Monastic Land Holding System in Sikkim (1642-1975)

A Thesis Submitted

To

Sikkim University

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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May 2022

Date: 20/05/2022

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SA	**Sikkim University, Gangtok / Migration of nepali into sikkim and its impact on the political and economic life from 1774 to 1975.docx** Document Migration of nepali into sikkim and its impact on the political and economic life from 1774 to 1975.docx (D29477425) Submitted by: librarian@cus.ac.in Receiver: librarian.sikkim@analysis.urkund.com	9
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W	URL: https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/newsdetail/index/3/8991/sikkims-forgotten-shamanic-buddhist-heritage Fetched: 2021-11-14T21:10:21.8000000	1

CONTENTS

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Gnudup Sangmo Bhutia

List of Tables

List of Maps

A Note to Citations

In entire the texts of the thesis, I have followed MLA style sheet. I have put all the citations in texts itself, which is a latest trend. However, it is not possible to cite the archival references in the text particularly the government files, which needed to cite file number, department, and date. Therefore, these sources are cited in the footnotes. But all the sources both primary and secondary cited in the footnotes and in the texts are kept in the bibliography.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sikkim is a small Himalayan state situated in the northeastern region of India, bordered by Bhutan in the East, Tibet in the North, Nepal in the West, and West Bengal in the South. Sikkim was once an independent kingdom under the Namgyal dynasty which was founded probably in the year 1642. The first ruler of this kingdom was Phuntsok Namgyal. Since then the ruler of Sikkim used to be called *Chogyal*, in the Tibetan language *Dharma-Raja*. According to the legends, it was believed that Phuntsok Namgyal was consecrated as the first *Chogyal* of Sikkim with the support of three Buddhist Lamas who must have fled from Tibet to protect themselves from religious persecution in Tibet. Phuntsok Namgyal under the guidance of three lamas ruled Sikkim. He was made both the spiritual as well as the temporal leader of the people of this kingdom and eventually Sikkim became a Buddhist kingdom. Phuntsok Namgyal being a spiritual leader and also a patron of the lamas supported them in establishing Buddhist monasteries in the kingdom.

From Phuntsok Namgyal onwards, several Buddhist monasteries were established in Sikkim with the support of *Chogyals*. In the initial stage, they were only confined to the Western side of the land as the capital (Yuksam) of the kingdom was situated in the West. Dubdi was the first Buddhist monastery constructed in Sikkim in 1647 and followed by many others like Sanga Choelling in 1697, and Pemayangtse in 1705. Moreover, to support and maintain these monasteries, the *Chogyal* granted lands to them. The granting of lands to the religious institutions by the rulers was not a new concept and in Sikkim, this tradition was started by the third *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal (1700-1717). The tradition of granting lands by the *Chogyal* to the Buddhist

monasteries remained continued until the fall of the Namgyal dynasty in 1975. However, not all monasteries enjoyed high prestige and wealth. There were mainly six important monasteries like Pemayangtse, Tashiding, Phensong, Rumtek, Ralong, and Phodong who enjoyed high prestige and acquired lands.

Hence, most of the Buddhist monasteries of Sikkim owned lands and some big monasteries got large estates. The monasteries that possessed large estates were also given the right to collect revenues from the villagers who fall under their jurisdiction. They not only collected revenues from them but acted as local administration for the *Chogyal* thus they occupied an important position in the kingdom's economy as well as politics and enjoyed high prestige.

However, the positions of these monasteries were threatened when Sikkim came under the control of the British in 1889. Under the new land settlement program introduced by the British, Sikkimese monasteries suffered as many monasteries lost their lands to the state, and forced them to survive with subsidies and few donations, and those monasteries that were allowed to maintain lands fall under the direct control of the state. Moreover, the positions of these monasteries never improved or received more challenges even after the fall of the British Empire in India as the idea of democracy entered the kingdom which ultimately leads to the fall of the monarchy in Sikkim.

The tradition of Buddhist monastic landholding in Sikkim was not a new phenomenon. This tradition started when the first monastic institution or the *sangha* was established in India. However, according to the rules of the Buddhist doctrines, the monks were supposed to live pure and detached themselves from material things. But the maintenance and growth of large monastic communities would be difficult

without any economic independence. As stated by Poceski, the monasteries have to take care of their buildings, temples, and monastic dwellings, the procurement of daily provisions for the community. The maintenance of the monastic communities was expensive and it could not be fulfilled by the donations from the lay supporters. Thus, the tradition of granting lands to the Buddhist monasteries existed mainly to maintain the large monk bodies and their surroundings and land became the foundation of Buddhist monasteries. Later, it was also observed that the Buddhist monasteries possessed large tracts of land and maintained their estates by collecting revenues from the tenants and enjoying the tax exemptions from the state (Poceski, 2017). Similarly, Buddhist monasteries in Sikkim also have large monk bodies, and to maintain their basic needs, taking care of buildings, temples, and scriptures they need to possess some landed properties. Therefore, they received land grants from their rulers as well as a few rich landlords mainly for the maintenance of the monasteries. Such tradition started from the beginning of the establishment of monasteries in Sikkim when Sikkim became a Buddhist kingdom in the middle of the seventeenth century.

The first *Chogyal* of Sikkim, Phuntsog Namgyal, established a theocratic form of a government probably in 1642 and introduced a government based on Tibetan lines. He also introduced the Tibetan system of the land economy under which lands were divided among three main bodies the king, the monasteries, and the nobles. Above all under the theocratic monarchy, monasteries played an important role in shaping the country's social, political as well as economic condition. There were several monasteries constructed under the patronage of Chogyals who also bestowed wealth and prestige upon them. Under the patronage of the rulers, monasteries also played an important role in administrative matters of the state.

According to Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma who wrote *History of Sikkim*, says that Sikkimese monasteries did not possess lands given by the *Chogyal* in the past, but each was authorized to collect contributions from certain villages named to support them (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908). Monasteries and lamas were exempted from paying labour services to the king and did not have to pay any contribution to him. However, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a piece of land in the Plains that had first been given to a celibate lama by *Chogyal* Gyurme Namgyal for services rendered to the State was later transferred to Pemayangtse monastery, with the agreement of the king on the condition to perform periodical ceremonies like *Panglhapsol* for the state and *Chogyal* (Vandenhelsken, 2003). Later, it was observed that the monasteries of this region got the right to collect taxes from the villagers which fall under their jurisdiction and it was obvious that earlier monasteries used to collect revenues in kind from the villagers but it was not known how much did they collect and what was the share of the state and how much did they render for monastic maintenance.

Apart from the right over their estates, all the monasteries have few donated private lands and the revenue of which is devoted to a specific regular monastic ceremony. Those lands were exempted from paying taxes. Since the monks do not till the soil, they employed local people from the nearby villages to cultivate the monastery's fields. At the same time, monasteries also possessed or maintained landless servants and labourers of Lhopo origin (there were very few landless servants and labourers of Lhopo origin, and these were mainly found either in the houses of the aristocracy or were attached to the estates of the large monasteries) and they were supposed to cook, bring firewood and water for the lamas as well as cultivate the agricultural fields (Balikci, 2008).

However, after the British intervention into Sikkim in the 1880s, the traditional system of administration and collection of revenue was changed. Within the framework of the British's land settlement program implemented from 1889 onwards, Sikkim's 35 monasteries lost part or all their land holdings except for five important monasteries. These five monasteries acquired a function similar to those of the landlords or managers of the landed estates like kazis and thekadars. The head of the big monasteries also enjoyed judicial power like the clergy of European feudalism who looks after their estates, provide justice, and also helped the *Chogyal* to fight against the enemy. The leading head of the monastery called the ritual master (Tib. *Dorje-lopon*), the prior (Tib. *Omzed*) and the discipline master (Tib.*Cho-trimpa*) are collectively referred to as *Udor-chosum.* The tax collection was carried out by tax collectors (*mandal*) on behalf of the *Udor-choesum*, and the management of the estate was supervised by the monastery's secretary (Tib. *Drungyig*) also referred to as *Adda* lama (Sinha, 1975).

Moreover, dramatic changes emerged in the history of Sikkimese monasteries' landholding in the middle of the twentieth century. When India achieved its independence from the British, Sikkim also got freedom from the British but Sikkim was already under the influence of the democratic form of a government which became the foundation of New India. The political scenario in Sikkim was also changing which challenged the very authority of *Chogyal*. Many different political parties were established in Sikkim and started demanding the abolition of landlordism in Sikkim. Unfortunately, this posed a great danger to the position of the monasteries, particularly their landholdings. Under such circumstances mainly the big five monasteries were threatened and many lost their lands to the state, and some of their lands were occupied by the landless tenants who were working under the monasteries.

However, it is important to point out that, these monasteries were not deprived of their all landholdings but some of them were allowed to maintain their holdings even after the abolition of the Sikkimese landlord system in the early 1950s. But it was not like before, all the landholdings of the monasteries were brought under the control of the ecclesiastical department of the state. Though, the Pemayangtse estate remained under the direction of the *Udor-choesum* the monastery have to report to the ecclesiastical department regarding his properties and the revenues generated from the estate. While other monastic estates were transferred to the *Chogyal's* private estate ministry which was later brought under the ecclesiastical department of the state.

Hence, the history of the Sikkimese monasteries' landholding system witnessed many challenges, and it can be divided into three phases. In the first phase, Buddhist monasteries were established and granted them lands and other privileges under the *Chogyal*. During this phase, Sikkimese monasteries enjoyed many powers, like the monks of important monasteries, acted as an advisor to the king, and the head lamas were appointed as the traditional state council of the *Chogyal*. Even the monks of those monasteries played important role in turning Sikkim's political history, they sometimes acts as an army and engaged in war-like disputes to support the *Chogyal*. Thus, the monks played important role in the administrative system of the state. In the second phase encountered the British entry into this Buddhist kingdom challenged the existing tradition of landholdings of the land. During this phase, Sikkimese monasteries were threatened for the first time, and eventually, they lost many of their lands and privileges as well. And in the third phase, the monasteries lost all the powers which they have enjoyed for such a long time and most importantly they lost many of their landholdings to the state in the name of development.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sikkim after becoming a Buddhist kingdom under the Namgyal dynasty adopted a theocratic form of government based on the Tibetan style with little difference. Protecting and establishing the Buddhist religion became one of the important priorities of the *Chogyal*. Hence, many Buddhist institutions like monasteries and chortens (stupas) were constructed under the patronage of the *Chogyal* who also granted the monasteries with landed estates. The Sikkimese monasteries received landed properties from the *Chogyal* mainly to maintain their monks, and to conduct the religious services of the monastery. This tradition of granting landed estates to the Buddhist monasteries by the rulers was vogue since the time of the formation of a Buddhist *sangha* during the time of Buddha. Such tradition became popular and thus, the Sikkimese rulers also adopted this idea.

