

The Architectural Reflection of
Shared Cultural Heritage of Transhumance Routes in
Pithoragarh

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Kailash Sacred Landscape



Interface between humans (“culture”) and the non-human world (“nature”) at a range of scales and across a variety of terrains.

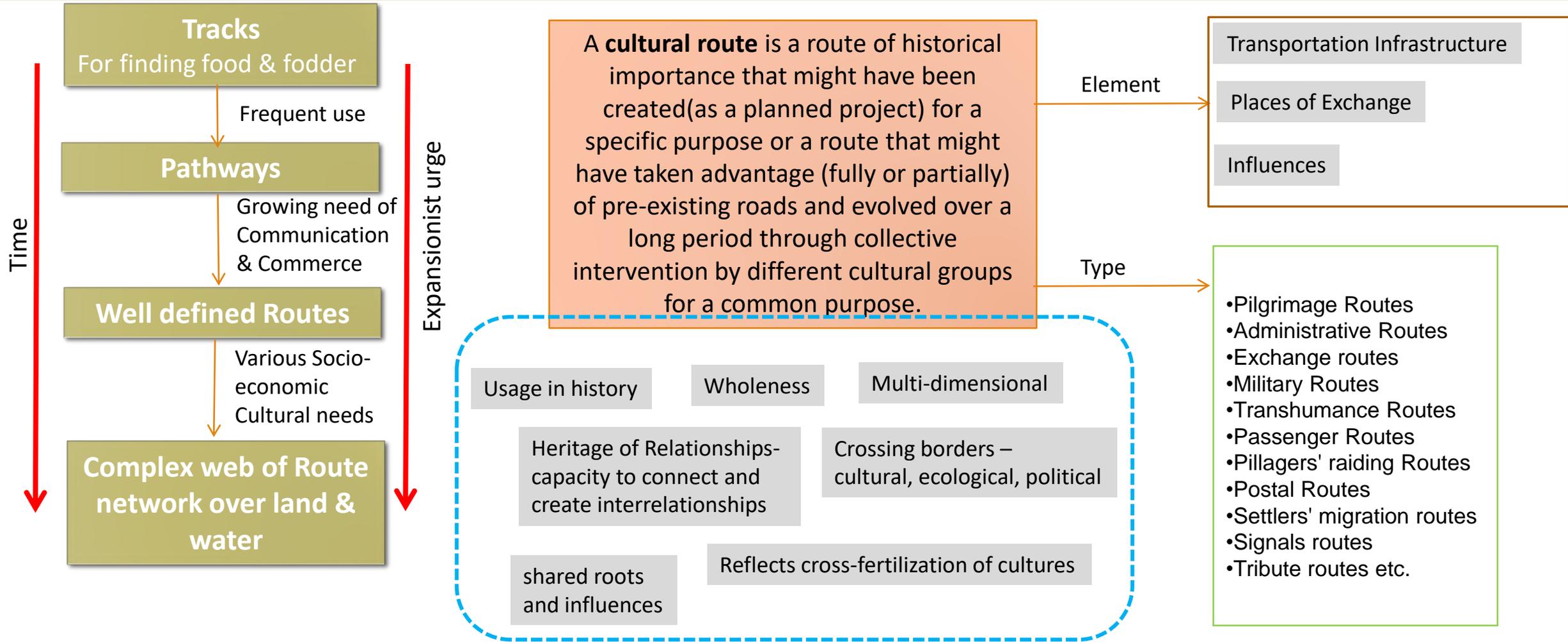
defined by

socially recognized markers and boundaries

inhabited and understood through layers of meaning produced by people’s engagements with their environments

