



## Ling Kesar Legend from Lower Ladakh: A Study of Archetypal Motifs and Images

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**Abstract:** *The legend of Kesar/Gesar has remained one of the most important fields in the Tibetology and has secured for it self a distinct sub-branch under the title 'Gesar Studies' in the recent times. The legend is considered to be one of the lengthiest in the mythology of world and is proudly narrated across all the Sino-Tibeto speaking population in the Asia, which includes India, Pakistan, China, Russia, Nepal, Bhutan and Mongolia. Each version across these countries presents a similar general theme and episodes, but there are certain narrative variations, which makes a particular distinctive among all the others. One such case is the Lower Ladakh retention of the Kesar saga, which presents a different romantic and chivalric charm of its own. The fabric of this legend is so neatly weaved around its mesmerising recurrent motifs, images and symbols, that an avid reader or listener is easily caught in the web of reality and daydreaming. This paper tries to bring out these archetypes and understand their larger function in the story along with their universal significance in the world of mythologies.*

**Keyword:** *Kesar, Gesar, Legend, Archetypes, Motifs, Images*

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### I. Introduction

The legend of Kesar/Gesar is one of the largest epic/legend sung and recited among the Sino-Tibetan speaking population of India, Tibet, Mongolia, Bhutan, Nepal and Gilgit-Baltistan. The legend of the King Gesar (Tibet), also spelled Kesar (Ladakh) or Geser (Mongolian) is the most widely known legend of central and East Asia and relates the heroic deeds of the legendary hero Gesar the fearless lord of the Kingdom of Ling (David-Neel 1987) (Francke 2000). This legend narrates the story about quasi-divine figure Gesar who has the task to restore stateliness and happiness in chaos-striven land of Ling and therefore quite sometimes the name of the king and the place i.e. 'Ling Gesar' is used as a compound word to designate this hero throughout Tibet and elsewhere. However the hero is also famous by titles like 'Ling Rgylam Kesar' and 'Ling Norbu Dadul' in Ladakh, and 'Geser Khan' in Mongolia (See Heissig 1992, p.93) (Karmay 1998, p.467) (Mutup 1981, p.9). It is believed that his famed heroic deeds have disseminated this fantastic legend to lands and realms far removed from his imaginary kingdom of Ling to geographically in Indian Ladakh region (also known as western Tibet), China, Mongolia and Gilgit-Baltistan in modern Pakistan. There are also versions in Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, and among various Tibeto-Burmese, Turkish, and Tunghus tribes (Stein 1959, p.59-60).

The famous Kesar/Gesar legend according to many scholars was born in Amdo and Kham region of Tibet (see 'Epic of king Gesar' Wikipedia). However, this seems to be a misconception if not erroneous because there has still not been enough research done in this regards due to many practical difficulties as well as vastness of the geographical area it is spread to. The Ladakhi tradition of the Kesar legend has long history and the chronicles also eulogise the early kings of Ladakh as the descendants of the king Kesar bloodline (Francke 2008, p.47). Every region in Ladakh has its own narration with subtle changes here and there, and the Ladakhis don't shy of often citing the artefacts related to Kesar legend in their locality (Mutup 1981, p.10).

One of the earliest known anthropologist and Historian to note down the Gesar legend of Ladakh was Christian Moravian missionary A.H. Francke who visited Ladakh in 1900 (Chatterji 2000, Introduction p.xx). During his stay in Ladakh he recorded the history and folk traditions of Ladakhi people along with the two most popular versions of the Kesar legend from Ladakh. To distinguish both of the versions he classifies them according to the geographical position of the villages where he recorded them. The first one is 'A Lower

Ladakhi Version of the Kesar Saga', which has been collected from Khalatse village in the Lower regions of Leh. The second version is the central Leh version with two parts- titled 'Spring Myth of Kesar Saga' and the 'Winter Myth of Kesar Saga' (B.S. Guha 2000, 'Forward' p.vii). The Lower Ladakh version according to many scholars has a least reference to Buddhism and claim is even made accordingly that legend must have germinated in the Pre-Buddhist society of Shamanism and Bon.