Along with the landed properties *Chogyal* also granted them prestige and rights to collect revenues from the villagers. Interestingly it is important to note that not all monasteries in Sikkim possessed landed estates. Only five big monasteries like Pemayangtse, Ralong, Rumtek, Phodong, and Phensong received large estates and became monastic landlords. The other smaller monasteries of this land owned a portion of land received from the *Chogyal*.

However, the prestige and rights enjoyed by the Sikkimese monasteries, their lamas, and monks were altered by the state when Sikkim came under the control of the British administration. John Claude White, Sikkim's first British Political Officer believes that the monks were idle and does not contribute to the revenues of the state. Therefore, under his tenure monks were charged with all kind of taxes and most

importantly the landholding monasteries were made to surrender half of their revenues to the state.

Furthermore, the history of landholding system of monasteries and the monks was not pleasing as they continued to face challenges even after the departure of the British from Sikkim in 1947. Eventually, after the abolition of the landlordism and monarchy in 1949 and 1975 respectively the tradition of monastic landholding system was also decline and abolished.

Hence, this research work explores the history as well as changing pattern of the monastic landholding system in Sikkim. This work can be divided into three phases of the history of Sikkimese monasteries. The first phase was the origin and establishment of monasteries in Sikkim in the seventeenth century, the second phase deals with the condition of Sikkimese monasteries under the British administration, and the third phase where the monasteries encountered many unfortunate changes after the abolition of the monarchy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are large numbers of works of literature available on the landholdings of Sikkim and other aspects of the state which provides valuable information but at the same time, very little literature is available on the monastic landholding in Sikkim.

Anna Balikci in her work *Lamas, Shamans and Ancestors: Village Religion in Sikkim* (Balakci, 2008) is an Anthropological work but at the same time it also provides important information regarding the history of Sikkim. This book discusses only the village called Tingchim which falls under the Phodong monastery estate. It says that until the mid-1930s, the village's headman, called *pipon*, was nominated by the elders

and was mainly responsible for taking care of the village's relations with the Phodong *mukter* (village chief), the agent of the Phodong monastery who acted as an administrator and revenue collector for the Estate's six village blocks. She also says that Tingchim villagers along with the others of the Phodong Estates did not suffer under the hands of difficult landlords or the burden of heavy taxes, as had been the case for many throughout the state. She also mentions that there were few areas in Sikkim similar to the Phodong Estate where the local population was protected from the intensive economic development which was brought up by the British at the end of the nineteenth century. However, this book did not provide detailed information about the Phodong estates but at the same time, it gives many ideas regarding the peasants of Tingchim village and their relationship with the Phodong monastery.

Economic History and Development of Sikkim- Before and After Independence (Debnath, 2009) written by Jagadish Chandra Debnath, gives a detailed history of the economic conditions of the state. His book is divided into two parts, first part mainly talked about the economic history of Sikkim during the Namgyal dynasty. In this part, he discussed how backward Sikkim's economy was and the reason behind its backwardness. According to him, religion played an important role in shaping the economic condition of this region. In this part, he also talked about how Nepalese traders brought changes in the economic condition of the state and how they turned a wasteland into agricultural land. However, this book did not give much information about the Namgyal period.

The work of Suresh Kumar Gurung, *Sikkim: Ethnicity and Political Dynamics- A Triadic Perspective* (Gurung, 2011) though it's a work on the political history of Sikkim, also talks about the Sikkimese society. He gives details of major ethnic groups of Sikkim and their history. Not only that he also briefly discussed the

economy of Sikkim, according to him, like other Himalayan states, Sikkim has also been agrarian in character based on the terrace farming system. However, this book did not give much information regarding the society and economy of the region of the early Namgyal period but he did mention the landholding pattern and collection of revenue at the beginning of the twentieth century. He also mentions a small paragraph on monastery estates where he says monastery manages their estates through *Udor-choesum* and it was their duty to maintain settlement records.

In *Economic patterns of the Tibet Autonomous Region: The Past and Present* the author (Rong, nd) mainly focuses on the relationship between Han and Tibetan ethnic groups in an economic context. Here he mentions that, for centuries, agriculture and animal husbandry have been the major economic activities in Tibet. The monasteries and govt took most of the peasant's and herdsmen's products to support monks, nobles, officials, and soldiers and to maintain religious activities and the governmental administration. The most important section of this work is the role of monasteries in Administrative and Economy, he says that the regime in Tibet before 1952 was a combination of religious institutions and civil administration. Large monasteries had their military forces and had often been involved in power struggles. Monasteries controlled estates, serfs, and handicraft workshops, and also engaged in trade and loan business. However, this work did not talk about the structures of military forces maintained by the monasteries and it seems that monasteries in Tibet owned their army but in Sikkim, the monks themselves act as an army. Moreover, this work did not give details of how the monasteries collected revenues from the peasants.

Denjong nang Gonday khag chik ghi Chagrab Yigcha Shug (Tsering, 2008) is a brief work on the monasteries of Sikkim compiled by Tashi Tsering. This work gives a list

of all the monasteries in Sikkim and at the same time, he also talked about the background of every monastery. He also gives a piece detailed information on some of the monastery's property mainly concerning religious belongings. Though this work is useful it did not provide much information on the monastic economy.

Karel David's article on *Monasteries, economies and states: the dissolution of monasteries in T'ang China and early modern Europe* (David, nd) says that, the establishment of monasteries in T'ang China proved to be a thorn in the economic development of the country. The author made a comparative study of the monastery's economy in China with that of Europe. He says that Enin, a Japanese monk witnessed the suppression of Buddhism under the Emperor Wu-Tsung and the imperial decrees ordained that monasteries were no longer allowed to hold landed property, that all wealth in the forms of slaves, cash, grain, clothes and the like should be handed over to the imperial authorities and that all monks and nuns under the age of forty should revert to lay status. Thus, this work is very useful in understanding the true nature of the monastic wealth in China and Europe and also to build some hypotheses for this proposed research work.

Secularism and the Buddhist Monastery of Pemayangtse in Sikkim (Vandenhelsken, 2003), this work is very useful for the scholars who are dealing with monasteries in Sikkim. This work mainly deals with the Pemayangtse monastery and does not provide information on other monasteries in this region. According to the author, the Kingdom of Sikkim had a politico-religious system in line with the concept of separate spiritual and temporal domains such as those encountered in Tibet. This study has divided into three parts where at first he focuses on Pemayangtse as a monastery of royal lamas, then on its role as an institution, and finally on its relationship to the land itself, where he gives detailed information on Pemayangtse

monastery and its estates. Although this work gives much information on the Pemayangtse monastery this work did not mention other monasteries of Sikkim which is also equally important.

The Circulation of Estates in Tibet: Reincarnation, Land and Politics is an article written by Goldstein (Goldstein, 1973). In this article, he mainly talks about how the system of reincarnations led to the redistribution of lands to the newly reincarnated lamas most importantly the Dalai Lamas. However, the important part of this work is that it gives some ideas regarding the landholding system of the monasteries in Tibet and their possession of wealth. However, many other small monasteries were supported mainly by the gifts donated by the patrons and pilgrims and infect, and most *Labrang* (monastic offices) are not huge and wealthy just like Sikkim's other small monasteries who support themselves with the gifts of the patrons. However, these types of cases are also found in Sikkim like the reincarnate lamas were granted lands but in Sikkim, most of the rulers themselves were the reincarnate lamas. This work is useful but it did not give details regarding the landholding system of the monasteries in Tibet.

Economic Functions of Monasticism in Cyprus: The Case of the Kykkos Monastery is an article written by Victor Roudometof and Michalis N. Michael (Roudometof, 2010). The article presents a comprehensive overview of the various economic activities performed by the Kykkos monastery in Cyprus in its long history (11^{th}-20^{th} centuries). The most interesting part of this work is that the authors examine the changes in monastic possessions caused by the legislation enacted by the post-1878 British colonial administration. The legislation caused the loss of extensive landholdings. This works also gives detailed information on the possessions of monastic land and its wealth. It has also mentioned how this monastery acted as a

revenue collector, trader, banker, etc. but it did not mention how much land was owned by the monastery and it also did not give details on how the British policy affected the landholding system of this monastery.

L.A. Waddell's work *Buddhism of Tibet* or *Lamaism* (Waddell, 1895) was one of the first major attempts to provide a detailed study of Buddhism in Tibet as well as Sikkim. He called Tibetan Buddhism Lamaism, however, this term was not accepted by the fourteenth Dalai Lama and many scholars who work on Tibetan history and culture. This work also provides detailed information on Buddhism in Sikkim, including its major orders and their branches. Moreover, this work says that Nyingma was the major Buddhist sect of Sikkim and he also talks about the sub-sect of Nyingma in Sikkim. Though he tried to create a division within the Nyingma sect of Sikkim this division was not popular among the followers of this faith.

Pedro Carrasco's *Land and Polity in Tibet* (Carrasco, 1959) discusses the land tenure not only of Tibet but also its adjoining regions like Sikkim and Bhutan. Though he talked about the Sikkimese land tenure system he did not give detailed information regarding Sikkim as his work was mainly based on Tibet.

Hidden Tibet: History of Independence and Occupation (Kuzmin, 2011), is one of the insightful works on Tibet where the author covers the history of Tibet from the early period till the Chinese occupation. One of the chapters of this work discusses the society and economy of Tibet. This work also provides information on how the land was divided among different institutions in Tibet, according to the author, the land was divided into three institutions the government, the aristocrats, and the monasteries. It says that the monasteries used to the possessed largest part of landed properties in Tibet. The monasteries also got the right to collect all kinds of taxes

from their subjects to maintain their large monk bodies. Since, Sikkim had social, political as well as religious connections with Tibet the *Chogyal* of Sikkim adopted the idea of granting landed estates from Tibet to support his monasteries.