Source : <https://www.grida.no>

The Concept of Cultural Routes



Cultural Routes as a Heritage Category

INTERNATIONAL



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



World Heritage
Convention

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

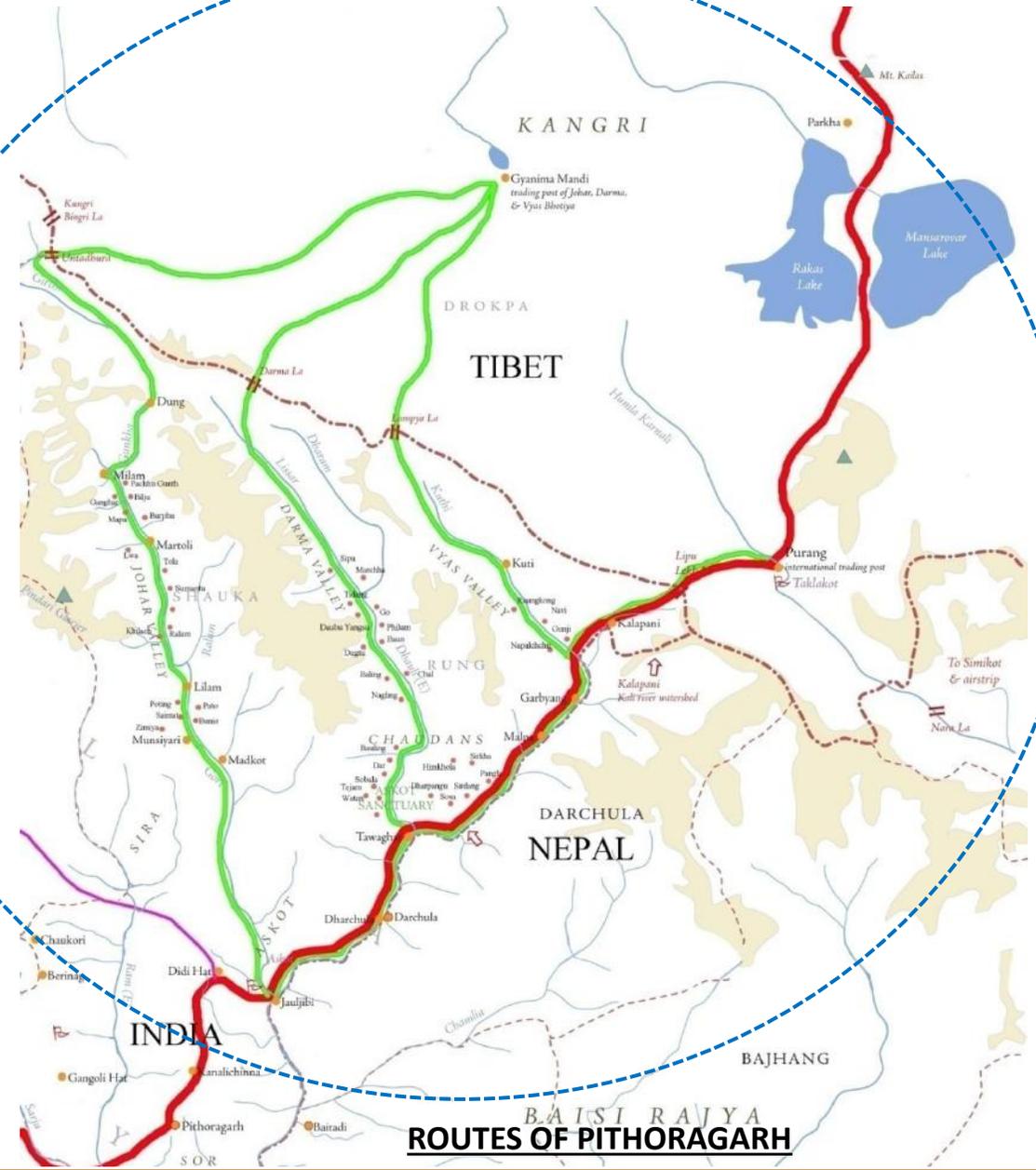
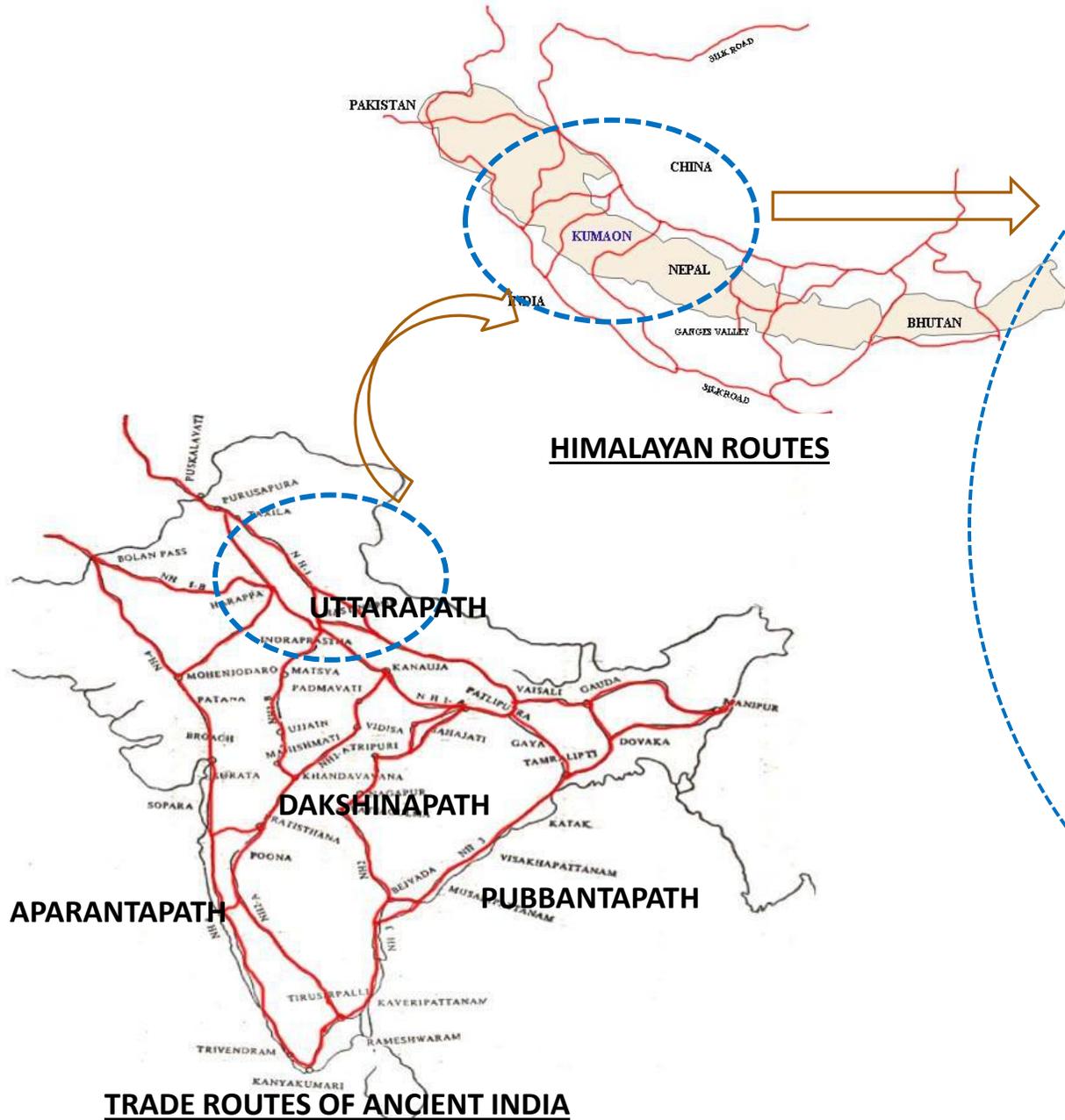


CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

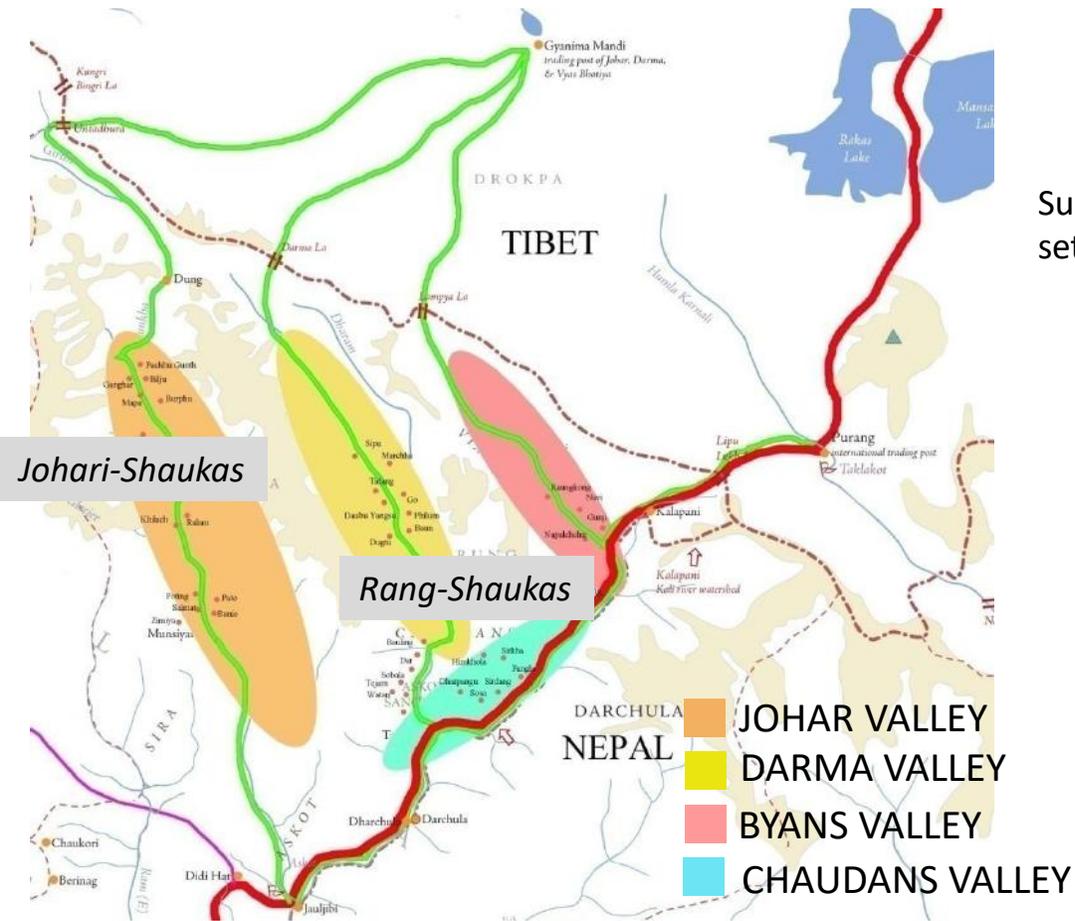


Leading International Organizations that played significant roles in the development of the concept