Another version from Gilgit-Baltistan Burshaski speaking population recorded by Lorimer needs to be mentioned here (1931, p.105-140). This version in all its episodes quite interestingly resembles in almost all the details to the Lower Ladakh version, which might be due to its shared ethnical history with Lower Ladakh and geographical proximity of the two regions. Similarly another 'Central Leh' version from the village Thiksay, some 20 kilometres from central Leh, was recorded by a native scholar named Tsering Mutup in 1981 and an abridged version with title 'Kesar Ling Norbu Dadul' was presented during a conference held in the same year (Tsering Mutup 1981, p.9-27), which on the other hand shows more similarity to the Tibetan version.

## **II. The Legend of Kesar: A Lower Ladakh version**

The Lower Ladakh version by A. H. Francke narrates the exploits of King Kesar to bring order and restore law in the chief less kingdom of Ling. The whole legend by A.H. Francke is divided into seven broad chapters, which includes a prologue. Chapter-1 Prologue: describes how in the land of *Kalakol* one day and old man *Krashis shis* and his wife borrows some seed and sow it in a small field. Soon the seed sprouts into a big tree and grains of wheat and barley to the size a pigeon grows on it. The old man stores them in his barn. Few days later he finds that they have turned into worms and has started eating each other until one huge worm is left. After seven days when the old man visits the barn again he finds that the worm has turned into a beautiful baby boy. The boy is named *Dong sum mila sngonmo* and one day on hunt he kills a nine-headed giant devil ogre and causes the origination of Ling land by its dismembered body parts under the due guidance of a hermit teacher *Tsegu*. He becomes the chief of the land, marries eighteen girls and fathers' eighteen sons who are later called eighteen *Agu* (uncle) or the eighteen heroes of Ling. These *Agus* one day find themselves treasure and settles down with wife and family in the country of Ling.

Chapter-2 One day *Agu Palle Godpo*, one among the *Agus*, herding his sheep in the mountains finds a black yak and white yak fatally fighting with each other. *Agu Palle* considering the black yak as devil kills it. This results in the appearance of the heavenly God king *Bangpo Gyabzin* who asks him to wish for anything in return for help *Agu Palle* had extended. Finding the opportunity, the *Agu* ask the God king *Bangpo Gyabzin* to send his youngest son *Don grub* to rule the land of Ling. The God king reaches back in heaven and consults his three sons about the demand and promise he had just made. However the elder two sons refuse to comply and the king organise series of competition with a view that whoever comes last will have to proceed to the land of men. Although the youngest son win but seeing the reluctance of his brothers and to keep his father's promise to the *Agu*, he decides to leave. This is followed by *MaGog Zang lhamo* getting impregnated by swallowing hailstorm in the land of Ling. Soon she gives birth to Kesar but she is made to suffer a lot by the baby in her womb who instructs her to build a house with three stones with three beams first on a mountains with three tops, then at the bank of a lake, then in a middle of a field and finally he miraculously comes out her body along with many other things. The birth of Kesar also introduces us to Kesar's protecting spirit *Ane Kurd Maan Gyalmo* who protects Kesar by taking the human form as *Kar thigmofrom* three *Sharrandre barandre* (black magician) sent by *Agu Ka lon ldan pa* who wanted to kill the boy.

Chapter-3 deals with Kesar courting of *Bruguma*. Although he is born to a very humble woman but with trickery and cleverness he wins for himself both respect and the hand of the most beautiful *Bruguma* through a series of tasks, which he successfully accomplishes. This includes *Chang* (barley beer) drinking competition, bringing the hide of wild Yak *Ri-ri* and finally the wings of bird *Nyi ma khyung rung* who threatens sun and human beings. Kesar successfully win these tasks with the help of his protector spirit and by deceiving the other contenders by misguiding them. On one insistence he sends them with wood to a place with scarcity of wood and with water to the places abundance of it, thereby delaying and hampering their pursuit.

Chapter-4 narrates how Kesar through black magic inflicts pain on the king of China. The king is revealed by oracle that Kesar of Ling can only cure his pains and therefore he send for his help. The hero reaching there ably subsides his pain but elopes with his daughter *gYui dKon mChogma*, which makes the courtier conspire his murder multiple times. However, every time he escapes with the help of his protecting spirit and in retaliation he inflicts leprosy through his black magic upon the people again. The helpless Chinese courtiers seek his forgiveness and present him treasure along with the princess hand in marriage. Kesar returns back to his kingdom with all the riches and his second queen.

