

# JESUS IN KASHMIR

Description of a trip to Kashmir  
and Ladakh in June/July 2015

By B.K. Hans Oberressl

## INTRODUCTION

The **CONTEXT**: To prepare the stage of revelation, we will need the co-operation of other religions, especially Christianity. The prerequisite for this is the resolution of long and intense karmic accounts, for example from Abraham to the crucifixion of Jesus to the Holocaust. It goes without saying that only those souls who are involved in these karmic strands will have to deal with this. Hence my interest in this topic.

In June/July 2015, a ride to Kashmir came as a complete surprise. A lady from Berlin who has known the area for eighteen years and has extensive knowledge about Jesus in Kashmir took me with her.

My aim was to visit and feel my way around some of the places where Jesus is said to have been according to various authors. Visiting his presumed burial place in Srinagar was an obvious choice. I also wanted to meet Professor Hasnain, who is regarded as one of the most important scholars in India. He is the most profound living expert on the subject, on which he has published several texts and recently wrote a book entitled "Jesus in Kashmir". I hope to be able to obtain the most important missing information from it.

**The most lasting impressions** that I took with me, **apart from the Jesus theme**, are outlined above:

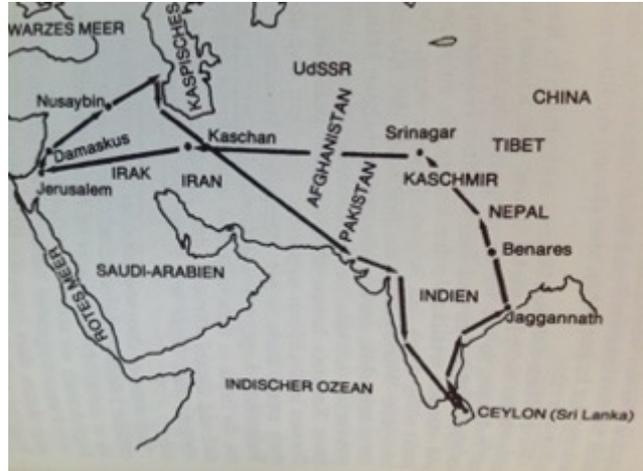
- Kashmir is an **ethnic-religious melting pot** in which various peoples have joined the original population, the Nagas, over the millennia, above all the Jews, but also the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians etc., as Kashmir and Ladakh were located on the **Silk Road**. The Jews in particular settled there around 2500 years ago, as will be documented later.
- I had the **opportunity to feel my way into all religious currents** and to cultivate intensive contact at times, especially with members of Islam, whose ancestors are largely of Jewish descent. I had very intensive contact with Buddhism in Ladakh, even if only for a few days. But I also had contact with Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and the Chankarsharia Temple (Solomon's Temple).
- I was able to **enjoy the scenic beauty of both parts of the country**, i.e. Kashmir and Ladakh, and imagine what it might have looked like two thousand years ago. The locals made me believe that in Jesus' time, the Dal Lake in the Kashmir Valley was much larger, so Jesus had a different view of the lake than I do today. Incidentally, it was mainly in the side valleys that I felt "at home" in "my" Alpine valleys with similar vegetation and similar, albeit higher, mountain formations.

## JESUS' FIRST JOURNEY TO KASHMIR / INDIA

Where was Jesus from about the age of 13 to 31? The Gospels are silent about this. I came across various versions, one of which I would like to mention here: About 2000 years ago, the abbot of the Buddhist monastery of Taxila in Kashmir had received a vision of the birth of Jesus. He sent three monks to Mother Mary, telling her that she had given birth to a special child and that she should send the child to Taxila with a caravan for training at the age of about twelve. The three monks found their way into Christian mythology as "The Three Wise Men from the East".

So Jesus travelled to Taxila around the age of 12/13, was educated and later travelled through various parts of India, had contact with Brahmin priests and studied Buddhism in particular in the northern parts of India, where it was already widespread. At that time,

Kashmir was visited by saints and sages for spiritual practices. Otherwise, the country was only sparsely populated by indigenous people, the Nagas, the shepherd people in the mountains. Around 2500 years ago, mainly Jews arrived. According to Prof Hassnain, King Solomon also established trading centres there. The Temple of Solomon bears witness to this. Of course, Islam did not yet exist in Jesus' time.



It is said that Jesus was particularly popular with the common people because he spoke in understandable images and loved and supported the common people. As he matured, he became increasingly well-known. Today, perhaps only a few high-ranking lamas still know about him, who in turn venerated and venerate him as a high lama, some even as a reincarnation of Buddha. Ordinary monks have no knowledge of this because they have no access to the relevant scriptures.