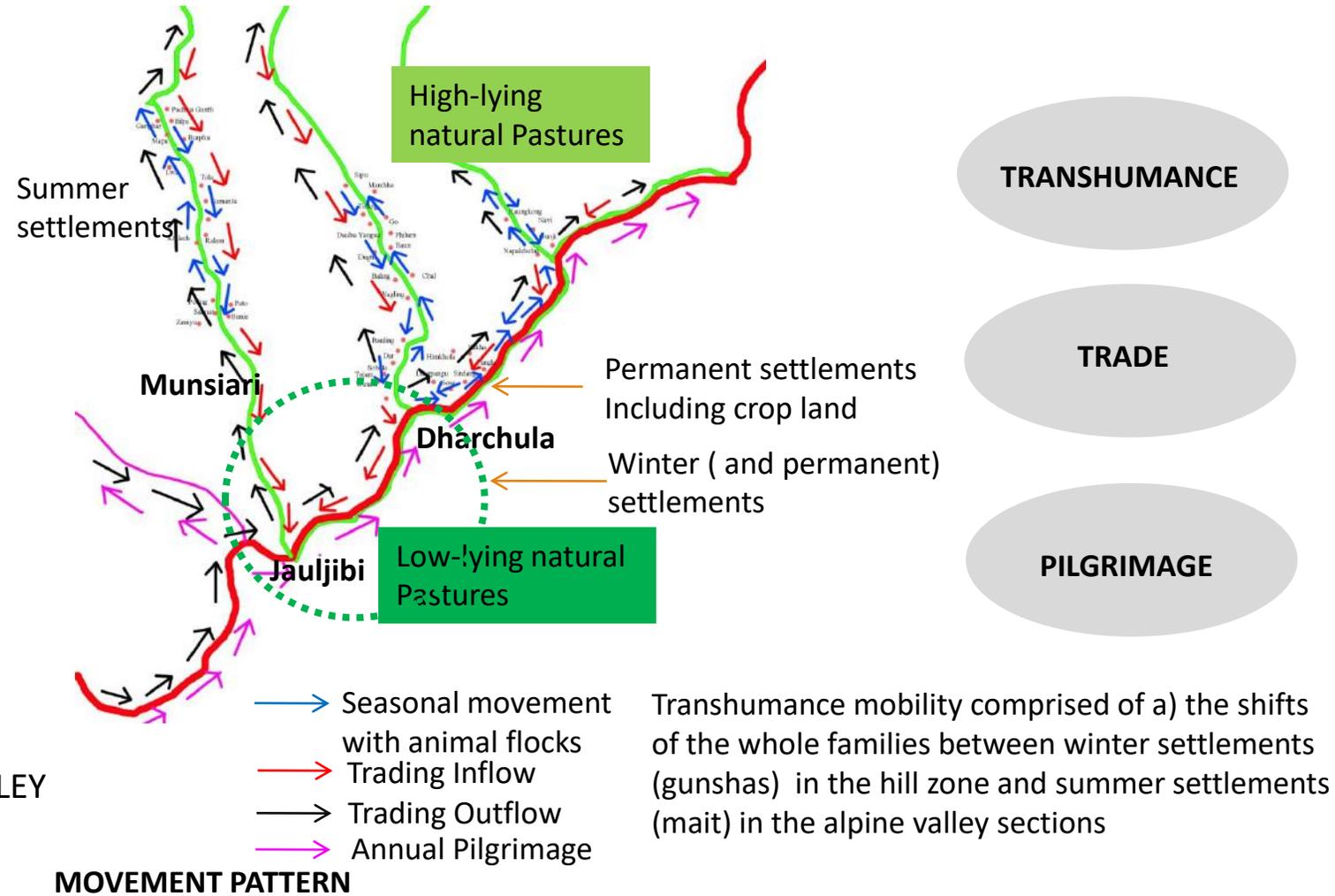
The **“Sites along the Uttarapath, Badshahi Sadak, Sadak-e-Azam, Grand Trunk Road”** is the only Indian route submitted to the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites



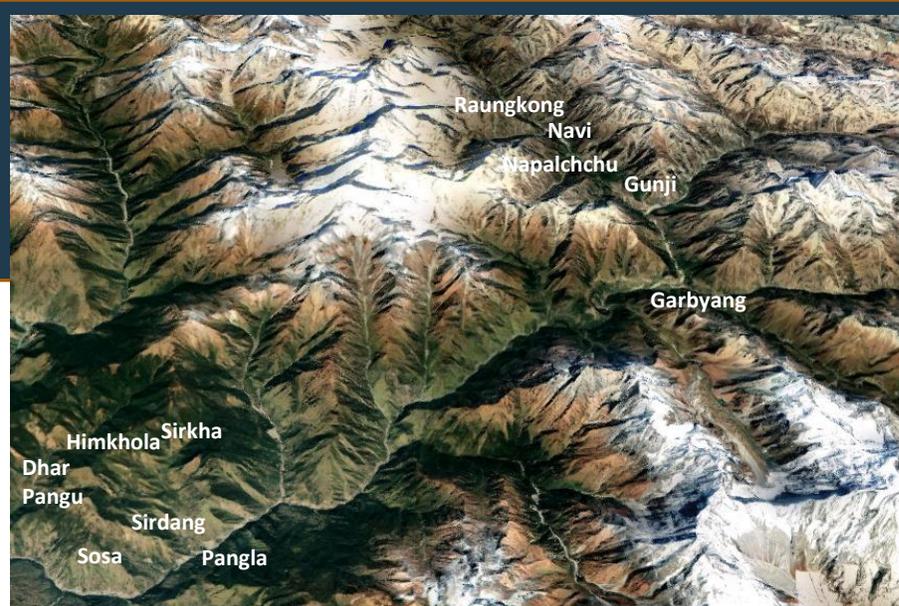
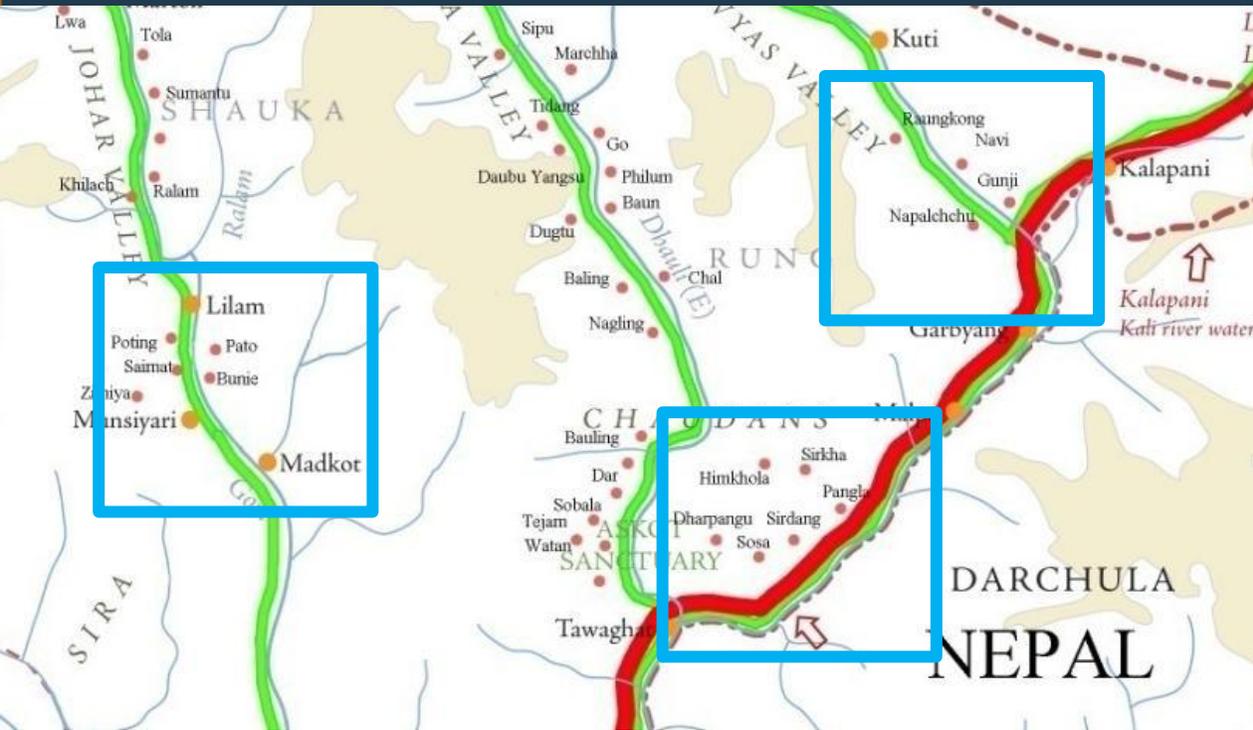
The Routes and Movement



The Routes and the associated Valleys



Study Area & Method



Objectives : 1. Preliminary assessment of the routes within the framework of Cultural routes
2. Finding out key areas of investigation for further research and establishment of significance.

Methods: This study is based upon field research conducted in the month of June and December of 2019 as well as an evaluation of primary and secondary material related to the four high mountain valleys of Pithoragarh. Data assessment included participant observation and semi-structured interviews with village communities, academicians and government authorities.



The human knowledge repository

The Negotiated Landscape and the Routes

Situation:

1. Valley Settlements
2. Midland Settlements
3. Ridge Settlements

Land use System:

Traditional land use system is characterized by animal husbandry, crop cultivation & forest use in different altitudinal belts, all of which are interdependently linked through seasonal migrations & energy flows

Shape:

a. Loosely arranged around Open spaces following the terrain joined by tracks. b. Densely built clusters of houses. These clusters are called *Haaru*.

Function :

Agro-pastoralism, trading (past)
Many people have migrated to the plains for better