Chapter-5 After vanquishing China he goes into deep retreat and one day *Ane Kurd Maan Gyalmo* appears to him and reminds him of his enemy in North. Kesar proceeds to vanquish the demon giant of north *Khyab-pa-lag-rings* but is insisted by his queen *Bruguma* to not to leave her alone. However, he reaches the demons country and with the help of giant's queen *Bamza-bum-skyid*, who is mesmerised by Kesar's

appearance, overcomes and slays the giant. When he is about to kill the demon giant, he is plagued by second thought to spare his life. At this instance *Ane Kurd Maan Gyalmo* appears to him and reminds him of the deeds and damages done to him by the demon, which makes him to kill him at once. Once he kills the enemy he is easily deceived by the giant's queen who feeds him food of forgetfulness and prolongs his stay in the country of North, hence keeping him to herself.

Chapter-6 narrates how in the meantime the king of Hor looking for a wife finds about *Bruguma* unmatched beauty and invade Ling. The Ling heroes meanwhile steal the horse of Hor army, who have encamped to attack Ling, with the help of *Rib-shing* (the invisible cap). Further to save the queen from abduction the immortal hero *Agu Bu Mar lam Stan* fights bravely against the invading army but is betrayed at the last moment by *Bruguma* and killed by Hor general *Shankra Miru* with an arrow on his mortal spot under his armpit. This sad fate of Ling and its people is soon conveyed to Kesar through two messengerbirds/strokes (white Crane). When Kesar learns about this he reaches the border of Ling and writes a letter summoning his army and sends it along with his horse and meanwhile continues his journey towards Hor. However the letter is only decipherable by underworld Nagi (she serpent) *Dargyi gochodma* who summons and calls for arm to all the beings of *Iha, Ihu* and *Tsan*.

Chapter-7 Kesar on his journey to Hor encounters the three dwarfs whom he tricks with his *Rib-Shing* and then use them to guide his way through hurdles like the rock door *Thsa'u dung dung* and the wild yak *Ka-ra-kham-pa*, which he overcomes with the dwarfs help. Then he has to cross a river where the nine bridges were tied together by killing all its guard, and finally reaches Hor kingdom where he disguises himself as the son of Hor blacksmith *Himis*. To validate his claims he has to go through the test of choosing his supposed father's tools, which he successfully does with the help of *Ane Kurd Maan Gyalmo* who transform into a golden fly and sits on the belonging tools. Later on at the court of the Hor king, blacksmith-son-Kesar, displays his unparalleled strength and bravery by winning against all the acclaimed great warriors and finally wins the favour of the Hor king. Meanwhile he with the help of his smith father forges a huge iron chain. Soon the Ling warriors arrive disguised as horse traders and attack Hor causing much internal damages, which leads to Hor king and queen locking themselves up in their castle safe. However Kesar calls his heroes off and send them back citing his lone responsibility to kill the Hor king. Further with the help of the iron chain he climbs the place wall and kills the king. However when he is about to slay the king, he is again plagued by second thought to spare his life but at the same moment *Ane Kurd Maan Gyalmo* appears and directs him to kill him. He follows the instructions given and kills the Hor king instantly. Finally on his way back to Ling he is reminded of the promise made to the rock door *Thsa'u dung dung* and pretends to have forgotten something and returns back to the Hor castle. There he overhears the two sons of the Hor king *Seer Ral Chan* and *Yhu Ral Chan* of vengeance. He calls them out and beheads them, taking their heads to the rock door and finally returns back to Ling with his queen.

### III. Archetypal Motifs and Images in the Legend

According to Wilferd Guerin recurrent Motifs and Images which forms the basis of a mythology and found among varied numbers of them, sometimes widely separated in time and place, tends to have a common meaning to draw a 'common psychological response and to serve a similar cultural function'. Such motifs and images according to him are called the 'Archetypes' and are universal symbols found among all the mythologies across time and space (p.184). Interestingly the foundational motifs and images across all versions of the Kesar legend are similar with smaller additions and variations. Few of these images have a more universal similarity and are starkly comparable to other images across globe. They form the basis of the development of the story and create an awe inspiring charm to the whole legend. The purpose of these recurrent motifs and images are to instil the divine presence and to transpose sublime into divine nature of the whole story.