- A little amusing side story about the "Three Wise Men from the Orient": Partout on Epiphany 2013 (a Christian holiday in Germany), I received a call from a profound Indian expert on Jesus, from whom the story of the Three Wise Men from the Orient originated, asking me to come to Calcutta as soon as possible. From there, a very good expert on Jesus from Germany would travel with me to Kashmir if I paid her for the ticket. Of course, I didn't go along with this dubious adventure, not realising that now - two years later - I would actually be travelling to Kashmir with this lady.
- **Explanation of one and the same "instrument" of all three "ABC religions" (Abraham, Buddha, Christ):** Two different personalities are involved in the founding of all religions. One is the owner of the body, and the other soul enters the adult body of the other person at the beginning of the teaching (Prof. Hassnain cites a similar thesis on p. 71). The Christ soul fresh from the world of souls thus enters the body of Jesus (at the baptism in the Jordan) as the main creator. Now two souls are in the head and control the teaching from there. Accordingly, the Buddha soul enters the Prince Gautama/Siddharta body fresh from the soul world (when he sat under the tree and finally let go of his striving), and it is the same with Moses (owner of the body) and the Abraham soul fresh from the soul world. One and the same soul thus plays the instrumental role in the founding of the three "ABC religions" - albeit at different times in different bodies called Moses, Prince Siddharta/Gautama and Jesus.

- The proximity of Jesus to Buddhism has already been outlined. And the proximity to Judaism/Islam also results from the same instrumental soul of Moses-Jesus. Jesus was Jewish and later followed Moses to Kashmir. It is not without reason that the sacred staff kept in the Aish-Muquam monastery is attributed to both Moses and Jesus and is therefore sometimes called "Moses' staff" and sometimes "Jesus' staff".

It is said that Jesus was particularly popular with the common people because he spoke in understandable images and loved and supported the common people. As he matured, he became increasingly well-known. Today, perhaps only a few high-ranking lamas still know about him, who in turn venerated and venerate him as a high lama, some even as a reincarnation of Buddha. Ordinary monks have no knowledge of this because they have no access to the relevant scriptures.

Which writings are we talking about? At the end of the 19th century, a Russian aristocrat and travel journalist repeatedly came across evidence that Jesus had been to Kashmir and India and that there were records of this. The Russian investigated the matter and heard that large monasteries had copies of the originals, which were later kept in Lhasa. In Hemis, the largest monastery in Ladakh, he finally found copies of Jesus' stays and teachings in Kashmir. They were translated for Notovith and, after much hesitation, he published them. Notovith's and all other publications on the subject of Jesus in Kashmir were ignored by the official Christian church for understandable reasons.

It is remarkable that some of these writings were written much closer to the time of the Gospels and can therefore make a certain claim to authenticity. I was very surprised at how close Jesus was to Buddhism as a high Buddhist teacher and therefore how close the original Buddhist and Christian teachings must have been. Based on special experiences and inspirations, I therefore tend to believe that Buddhism and Christianity are connected by one and the same instrumental soul (see the paragraph after next).

Towards the end of his first stay in the Far East, Jesus also increasingly criticised religious abuses. He criticised the Hindu Braman priests who enslaved the Shudras, he criticised the false teachings of Buddhist religious leaders and, on his way back, he criticised the misconceptions of Persian Zarathus teachers, who were also concerned with the oppression of dependent people. For Jesus, there was no top or bottom; for him and before God, all souls were equal. Of course, they could not bear the mirror he held up to officials, so they wanted to get rid of him or even kill him, whereas the common people loved him.

## **JESUS SURVIVED THE CRUCIFIXION**

The same pattern was followed after his return to Palestine. He remained true to his quest for truth and criticised the degenerate state of Jewish power structures there too. Take, for example, his expulsion of the money changers from the temple. In the end, he pursued his criticism to the bitter end, until he went over the edge. Initially, he was able to endure his ordeal because he was strengthened by the additional power of the soul of Christ. However, the Christ soul left his body before the crucifixion because Christ had nothing to do with the karmic accounts of the Jesus soul. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" therefore referred to the departure of the Christ soul.

In my experience, the high priest Caiaphas, a reincarnation of Abraham, was the driving force behind the crucifixion. According to the above assumptions, the soul of Jesus was

identical with the soul of Moses. And the Moses soul in turn had karmic accounts with the Abraham or later Kaiphas soul, which were at least partially equalised by the crucifixion. Jesus' karmic accounts presumably also arose through other prominent roles; he could possibly have played the role of Alexander the Great, which on the one hand would explain his endeavours towards his original homeland of India, but also the intense karmic accounts.

It is pointless to discuss who was the driving force behind the crucifixion. Personally, I tend to favour the aforementioned thesis, whereby Pontius Pilate had to give in to the wishes of the Jews because otherwise he would have been denounced by the Jews to the emperor (Jesus, as "King of the Jews", had questioned or even wanted to undermine the authority of the Romans). Pontius Pilate went along with the bitter "game", but agreed with the Roman citizen and physician Nicodemus, who was also a follower of Jesus, that the death on the cross should be avoided. The elimination of Jesus was therefore a matter of "pretending".