Saul Mullard in his remarkable work, *Opening the Hidden Land: State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese History* (Mullard, 2011) provides valuable information on the history of Sikkim based on rich historical religious literature, and this work opened new paths of inquiry. The author says Sikkimese monarchy was based on the principles of Tibetan monarchy is the idea of the religio-political theory of state and governances: *Chos-Sid lug-nyis*. Though, not much information was provided on the lands and land ownership system of Sikkim.

Buddhist Monastic Economy: The Jisa Mechanism (Miller, 1961) according to the author, the Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries possessed their wealth through the *jisa* mechanism which means "community property" or "place of property". But in the general understanding, the monasteries gather wealth through donations and grants from rulers and lay patrons in return for religious merit. He discussed some monasteries situated in the Darjeeling district, Sikkim, and Mongolia. Though he has not had much to say regarding the Sikkimese monastic economy, he left many important questions to be answered, including how Sikkimese Monastery maintained its materials, and whether, they have a central treasury or decentralized treasury. However, he says that Darjeeling Monastery (Pedong), had a treasurer to look after the monastic property but he was free to use those materials to earn profit. But mostly, in Tibet, and Sikkim, monastic heads control the property and that head will receive certain benefits like separate land for his family and tax exemptions. However, it is interesting to note that, both in Tibet and Sikkim, the head or the incarnate lama will

receive a certain amount of property mostly land to support their families and those properties do not come under the monastic property.

Monasteries of Sikkim with Special References to the Economic Structure (Dhamala, 2008) is an article where the author provided a broad range of information on Sikkimese monasteries and their economic condition. This work is one of the most important works which deals with the economy of Sikkimese monasteries since no other such works are available on this topic. It provided information on six important monasteries of the state mainly during the late nineteenth century and twentieth century. However, this insightful work did not talk about the economic conditions of the Sikkimese monasteries during the Namgyal period.

The Prayer Wheel and Sceptre: Sikkim (Bhatachrya, 1992) discusses how Buddhism influenced and shaped the socio-political structure of Sikkimese people from the very early period. According to her Buddhism reached Sikkim from Tibet along with the three lamas who established the Namgyal dynasty on Tibetan lines. As in Tibet, Buddhism was the main feature of the socio-political life of Sikkim. The rulers were the Dharma-rajas having both spiritual and temporal powers and the lamas were not only the spiritual aids but also the guards and guides for the administration of the kingdom. Hence, the political system in Sikkim was based on the pattern of the Lamaist theocracy of Tibet. Thus it can be noted that Lamaist Buddhism controlled the duties of the rulers or the *Chogyal* (*Dharma-raja*) and the monk guided and advised the rulers on every matter of the administration, therefore, the monastery also was a very important institution of the kingdom. It can be noticed that, from the very early times, monks and the monastery played important role in shaping the feudal society of Sikkim and this system continued till the end of British rule in Sikkim as the author has mentioned that even during the time of J C White, the most influential

people were the lamas of Sikkim in the administrative council who were also provided with land and other facilities at Darjeeling. However, this work is very informative and helpful but at the same time, most of the information belongs to the British period.

The Himalayan Gateway: History and Culture of Sikkim (Kotturan, 1983) provided insightful knowledge about Sikkim, the author gave detailed information on Sikkim's history from the origin of the Namgyal dynasty to the abolition of the Namgyal dynasty. He also discussed Sikkimese Buddhism and the monastic culture of this region. However, this work does not discuss anything on landed properties and the rights of monasteries granted by the *Chogyal* of Sikkim.

State Government and Politics: Sikkim (Sengupta, 1985) though this works mainly deals with the political issues of the state at the same time the author also discusses the monastery and the monastic education of Sikkim. He says that the monasteries were the main centers of all social activities since the monasteries and the monks were involved on all occasions in the life of Sikkimese Buddhists. Moreover, this work also provided information on how the monasteries of Sikkim lost their political and economic privileges after the migration of constitutional democracy.

Chogyal's Sikkim: Tax, Land & Clan Politics (Tran, 2012) has discussed the ownership of land and the taxation system in Sikkim. He points out that the land in Sikkim belonged to *Chogyal* and people cultivate the land in return for various kinds of taxes and duties. The author also mentions that the monasteries possessed lands granted to them by Chogyals and collected revenues from the villagers. Interestingly, concerning monastery lands, he says that most of the tenants were a follower of

Hindus and pays taxes to the Buddhist lords. However, this work does not give much information on monastery lands and their tax collection.

Alex McKay's *The Mandala Kingdom*: *A Political History of Sikkim* (McKay, 2021) provides a great deal of information on the political history of Sikkim, particularly on the Namgyal dynasty. It gives a detailed insight into the formation of the Namgyal dynasty and also the severe humiliations faced by the rulers of this kingdom under the British, particularly J.C. White who was the first British Political Officer of Sikkim. According to him, J.C. White didn't try to learn the tradition and culture of the land before imposing any of his new rules and regulations upon the people and the rulers. This book also provides a piece of information on monasteries mainly the big six monasteries of Sikkim and their relationship with the ruling elites of Sikkim. Moreover, this constructive work gives much information on Sikkimese monasteries and their lamas, and their contribution to the establishment of this kingdom.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the present study are:

1) To study the landholding system of the monasteries in Sikkim and to analyze how they collected the revenues from the tenants who fall under monastic estates.
2) To examine how the monastic houses maintained their property including land, forest, and servants or slaves, and to study how these monasteries maintained their relationship with the villagers.

3) To study how the British land settlement program changed the traditional landholding system of the monastic houses and the impact of those changes on the condition of Sikkimese monasteries and their lamas.
4) To analyze the changes in the monastery landholding system during the post-British period in Sikkim and to examine how the new political developments brought changes in the existing traditional setup of the kingdom whose main motive was to reduce the power of the *Chogyal* of Sikkim and to form a democratic form of a government.

METHODOLOGY

Methods applied for the construction of this historical research work were studying the primary sources like documents and records in the form of government files which are available in the State Archive, Private Museum, and National Institute of Tibetology. Other important sources like letters, historical documents, and other works which are in the Tibetan language from Sikkimese Palace Archive are read and analyzed. Moreover, there is some Government of Sikkim Records in the State Archive. This work mainly deals with the monasteries and their economy therefore various records and bills which are maintained in the different monasteries are also used.

Old journals and articles on Sikkim from the Asiatic Society of Bengal as well as the Centre for Himalayan Studies were also used. About secondary sources, an immense of works have been done on the history of Sikkim, and most of them are available in the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, State Central Library, Sikkim State Library, District Libraries of Sikkim, and Centre for Himalayan Studies, North Bengal

University. Moreover, online works are also read and consulted through a website like *eap.bl.uk/project/EAP800* Fragments of Sikkim: Preserving and Presenting the Palace Archives of the Himalayan Kingdom, 1875-1975.

CHAPTARIZATION

This thesis contains six chapters and the first chapter is an introduction that includes a statement of the problem, literature review, objectives, methodology, and chapterization.

Chapter two, History of Buddhist monasteries in Sikkim deals with the origin of Buddhist monasteries and how these monasteries flourished in Sikkim.

The third chapter, Monastic Landholding in Sikkim focuses on the monastic landholding system of Sikkim mainly under the Namgyal period. It also examines how these monasteries collected revenues from the peasants and their relationship with the villagers who come under the monastery estates.

The fourth chapter, Impact of British Administration on Monastic Economy explains the changes encountered by the monasteries under the British administration in Sikkim. It also explains how monasteries and their monks were deprived of their traditional rights granted by the *Chogyal*.

The fifth chapter, Monasteries in Sikkim from 1947-1975, this chapter mainly focuses on the changes faced by the monasteries after the departure of the British from Sikkim. It also describes the challenges faced by the monasteries after the abolition of monarchy which eventually led the monasteries to give up their rights over their landed estates.

Chapter six is the conclusion and this last chapter contains the summary of the above chapters.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF BUDDHIST MONASTERIES IN SIKKIM

Buddhism spread to the outside world from its homeland (India) and was deeply rooted in Tibet where Sikkim received its Mahayana Buddhism when a group of people called *Lhopo*[1] migrated towards the land of rice known as *Denzong* in Tibetan probably in the middle of the seventeenth century. The lamas of the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism could not survive under the newly formed or reformed sect called Gelug and thus fled to Sikkim and established their influence by introducing the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Hence, Mahayana Buddhism became the state religion, as well as many monasteries of Nyingma, were constructed to preserve and promote Buddhism in Sikkim. With the support of royal patronage, the lamas constructed *gonpas* (monasteries) which became the centres of teaching and learning and also the centers of local administration[2].

The Buddhist monastery is a central feature of the Buddhist tradition and has been so since the early development of Buddhism. The origin of the monastery goes back to the time when the Buddhist monks wandered around for knowledge and food. There was a problem with spending the whole year wandering. For about four months, the roads and tracks are covered with water during the rainy season, and it was not easy to move around the country. There was also a moral question that wandering around in water may cause harm to living beings and plants. Thus to spare those animals, as per the Buddhist tradition, Buddha established a rule that monks would not travel during

[1] *Lhopo* literally means people of southern region.

[2] The name for a Buddhist monastery in both Tibetan and Sikkimese is *Gonpa* meaning a solitary place. Miller says that, "any unit where in there is a resident body of monks will be called Monastery" (Miller, 1959: 12).

the monsoon season. Initially, the Buddha and his followers or disciples spent time till the rain retreat wherever they were offered shelter. But later, a lay disciple named Anathapindika constructed a building for the Buddhist monks during *Vassa* (annual rain retreat). Though the Buddha and his disciple did not stay in this complex year round, it was called the first Buddhist monastery. However, this type of settlement eventually turned into regular monastic communities called the *sangha*, originally meaning 'assembly,' which was regarded as the oldest form of monasticism in the history of religions. It was not known when this process had begun, but it was clear that the *Sangha* formed during the life of the Buddha himself (Snellgrove, 2002: 305). Due to this, it seems that already in the times of Buddha, there was a tradition of staying in one place for the rainy season. Therefore, it can be assumed that the origin of the Buddhist monastic tradition goes back to these rainy season retreat dwellings. Moreover, in Tibetan Buddhist tradition, this rainy season retreat is considered essential and celebrated as *Yarnay,*[3] during which time the monks are not allowed to go outside the monastery and observe religious rites inside the monastery chapel.