The first of such motif is the 'cosmic creation', which is the 'fundamental of all the archetypal motifs' (Guerin 2005, p.189), in the prologue section. The prologue section deals with the creation of the land *ling*, which as we have seen becomes the kingdom of celestial hero Kesar in the later part of the narrative. This creation is entrusted to the forefather hero *Dong Sum Mila Gonmo* who exhibits all the wisdom and valour we experience from Kesar-the central hero. Further the pre-literate society, which strongly believed in the grandeur of the nature, is perfectly blended in the heroic quality of our hero *Dong Sum Mila Gonmo*. He is interestingly not of a divine birth, neither he is a human progeny but, a miraculous nature son and personifies in the extreme sense the creator of everything. Our hero true to its nature character is not permanent and therefore once his job to create is finished he has to leave the space without creating a disharmony, obviously not so apparently but in the subtlest way as to make his absence fade away in the memory of time. Therefore once the land of Ling is created and eighteen *Agus* born, his character fades away slowly thereby diminish his presence without bothering the listener or reader.

The prologue also symbolically presents the movement of non-settled nomadic or raiders life towards

the agricultural life, which was prevalent along these regions long time back in the history due to less productive agricultural life. The whole trans-Himalayan region and beyond was one of the most sparsely populated due to this probable reason. Nonetheless, gradual medieval trade system connecting the middle-east to the east through the famous 'Silk Route', which adversely also germinated the bandit cult who roamed in large groups and were detrimental to the nomads and settled agriculturist encouraged confederacy and heroism that the prologue as well as the whole Kesar story inculcates within the listener or reader.

The archetypal pattern or motif of 'immortality' "another fundamental archetype" (Guerin 2005, p.190) is presented through the theme of chaos to order or 'Escape from time' and 'the return to the state of perfect bliss enjoyed by man and woman before their fall' as Guerin puts it. The Prologue section of the story explicitly expresses the idea of order and happiness. However, with time, when the natural hierarch breaks with the absence of the forefather hero *Dong Sum Mila Gonmo* the state goes into chaos and ultimately demands for the restoration of the same. Interestingly it is to be noted that this crisis is more of a secular reason i.e. to have a king/leader then of any divine providence. Nonetheless, since the 'order' sometimes is a subject beyond human authority, the divine has to make its presence felt, least chaos turns into anarchy.

The next archetypal motif according to Guerin is the 'Archetypal hero' who has to go through transformation and redemption through a series of 'quest', 'Initiation' and the 'sacrificial scape goat' (Guerin 2005, p.190). Throughout the whole legend, the hero has to go through constant trials and tribulations. From his divine being to his humanly form the test and ordeals is the constant shadow to his persona, whereby he gradually transforms from a simple trickster into a more profound hero by the end of the story. Kesar is entrusted with the bringing of the order into the land of *Ling*. However this restoration is not limited to being appointed as king but rather he has to extol his capabilities through subduing of all possible threats to his kingdom, which included the Giant king of the North. The motif of 'Archetypal hero' is further elaborated into other smaller sub-motifs in this legend across the Trans-Himalayan region.

The first of such motif is the 'competition in heaven' (sacrificial scape goat) where the sons of divine king compete with each other to save themselves from going to the land of humans as the king. Then there is the 'horse race', which in many versions beyond Ladakh narrates the hero's successful winning of the maiden *Bruguma* as his wife. Somehow this motif is different in the Lower Ladakhi version and narrates the prowess of the hero Kesar whereby he displays his warrior qualities and dexterity at riding his horse and witnessed by his future queen to be only. It also acts as self-realization of our hero Kesar, who hitherto although aware of his divinely link, for the first time displays his superhumanly qualities. Then the motif of 'wood and water trick' is also another important part of the whole narrative whereby the hero tricks his opponents by making them collect woods for burning to the place where there is abundance of wood but no water, and to collect drinking water to the place where there is abundance of water but no woods to burn and hence troubling them of cold and thirst, and finally overcoming them in their quest. However this incident is only available in the Lower as well as upper Ladakh versions and not in the Tibetan version.

Apart from these recurrent fundamental motifs the whole legend is filled with subtle images, which has a wider 'common psychological concerns' and appeal to the general preconceived meanings instantly. Guerin mentions fourteen such universal archetypal images visible across all the mythologies in time. Our legend from Lower Ladakh also does not fail to reflect these images and they remain one of the most indispensable narrative unit linking the divine and humanly relationship of the legend. Among these universal images the most pertinent, which needs to be discussed is the image of 'Tree', 'Water', 'colours', 'numbers', 'The archetypal women or the great mother', 'the demon lover' and 'the trickster'.