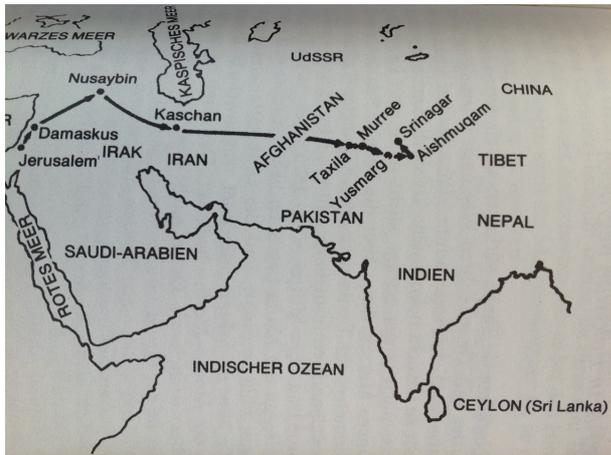
Jesus was indeed crucified, I have no doubt about that. But the following reasons speak in favour of him not dying on the cross: the crucifixion took place on Friday afternoon. As the deceased were not allowed to be buried on the Sabbath, which begins at sundown on Friday, Jesus only hung on the cross for a short time. And while the legs of the condemned hanging next to him were broken, Jesus' legs remained whole. The breaking of the legs and the resulting lack of foot support usually led to a much quicker death due to the sagging of the body. Furthermore, the discharge of blood and water after the spear thrust would simply be impossible after death. Jesus was therefore still alive at this point because blood and water came out of the wound. However, he was no longer suffering because the soul had left the gross body with the subtle body. Similar to the descriptions of near-death experiences, the soul hovered above the cross with the subtle body and was able to observe the events from above. As long as the subtle body remains connected to the gross body through the "silver cord", it is possible to return to the gross body. Below stood the two brave women Mother Mary and Mary Magdalene. All the others had left for fear of being arrested as followers of Jesus. With the Romans' permission, male help was brought in to remove the body. After the initial treatment on a flat stone, Jesus was cared for by Nicodemus' family in a fresh, well-ventilated tomb and then hid as far as possible for further healing until he finally left Palestine via Damascus for Kashmir.

Another interesting **side note**: At Damascus, Jesus met Paul, who had been converted and was now teaching. After Jesus revealed himself, he told Paul that he was alive and had not died on the cross. However, Paul did not want to take back the central idea of later Christianity that he had taught, namely the "**idea of redemption by death on the cross**", on the grounds that it was very attractive to people, as all the sins of mankind a` priori redeemed. And as reaffirmed much later at the Peace of Augsburg, it was ultimately only faith that counted and not deeds. It goes without saying: If the Christian churches were to recognise Jesus' survival on the cross would render their central "death on the cross - redemption basis" and thus the church as we know it today obsolete. Following this assumption, the Christian church today would actually be a Pauline church, because it was founded by Paul. Nevertheless, the soul of Christ is and remains the main source of energy for Christians.

## **JESUS' SECOND JOURNEY TO KASHMIR**

Why would Jesus have gone back to Kashmir? Firstly, because he was no longer allowed to be seen in the Middle East after his condemnation to death. Secondly, because he knew

Kashmir very well from his first visit at the age of 12-30. Incidentally, the Kashmir basin with Lake Dal is similar to the area around the Sea of Galilee. He probably felt at home there, especially as the climate and the water-rich vegetation were more like a paradise than a Palestinian desert. Thirdly, the "Lost Tribes of Israel", i.e. part of his Jewish people, had lived in Kashmir and neighbouring areas since the Jewish exodus. According to Prof Hassnain, King Solomon is said to have been in Kashmir some time before Moses. Solomon certainly left lasting traces, otherwise there would not be a revered temple to Solomon on a hill in Shrinagar. Jesus was of course aware of all this. There are therefore many indications in favour of Jesus' presence in Kashmir, including the Jewish settlement of Afghanistan and Kashmir. This will be explained further below.



According to Prof Hassnain, King Solomon is said to have been in Kashmir some time before Moses. Solomon certainly left lasting traces, otherwise there would not be a revered temple to Solomon on a hill in Shrinagar. Jesus was of course aware of all this. There are therefore many indications in favour of Jesus' presence in Kashmir, including the Jewish settlement of Afghanistan and Kashmir. This will be explained further below.

My companion Karin K. thinks she knows the route he took. Perhaps he had to avoid the usual caravan routes so as not to be recognised and caught by Romans. However, the fact that he arrived in Kashmir and lived there is documented in ancient Persian, Tibetan, Muslim and Kashmiri writings. He is said to have met the king of Kashmir. The king asked him who he was. Jesus identified himself as the Crucified One and later befriended the king. At the king's repeated urging, Jesus even married and fathered children, whose long line of descendants is said to still exist today. Jesus finally died and was entombed in Shrinagar at an advanced age. The apostle Thomas, who according to Wikipedia was also in Taxila and who later proselytised in India, is said to have accompanied Jesus as he died and finally buried him.