Robson has also mentioned thus:

> although the precise historical details remain unclear, the story that is often told about the origin of Buddhist monastic tradition is that a coenobitic Buddhist monastic community evolved out of a collection of wanderers (*parivrajaka*) who had set forth from the household (*pravrajya*) and travelled without a permanent abode, except during the rainy season when they would take up temporary lodgings. Eventually, the temporary rainy season retreat began to extend into the dry season and the temporary retreat huts came to be replaced by elaborate

[3]*Yarney,* from the full moon of the 6th lunar month (*Chuto*) until the new moon of the 8th lunar month (*Trum*) of the Tibetan calendar, the monks gather themselves to observe their annual rainy season retreat for six weeks.

> shelters that were provided by wealthy patrons. Buddhism is thus marked by the way its postulants are said to "leave home," renounce "the world," join the family of the Buddha (*samgha*), and take up residence in a monastery, where the communal lives of the monks and nuns was governed by a set of detailed rules (*vinaya*) that pertained to issues of individual behaviour, communal living, and liturgy. Monasteries were, according to this telling, the primary abodes for monks, the locus of their activities, and central to the functioning of Buddhism as an institution (Robson, 2010: 3-4).

However, in ancient times, the Buddhist monastery was known as *vihara* or *arama*, a dwelling place or residence for monks or nuns. Initially, viharas were meant for enjoyment, but in due course of time, many wealthy families donated these residences to the Buddhist *sangha* for dwelling purposes. Progressively, this *vihara* or dwelling place turned into an organized *sangha* and became the foundation of the Buddhist tradition. Thus, the term *vihara*, *arama*, or *sangha* came to be referred to as monastery (Bajracharya, 1995: 141-143).

The Buddhist *sangha* played a significant role in the extraordinary development of Buddhism, and in the history of religion, it was regarded as the oldest form of monasticism. In the beginning, it was mainly comprised of only male disciples who devout themselves in the Buddha's *Dhamma*. Still, later it was joined by a female-led by Mahaprajapati, the Buddha's foster mother. As more members joined the monastic community, the number of rules and regulations redacted in time to maintain communal unity and monastic order and safeguard the longevity of the Buddhist tradition (Kawanami, 2014: 1-2). However, this communal harmony could not survive for an extended period as after a hundred years of Mahaparinirvana of Shakyamuni[4], various sects came into existence. It was after the First Great Council held at Vaishali,

[4]Buddha is revered as Shakyamuni.

that the Buddhist monks began to have differences among themselves, mainly concerning *Vinaya* and the Teachings of the Buddha, and they split into two groups or schools - the Mahasamgika - the Great Community, which was later changed to Mahayana and the Theravada later called as Hinayana or Lesser Vehicle. Gradually, from these sects, more than eighteen sects came into existence (Kumar, 2002: 1-5).

Thus, after the death of Shakyamuni, numerous schools and sub-schools appeared. The Mahayana (The Greater Vehicle) and the Hinayana (The Lesser Vehicle), which came up in the 1st century A.D., are differentiated mainly by the doctrines or monastic discipline they followed. Later it became more complicated when the new texts appeared and claimed that the founder of Buddhism himself spoke them. Many of the older texts were redacted, and many new materials were incorporated into it to make it further confusing. According to Powers, "Since Buddhism has no centralized authority and no ecclesiastical body that oversees the purity of the doctrine and canon, the treatises and teachings of Buddhism were open to revision" (Powers, 1995: 101).

Eventually, after the division of Buddhism into numerous schools, the monks started spreading their tradition (Theravada or Hinayana) to various countries like Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, etc. The Mahayana is deeply rooted in China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tibet, and Taiwan. Though there are many similarities between these two schools regarding the teachings of the Buddha, there are some aspects where both the school differ from each other (Barua, 2015: 8). The significant differences are the concept of *Boddhisattvas*. The fourth council[5] of Buddhism developed exorcism, and from it arose the *dharani* formulae for the schism of the

[5]The fourth council was held in the first century A.D. under the patronage of Kanishka of Kushan dynasty and headed by Vasumitra at Kashmir. The division of Buddhism in two sects like Hinayana and Mahayana was the outcome of this council (Pokharel, 2018: 44).

"Northern" and "Southern" Schools. The Southern School is the more primitive and purer form; it includes Buddhism's Burmese, and Ceylonese forms. Its sacred language is Pali. The Northern School comprises the states of Buddhism current in Kashmir, Mongolia, China, Manchuria, Japan, Nepal, Tibet, and Sikkim. Its sacred language is Sanskrit. The schism was brought by the Mahayana doctrine, an atheistic and metaphysical form of Buddhism introduced by a monk named Asvagosha and especially advocated by Nagarjuna, whose name was closely identified with it. Its chief work is the *Prajna Paramita* which recognizes several grades of numerous divine Boddhisattvas, or beings who have arrived at perfect wisdom. Yet, consent to remain a creature for the good of other beings, who must therefore be worshiped, and to whom prayers must be addressed. Mythology and mysticism followed mainly from the growth of the Mahayana school and its extension amongst races of devil worshippers. Mysticism reached its fullest in the *Tantrik* doctrines (mixture of Siva-worship and magic), which spread throughout India in the sixth and seventh century A.D., affecting both Buddhism and Hinduism. Arya Asanga, a Buddhist monk of Peshawar, who lived about 300 A.D., has introduced Tantricism into Buddhism. Tantricism teaches yogism and incantations addressed mainly to female 'energies' like the Hindu Saktis or divine mothers, by which men may gain miraculous powers which may be used for purely selfish and secular objects. At an early date, Buddhists worshipped the *bodhi* tree[6] under which the Buddhahood[7] was attained. The monument contained Buddha's relics and the images of these two objects together with the wheel as symbolic of the teaching.

[6]Bodhi tree is a fig tree and referred by other name like Peepal tree under which Shakyamuni achived his nirvava or Buddhahood. The scientific name of this tree is Ficus Religiosa.

[7]Buddhahood, basically means achieving nirvana or the state of Buddha through practices of Buddhist doctrines and meditations.

Northern Buddhism had reached an impure stage when it was introduced into Tibet about the middle of the seventh century A.D. Lamaism is referred to as a form of Northern Buddhism or Mahayana but the Tibetan Buddhists considered it a pure form of Mahayana Buddhism. It dates back over a century later than the first entry of Buddhism into Tibet. In the meantime, Tantricism in Tibet had significantly increased, and at about the same time, the doctrine of the Kalachakra or supreme deity, the source of all things, also called Adi Buddha Samantabhadra (Tib. Kuntu Zangpo) accepted by the Tibetan Buddhists (Risley, 1894: 244). However, monasticism remained fundamental to both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhist philosophies (Goldstein, 2010).

INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM IN TIBET

Buddhism in Sikkim owes its origin to Tibet and Tibetan monks. Therefore it is crucial to study how Buddhism reached Tibet and why it came down to Sikkim. Centuries after the nirvana of Shakyamuni[8], several sects of Buddhist philosophies (more than eighteen sects of Buddhism existed, but only three survived today) came into existence and travelled to various countries. One of the important countries which were considered to be the upholder of Buddhism was Tibet. According to the legends, Buddhism for the first time reached Tibet during the reign of the twenty-third monarch of the Yarlung dynasty. But according to the traditional history, the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet took place during the reign of King Songtsen Gompo (c.618-650), who was considered the *Chogyal* or Religious King of Tibet (Powers, 1995: 144). Buddhism first moved towards China and then the whole Far

[8]Shakyamuni means sage of the Shakya clan. Shakyamuni was born around 490 B.C. to a royal family of Lumbini (present day Nepal).

East from the first century A.D. onwards. Still, it was when Songtsen Gompo and his military forces captured the regions of Central Asia, that they encountered Buddhism, which was already prevalent in Central Asia and China (Snellgrove, 2002: 324).

The next great religious King was Trisong Detsen (c. 740-798), who was considered an incarnation of Manjusri (*Boddhisatva*). He was a devout Buddhist and took a personal interest in propagating the *dhamma*[9]. He requested Shantaraksita, a great Indian scholar also in in-charge of Nalanda University, to visit Tibet. Few ministers opposed the visit of Shantaraksita as they followed their traditional faith called Bon. It was also said that Shantaraksita was forced to leave Tibet because a series of natural disasters occurred during his mission, and people believed that Bon deities or spirits caused them. At this juncture, Santaraksita advised the King to invite the tantric master Padmasambhava to bring peace to the spirits of Bon. According to Powers, it is believed that:

> Padmasambhava knew in advance that the King would invite him to Tibet, and so when the messenger arrived he was already prepared to leave. When he entered the outer reaches of Tibet, demonic forces sought to bar his progress by sending a huge snowstorm. He retreated to a cave and entered into a deep meditative absorption, and through this was able to defeat them. As he travelled toward central Tibet, the demons and deities of the country massed against him, but his power was so great that he single-handedly defeated them all. The people were amazed that a single man could challenge their powerful demons to personal combat and triumph (Powers, 1995: 148).

As a result, Padmasambhava was able to overcome opposition from the Tibetan ministers. After that, Trisong Detsen, Padmasambhava, and Santaraksita established Buddhism in Tibet by founding its first monastery at Samye, which was known as

[9] In Buddhism *dhamma* is the doctrine that is the universal truth taught by Buddha himself.

Samye Monastery. When the monastery was completed, seven Tibetans received monastic vows, and their ordination was considered to be the installation of monastic Buddhism in Tibet.

Thus the monastic tradition of Buddhism established by Padmasambhava in Tibet came to be known as Lamaism. Lamaism is a mixture of Buddhism with a large amount of mythology, mysticism, and magic, and believes in the doctrine of incarnate lamas and the canonized saints (Risley, 1894: 245).

It was also believed that to establish the new religion among the Tibetans, who were the followers of the Bon faith, Padmasambhava compromised some of their religious beliefs by incorporating Bon deities or spirits into Buddhist culture. Moreover, he also adopted many Bon customs and rituals into Buddhism. Thus, Buddhism, which was already modified in India, became transformed when it reached Tibet.

