

**cashmere/KASHMIR voice-over draft**

The time-code differs from the images in certain spaces because this translation was meant for a two-part-version for DEUTSCHE WELLE.

the warp and the weft

00:44 (voice in after cough)

Spinning and weaving are at the beginnings of any civilization - just like story-telling. Don't we all spin our yarns and try to find the figure in the carpet - of our lives or in the carpet we call history?

01:07

Some looms - and some conditions of life - are narrower than others.  
The number of threads forming the warp is always fixed.

01:27

What weavers then pass over and under this warp depends on tradition and taste - and even more so on what their times and the market-place have in store for them.

01:45

Weavers (- just editors -) have patterns in their minds and their hands give their best - the rest being, well, destiny - or politics??

Norchen, Rupshu (pronounced like Rupert, not like rupture)

03:08

Rupshu is where the western end of the Tibetan plateau meets the southern end of Ladakh, India's territory north of the Himalayas. (Literally,) Rupshu means "good bone" and lies three miles or 15,000 feet above the heat of the Indian plains.

03:26

Norchen means "wealth": there is water all year and food for more than 15,000 sheep and goats for a few weeks in July and August, when some fifty nomad families gather here.

03:45

In the beginning, the world was populated by demons and demonesses who destroyed everything in sight, ate their own children and - some say - the demonesses also ate the demons. One day, a god, disguised as a monk, came and told the demon folk that they had to stop their bad ways and live peacefully. The demons, who were wiser, listened to this monk and became men.

04:21 (nach dominanter Flöte - out vor Lachen 04:35)

The demonesses still went round doing bad things. So the monk taught them how to weave and they became women. However, they had to keep weaving so they wouldn't stray back to their wicked ways.

04:47

The Rupshu women indeed are busy weaving the whole day and in a slow way. With their looms strapped to their backs, the women actually weave from their laps and according to an anthropologist, they are aware of the sexual connotations and consider the warp to be the mother and the weft the child conceived in the womb ... opened up by the sword or beater, which for the Rupshu nomads is female, too.

05:36

Many tents - also nomad's tents - are made from parachutes - silent reminders of how difficult it had been for the Indian army to airlift enough soldiers across the Himalayas in order to stop the Chinese advancing towards central Ladakh in 1962.

06:00

Power politics prevent the Rupshu nomads from making salt in Tibet and, more important, from taking their animals to good winter grazing-grounds across a border closed now even for nomads. This is a real loss, whereas only time will tell, if the nomads can profit from the occasional trekking group coming here in the summer.

06:35

Everything from goat hair to sheep wool is processed locally, except pashmina, the choice wool from which cashmere products are made. The fibre grows on the underside of goats as a protection against the fiercest winters imaginable. An average five ounces or 150 grams per animal are combed out in early summer. - After cleaning, wool is being hand-carded here - combing the longer fibres - before it is spun.

07:23

Rather than cashmere, the nomads themselves wear a fairly coarse cloth, one well-suited to their life-style: home-spun "snambu", its woven strips sown together and then fullled, that is, thickened into almost felt by walking on it in ice-cold-water for half a lazy afternoon, while the animals are grazing before they return in the evening.

08:06

Sheep give milk for three months, goats for four and a half. For most of the year, fresh milk can only be had from the few yaks. They also carry the nomads' tents.

08:48 out 09:25 Schaf-Baby nicht zutexten!

At an estimated 40'000 kilos Ladakh's output of cashmere-wool is just one percent of the world production, the bulk of which grows on the vaster pasture-lands of Tibet and Mongolia. Thanks to biotechnology, smaller quantities are now produced at far lower altitudes and in the less severe climates of for instance Scotland and Australia. - In the past decade or so, cashmere products have trickled down from the pricey boutique to the department store level in the more affluent economies.

09:45 or later 10:18 out /'shaa-'toosh/

Cashmere's place on the top shelf has been taken by shahtoosh, (literally the king's wool,) trading which is illegal anywhere in the world except in Kashmir. Four lovely Tibetan antelopes go into a single scarf fetching thousands of dollars just because its very possession is illegal. For centuries, shahtoosh had been woven into priceless heirlooms for a local Indian market, when, all of a sudden, a globalized fashion market hiked up the demand, which in turn hiked up the poaching.

11:24

On behalf of the community, the nomads' headman - in traditional dress - negotiates with the wool-merchant, a Muslim from Ladakh's capital Leh.

