

A Shared Spiritual Lore

The Himalayas as a Bridge



Mount Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva

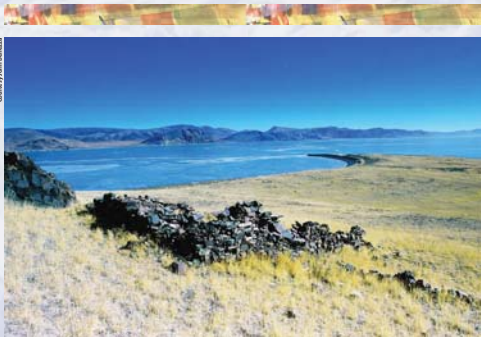


The Himalayas as seen by the Russian painter Roerich

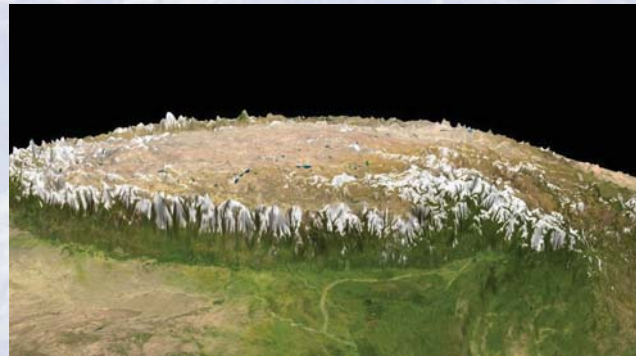
For millennia, the Himalayas have been a bridge between the Indic and Tibetan civilizations with the great physical barrier witnessing constant contacts between two cultures which shared an aspiration for infinity. The Himalayas have undoubtedly dominated Indian spiritual life. Some of the earliest Sanskrit texts state that the country south of the Himalayas and north of the ocean is called 'Bharat'. Besides, it is believed that the blue-throated Shiva still lives on Mount Kailash ('Kang Rinpoche' for the Tibetans). Shiva's consort Parvati is the daughter of the Himalayas while Ganga is her elder sister.



The Panchchuli, the Pandavas' five stoves where they cooked their last meal on their way to Heaven



Many pre-Buddhist structures are similar in Western Tibet and Ladakh



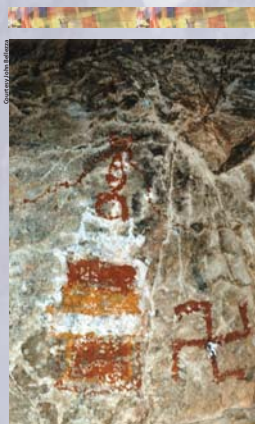
The mighty Himalayas: a barrier and a bridge



Contacts between the Tibetan plateau and the subcontinent probably existed in an ancient past. However there are no findings to prove it. Archeological study of the Tibetan plateau is a relatively new discipline. The first archeological surveys at the beginning of the 20th century, were rather superficial. Since two or three decades, the scenario has changed and more scientific interdisciplinary studies are being conducted.



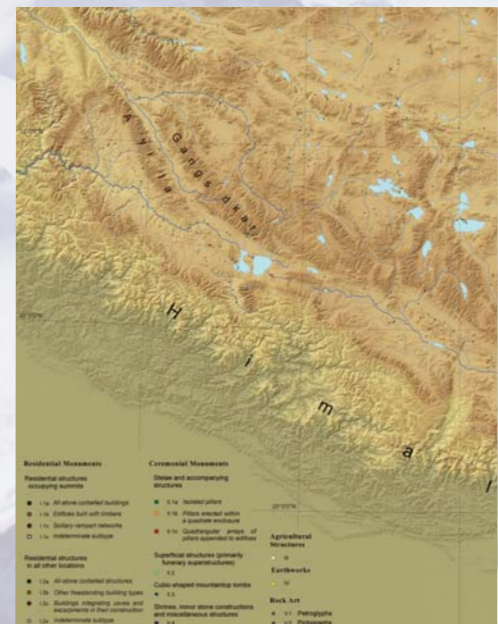
Wild ungulate thokchas (copper alloy talismans)



Rock art in Western Tibet



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Map of archaeological findings