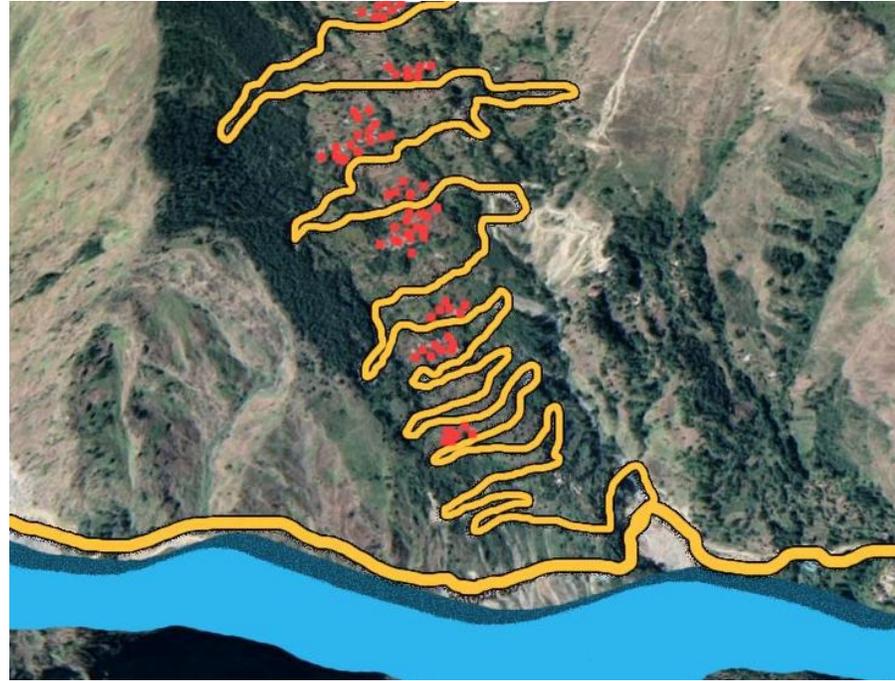
Opportunities

Area: 100-600 Ha

Population: 100 - 1000



Different Shapes and Situations



Types of Routes



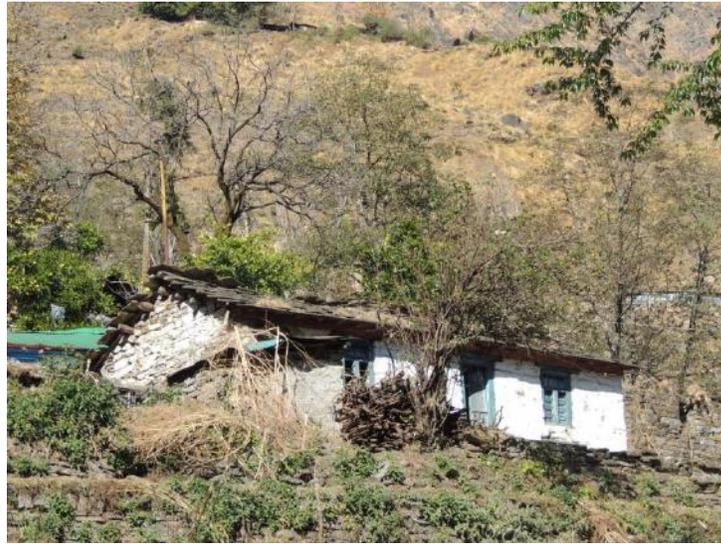
The Negotiated Landscape and the Routes



Photograph & 2 Source: Dhiraj Garbyal, A. P. (no date) *Throne of the Gods : The amazing vyans, Chaudans and Darma Valley*, A Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam Publications.



Earthquake Resistant Construction



Eco-sensitive built environment



Place making



Decorative art & Craftsmanship



Traditional Water management



Food storage techniques



The institution of Sacred Forests called Dev Van, the institution of Shingul are prominent mechanisms of biodiversity conservation at the community level.

As the people inhabiting these areas are agro-pastoralist-trader society, whose livelihood depends on the forest ,pastures, people attach sacred values to the natural environment for their conservation and optimum use of resources

'A reserved space, established by a community, a group of people or an individual, following the conventions based on specific phenomena and requiring the respect of engagements taken at this place; in order to satisfy the .spiritual, cultural and socio-political needs while focusing on the harmony and wellbeing of the native community, as well as of the whole humanity (Kamga-Kamdem, 2008)



The *Kandali* festival

Source: Dhiraj Garbyal, A. P. (no date) *Throne of the Gods : The amazing vyans, Chaudans and Darma Valley, A Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam Publications.*

- The **Jauljibi fair** is held in November every year at Jauljibi, the confluence of the rivers Kali and Gori. This is a meeting place of three cultures – the Shauka, the Kumauni and the Nepali.

- The **Thal Fair**, celebrated in the month of April again is a festival where cross-border gathering happens.

- The **Kandali** festival, held by the *Rung* sub-tribes in *Chaudans* valley, happens once in every twelve years, the festival, to some extent, takes care of checking the spread of the invasive species through community action.

- Nabu Samo** is performed during the main agricultural season to mainly collect harmful insects from the fields and destroy them after elaborate rituals.