11:50 /'nau-'wang 'khe'tchog/ 12:24 out

Like Nawang Khechog, who played the flute in this part, also Tensing's family lived as nomads in Tibet, before they fled in 1959 to continue their way of life here in Rupshu. Hoping to fetch a better price, Tensing's father takes his wool to the city himself, across the second-highest motorable pass in the world. Builders from lowland India maintain Ladakh's modern lifeline. There are 30 petrol-trucks a day between July and October. After them/that, there is only snow.

## Ladakh

14:10 or earlier NB: sunshine = 14:18

Ladakh, a desert in the sky, is a narrow loom, so all life is an oasis made by man.

Rather than for rain, farmers might pray for sunshine to melt what is left of the glaciers receding due to perhaps global warming - still, the high-altitude thaw only starts in early summer, reducing the agricultural season to just four months.

14:43 /'tshe'wang 'nor'fel/

Stealing more than a page from nature, Chewang Norphel, a retired civil engineer, constructs new glaciers.

14:54 bildergesteuert out 15:19

Until late autumn, small streams are diverted into man-made channels with numerous outlets, through which water - otherwise lost - drips down a slope just shaded enough for the water to freeze - and just sunny enough for the ice to melt - much earlier and closer to the fields - when and where the farmers most need it - to grow their barley, some wheat, and - often in the same field - peas or mustard.

16:08 or earlier - out 16:31

Ladakh's surplus water has always made small prayer-mills go round, while the surplus of crops has been invested in Buddhist monasteries, where murals remind believers that ignorance, greed and hatred (intertwined) will tie them onto the wheel of life, hence into one more reincarnation.

16:45

To represent these negative impulses of the human ego, monks mould a doll out of barley-flour and butter - at the Hemis-monastery-festival - the doll is ritually dismembered and evil is being scattered to the four corners of the compass.

18:05                   Ladakh should be on 18:19; the sentence may be rearranged

Until 20:10, the text is fairly dense

For the past fifty years, politics have belied the ritual. Before various armies - from the four corners of the compass - created new borders or closed older ones, Ladakh had been the crossroads of a High-Asian freetrade zone linking Kashmir and the Hindukush (in the west) to Tibet (in the east) and Sinkiang to India.

18:42 (felt-pen!)

Since the partition of Southasia into India and Pakistan in 1947, a 500 mile line of control has blocked all western trading routes.

18:54

China annexing Tibet and Sinkiang in 1949 closed all routes leading north and east, leaving Ladakh in a cul-de-sac economically and wedged between forces (loosely) co-operating in a menacing embrace of Northern India. China (secretly) occupied parts of Ladakh in the 1950ies and advanced towards the capital in 1962.

19:19                   out 20:11

300 years earlier, the King of Ladakh had to ask India for help against a Tibetan army, which was routed by a Kashmiri general and his troops. In return, Kashmir got its monopoly on pashmina - (the) wool growing in Ladakh - but known and marketed as cashmere since then.

In 1962, India's military aid had a different price: the armed forces became the decisive factor in Ladakh and Ladakh turned into a theatre in the war about Kashmir.

Ladakhi women are only just learning how to process their best wool themselves and typically, many of them are Muslims rather than Buddhists.

20:24

Ladakh had been Buddhist for 600 years, when Islam appeared on the scene. With the arable land in Buddhist hands, the Muslims had to settle in economic niches. The Mosque overlooking the main bazaar of Ladakh's capital illustrates the part Muslims have played here for the past four centuries, ...

apx. 20:47

... that of a prominent minority - among it, for religious reasons, all butchers, and - more influential as well as controversial, merchant families from Kashmir who once ran the caravan trade and now run the tourist and handicraft industries - while Ladakhi villagers sell vegetables on the sidewalk.

21:15

Rural Buddhist Ladakh is still (busy) falling in step with a money-economy and cannot compete with Muslim business expertise.

21:30

Should the profits from tourism, Ladakh's most valuable product of the present, indeed go to Kashmir, tourism would just repeat the pattern of cashmere-wool, Ladakh's only prime product in the past. -- Here, cashmere is being machine-carded.

21:51

The mutual dependance this wool created between Muslim Kashmir and Buddhist Ladakh also brought them into the same state of modern India, (called) Jammu and Kashmir. Its largest part, Ladakh, is left out in the name - and in other matters. (doesn't seem to count)

22:17 or earlier

23:07-23:15 nach Möglichkeit freilassen

In 1834 the Maharaja of Jammu, a petty state in Northern India, invaded Ladakh, simply bypassing Kashmir and its monopoly. His brilliant move was eventually stopped by a Tibetan army but - what irony - vindicated by the British East India Company, who let that ruler have more than he had bargained for, when - in 1846 - they sold him all of Kashmir for some hard currency and an annual tribute of - surprise, surprise - soft cashmere shawls.