## THE TOMB "ROZABAL" - JESUS' TOMB IN SHRINAGAR

Jesus' tomb is located in the centre of the old town. It is called "Rozabal", is venerated to this day and was used until several years ago by his followers called SALEEM. Today, the grave is closed to tourists because, according to the neighbours, it has been abused.



*You can see inside the closed building from the outside. In the centre is a shrine that houses the tomb of a Muslim saint. Underneath (in the Cellar) is the much older tomb of Jesus.*



43 Die stilisierten Fußabdrücke innerhalb des Grabgebäudes von Kerzen erleuchtet.



41 Bei diesem Gipsabdruck von den »Fußabdrücken« erkennt man in den halbmondförmigen Wülsten unterhalb der Zehen deutlich die Narben, die durch die Kreuzigung zurückgeblieben sind.

*These pictures show stylised footprints made of plaster. They are from Holger Kersten's book, who was allowed to examine the grave.*

Professor Hassnain is convinced of the authenticity of Jesus' tomb. He examined it himself decades ago with other experts and discovered that, unlike the tombs of Muslim saints one storey above, it is orientated from east to west according to Jewish custom. In addition, a cross and a stone slab were found and uncovered. On the stone slab are two stylised footprints with the wounds of the crucifixion. The footprints were probably made by the undertaker (presumably Thomas), who of course knew whose body he had buried and therefore wanted to leave this very clear indication.

Very devout Muslims in the neighbourhood of the tomb do not like visitors to Jesus' tomb because they would disturb the peace of their saints, whose graves can be seen through windows from the outside. Jesus' tomb is not visible from the outside through the windows because it lies in a crypt below.

## PLACE NAMES IN KASHMIR - EVIDENCE OF JESUS' PRESENCE

In my first academic thesis, I focussed on the field and place names of a European region. I therefore know that field and place names remain stable over thousands of years, even if different peoples settled there. The pronunciation may have changed with the change of peoples, but the meaning of the names remained the same. Faber-Kaiser (148 f.) lists a longer series of place names that refer to Jesus, including: Issa-Brari, Issa-Kush, Issa-Ta, Yusu-dha, Kal-Issa. Arya-Issa, Yusu, Yusu-para, Yus-marg, Aish-Muquam etc. The most common Jesus Issa, Aish, Yus or Yusuf.



*The monastery and the village of Aish-Muquam. That is, the place where Jesus was. Photographed once from below and once from above.*

I myself visited the Aish-Muquam monastery and Yusmarg, the "Jesus Meadow". Aishmuquam is now a Muslim monastery with a town of the same name about 70 kilometres south-east of Srinagar. The monastery is beautifully situated on a hillside and has a sacred grotto in the rock, which is still visited by pilgrims today. The staff of Moses or Jesus is kept in this monastery. However, it is only brought out during catastrophes, e.g. droughts, so that it can help.



Jesus stopped at the Jesus Meadow when he was travelling through. It is also known as the gateway to Kashmir. It still has a peaceful aura today, as long as you arrive before the tourist crowds. It resembles a mountain pasture with herds of cattle, shepherds and scattered huts. Many horse owners

offer themselves somewhat intrusively to the tourists, most of whom are Hindu today. We preferred to cross the very long meadow on foot down to the river so that I could imagine what it might have looked like 2000 years ago.

## MOSES AND JEWS IN KASHMIR

As already mentioned, Jesus probably followed some of his Jewish people to Kashmir. He was obviously aware that the "Lost Tribes" had travelled there. This is hardly known here in the West. Was there a reason to conceal the Jewish colonisation of Afghanistan, Kashmir and neighbouring areas? Did Moses do something wrong that he did not have to or was not allowed to settle with the other tribes in Palestine? Since even Old Testament scribes do not seem to have any clarity on these questions (cf. Faber-Kaiser), I naturally do not trust myself to find answers to them.

In the Old Testament, God mentioned several places or field names that Moses was to settle with his people after the exodus from Egypt or after the Babylonian captivity. Old Testament scholars were unable to find any of these place, mountain and field names in the Middle



East. However, these places do exist in Kashmir: "Beth-peor" or "Bandipoor" means the place of opening, where the narrow Kashmir valley opens up into a wide basin with lakes (picture left). Or "Heshbon" or "Hashba" or the mountain "Nebo", from where the opening to the wide Kashmir basin can be clearly seen. Moses was supposed to go up Mount Nebo so that God could show him the promised,