One of the most powerful nature images, which perhaps made Francke to proclaim the whole legend as the myth of cosmic creation is the Sun and Moon (Francke 'Footnote' p.70). Further the hero Kesar is always said to represent these two images arising from each of his shoulders whenever he reveals his true self. Not only this, he also protects the sun and all the mankind from the evil designs of *Nyi ma khyung rung* (the giant bird who threatens utter darkness by spreading of his wings across sun). Guerin points that the images of sun is always related to 'creative energy and a fatherly principle' and the moon as the 'female or the motherly principle' (p.185). The image of rising Sun also relates to 'birth, creation and enlightenment', which not only co-relates with the character of our hero Kesar but also truly justifies his transformation because with each successive self-revelation his character develops more strongly towards his heroic-self.

The universal image of 'tree' as life giving force is presented in the very beginning of the legend and narrates how our forefather hero *Dong Sum Mila Gonmo* is born out of the grains of wheat and barley that grows on the tree sowed by the forefather *Karshis shi* initially. A symbol of a 'Tree' in its 'most general sense denotes the life of the cosmos' (Guerin p.189) (see also Wiki 'Tree of Life') and therefore it will be no wrong to *assume* that the prologue section in its true sense represent the genesis of the whole legend. The image of the 'water' is the next important image of universal significance in the lower Ladakh legend. According to Guerin



the image of water symbolises the 'mystery of creation' and 'one of the commonest symbol for the unconscious' (p.185). The images used for conceiving of our hero Kesar is always in one form of water. This image is present across all the versions in Ladakh and elsewhere, and perhaps remains one of the most indispensable narrative unit linking the divine and humanly relationship of the legend. For example in the Ladakhi versions its hailstorm (Francke 2000) which is falls in the cup of his mother *Gogza Lamo*, the Burushaski version it's a drop of rain (see Lorimer 1931) and in the Tibetan version its *Dutsi* (consecrated water) (DavidNeel 1987).

The next major image used in the whole legend is the image of 'colour'. In the prologue section there is a reference to two most prominent colours throughout the legend i.e. the White, which is always associated with God and good, and the Black, which is always associated with Devil and Bad. Further the legend constantly refers to the three world realms of *Lha*, *bTsan* and *Lhu*, which further represent three colours of White, Red and Black/Blue. These colours and realms according to Francke corresponds to the pre-Buddhist Bon cosmological existences of Gods (*Lha*) representing 'White' colour, Humans (*bTsan*) representing 'Red' colour and Water Spirits or *Naga* (*Lhu*) representing 'Black' colour (2008, p.31-32). Interestingly, Guerin notes that the 'White' colour is 'highly multivalent, signifying, in its positive aspects, light, purity, innocence, and timelessness'; the Red colour 'disorder' and the 'Black' colour 'chaos, mystery, the unknown, death' (p.185). Francke further believes that this division of cosmos belongs to the practiced belief system he calls *Ling Chos* (Francke 2008, p. 53) and the heroes of the Kesar legend are still considered as deities in whose honour folk songs like *gling-glu* are sung (Francke 2000, Preface p.xxx). The apparent reference to this system consistently throughout the legend marks that 'in Ladakh we are in the home-land of the Kesar Saga' (Francke 2000, 'Preface' p.xxx). However different scholarly opinions are there and some call this system relating to Shamanic rituals and others animism. Nonetheless it cannot be denied that this practice was also in vogue during the pre-historic Tibet and therefore pointing the origination of the legend to specific place based on the current rituals in practice will be too early to be judged upon without looking into other factors.

The recurrent use of certain numbers throughout the legend also attract our interest to the archetypal images the number carry and their symbolic significance universally. The reference to number Two, Three, Seven, Nine and Eighteen are consistently made in the legend. The two yaks (black and white) fighting in the beginning of the prologue; The two birds who are sent as the messenger to Kesar when he is held by the queen of north; the two sons of Hor king killed by the hero at the later stage etc. Further, it is among the three sons of the heavenly God who has to take the human form and rule the kingdom of *Ling* as Kesar. Guerin cites that the number three signifies 'light, spiritual awareness and unity' (p.187). The three realms of the world; then once Kesar is conceived by his mother he instructs her to go to 'hill with three tops and build a house with three stones and three beams' in order to give him birth; then one of the *Agu* summons three *Sharrandre barandre* (black magicians) of the east to kill Kesar once he is born and many more such inexhaustible 'three' instances and number are there throughout the legend.