There was Jammu and Kashmir, of which - then and now - Ladakh would rather be no part- mainly because too much gets lost on the long way from Delhi via Jammu and Kashmir.

23:15

While they disagree and compete, Ladakh and Kashmir share the feeling that they would be better off, if someone else governed them. Whereas the Ladakhis agree that they want to be directly ruled by Delhi - the Kashmiris most of all differ - and most widely.

### **Kashmir, 24:50 ff**

25:13 - 25:52 : I'm still working on a short summary of the first part to be included here.

25:39

After the high-altitude deserts of Ladakh, Kashmir's rice paddies appear so frivolously green that it's difficult to believe the grass could be greener on the other side of any fence.

26:48

The Kashmir Valley is fertile and cultivated in any sense of both words. Vegetables are grown in gardens literally floating in Dal Lake. Around it Mughal emperors built their famous gardens, which attracted British civil servants, honey-mooners from India and tourists from all over the globe. Nowadays, the Kashmiris are (mostly) amongst themselves.

Note for the narrator and the sound-technician: the following section of the commentary is intricately linked to the images shown. Please try your best in aligning the two levels. To give an example: The words "when Pakistani tribesmen and later soldiers invaded his state in October 1947" should be synchronized with the men walking into the picture. Thanks for your efforts.

27:37

In 1930, when Muhammad Sultan was born, India was the jewel in the crown of the British Empire - and Kashmir, the pearl in that crown, (was) a fringe state in a delicate position, coveted by both India and Pakistan, states about to be partitioned - when Muhammad Sultan took up embroidery - more than fifty years ago.

28:07

Hari Singh, the Hindu ruler of a Muslim Kashmir, had wanted to stay independent but opted for India when Pakistani tribesmen and later soldiers invaded his state in October 47.

28:22

Like that Ladakhi king three hundred years before him, Hari Singh signed over sovereignty to a distant power in return for military aid and - it being a different time - the promise of a referendum on the accession to India.

However, two armies were soon enough fighting the first of three wars in fifty years.

29:00

As if men spinning had become demons again, eating their own children, all parties in the Kashmir conflict have kept losing for the past fifty years - while Muhammad Sultan has been embroidering shawl after shawl - a full one taking him three years - Pakistan lost at least three wars.

29:26 out 29:38

The Indian Government lost the confidence of a greater part of the Kashmiri people, who despise the Indian Army as an occupation force responsible for the violence in the valley.

29:40

The Kashmiris lost most of their hope and nearly all of the tourists and hence also the economic basis for the independence India might not grant (them) even in better times.

29:56 (or after feet)

As the warp of a pashmina shawl has 2800 threads, laying one takes a thousand short walks across the yard and back.

31:01

With most of the foreign tourists replaced by more Indian soldiers - or jobless mercenaries from Afghan battlegrounds on the Pakistani side - Kashmir has to find its way between (pause) - not so much India and Pakistan - there is no chance of a choice there - but between noble dreams of independence and the dangerous promises of Muslim fundamentalism - both causes produce martyrs rather than stability and wealth.

apx 31:26 It's only in books and films that one simply turns a page to reach still waters.

32:16 /shrinagar's/ /shaç 'ham'dan/ almost like German Schach

With its storeyed, pagoda-like roof, Srinagar's wooden Shah Hamadan mosque is a fine example of the amalgamation of cultures in Kashmir: built on the foundation of a Hindu temple 700 years ago, its design is more Buddhist than Muslim.

32:38

Once the valley had been Buddhist, then turned Hindu again before a gentle form of Islam took over in the 14th century, Sufi mysticism conquering the Indian mind more deeply than the military Afghan type had been able to in the 11th century.

33:03 apx

Women are not banned from all mosques in Kashmir. But women wearing no veil in public have been attacked, beauty parlours have been destroyed and cinemas closed. The Afghan type of Islam (in its tough present day form) seems to return to parts of Kashmir - whereas an estimated quarter million of Kashmiri Hindus have left the valley in the past decade.

33:49

Politics in the area seem a fairly hopeless muddle and the very opposite of a lotus - a symbol of enlightenment in Buddhism; however mired in the mud the roots are, the blossom only opens clear of the surface and in the light.

34:16 or earlier out 34:27

Despite a number of UN resolutions on this issue Delhi has never allowed the Kashmiri to vote on their future, fearing that other regions might follow suit.