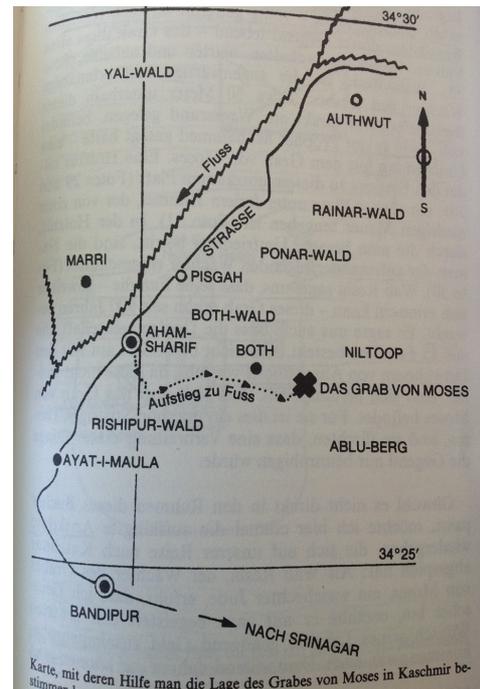
fertile land, where milk and honey flow, in a manageable way before his death. I was up there and could enjoy this view over the Kashmir basin with several lakes. Should paradise, on the other hand, be in the Palestinian desert? Israel was only cultivated in modern times. Kashmir, on the other hand, can be described as a water-rich, very fertile land or even a paradise.

## THE TOMB OF MOSES

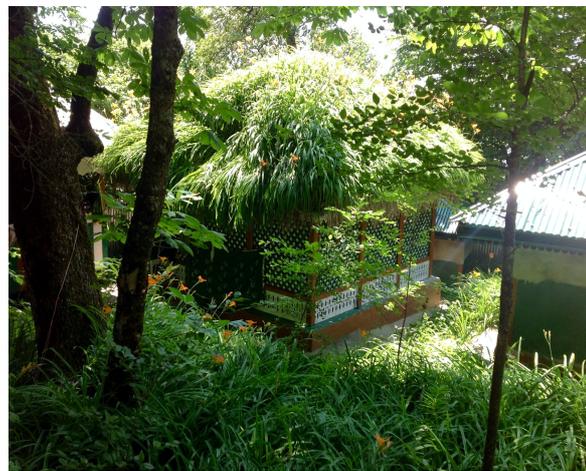
Moses was to see his promised land before he went to his final rest, i.e. to die on Mount Nebo. The marvellous view must have been a source of satisfaction to him. He died there and was buried about 60 kilometres north of Srinagar. As it says in the work "Hashmat-i-Kashmir": "Moses arrived in Kashmir and the people listened to him. Some held on to their faith in him, others did not. He died and was buried there. The people of Kashmir call his grave "The burial place of the Prophet of the Book" (Faber-Kaiser, p.199).

The biblical texts would not say anything precise about this: "So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. He was buried in the valley, in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor; but (alleged) no one knows his grave to this day." (Deuteronomy, quoted from Faber-Kaiser.

The small village with the tomb of Moses lies about halfway up Mount Nebu.



*Behind the last house, turn right down to the tomb of Moses. Muslim saints are buried in the building in the right-hand picture. Moses is buried under/between the trees.*



However, the tomb has long been worshipped by the locals. From this tomb you can see "Bethpeor" (Bandipur), and not far away are "Haz-bal" (Hesbon), "Moab" and "Pisgah". And nearby there are a number of places called "Muquam-i-Musa" (Musa = Arabic for Moses), which means "the place of Moses". So all the places mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with Moses were not found in the Middle East, but in Kashmir!

We, my driver and I, were able to drive up to the small mountain village where the tomb is located on a road that has only been in existence for two years. Before that, we had to walk uphill on a donkey track from Aham-Sharif for about two hours. Everywhere we stopped, we were immediately surrounded by locals. It was easy to make contact. At the top of the tomb village, we were also immediately surrounded. The imam, an exceptionally friendly older gentleman, soon arrived and willingly led us about 60 metres past a small mosque at the end

of the village to the tomb. The whole area looked well-kept. On top of it stood a building in which Muslim saints are buried and worshipped.

When asked where Moses was buried, he pointed to two trees. Between them lay the remains of the Prophet Moses. The imam readily answered all our questions and then invited us into his house for tea, even though it was Ramadan. He also gave us very friendly information about previous guests. One of the names I found in a notebook was Faber-Kaiser, one of the authors whose books I was reading. The imam recognised his father from one of the pictures in the Faber-Kaiser book; he was delighted. This trip was also very nice and above all characterised by beautiful landscapes and very friendly people. But even in this remote area, the military were on their guard. These encounters, like others before and after, contributed to a new, much more positive image of Islam in my mind, because I saw very kind, friendly faces without exception.



## NATURE AND CULTURE PICTURES FROM KASHMIR

Apart from the traffic chaos, Kashmir is very different from the rest of India. There is considerably less rubbish on the roads, everything is green and the vegetation is similar to European (alpine) vegetation, with the exception of many rice fields. Occasionally I felt like I was in the foothills of the Alps or in Alpine valleys, although the vegetation zones are much higher than here. At 2000 metres above sea level, for example, you can still see numerous walnut trees, where here the tree line has long since been crossed, not to mention other cultivated plants. Pictures speak louder than words.