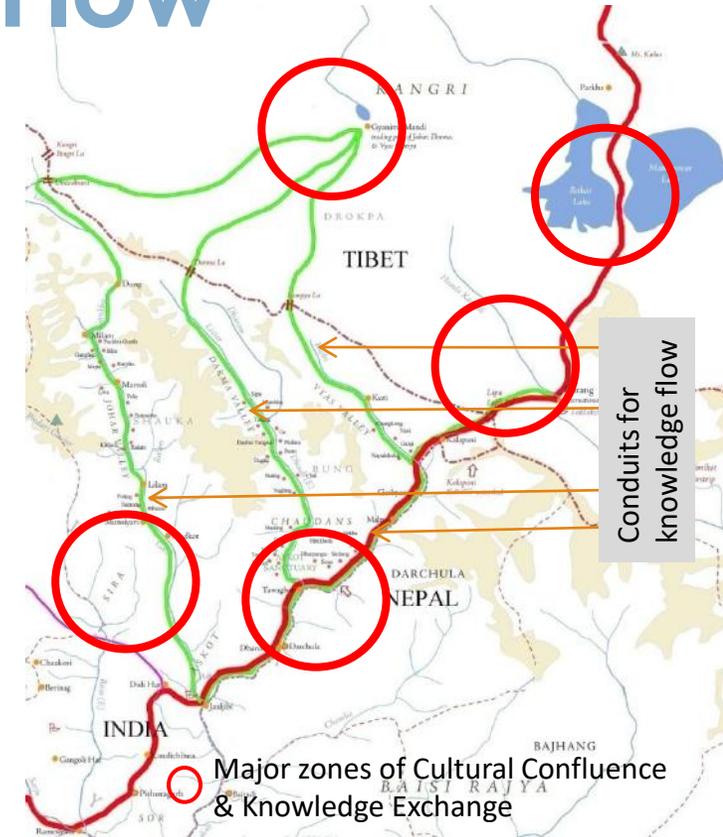
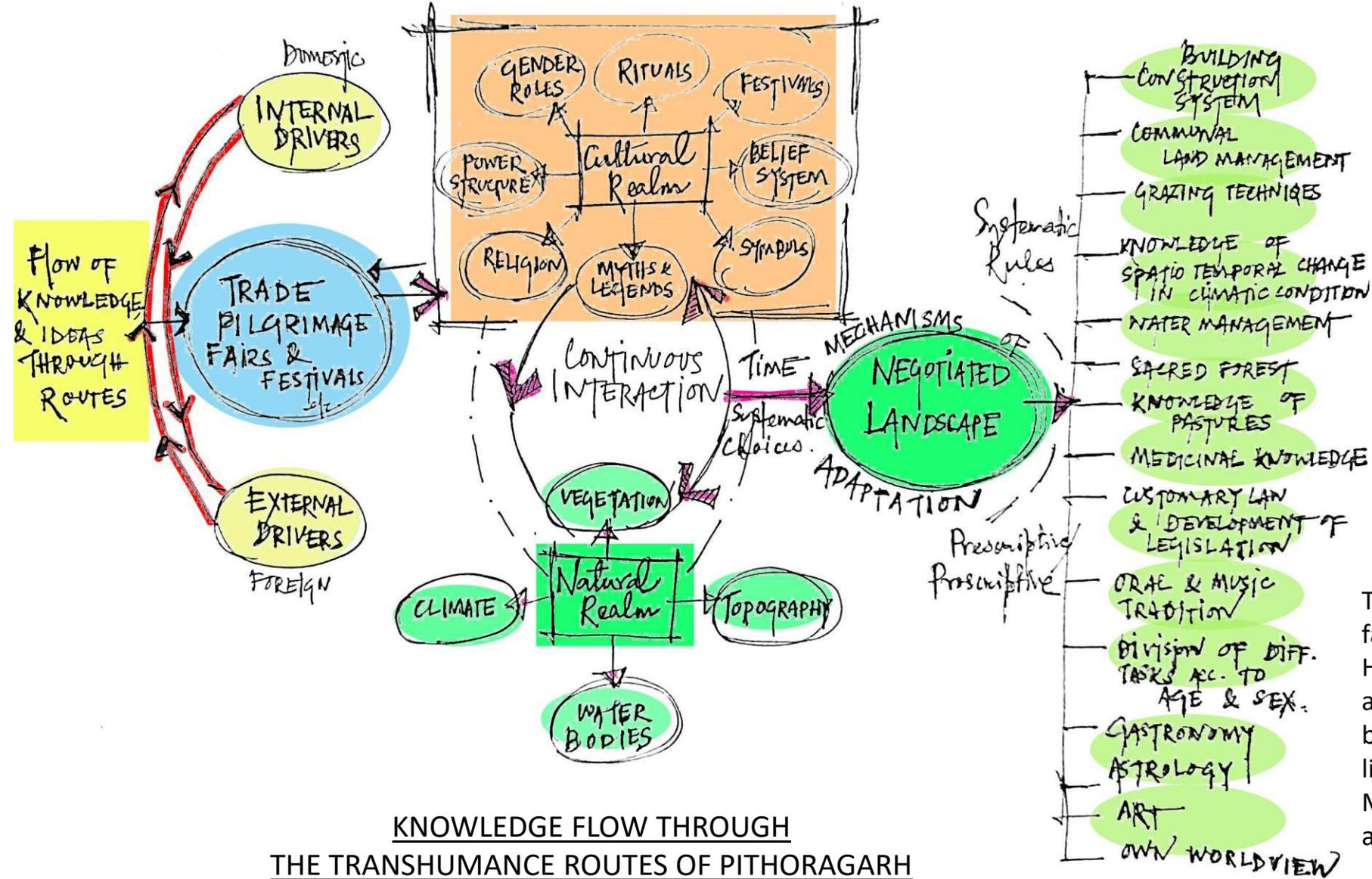
- Nanda Astami**, a festival to collect the sacred flowers of *Brahma Kamal*

- The **Hill Jatra** is a festival of pastoralists and agriculturists, which expresses the linkages of agro-pastoralist communities with nature..

- The concept of **kathbhuria**, the hillside Goddess, ensures effective conservation on the hill tops and facilitates natural regeneration.

- Khatarua** is a special festival of pastoral-agricultural society

Routes as Conduits for Knowledge Flow



The seasonal migration (Transhumance) facilitated intensive trade relations with Tibetan Highland and Nepal. After 1962, agriculture and the use of forest and grassland products became even more important for their livelihood security. The Pilgrimage to Kailas Mansarovar brought in people from the plains and their knowledge and ideas.

Usage in history	Multi-dimensional	Wholeness	Crossing and connecting borders – cultural, ecological, political	shared roots and influences – Heritage of Relationship	Reflects cross-fertilization of cultures	Associational Value
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These routes crossing the tightly bounded mountain settings connect with the larger trade routes, influence the long standing ties between highland and plains for many centuries. In spite of harsh living conditions, inaccessibility of terrain and geographic isolation, the routes helped in the evolution of a system of interdependence, also facilitated unique trans-border connectivity between the larger landscape inhabitants. The flourishing period of the cross-border trade was 17th century.