During this period, another important aspect of Buddhism also developed in Tibet that of Buddha as a transcendent being manifested himself in many Buddhas and Boddhisattvas. It was said that this idea of Buddhahood is the characteristic of Mahayana Buddhism. Still, it has been an essential of Tibetan Buddhism associated with the belief in rebirth and incarnation. According to this tradition, it is said that Boddhisattvas take birth out of their own free will in any form to impart Buddhist teachings to other sentient beings so that they can achieve salvation as it is the only reality that was striving for salvation or Nirvana could end all sufferings. Moreover, it is said that Nagarjuna suggested the path of esoteric to attain Nirvana. Thus, this form of wisdom spread in Tibet and was adopted by the people in their daily life. In Tibet, not only the Buddhas and Boddhisattvas but also all Lamas and holy men manifest themselves to the next incarnate thereby. N.C. Sinha remarked that “what appears as

superstition to a foreigner is a matter of symbolism to a Tibetan, whether literate or illiterate" (Sinha, 1991: 19). Thus, Buddhism that entered Tibet was not a pure form of Buddhism taught by Buddha himself. The Tantric form of Buddhism was incorporated by many native religious traditions, which made Tibetan Buddhism unique from other parts of the world and gained the appellation of Lamaism.

Finally, in the year 1042 A.D., Atisha, a Buddhist scholar from India, started a reform movement within Tantric Buddhism as he found changes in the original or authentic doctrines of Tantric Buddhism and encouraged the monks to study original Tantric scriptures. Moreover, the most significant reformer Atisha tried to introduce the idea of celibacy within the monastic community of Tibet, which the monks of Tibet have not observed. Though Atisha tried to bring reform by introducing celibacy within the Tibetan monk community, he was unsuccessful. But his students fulfilled his dream by introducing reforms, which ultimately led to the division within the community.

One of the Atisha's students, Dromtson (1005-64), started a new sect called "Kadam," then only the early Buddhist sect of Tibet, Padmasambhava established that came to be called as "Nyingma" or Red hat sect since they wear a red hat. Apart from these two sects, two semi-reformed sects of "Kagyu" and "Sakya" also came into existence (Waddell, 1895: 60). However, with time, another wave of reform movement started probably in the 15th century by a learned lama named Tsongkhapa who changed the name of the Kadam sect to Gelug or yellow hat sect. Moreover, the reform movement of this sect achieved success as they had received great support from the Mongol emperor, who was having an influence on Tibet.

THE FOUR IMPORTANT SECTS OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

By the time of the seventeenth century, there were four major sects of Tibetan Buddhism. It is important to note that all the sects were equally essential and shared their doctrines and teachings. There was no such division between these sects or schools as they all practiced the teachings of Buddha with some variations, but there were no clear-cut divisions. These sects or schools were mainly concerned with the particular lineage of teachers and disciples. For instance, a specific teacher teaches to his disciples, who again becomes a master and teaches to another disciple, who usually incorporates their idea of *Dhamma*. The process goes on, which ultimately leads to the growth of different sects or schools.

Nyingma

Many believed that Nyingma School is the unreformed school of Tibetan Buddhism, but most scholars say that it is the teachings taught by Padmasambhava at Samye Monastery (the first monastery of Tibet). The Nyingmapa or the followers of the Nyingma School regarded Padmasambhava as 'Guru' or 'Lopon,' meaning teacher, and worshiped him as the second Buddha. The lamas of this sect wear red hats to distinguish themselves from other sects. The important teachings of the Nyingma School were the *triyana*[10] structure, which propagated the three vehicles of Buddhism. This teaching was further divided into nine *yanas* or vehicles for liberation. They are as follows:

1. Hearer's Vehicle (*Sravaka Yana*)

[10]*Triyana* means the three vehicles in Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism comprises the teachings of the three vehicles called *Thekpa-sum* in Tibetan. These are Hinayana (*Thek-men*), small raft or path for individual liberation; Mahayana (*Thek-chen*), large raft or path which focuses on universal liberation and the last is Vajrayana (*Dorje-thekpa*), the tantric path which focuses mainly on liberation through meditation, and rituals (Tharpa, 2018: 38-39).

2. Solitary Realizer's Vehicle (*Pratyaka* Buddha's Vehicle)
3. Boddhisattva Vehicle
4. *Kriya Tantra*
5. *Carya Tantra*
6. *Yoga Tantra*
7. *Mahayoga*
8. *Anuyoga*
9. *Atiyoga* (*Dzogchen*)

The Nyingmapas also had a special place for the texts known as the '*terma,'* which they considered very important along with the nine *yanas*. According to legends, these *termas* were written by Padmasambhava himself when he was travelling to Tibet. However, he realized that the people of Tibet were not ready for these teachings. Therefore, he had hidden them in different caves, assuring that they were to be rediscovered when the conditions were suitable for such teachings. The practitioners who discovered the *termas* were called *tertons* or *terma* revealers. Many of the important *tertons* are Sangye Lingpa (1000-1080), Guru Chowang (1212-1270), Rigzin Godem (1307-1408), Pema Lingpa (1450-1521), Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820-1892) and Orgyen Chokyur Lingpa (1829-1870) (Shakya, 2006: 5).

Moreover, the monks of the Nyingma School are less exclusively monastic, and some of the famous Nyingma lamas are not monks or, sometimes, laymen with families. They do not follow celibacy as the monks of other Schools do, and therefore the lama of Nyingma School was considered by other sects as unreformed and bad. The most important monastery of this sect is Mindrolling Monastery and Dzogchen Monastery.

Geluk

This sect was formed by Dromtson, Atisha's student, as Kadam sect, which was later transformed and reformed by Tsongkhapa, who renamed it, Geluk probably in 1407 AD. Further, the lamas of this sect wear a yellow hat to distinguish themselves from the Nyingma sect or Red hat sect. This sect became most dominant and occupied both spiritual and temporal powers by establishing the hierarchy of the Dalai Lama in 1640. Though it got reformed under Tsongkhapa, it was based on the doctrine of Kadam with particular emphasis on discipline, purity, knowledge, and higher attainments. Waddell points out, "Tsongkhapa gathered together the scattered members of the Kadam-pa and housed them in monasteries, under rigorous discipline. He made them carry a begging bowl and wear a garment of a yellow colour after the fashion of Indian Buddhists" (Risley, 1894: 245). The most important rules of this sect were that the monks should not be involved in wine and marriage.

Whereas Goldstein mentioned, "Geluk-pa on the other hand, emphasized celibacy and scholasticism as prerequisites to more advanced tantric studies and practices and seeing themselves as returning to "pure" Buddhism. This placed them in conflict with the older and then dominant Red Hat sects, which advocated "instantaneous" practices to attain enlightenment and were less concerned with celibacy and study. The Gelukpa, in turn, viewed these Red Hat practices as corruptions and debasement" (Goldstein, 2014), as Miller called it as "Old" or "unreformed" sect (Miller, 1961: 197-203).

Kagyu

This sect was founded by a lama named Marpa in the latter half of the eleventh century A.D. who had visited India and received teachings from Tilopa (988-1069)

and Naropa (1016-1100), who were considered great Indian teachers. The name Kagyu means “teaching lineage,” according to Powers, “its adherents claimed that the doctrines and practices are passed down through a succession of awakened teachers, each of whom directly understands the true nature of reality through spontaneous, non-conceptual awareness and then transmits the essence of his or her teachings to the next generation of meditators” (Powers, 1995: 399). For example, Tilopa transmitted his teachings orally to his student Naropa, and on the other hand, Naropa also transmitted his teachings to Marpa, who became his student. Later on, Marpa returned to Tibet and preached the Buddhist teachings, that he learned in India. Marpa’s famous student was the great Tibetan yogi named Milarepa (1040-1123). Accordingly, Milarepa also got many disciples. Among them, Gampopa became very renowned (Evans-Wentz, 2004: 12).

The Kagyu order was further divided into ‘the four great and the eight lesser sub-sects. The four great sub-sects were derived from Gampopa, and they are:

1) Karma Kagyu
2) Tselpa Kagyu
3) Baram Kagyu and
4) Pakmo Kagyu

The eight lesser sub-sects are:

1) Drikung Kagyu
2) Taklung Kagyu
3) Tropu Kagyu
4) Drukpa Kagyu
5) Mar Kagyu

6) Yerpa Kagyu
7) Shuksep Kagyu and
8) Yamsang Kagyu (Powers, 1995: 402)

However, out of eight lesser sub-sects, only three Drukpa, Drikung, and Taklung survived.

This lineage started with ascetic, iconoclastic hermits but later developed into large monasteries. The credits for bringing such changes were given to Gampopa, the disciple of Milarepa. He received the teachings of Milarepa and incorporated them into a system of coenobitic monasticism. He combined the yogic practices and meditational techniques of the early Kagyu teachers with the monastic structures of the Kadam (at present Geluk-pa). Thus, the teachings of Milarepa and his predecessors were preserved within a monastic framework (Powers, 1995).

Sakya

The Sakya takes its name from the Sakya Monastery in Western Tibet, founded by Khon Konchog Gyalpo (1034-1102). The term Sakya refers to the light yellow colour of the soil or pale earth of that locality. The founder of this sect mixed with the old and new dispensations of the *tantras*, calling his tantric system *sanagnag-sar-nying*. This sect also incorporated Nyingma scriptures and traditions into their faith. Moreover, this sect promoted a different style of monastic succession where the position of the head lamas was generally passed down to the family members. Thus, many of the influential masters of this sect were non-celibate yogis or sages (Ghimire, 2014: 7-8).

Hence, Buddhism, notably Mahayana Buddhism, reached Tibet from India through many great teachers and flourished there. Eventually, many great lamas and sages

emerged in Tibet who studied Buddhism and came up with their teachings and ideas. Gradually, the teachings and ideas of these learned lamas gave birth to different sects and sub-sects in Tibetan Buddhism. Moreover, Tibetan Buddhism travelled outside Tibet and established its dominance in other kingdoms like Sikkim.

INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM IN SIKKIM

As said earlier, Buddhism had travelled from India to Tibet, and from there, it moved to Sikkim[11]. It was first introduced in Sikkim sometime in the mid-seventeenth century. Some believed that during the eighth and ninth centuries, Padmasambhava, on his way back to India from Tibet, had visited Sikkim and sown the seeds of Buddhism. Three periods have been identified regarding the introduction and spread of Buddhism in Sikkim: Introduction, Development, and the Final spread (Dhamala, 2008: 123).

Namgyal and Dolma expressed Buddhism in Sikkim in Tibetan style, i.e., "the earliest, the middle and the latter triumphs." The first period or the earliest stage coincides with Padmasambhava's visit to Tibet during Trisong Detsen in the eighth century. It is believed that the Guru Padmasambhava visited Sikkim and blessed the

[11] It was believed that, the reason for the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism in Sikkim was due to the religious upheaval in Tibet. During eleventh or twelfth century Atisha went to Tibet from India and introduce reformation within the existing Mahayana Buddhism and established a new sect known as Kadam which was later transformed into Geluk by Tsongkapa. This reformed sect was also called Yellow Hat sect which also occupied political power in central Tibet with the help of Mongol ruler Gushri Khan under the hierarch of the fifth Dalai Lama and became the sovereign of Tibet in 1642 (Goldstein, 2014). However, the followers of Nyingma or Red Hat sect could not readily accept this supremacy of the Geluk either in religious or in political sphere in Tibet. Under such circumstances, the Nyingma left with no other option than to move towards other region in order to establish and preserve their sect. In that way, the Nyingma lamas came down to southern parts of the Himalayan region mainly Sikkim and Bhutan and established Nyingma form of Mahayana Buddhism.

land on his journey to Tibet. He stayed in Sikkim, meditating in the caves, and got rid of all hindrances that would tend to disturb the course of devotional practices and meditation. He then compiled several works, which were kept hidden under rocks and in the caves known as *Terma* to be revealed later on. Secondly, the middle period of growth was when the great incarnate treasure extractor *Terton* Rigzin Godkyi Demphru-chen came miraculously and got the images of Guru Drag-Po and Thing-Ka. He spent long periods in devotional and meditation in western and northern passes and blessed the mount Kanchenjunga. Finally, past the final triumph, the authors opined that the four prophesied monks came from Tibet and took actual possession of the land, i.e., Sikkim, in 1642 (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908:7-9).

However, as mentioned by Namgyal and Dolma, the first and second phases of development were much trapped in mythology, though it is not unlikely that certain monks might have visited Sikkim and preached Buddhism even before the arrival of those three lamas. Contrary to it, some sources believed that the spread of Buddhism to Sikkim started after the arrival of three monks from Tibet. It is said that the three monks, Lhatsun Namkha Jigme, better known as Lhatsun Chenpo, Kartok Kunto Zangpo, and Ngadak Sempa Phuntsok Rigzin came to Sikkim from different directions, and Lhatsun Chenpo came from the north via Dzongri, the Kartok Lama entered through west via Singalila and Ngadak Lama from the south via Namchi (Dhamala, 2008: 124).

Namgyal and Dolma explained the third stage, or the final triumph, based on the popular legends in Sikkim. According to legends, the introduction of Buddhism into Sikkim dates from the time of Lhatsun Chenpo's arrival in the middle of the seventeenth century A.D. During this time, two other Nyingma Lamas also came to Sikkim. These three lamas established their Buddhist faith by forming the theocratic

kingdom in Sikkim as the proto-type of Tibetan Lamaist hierarchy. They assembled at Yuksam and discussed the plans of their mission. The three lamas held here a council at which Lhatsun Chenpo said, "Here are we three lamas in a new and irreligious country. We must have a dispenser of gifts (i.e., a king) to rule the country on our behalf." Then the Ngadak lama mentioned that he was the descendent of the celebrated Terton Nga-dak Nyang-rel, who was a governor therefore he should be the king. After hearing that Kartok lama also declared, that as he was of royal lineage he has the right to rule. Then Lhatsun Chenpo said, the Guru Rinpoche's prophesy mentioned that four noble brothers shall meet in Sikkim, and they would arrange for its government. And according to the prophecy of Guru, they decided to find a fourth noble one (Risley, 1894: 249). Thus, Lhatsun Chenpo handled the issues by saying that all of them were lamas and they need a layman to rule the kingdom righteously. Then they formed a search party to find a man named Phuntsok in the east direction. After finding the man, the three lamas consecrated him as the first king of Sikkim in 1642 A.D. He was declared as *Chogyal* meaning *Dharmaraja* and bestowed two spiritual and temporal powers. It is also said that Lhatsun Chenpo gave his surname Namgyal. Hence the Namgyal dynasty was established in Sikkim (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908: 18).

Whatever the mythology and legends say, the available sources explain that the Tibetan settlers started to enter and settle in Sikkim probably from the eleventh century. They called this region 'Beyul Demozong', meaning the hidden land of rice. Along with the settlers, Mahayana Buddhism also entered Sikkim. Before the arrival of Tibetans, the Lepchas claimed to be the aborigine of Sikkim, and they called themselves 'Rongkup.' They were the followers of shamanism and believed in nature worship. Along with the Lepchas, Limboos were also early settlers of the region.

Once Buddhism entered Sikkim along with the Tibetans, many Lepchas and Limboos were converted to the Nyingma sect of Buddhism.

Thus Sikkim became the follower of the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism also called Lamaism right from its establishment.[12]As in Tibet, in Sikkim also celibacy was not observed strictly, or most of the practitioners and masters were non-celibate tantric and yogis as per the Nyingma sect.

Whatever may be the case Sikkimese lamas and the people attributed their life to preserving the Nyingma sect and continued to follow the doctrines and teachings of this sect. Accordingly, the Nyingmapas (followers of Nyingma) of Sikkim worshipped Guru Padmasambhava as their main deity and considered him the second Buddha (Kotturan, 1983: 46-49). Moreover, as already mentioned most Nyingma masters and yogis were married and did not take that particular vow of celibacy. This system is still rooted in Sikkim as most lamas in Sikkim are house-holders. As they do not follow the doctrine of reincarnation, as Hooker mentioned that "I never heard of any Sikkimese lama arriving at such sanctity as to be considered immortal, and to reappear after death in another individual, nor is there any election of infants" (Balakci, 2008: 61). Generally, in Nyingma tradition, the lineage is carried out from father to son and sometimes from master to disciple. Still, sometimes we can also find the reincarnation system, as in the case of Jigme Pao, who was considered the reincarnation of Lhatsun Chenpo.

According to Waddell, when the Nyingma form of Tibetan Buddhism came to Sikkim, it was divided into three sub-sects according to the lineage of the three

[12]The Nyingma or "Old School" represents the unreformed style of Tibetan Buddhism.

pioneer Lamas, i.e., Ngadak, Lhatsun, and Kartok, (Waddell, 1895: 73).They were Ngadak-pa, Lhatsun-pa, and Kartok-pa.

NGADAK-PA

Ngadak-pa sub-sect was named after its founder Ngadak Phuntsog Rigzin,[13] who was considered one of the pioneer lamas of Sikkim. Ngadak sect gives importance to the Terton work of Rigzin Godem as a code of ritual in their monasteries (Risley, 1894: 251).

[13] Ngadak Phuntsok Rigzin was born in 1592 and he came from a royal lineage but his father lost his kingdom which made him to wander throughout his life till he reached Sikkim. He carried on his religious life and became one of the great figures. He received Buddhist teachings from his father (Mahamudra teaching) and spent his life in retreat in isolated places and burial grounds like an ascetic. He also received spiritual training from his grandfather who was also a great Lama who received his Mahamudra and other teachings from a Drukpa (one of the sub-sect of Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism) Lama of Kirong. His grandfather also received teachings from another important Lama Jhampa Zangpo whose teacher was the famous Yangter Lodoe Gyaltsen the lineage holder of Rigzin Godemkhen treasure cycles. Accordingly Phuntsok Rigzin received teachings from his grandfather on these lineages which is why one can find the role of Yangter in the monasteries particularly the Ngadak sub-sect. He then succeeded his grandfather in the Gtsang court and as a result he became renowned lama and began to receive sponsorship for the establishment of retreat sites and monasteries. Later when the Mongol influence increased in Tibet under the Dalai Lama, Ngadak Phuntsok Rigzin decided to journey towards south (Demozong/Sikkim). Actually, his family was associated with the anti-Gelug group which later made him to flee towards Sikkim. He reached Sikkim with his son and few attendants. It was believed that Ngadak Phuntsok Rigzin established a good relationship with the first Chogyal Phuntsok Namgyal and received support, accordingly they built Marpo Lhakhang (a small chapel) in the year 1644 at Tashiding and he took this place as his principal residence and monastic seat. It has also been stated that Ngadak Chenpo came to Sikkim earlier than Lhatsun Chenpo, therefore he was considered as the principal religious figure (Mullard, 2011: 101-112). The important or head monastery of this sect is Tashiding and Ngadak Chenpo traces his lineage from Zhigpo Lingpa (1524-1583) one of his great teacher who witnessed opposition with the third Dalai Lama (Mullard, 2011).

LHATSUN-PA

Lhatsun-pa sub-sect was named after its founder Lhatsun Chenpo or Lhatsun Namkha Jigme[14]. It was said that this sub-sect was associated with the Mindrolling Monastery, one of the most important Nyingma Monastery in Tibet. The main monastery of Lhatsun-pa was Pemayangtse Monastery in West Sikkim, and there was a tradition of sending monks from Pemayangtse Monastery to Mindrolling Monastery for study purposes (Waddell, 1895: 51).