*Gulmarg - a leisure and skiing area about an hour's drive west of Shrinagar with alpine meadows, shepherds (Nagas) and a Kashmiri horse-drawn cart.*



*The three pictures below show the remains of prehistoric megalithic buildings (left) and Mughal gardens near Shrinagar.*

*Partial views of mosques in Shrinagar*



*Left: Srinagar (Sri=saint, Nagar=place) from above, photographed from the Temple of Solomon (also called Shankarshariatempel genannt). Rechts: Houseboats at Dalsee lake.*



*Houseboats from the outside, from the inside. The picture on the right is very remarkable. It shows a **heart-shaped paddle**. This paddle shape can only be found worldwide on the Sea of Galilee. The (advertising) inscription "**Nazareth**", which I saw twice, is a further reference to the connection between Palestine (the Jews) and Kashmir.*

## CASHMERE MELTING POT

Kashmir can absolutely be described as a **melting pot of peoples and religions**. When it was pointed out to me that in addition to Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, Persians and above all Jews, other peoples whose roots are still recognisable today (!) had settled here, I naturally began to study the faces and clothes carefully. A few sample pictures are shown below. I would like to add that I always asked - as far as possible - if I could take a photo. When people looked a little surprised, I explained the following: "As you know, Kashmir is a melting pot of different peoples. I am looking for characterful examples of this." This led to some amusing encounters. In most cases, a large crowd of onlookers immediately gathered around us, and many a contact deepened into an incipient friendship with an exchange of addresses.

*The first three gentlemen reveal their Jewish ancestry. The large curved nose and wrinkled cheeks are typical characteristics. Nearly the half of the Kashmiri population bears these typical Jewish features, it is said.*



*The two women (top row on the right and bottom row on the left) are wearing typical Egyptian head-dresses. Two of the men at the bottom have more Greek facial features, while the man at the bottom right suggests a Roman appearance. Imagine him in a Roman uniform... It's amazing how details have been preserved over thousands of years!*



Of course, the question arises as to how the ethnic and religious "melting pot of Kashmir" came about. The answer lies in the Silk Road, an ancient trade route between the Orient and the Occident. Romans, Greeks, Egyptians and Jews established bases. Some of them founded small kingdoms, such as King Solomon, the Romans, the Greeks and others. Alexander the Great advanced as far as India with his army. He could not hold out in the broad plain, but he did settle temporarily in Kashmir. When he left again, some of his former comrades-in-arms founded small kingdoms in Kashmir. The mountainous landscape of Greece certainly shows similarities with the Himalayan foothills of Kashmir. I believe that such affinities often determined whether one stayed in a favoured region. I myself was most convinced by the "face reading" of the fusion of many peoples in Kashmir. There were hardly any doubts left.

## **BUDDHISM IN LADAKH (SMALL TIBET)**

A trip to this part of the country should not have been missed, because it both the landscape as well as the people are very very different from Kashmir. Ladakh is the largest administrative district in India in terms of area, but it is the most sparsely populated. There is hardly any rainfall. Oases on the valley



floors (picture right) provide the basis for food, as there is plenty of meltwater from the mountains, which is collected in canals (picture top left).

We flew from Srinagar over the Himalayas to Leh, the capital of Ladakh. It was an impressive experience for me to look out over the snow-covered Himalayas. When we arrived in Leh, we were surprised by a light drizzle, but it didn't last long. At an altitude of 3500 to 4000 metres, we had to watch out for altitude sickness. But it only made itself felt in the first few hours in the form of a slight dizziness. Otherwise, everything went well: the accommodation in a hotel in the Tiksay monastery (pronounced "Tiksi"), the food and the transport.



It was a very nice experience for me to always get a lift straight away, whether in one direction to Leh or in an easterly direction to Hemis. There are small buses that give you a lift for a small fee. I was usually picked up as a hitchhiker. These people were obviously looking for contact, and in no time at all I had intensive exchanges with interesting people, whether as a hitchhiker with the chief of police of Ladakh, with lorry drivers or sometimes with Hindus driving taxis.

What I liked most was the completely different atmosphere, which I found very peaceful. I was drawn up to Tiksay Monastery several times a day, where I meditated and sometimes took part in a guided tour. I found the monks at Tiksay to be very open and interested. Sometimes there was even an intensive exchange of religious concepts, which was characterised by a tolerant attitude. The picture right shows one of the monks. He is the head administrator of the monastery.



The monastery itself stands on a steep hill. Various footpaths and a road lead up to it. The following pictures show a general view and Facade views at the beginning of the chapter.



**HEMIS is the largest monastery in Ladakh.** It is beautifully situated in a gorge about twenty kilometres west of Tiksay. I was interested in this monastery because **Notovitch found the copies of Jesus in India there** at the end of the 19th century. The monks have always visited Lhasa, the seat of the Dalai Lama in Tibet. They brought copies with them as a gift for their monastery. Among them were copies about Jesus.