Similarly number 'Seven' has also innumerable reference throughout the legend with regards to time. For example the forefather *Karshis* visits the barn where the grains from the tree are stored after seven days to find baby Kesar; then the heavenly god promises to send one of his son to rule the land of men after seven days, he is guided by seven goats to find the yak *Riri* whom he tricks and kills it in the pursuit of Bruguma's hand and many more such instances. Guerin points that the number seven is the most potent of all the symbolic numbers and a perfect union of number 'three' and 'four', and signifies perfect order or the completion of the cycle (p.187). Then the number nine is also constantly used throughout the legend. It is from the nine-headed ogre killed by forefather hero *Dong Sum Mila Gonmo* from whose dismembered body parts the land of *Ling* is formed; Kesar always invokes the nine Gods and water sprits born with him for support; then the two messenger birds (Crain) are made to circle nine times the land of *Ling* before departing to find Kesar; then there are 'nine bridges tied together' and guarded by Hor army, which needs to be crossed by Kesar before finally reaching the Hor kingdom; then he kills the Hor warrior *Srog-dgu* (nine-lives) to win the confidence of the Hor king by showing his bravery, and many more minors references to number nine. Similarly, the number eighteen is also prominent. Our forefather hero *Dong Sum Mila Gonmo* is made to marry eighteen girls born in the sheep year and these girls soon gives birth to eighteen *Agus* of *Ling* land and are also called the 'eighteen warriors of the *Ling*'.

Then the universal 'archetypal women or the great mother' (Guerin p.187) is visible in the persona of *Ane Kurd Maan Gyalmo* the protecting spirit/deity of Kesar who is always there to help our hero in the extreme situation. It is also to be noted that she also acts as his inner consciences and always presses upon him to act in a certain way, which might be detrimental to him if he does not. Throughout the legend she is a constant support and encouragement for our hero either in the form of human as *Kar thigmoto* physically save him when he is a baby, Or in the form of photism when he is plagued with the second thoughts to spare the life of the Giant of the North as well as the Hor king- the two of his most formidable enemies.

The next symbolic image of 'the demon lover' (Guerin p.188) is so characteristically portrayed in *Dzemo*, the wife of the Giant demon of the North, that she truly in the literary sense plays the role of the 'Satan-the corrupter' who besieges the hero and results in the chaos that overruns *Ling* in his absence. It is her resolution to keep the Kesar that the Hor king finds the opportunity to wage the war and abduct the queen of *Ling*. Her 'food of forgetfulness' is no different from the 'fruit of the forbidden tree' that brings woes and kills many at the costs of desire. Then the image of the 'trickster' who is personified in none other than Kesar himself. Guerin points that the trickster besides being a rogue, a prankster, a magician and an opposite of the wise old man' also has a positive side of him and 'may even serve a healing function through his transformative influence'. He also cites Jung who remarks that 'he is the forerunner of the saviour, and, like him, God, man, and animal at once. He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and a divine being' (p.188) that so aptly justifies our hero Kesar's persona. He is no more than a trickster and a prankster in the beginning of the story but gradually with the self realization he displays more power and confidence that subsumes his negative aspect to fully grow into a divine hero at the end.

In this sense the Kesar legend is a bildungsroman and the constant efforts on the behalf of the central character to become more mature his sole purpose. He begins with a very humble birth and to overcome his miseries and partiality faced from the *Agus* (uncles) he has to play the part of the rogue and a trickster. Further it cannot be denied that his Kesar-ness or being Kesar the divine superhuman is sometimes negated by his carelessness and unpredictable rashness to decision. His guiding spirit *Ane Kurd Maan Gyalmo* always reminds him of his purpose as Kesar since he cannot help but fall in the trap of worldly affairs. His queen pleads him to stay back and not proceed to the North and the fear of the unprecedented is at once acknowledged. But nonetheless he has to overcome his reluctance and gamble with his destiny to prove himself and he successfully overcomes everything in the end, although with a cost which he has to accept, to become Kesar the divine being.

