I imagine, could see himself in all three roles. By 2017, however, he was celebrated locally as an archivist, one who, Povinelli suggests, is charged to find "lost objects, subjugated knowledges, and excluded socialities" (2011: 151). In 2017, I found Deen in pride of place at the recently opened Central Asian Museum in Leh, welcoming visiting officials and explaining the wealth of exhibits. Following difficulties and tragedies with the museum project, the Muslim Association in Leh had welcomed support from Deen and a colleague who, in a space of six months, filled the four-storey building with Buddhist and Muslim treasures. Most of the objects were on loan and the display included several items from Deen's own collection. I was delighted to set eyes on a mythical set of family saddle



bags, cases with sturdy locks (the key missing once again) joined by two metal chains so that they could be slung over the back of a camel. Deen's stores are beginning to empty.

I was struck by the parallel movement of our storyboard from a personal to a more public arena. Veena Das (2012) emphasised that stories enrol participation of varied kinds in her comments about the social as the domain of unfinished stories (see above); they also circulate in particular domains (Cruikshank, 1998). The portable papers, kitchen goods, heirlooms, jewellery, clothes, photographs and models that I photographed resonated and held stories between Deen, myself and others with a particular although variable intensity. Combined with text and in book form, they circulated more widely and gathered further material. Each page frames particular objects and topics but the sequence of pages along with the core theme of partition thread them together and connect the biographical to the ethnographic in relation to divisions between India, Pakistan and China, within the house, and

among ethnic and religious groups. This fieldwork approach and the material it produced prompts questions as to what might qualify as biography and what as ethnography: to whom does this archive belong; does it record the life of a house, a person or a people?

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Xx 2012

Xx 2015

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<sup>1</sup> A British Academy project, *Ladakh 1980-2010: a visual and textual analysis of key trends* (SG54354, xx and xx, 2009-2011), enabled digitalisation of my material from the 1980s.

<sup>2</sup> Manzil (Urdu): house, destination, stage, day's journey.

<sup>3</sup> All photos © xx unless otherwise credited.

<sup>4</sup> *Serai* are also known as *caravanserai* in English and provide accommodation for travellers, their animals and goods.

<sup>5</sup> Deen's grandfather features in accounts of the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century such as this 1926 visit: "On the non-official side there was a very charming Mohammedan called Bahr-ud-Deen-Khan, who was lord of the Yarkandi Serai, and through whose hands passed most if not all of the trade from Turkestan. While sipping his scented China tea out of elaborate cups made in Moscow, we heard all the gossip of the bazaars from Kashgar to Khotan." (Orme 1945: 30).

Deen's wife is from the principal family in the trade with Tibet.

<sup>6</sup> F.E. Peter (Friedrich Eugen Peter) served in the Himalaya from 1898 to 1936. In 1927, he was ordained the first and only Bishop of what was then the West Himalayan Province of the Moravian Church. (Bray 1985: 39; see also Beszterda 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Double quotation marks indicate transcribed passages from the single life story in English that I taped with Deen in 2013. I use an ellipsis, ... , to indicate omissions and comments in [square brackets] for explanations that I have added. Approximate citations are given single quotation marks. With the passage of time, I cannot always be sure which words were Deen's and which interpolations of mine and so I summarise conversations where attribution is a problem.

<sup>8</sup> Several accounts explore the continuing significance of Partition and other borders in everyday life; for example, Aggarwal (2004), who discusses published Ladakhi accounts such as that by Abdul Ghani Sheikh, Gutschow (2006), Kaul and Kaul (1992).

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Deng (2010) comments on a National Geographic photograph (LaFugie 1949) on the Ladakh-Yarkand border in the 1940s, after the Tungan exodus through Ladakh and before Mao's government sealed the borders. LaFugie's black and white image of trading in 1946 shows porters unloading 'giant American-made tires, two per beast' (2010: 16) and her caption states that these American-made war supplies were for Chiang Kai Shek's Nationalist Government. The image shows soldiers in mandarin collars from the National Revolutionary Army and Deng comments, 'It seems that soldiers from the national Chinese Army preceded Indian soldiers in Ladakh by a year.' (2010: 16-17)

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Umrat al mufradah* can be performed separately from the hajj and is sometimes described as a lesser pilgrimage.

<sup>11</sup> Despite this conventional way of describing the partition of the house, there were in fact three houses; the third belonged jointly to Deen's two sisters.

<sup>12</sup> Joyce asks of first houses and first languages, "Is it more a question of the past speaking us than we speaking them?" (2014: 89)