**Notovitch, a Russian count and travel journalist, kept hearing** on his travels through Tibet and northern India **that Jesus had been here and that there were writings about it. He finally found what he was looking for in Hemis.** After some hesitation, he published them in Paris.

**It is remarkable that the Buddhist writings about Jesus were recorded much earlier than the Gospels.** Jesus was known in Kashmir and northern India when he was there from the age of 12 to 30. When people heard via caravans that he had been crucified, they remembered him and began writing down his words and deeds. According to the religious scholar Dr Stefan Nagel, Tibet and Ladakh were not yet Buddhist missionaries at this time, but northern India was. It is quite possible that such transcriptions were later taken from Lhasa. According to Prof Hassnain, Taxila (in Kashmir, now part of Pakistan) was a "world-renowned" educational centre ("University") at the time and was probably also populated by Buddhist monks. Jesus was probably given a warm welcome by them. Thomas was there in any case.

The writings of Hemis and other writings of Kashmiri, Indian, Persian and other origins also show that Jesus was recognised as a high Buddhist teacher, by some even as a reincarnation of Buddha (Hassnain). The simple monks are not aware of this because they have no access to these scrolls.

These connections made me realise how close the original teachings of the great religions were. From this point of view, it no longer seems so far-fetched that they were and are also personally connected by the soul that carried (or endured) all three instrumental roles, namely Moses for Abraham, Siddharta for Buddha and Jesus for Christ.



Thanks to the library in Hemis, the assumptions about Jesus' presence in Kashmir and India have almost become certain. Professor Hassnain, who was once snowed in in Ladakh and could not travel home, used the time for studies in Hemis. He is the only person alive who studied the writings and was able to verify Notovitch's Hemis studies and publications. On the left a picture of Hemis.

Now two shots from Leh, the capital of Ladakh.



## THE RETURN JOURNEY FROM LADAKH TO KASHMIR

The return journey offered fantastic landscapes. We flew to Ladakh and travelled back by taxi for around 17 hours. The "moonland" of Ladakh only really became clear here, combined with a wide variety of shapes and colours. The latter were previously unimaginable in a landscape of rock and scree. Shades of blue, green, yellow, ochre and many other colours came to light. Let the pictures speak for themselves:



## THE RELIGIONS

After Buddhism in Ladakh, I basically had contact with all religions, namely in the form of the Shankarchiatemple with all the mass Hindu pilgrims there, with Sikhs (mostly traders), with Jews who later converted to Muslims, but above all with Muslims. Our image of Muslims is characterised by violence in the mass media - whether we like it or not. In Kashmir, I was presented with a completely different picture. I looked into the faces of many very kind and friendly Muslims. Their proverbial hospitality was sometimes embarrassing. One, albeit blatant, example: After the long journey from Ladakh, we actually wanted to stay on a cheap houseboat for two nights. Surprisingly, it was occupied. Where to now? Before the Ladakh trip, we had stayed in private accommodation in the house of Raffi's cousin. So he drove to the house outside Srinagar, went in alone and came back after a while with the message that we could stay here again. It turned out that the entire family of about twelve was gathered in the weekend house. So we moved into our rooms as usual. The next morning, I realised that the whole clan had slept in the dining room without a table because of us. So they had given up a comfortable night's sleep because of us. Imagine that here with us!

Whether it was this family, the imam at the tomb of Moses, neighbours of the tomb of Jesus, traders or anyone else, I always encountered the same friendliness and very often deep cordiality. Because of the fasting month of Ramadan, we naturally also got to hear the Mina salvation chants, which sometimes started early in the morning and ended late in the evening. There were also numerous visits to mosques.

I encountered Judaism indirectly through Islam, although it would have been possible to meet Jews who are still practising today, although they are sometimes said to live in remote enclaves.

Christianity was, of course, noticeable in the traces of Jesus. British relics were also visible at Gulmarg, for example in the form of a golf course and a Christian church.

Finally, Buddhism should be mentioned, which, along with Islam, left the deepest impression on me. The peaceful atmosphere in the whole area, but above all the monks themselves, touched me deeply. Everything seemed to me to be in an atmosphere of harmony.

## EASY TO MAKE CONTACT - NICE ENCOUNTERS

The **hospitality** and openness was sometimes very touching. Although I was in a totally foreign culture, I mostly felt at home, not only in terms of the landscape but also the warmth of the people. I have already tried to describe the general atmosphere here and there. Now let me describe a few individual encounters by way of example:



**Professor Hassnain:** Of course we were registered. An attentive and lively-looking gentleman greeted us in a friendly manner. Karin has known him for a long time, so the greeting with her was particularly warm. We stayed for about two hours. He showed me his latest books, which were published around 2012/13, one about Ladakh and one about Jesus in Kashmir, which I was and still am particularly interested in. Because of the book, there was no need for an interview, as it probably contains everything he knows about the topic of Jesus. On this occasion, I also met an IT specialist who is digitising all of Hassnain's writings. Incidentally, this gentleman called Yassir travelled with us to Ladakh. The farewell from the professor was very warm.