[14] Lhatsun Namkha Jigme (1597-1653) also known as Kunzang Namgyal came from a noble family named Lhatsadpo from which his title Lhatsun is said to have originated. From early age he wanted to become a monk so he left his house and started learning *dharma* from different teachers and at different places but there are some important lamas who occupied important place in the life of Lhatsun Chenpo. They were Sonam Wangpo and Jatsun Nyingpo. It was from these two lamas he received initiations into important Nyingma terma traditions. It is to be mentioned that from Jatson Nyingpo he received teachings of important tertons like Padma Lingpa's Kunzang Gongpa Kundu, Karma Lingpa's Shidro Gongpa Rangdrol, Sangay Lingpa's Lama Gongdue, Ratna Lingpa's Thugrub Yangnying Dupa and Ngadag Yang's Twenty-five scriptures on the eight Mahayoga deities. Moreover, Lhatsun Chenpo himself was a great *terton* or treasure reveller and a great master. He is famous for his terma which he received while doing meditation as pure visions known as Rigzin Rogrub not only in Sikkim but in Tibet as well. His teachings was revered even by the fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) and his teachings were also kept in Mindrolling Monastery one of the important Nyingma Monastery of Tibet. With regard to his arrival in Sikkim, the exact date was not found but it is said that he also had good relationship with Chogyal Phuntsok Namgyal who told him to establish a monastic community in Sikkim. Accordingly he built the Sangnag Dorjeden *Gonpa* (also called Dubdi) in the year 1647. He also constructed important stupa called Chorten Thongwa Rangdrol at Tashiding to commemorate the death of his teacher Jatson Nyingpo. Another important contribution of Lhatsun Chenpo in Sikkim was the teachings of Dzogchenand also Tibetan medicine (Mullard, 2011: 116-133; Archarya, 1997:7). Lhatsun Chenpo was also a master of *Dzogchen* tradition, the teachings of the 'Great Perfection' shared by both Nyingma and Bon (An old religious tradition of Tibet flourished before the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet.). According to Balikci "He composed Nesol (gNas gsol- 'offering to powerful sacred places') ritual text, which is a celebration of Sikkim as a *beyul*...and an offering ritual to Kanchenjunga (*gangs* snow, *chen* great, *mdzod* treasure, *lnga* five), Sikkim's mountain god, and to all the deities of the land. The *Nesol* is still one of the most important and most often performed rituals in Sikkim" (Balikci, 2008: 23). However, Mullard says that, despite all his contributions, he never received much recognition during his lifetime may be due to the privileged position occupied by Ngadak Phuntsok Rigzin (Mullard, 2011: 133).

KARTOK-PA

Not much information has been found regarding the lineage of Kartok Kuntu Zangpo. The Kartok-pa took their title from the name of the founder, which means "The Understander of the Precepts" and gave importance to the *terton* work '*Longchen Rabchung.* It has been suggested that Darjeeling, properly Dorjeling, may owe its name to the *terton* Dorje-lingpa, who visited the Kartok-pa Dolling (Dorjeling) monastery in Sikkim, of which the old Darjeeling monastery was a branch (Waddell, 1895: 78).

Though the Nyingma sect was divided into three sub-sects in Sikkim, they do not have much difference as all the sects of Nyingma professed the creed of Dzogchen or "The Great End."[15] They all give importance to Padmasambhava as Guru Rinpoche as their supreme deity. Next, they all worship Kuntu Zangpo (Skt. Samantabhadra), their special tutelary deity is Dubpa Kahgye, and their special guardian deity is Palgon Denga (Waddell, 1895). Thus, the Nyingma sub-sect in Sikkim was only differentiated from the works of the three Lamas and their monastic seats; they don't have different monastic rules introduced by these lamas. It was not merely considered a sub-sect in Sikkim because the followers treated them equally with great respect. The only difference is that they professed the monastery near their villages, whether Ngadak, Lhatsun, or Kartok.

KAGYU

The Karma Kagyu is one of the earliest surviving sub-sects of the Kagyu sect of Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism. This sect was mainly introduced by the fourth *Chogyal*

[15]Dzogchen is considered as the highest among the nine vehicles of Nyingma tradition. Dzogchen is a method of meditation for direct realization of ultimate truth.

of Sikkim, Gyurmed Namgyal (1717-1733), on his pilgrimage from Tibet. He received good hospitality at Karmapa's monastery in Tibet while he was wandering as a hermit. Thus he promised to construct a monastery for Karmapa in Sikkim to give honor to the Karmapa Lama. Accordingly, he built the Ralong monastery in the south district of Sikkim named 'Karma Rabdenling' in 1730 (Dhamala, 1992: 125). Moreover, other than Karma Kagyu, one can also find the establishment of monasteries of Drukpa-Kagyu, which is another sub-sect of Kagyu School from 1850 onwards. Tashi Choelling Gon was one of the earliest Monastery of Drukpa Kagyu constructed in 1875 at Pabyuk in East Sikkim.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST MONASTERIES IN SIKKIM

Three neighbouring territories-Tibet, Bhutan, and Sikkim-unified have been stated under the fold of the Buddhist religion during the early seventeenth century. Both in Tibet and Bhutan, the monastery and *Dzong* (Tibetan terms for districts and fortified monasteries) played a dominating role during the period of unification under particular Buddhist sects: Geluk in Tibet and Drug-pa in Bhutan. On the other hand, the state of Sikkim emerged under the guidance of three lamas from Tibet, and Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism became the state religion. While both in Tibet and Bhutan, the successive heads of the state were usually the reincarnations of the previous heads, in Sikkim, religion also played a crucial role in selecting the head of the state. Though it maintained a hereditary ruling system, many a time, the hereditary head had been accepted as the reincarnation of an important religious personality.

Moreover, it has been said that the first *Chogyal* took monastic vows after the coronation. Similarly, the system of reincarnation under the fold of hereditary

succession was common in Sikkim. For instance, the eighth and the tenth Chogyals were considered reincarnations of the Karmapa lama of Tibet and recognized as the head of the Rumtek and the Phudong monasteries (Sinha, 1975: 39). Immediately after the installation of the *Chogyal,* they started either building or at least selecting a site for monasteries around Yaksum. A Stupa or *Chorten* called Tashi Wodbar was built at the coronation site at Yuksam during the time of consecration to commemorate the ceremony. This stupa was the first religious structure of Sikkim. The monastery at Dubdi (near Yuksam) was said to have been built by Lhatsun Chenpo in 1647 AD, and it is said to be the first monastery of Sikkim however, according to another source Dubdi Monastery was established in the year 1701 (Tsering, 2008). Lama Lhatsun also selected a site for Pemayangtse monastery and Rabdantse palace around 1705. At this time, Ngadak Chenpo had also built two monasteries at Tashiding, one at the junction of Barbong and Karma, and the other at Rinchenpong (Dokhampa, 1992: 36). Kartok lama built the Kartok monastery near Pakyong in East Sikkim (1840). In the course of time, monasteries were built in those selected sites (Boot, 2008: 151-183). This trend of constructing monasteries was followed by the subsequent Chogyals, who set out missionaries to different parts of Sikkim to establish shrines and propagate the *Dharma*.

Hence, during this period many monasteries were constructed by different lamas under the patronage of *Chogyal* and were mostly concentrated in West Sikkim. These monasteries – Pemayangtse, Sangacholling, Dubdi, Tashiding, and Ketchopalri were most prominent in the monastic circuit of West Sikkim. Chopel says “This ‘golden circuit’ went on to become the most important corridor in the state with the Pemayangtse – Sangha Choeling ridge as its centre as it was visually linked with other

important gonpas at Risum, Rinchenpong, Dubdi, Hungri, Silnon, Ralong, etc" (Chopel, 2011: 58).

During the period of the third *Chogyal* Chakdor Namgyal (1700-1717), Bhutan invaded Sikkim. They kept the Rabdantse palace under their control for eight long years and built several *dzongs* and Paro-gon monastery near the Pemayantse monastery. The *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal took refuge under the sixth Dalai Lama in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. There, he attended a monastic school and became a learned Buddhist scholar. During his tenure, Buddhism got a firm footing in the soil of Sikkim. Lama Jigme Pao (the third reincarnation of Lhatsun Chenpo) came to Sikkim in l709 and *Chogyal*. Under his guidance Buddhism and the monastic establishment further spread and systematized the rituals of the land. Chagdor Namgyal also introduced a new rule that every Bhutia family should send their second child to the Pemayangtse monastery to become a monk. As a result, the number of lamas increased, which generated a demand for more monasteries.

During this period, the three monasteries of Zilnon, *Chogyel* Lakhang of Tashiding, and Sanga Choelling were established probably in 1716. Thus, though founded later than Dubdi, Pemayangtse became the first monastery in Sikkim to be systematized. In the course of time, it became the Royal monastery in Sikkim and served as the head monastery of the Nyingma-pa sect. Lama Jigme Pao also played an active role in the state affairs after the death of *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal as the fourth *Chogyal* Gurmed Namgyal ascended at a very young age. After the death of the great lama Jigme Pao, the *Chogyal* became depressed and went to Tibet on a pilgrimage where he met the famous Karma-pa lama Changhup Dorjee. To him, he promised to build a Karma-pa monastery in Sikkim. Thus the Ralong monastery was founded in 1730 with the landed estate for its support. In this way, the Karma-pa sect received royal

patronage for the first time in Sikkim. The King also founded two important Karma-pa monasteries at Phudong and Rumtek. Interestingly, these two monasteries were established for the first time outside the monastery cluster around the capital, Rabdantse (West Sikkim). During the period of the successive rulers, most of the monasteries were established in the north and eastern part of the country because this area was mainly inhabited by the Buddhist population (Boot, 2008: 158).

However, these monasteries were distributed unevenly, and many were built in places of socio-political importance. In this connection, Boot stated:

> The distribution of the monasteries in Sikkim is uneven as we find there in every aspect of habitation over the dissected topography. Besides topography, spatial distribution of community and political factors also play vital roles in the distribution pattern. In general, the monasteries are located in the Buddhist dominated areas. Of course the cosmopolitan town like Gangtok is an exception. But Gangtok served as the capital of the Buddhist state for about 86 years (1889-1975). About half of the monasteries in Sikkim are located in some particular localities of religious and political importance (Boot, 2008: 163).

For example, the first capital, Yaksum - Rabdantse, used to be one such area where seven monasteries were located within a radius of 9 km. in the Rathang Chu basin. It has been mentioned earlier that this particular area is the legendary Demojong which has the highest concentration of sacred sites and hidden treasures, including the first known fourteenth-century monastery of Pao Hungri. This area was known to the Buddhist communities and visited by the great monks long before forming the Buddhist Kingdom. In this way, these areas served as the seedling ground of Buddhism in Sikkim, and still, it is very famous among the Buddhist communities. Monastery building activities of this newly emerged kingdom were confined within this particular area till the regime of the third *Choygal*. In 1814, the capital Rabdentse

was shifted to Tumlong (North Sikkim), and consequently, the monastery building activities were also moved from West to North. Finally, the capital went to Gangtok in 1889, and many monasteries were founded around the new capital (Boot, 2008: 163).