Similarly there are other limitless numbers of motifs and images specific to the Kesar legend across the regions where it is narrated. One of the most amusing archetypes is the use of 'invisible hat', which is quite often found across ancient Greek mythologies. Across the Kesar legend it is called *Rib Shing* and can be literally translated into 'Hide Wood'. This trope comes quite handy for our hero many times and specially when he successfully deceits the three dwarfs into his favour and later the same is also used by *Bu mar lambsatn* to steal the three legged horse of Hor general *Shankramiru*. However, in the Tibetan version the Invisible cap *Ribshing* is also used by *Todong* (Gesar's uncle) to steal the three famous horse of *Tazig* king so that he can please his benefactor by gifting them. The archetypal 'invisible cap' is one of the oldest supernatural or power-possessed articles in the world of mythologies and one of the recurrent objects in the classical Greek legends. The cap has a power to render the person who wears it invisible and thus helping him in achieving his desired objective. It is also well known as the 'Cap of Hades', 'Helm of Hades' or 'Helm of Darkness' in the Greek myth (Wiki 'Cap of Invisibility').

Then there is the archetypal 'messenger bird', which brings back the memory of our hero when the queen of north unsuspectingly keeps him by magic potion. Across all the versions of Kesar legend in Ladakh the bird exists as the liberator or messenger and quite probably due to its agility it remained as one of the important part along the versions. The birds to select the black carpet with rotten carrion for a bad news and white carpet with fresh meat for good news, once they have reached to the destined hero follows this. This archetype is found across all the versions from Ladakh as well as Tibet. Then there is the 'stealing of the horse' archetype in all the versions. Nonetheless, the incidents are different and the Ladakhi version narrates of *Ling* heroes or the *Agu*'s (uncles of hero) stealing the horse from the Hor camp. However in the Tibetan version it is one of the *Agu* *Todong* who steals the horse from the king of *Tazig* for his personal benefit. Then the archetypal 'she *Nagi*' who is the only one to be able to decipher the letter sent by Kesar asking his people to join him in his attack to Hor country in the Lower Ladakh version. However, in the Tibetan version she functions as the earthly mother of hero Gesar.

Then the archetypal 'immortal hero' *Agu Bu Mar lam Stan* who is found across all the versions in Ladakh and Tibet. He is the only hero next to Kesar who is divinely blessed and has his entire body made of iron/steel but with a soft spot under his armpit. He is also deceived by the queen of *Ling* across all the versions who discloses his weakness to the Hor king. Then there is the archetypal 'rock door' or clashing rock called *Tsha'u-dung-dung* in the Ladakhi version. These rock functions as gateway to the enemy territory and our hero has to promise them to bring the heads of Hor king's offspring prevalent across all the versions including the Tibetan version. Once the hero has reached the Hor country to take his revenge there are many more such archetypes, which is always there in all the versions being one of the central parts to the story line. The first of such is our hero disguised as the 'son to blacksmith of Hor', which is there across all the versions. However the Ladakhi version adds to it the test to legitimacy by pointing the blacksmith tools of his father among others. The hero Kesar is further guided by his guiding/protecting spirit *Ane Kurd Maan Gyalmo* who helps him in this task by transforming herself into a golden fly and sits on the designated tools.

Then there is the archetypal 'iron chain' forged by the blacksmith father-son of Hor. We although know that our hero is capable of impossible but nonetheless he is destined to climb the Hor palace using the iron chain, which is almost always there across all the versions in Ladakh. However in the Tibetan version the same iron chain is used to retrieve the head of hero's cousin *Gyatza*, whose head is hanged across the Hor palace to save the king from misfortunes.

#### IV. Conclusion

Similarly there are end numbers of other archetypes across the legend that has universal and well as across version significance. Identifying and cross studying them, most probably will result in Kesar specific archetypes and thus fruitful lead to a conclusive remark on the earlier form among them. However there are certain numbers of limitations, which is always experienced by the folklorists across globe with regards to different version across countries- to- regions- to- villages, which proves haphazard to any conclusive remark. But structurally studying them by breaking the whole narrative structures into theme and archetypes would surely lead to some hope in the revival of the lost glory passed through the words of mouth.

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