On the very first day after travelling into the city, a television crew from Kashmir welcomed us at the houseboats. All three of us were interviewed about whether we were enjoying our holiday, whether the weather was good etc. As almost always, there was a crowd of people around us.



Our chauffeur took us to visit an uncle, a cabinetmaker. We watched him at work and I was particularly interested in his work. The things he carves out of walnut wood are unbeliev-



able. The carpenter himself seemed calm, not to say a little distant. But that was deceptive. I was there a second time with Raffi and he probably noticed my interest again. His son then tried to persuade me to buy a special desk, but my budget doesn't allow for

other expenses than a really special desk for around 5,000 euros. Raffi wanted to take me there a third time. I refused because I didn't want to give the gentlemen any hope of buying the desk. He waited for me on the street after a phone call. I didn't know why. Suddenly the uncle and his son, a doctor, came up to us and asked in surprise why I didn't want to come to their house. I said straight out that I didn't want to get my hopes up about buying a table. Oh no, that wasn't the point, they just wanted to be with me again and have tea. Well, I was a little embarrassed. Nevertheless, addresses were exchanged.



The encounter with Raffi Ratta is also worth a few sentences. We were all together, but I in particular was travelling a lot with him. Sometimes I felt sorry for the car, because the roads were more than a little bumpy at times. His constant friendliness was marvellous, but for a long time it seemed to me to be expedient. Especially in the last period, however, he really grew on me with his charm and his perpetually lilting song

"No women no cry" (he was married to a Norwegian woman). In the meantime, he has actually called here twice to ask how I am. You can see him on the right at the picture above. He spoke to people living near the tomb of Jesus to find out a few things at my request.



An unexpectedly nice encounter happened with a trader near the house-boats, whom I asked for a photo (he looked to be of Greek descent). On the basis of my explanation about the melting pot of Kashmir, he unexpectedly asked me if I knew about Jesus in Kashmir. I replied in the affirmative and said that was why I was here. Then came "test questions" with a mischievous look on my face, asking if I knew where Mother Mary was buried. In "Mauree" I said correctly. The dialogue was so heart-warming that I promised to come back in the next few days. I did, and we had a long, intense conversation and exchanged addresses.

The "Encounters" will conclude with a contrast between young and old.



## RESUMÉE

My journey in the footsteps of Jesus was packed and extremely eventful. The most important motive was to feel what the story of "Jesus in Kashmir" was all about. I was not interested in a scientific reappraisal. This would not be possible given the historical breadth and significance of the topic. Besides, others have already tried to do that with greater success. I read a few books and tried to follow in their footsteps by visiting places where Jesus is said to have been. I could intuitively visualise many things, e.g. the landscapes that seemed very "familiar" to me, probably because they are so similar to my physical home in Carinthia with

its lakes and mountains. In the side valleys, I felt like I was on the mountain pastures of my childhood.

I was also fascinated by the proximity to Judaism (Moses) and Islam. I had previously ignored Islam, although I had only recently experienced Istanbul with its culture and mosques. It was not so much the rituals as the human closeness to many Kashmiris that surprised me in a very positive way. As I said, I looked into many very kind faces. There were no communication problems with the inhabitants of Kashmir and Ladakh. Contacts were very spontaneous, open and cordial.

However, the Moses research also brought me into contact with Judaism, as many Kashmiris are obviously of Jewish descent. After all, the stem of all three religions, namely Judaism, Islam and Christianity, is the same and is also practised in the form of the Old Testament. This is one of the reasons why Muslims are open to personalities from Christianity. At the time, the British wanted to demolish the tomb of St Mary in Mauree (in the Pakistani part of Kashmir). Muslims stood in front of it and prevented this. The tomb of Jesus also "coexists peacefully" next to Muslim graves in the same place.

The presence of Judaism in Kashmir at that time seems to be a major reason why Jesus went there. As I indicated, I think it is possible that one and the same soul embodied Moses and Jesus (as well as Buddha). This probably caused the pull of both to go to Kashmir. I would also like to remind you of the staff of Moses and Jesus - another connecting element.

What touched me most about Buddhism was the peaceful atmosphere. I could have stayed there longer. The monks also had a peaceful aura. I was very much in favour of that; and my affirmation was well received. That's how such light and touching encounters happened. It was one of my most beautiful journeys.

Hans Oberressl, Ravensburg im Juli 2015, translated in February 2024

## **LITERATURE**

FABER-KAISER, Andreas: Jesus lebte und starb in Kaschmir, Holzminden 2009

HASSNAIN, Fida: Jesus in Kashmir, Srinagar 2012

KERSTEN, Holger, Jesus lebte in Indien. Sein geheimes Leben vor und nach der Kreuzigung, München 1993

NOTOVITH, Nikolas, Das unbekanntes Leben Jesu, Die Originaltexte der 1887 entdeckten Schriftrollen, Deutsche Erstausgabe, Verlag Helga Krachlerr, Wien 2006