34:30

Fundamentalism is made when people are denied democracy. So separatist or Muslim positions win hands down, while the warnings that Pakistans recent history spells are unheeded - but isn't the grass always greener on the other side of the fence?

### **Dipling, 3505 ff**

35:36

In the meantime the Rupshu nomads have moved to Dipling. Their daily routine remains the same - despite great uncertainty. No-one knows how many persons and animals have contracted brucellosis, a disease causing abortions with pregnant animals and, if untreated, infertility with males (both human and animal).

36:02

The nomads believe they imported the illness through livestock bought from lower altitudes to replace the 50% loss they had suffered due to heavy snowfall in October 98; 40 out of the 150 nomads currently living in Dipling are being treated by a travelling medical worker.

36:41

Apart from basic medical help the government also sends a teacher to provide elementary schooling for nomad children, who try to learn about bicycles and the world by repeating in chorus whatever is spelt out

for them. The method - called "chanting" - is used allover India. The nomads listed poor schooling and medical assistance as the main reasons for giving up their life-style.

37:12

A well drilled in August 2000 saves the nomads having to walk an hour to fetch drinking water from the slopes of the Taglang Pass just visible in the background.

37:39

Butter churned into salted tea makes the traditional drink of the entire Tibetan Plateau. (The pipe directing the smoke outside the tent is a relative novelty and a distinct improvement healthwise.)

38:01

The nomads' diet consists of meat and milk products, subsidized rice and a variety of dishes made from roasted barley ground almost daily.

38:41

Butter is made from a fat yoghurt rolled to and fro in an inflated sheepskin; the remaining buttermilk is processed into cheese slowly drying in the open.

39:00 out 39:23

Brucellosis is transmitted from animal to man through fetal fluid, raw meat and raw milk. Cooking fuel, however, has to be painfully collected first. Sheep and goat feces are carefully winnowed - like grain, and whatever shrub survives at these altitudes will end up in a cooking fire.

### **Kashmir, 39:40 ff**

39:55 or earlier out 40:34 because of the music

Kashmir in fall competes with Iran and Spain for the best saffron - its short bloom and labour-intensive harvest make it the most expensive spice on the market, historically outweighing gold for value. The crocus-bulb produces two to nine flowers with three garnet-coloured stigma-branches each. The stigmas of a hundred flowers - carefully dried - make a gram of saffron. For a pound of it, a person will have to bend ten-thousand times. So saffron lends itself to adulteration - just like cashmere wool - or, one tends to think, all of Kashmir.

40:58

Labour is cheap. So are industrial dyes.

42:33

Cricket - that very British game about fairness - is played nowhere as fervently as in Southasia. Kashmir is reported to cheer whenever Pakistan scores against India. Kashmir also makes excellent bats because labour is cheap and the wood just perfect: sturdy enough to deal or take a blow - and resilient enough to spring back to its original form - however, is it "cricket" if the big shots in politics expect a whole people to really be like their staple tree and recover quickly from whatever blow?

apx 43:15 out 43:31

Kashmir keeps arousing suspicion in the Muslim world because of its hindufied Islam - and suspicion in India, because it is Muslim after all and hasn't Islam caused the partition of India??

43:41

The art of making carpets - movable floors - most probably originated with (Central Asian) nomads. Kashmir's more refined techniques were imported from the Mughal courts in Samarkand in the early 15th century. 150 years later Kashmir came under the Mughal Empire, and the famous Nishat and Shalimar gardens were laid out on the banks of Dal Lake -

(44:07)

just opposite 'Haz'rat'bal Mosque, house to a hair of the prophet Muhammad.

Kashmir's modern mogul, Sheikh Abdullah, is buried nearby - or, rather, lying in state perpetually - with only minor interruptions, he and his family have been running Kashmir for the past fifty years.

apx. 44:30

out 45:05

His son , the ruling Chief Minister, sums up Kashmir's prospects: "When Kashmir faces a choice between a democratic, secular India and an Islamic, military Pakistan, it will always choose India. It is only when it faces a choice between a repressive, communal India and an Islamic Pakistan that Islam may become a factor."

45:52 apx

alas he died in piece = red shawl falling

Muhammad Sultan's life should have figured as prominently here as his work - alas, he died - in peace - before his story could be resumed.

46:10 out 46:39

Others will continue his craft - still others (will continue) the war about Kashmir. The decisions are taken elsewhere.

Even cashmere - the wool - isn't Kashmir's business any longer.

China produces 70 times more (of it): 10,000 (metric) tons or two thirds of the world production - Mongolia another 20 per cent.

49:31 Ende Teil 2, Laenge: 24:41

Finis