Different layers of function-
 Transhumance
 Commerce
 Religion
 Politics
 Migration

a crucial passage for the transport of people and ideas from the high altitude lands to the plains.

extensive interactions that took place among various cultural regions especially nomadic pastoral and settled agrarian societies, nomadic and sedentary Cultures

The routes as a whole along with their various tangible and intangible heritage could showcase the co-existence of nomadic and settled cultures and the adaptation of different mechanisms to live in harmony with nature. Environmental ethics and methods of biodiversity conservation, sensible disaster resistant built environment, dynamics of resource management are the key aspects exhibited by the places crossed and connected by the routes.

Located at the “**interface between two main ecological and subsistence zones**” **Connects Tibetan and Indic cultures** and it is a part of the long-distance trade silk roads) at a cross-continental scale

The routes not just traverse through the high altitude areas but connects to other cultural regions of Pithoragarh: Sor, Seera, Askot, Gangoli. At the regional level it further gets connected to Almora, from their to haridwar, Rishikesh and with the Ganges plain through the pilgrimage routes of Kailash Mansarovar and Chardham yatra.

The roads via the high-altitude plateaus of Tibet that enter India and come down to the ancient site of Sravasti (Ganga belt)

The trade routes through Nepal, entering India via Uttarakhand, and coming down to the Ganga valley belt, to areas like Ahichchhatra, Kaushambi, Vaishali, etc.

Chhangru and Tinkar, Rapla, Syangkang and Dumling these Nepali villages have age-old relationships with the Rangs of Chaudans and Byans valley. They follow similar social and religious customs. Marriages between the members of these villages with those in the Rang valleys are extremely common.

The knowledge of wool processing and shawl wool, carpet making came from Tibet, where as the knowledge related to cotton and spices etc passed onto Tibet and Nepal

The knowledge of medicinal herbs disseminated by the routes

The thermal responsive, earthquake resistant built fabric of high lands of Tibet and India has many similarities in terms of materials, construction techniques, form and aesthetics.

Music and musical instruments is another shared heritage that has influences of Tibet, Nepal

Being situated in the intermediate zone between Tibetan and Indic culture, the routes helped in facilitating cross-cultural exchanges. As a result many micro-cultures and societies do exist within this landscape originating from the Kol-Munds, Kirat-Mongols-Huns, Khasas, Shakas, and Dravidians

Linguistic diversity created through cross-fertilization between exchange Tibeto-Burman language and the Indo-Aryan Kumaoni hill dialect.

Many of the religious practice, ceremonies and rules that the Bhotiyas observe seems to have Rajput origin, influenced by the Immigrants of the Rajputs of the plains.

Tibetan marts in Gartok, Gyanima, Taklakot or Tholing, Indian marts in Gunji, Dharchula, Jauljibi are considered as the major places for exchanges

Many mythological association: Lord Hanuman had come to Chhiyalekh to gather the magical herb- Sanjivani that could bring the dead back to life. A small stream called Nyungtang-Ti falling in the route to Budi from Lamari also appears in several myths since Nyungtang is the goddess of water and prosperity and is worshipped in all the villages of the valley.

Rituals associated with many of the Gods personifying natural forces: Hya Thimpa Namgyung, Chhainto Guru, Vyas Dev, Karjang Gungka, Hya Gabla, Layar Kuti, Laraung-Kakaung, etc Some gods are directly linked to nature and its forces while several others have mythological beliefs attached to their existence. These beliefs have been passed on through generations via an extremely vivid and opulent oral tradition.

Preliminary Value Assessment as Cultural Routes

The “Shared Heritage” of KSL

- In an historic sense, cultures and societies have commonly **shared cultural practices**, ways of doing, and viewpoints. (except for when it’s forced upon or closely guarded, thus not shared)
- **The connected past** – connections with different cultural groups that have left traces of rich cultural heritage
- The relationships between cultures or cultural groups and their collective responsibility for the care and safeguarding of the **significant attributes, meanings, and values** of heritage of KSL.

Way Forward

Key Tasks and areas of Investigation

1. Tracing the original routes and the evolving network
2. Mapping the anchor settlements in KSL and list the tangible and intangible heritage
3. Defining Extent and Boundaries of the influence zone
4. Comprehensive research methodology for the identification of Intangible heritage
5. **Semiotic study of Kailash Sacred Landscape to find out the shared heritage.**

Proposed Methodology

Stage-1 Analyzing Routes and Cultural Region

- Examination of networks
- Landscape dynamism
- Relationship between natural and manmade elements
- Spatial distribution of components- transport infrastructure, Places of Exchanges, Influences
- Chronological ordering of components

Stage-2 Assessing Significance

- Value Assessment: Historical, Ecological, Pastoral, Agricultural, Social, Economical, Aesthetic
- Capacity to connect and create interrelationships
- Overlaying various layers to identify shared roots and influences and shared heritage

Intangible Heritage Manifestation

1.) traditions and oral expressions, including the language as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage	2.) social practices, rituals and festive events	3.) knowledge and expertise related to nature and the universe	4.) traditional craftsmanship techniques
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Attributes

Legends and myths	Community Practices
Local History	Traditional Medicines
Music and Dance	Traditional Medicines
Games	Traditional Ecological Wisdom
Festivities	Symbolic sites
Rituals	Traditional construction techniques
System of Reciprocity	Agricultural practices
Gastronomy	Worldview

Proposed inventory format for Mapping of Intangible Heritage through attributes and their manifestation

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THANK YOU.