The frequent shifts of capital during the Namgyal period also affected the process of monastery building in Sikkim. When Bhutan and Nepal frequently attacked Sikkim from 1770 to 1790, the *Chogyal* fled to Tibet with his family. However, after the British-Nepal treaty of Titalia in 1817, *Chogyal* returned to the new capital Tumlong. In this period of political uncertainty, monastery building activities were limited and confined to the northern part of Sikkim as Nepal and Bhutan occupied the entire southern part. Only a few monasteries at Lachung, Chungthang, Tholung, and Lachen were established during this period. Many of the monasteries were destroyed during the Nepalese attack.

Moreover, when the capital was shifted from Tumlong to Gangtok (East Sikkim) under the first Political Officer J.C. White in 1889, monastery building activities once again started. It was said that about 16 monasteries were established from 1912 to 1947, but many of these monasteries were small and considered village monasteries (Boot, 2008: 158). The village monasteries are those monasteries where only two to three monks or lamas resides as a caretaker and are usually attached to one of the more significant monasteries of the state.

However, after 1947, very few monasteries were established, but there are many other monasteries constructed that are not parts of the monastery system of Sikkim. They do not receive any subsidy from the Sikkim Government. These monasteries were mainly constructed after the settlement of Tibetan refugees in Sikkim. Therefore, these

monasteries with a large number of monks bear the expenditure mainly from devotees from all over the world (Boot, 2008: 158-162).

Table No. 2.1: List of Monasteries in Sikkim

Sl. No.	Year	Name of the Monastery	Location of the Monastery	The sect of the monastery
1	1647/1701?	Sang-gnang Dorjeden	Dubdi	Nyingma
2	1697	Sang-gnang Choelling	Sanga Choelling	Nyingma
3	1705	Sangchen Pemayangtse	Pemayangtse	Nyingma
4	1716	Tashiding	Tashiding	Nyingma
5	1716	Zilnon	Zilnon	Nyingma
6	1730	Rinchenpong	Rinchenpong	Nyingma
7	1730	Karma Rabtenling	Ralong	Kagyu
8	1740	Sang-gnang Duzomling	Melli	Nyingma
9	1740	Karma Choekhor Thangtenling	Rumtek	Kagyu
10	1740	Karma Tashi Choekhorling	Phodong	Kagyu
11	1765	Karma Dorje Choelling	Bhutia Busty (Darjeeling)	Kagyu
12	1788	Khachoepalri	Khechopari	Nyingma
13	1788	Tsemo Rinchenthang	Chungthang	Nyingma
14	1788	Thangmochen	Lachung	Nyingma
15	1789	Samten Choeling	Talung	Nyingma
16	1818	Sangchen Thongdorlling	Ging	Nyingma

			(Darjeeling)	
17	1836	Ngadak	Namchi	Nyingma
18	1840	Rigdzin Lonoyang	Dolling	Nyingma
19	1840	Dojiden Khatok	Kartok	Nyingma
20	1840	Sang-gnang Rabtenling	Enchay	Nyingma
21	1840	Sang-gnang Choeling	Phensong	Nyingma
22	1840	Lingdok	Lingdog	Nyingma
23	1841	Yangyang	Yangyang	Nyingma
24	1841	Paljor Phenzok	Rhenock	Kagyu
25	1843	Tingbong Rigzin Tharling	Tingbong	Nyingma
26	1844	Palden Phuntsok Phodrang	Labrang	Nyingma
27	1850	Samten Choelling	Lachung	Nyingma
28	1850	Lhundrub Yangtse	Lintse	Nyingma
29	1850	Sang-nang Dudtulling	Simik	Nyingma
30	1852	Ridgon	Ringim	Nyingma
31	1855	Choephel Dargeyling	Lingthem	Drukpa Kagyu
32	1857	Lingthem Choephel Dargeyling	Dzongu	Nyingma
33	1858	Gnudup Choelling	Lachen	Nyingma
34	1860	Gyathang	Gyathang	Nyingma
35	1860	Lignay Phalgyal/ Choekhor Yangtse	Lingki	Drukpa Kagyu
36	1860	Lingdong Tsangkhar	Lingdong	Drukpa Kagyu
37	1862	Pathing	Pathing	Drukpa Kagyu

38	1873	Rey Mindu	Rey-Mindu	Kagyu
39	1873	Bermoik Wosel Choelling	Bermoik	Kagyu
40	1874	Chakung *Gonpa*	Chakung	Nyingma
41	1875	Chakyung	Chakyung	Nyingma
42	1875	Tashi Choelling	Pabyuk	Drukpa-Kagyu
43	1875	Lingdok	Lingdok	Nyingma
44	1884	Singtem	Singtem	Kagyu/Nyingma
45	1888	Chongay	Chongay	Kagyu
46	1890	Singchit Ngadak *Gonpa*	-	Nyingma
47	1905	Karma Choephelling	Ben	Kagyu
48	1911	Kabi Sanga Choeling	Kabi	Nyingma
49	1912	Karma Drubgyu Choekhorling	Song	Kagyu
50	1913	Mintog Gang	Samdong	Nyingma
51	1913	Aden Walong	Sombarey	Nyingma
52	1914	Hee Gyathang Tashi Choeling	Hee Gyathang	Nyingma
53	1915	Karma Choelling	Tumin	Kagyu
54	1917	Martam Namzong	Martam	Kagyu
55	1921	Sangmo Sharchog Beyphug	Rabongla	Kagyu
56	1922	Hongri	Yuksam	Nyingma
57	1923	Singchid	Singchid	Nyingma
58	1924	Thupden Gatselling	Sumin	Kagyu
59	1924	Sang *Gonpa*	Sang	Kagyu

60	1927	Samten Choelling	Wok	Nyingma
61	1928	Malam *Gonpa*	Malam	Nyingma
62	1929	Namdrolling	Boomter	Nyingma
63	1929	Amba Mamring	Mamring	Nyingma
64	1933	Norbu Choelling	Namthang	Nyingma
65	1934	Samten Choelling	Parbing	Nyingma
66	1935	Tashi Choelling	Hee-Gyathang	Nyingma
67	1936	Tsawang Ani*Gonpa*	Chawang	Nyingma
68	1937	Urgen Samdupling	Naga	Nyingma
69	1937	Tekling Dzokchen	Namthang	Nyingma
70	1939	Choedrub Dargayling	Barphok	Nyingma
71	1940	Sakyong Woser Choeling	Sakyong	Nyingma
72	1941	Ragdong Tensung Tintek	Rakdong	Nyingma
73	1944	Kangsang Choelling	Sheepgyer	Nyingma
74	1946	Dodrupchen Choten	Deorali	Nyingpa
75	1947	Tsenkhar Tashichoelling	Martam	Nyingma
76	1952	Wosel Choelling	Barmiok	Nyingma
77	1954	Palung	Palung	Kagyu
78	1956	Ralong Gonpa	Ralong	Nyingma
79	1957	Barphong Chodrup Dhargayling	Dzongu	Nyingma
80	1959	Rakdong	Rakdong	Nyingma
81	1961	Sang-ngor Chotog	Gangtok	Sakya
82	1962	Guru Kubum	Gangtok	Nyingma

83	1962	Sorok Tamang *Gonpa*	Namchi	Nyingma
84	1966	Dharmachakra Centre	Rumtek	Kagyu
85	1966	Bakcham	Dechenling (Gangtok)	Kagyu
86	1967	Alley Serdup Choeling	Namchi	Nyingma
87	1972	Rabong Tshechu *Gonpa*	Rabongla	Nyingma
88	1974	Thangu *Gonpa*	Thangu	Nyingma
89	1974	Kewzing *Gonpa*	Kewzing	Nyingma
90	1976	Sreebadam *Gonpa*	Sreebadam	Kagyu
91	1977	Kagyu Tshechoeling	Gangtok	Kagyu
92	1980	Simik Sanga Dudduling	Khamdong	Nyingma
93	1980	Taktse Ogen Choekhorling	Gangtok	Nyingma
94	1980	Bon Yundrung	Kewzing	Bonpo
95	1981	Gonjang	Bojogari (Gangtok)	Nyingma
96	1982	Yangyang Gurung *Gonpa*	Yangyang	Nyingma
97	1987	Dichen Choeling Tamang *Gonpa*	Sichay (Gangtok)	Nyingma
98	1988	Maniram *Gonpa*	Maniram Banjyang	Nyingma
99	1991	Dolopchen	Aritar	Nyingma
100	1992	Singtam Gon	Singtam	Nyingma
101	1995	Ralong Palden Choeling	Ralong	Kagyu
102	1995	Rinchen Choeling Tamu	Rinchenpong	Nyingma
103	1997	Namthang Nima Choeling	Namthang	Kagyu

104	1999	Lingdum Zurmang	Ranka	Kagyu
105	2000	Burtuk Ugen Pema Choelling	Gangtok	Nyingma
106	2004	Samsing Lanzong Choeling	Samsing	Nyingma
107	2005	Seraje Drophenling	Gangtok	Geluk
108	2005	Bongyong Khachod Pema Yulling	Gangtok	Nyingma
109	2005	Gagyong *Gonpa*	Lower Yangyang	Nyingma

Source: File No. Waddell. The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism. London: W.H. Allen & CO., Limited. 1895, pp258-259; Boot, 2008, pp159-162; Tsering. Denjong nang Gonday Khag chik ghi Yigcha Shug. Gangtok: Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, 2008, pp 15-16.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MONASTERIES OF SIKKIM

The literal meaning of the term *Gonpa* is a solitary place, and most Gonpas of the area are still found in lonely places like the hilltop also for purity. To escape from the mundane temptations of day-to-day life, the Buddhist monks constantly desired an isolated area where the spiritual activities could be performed calmly (Acharya, 1998: 3). The monastery or *Gonpa* was usually located on a commanding spot, high altitude but not far away from the villages. *Gonpa* or monastery was a residential college for a religious study where many monks and lamas resided together. Gonpas had schools, libraries, and residences for the students and monks. Several Stupas or Chortens were also erected. The main structure was usually a two-storied building where the lower story houses the *Lhakang* and the other buildings cluster around it (Boot, 2008: 167).

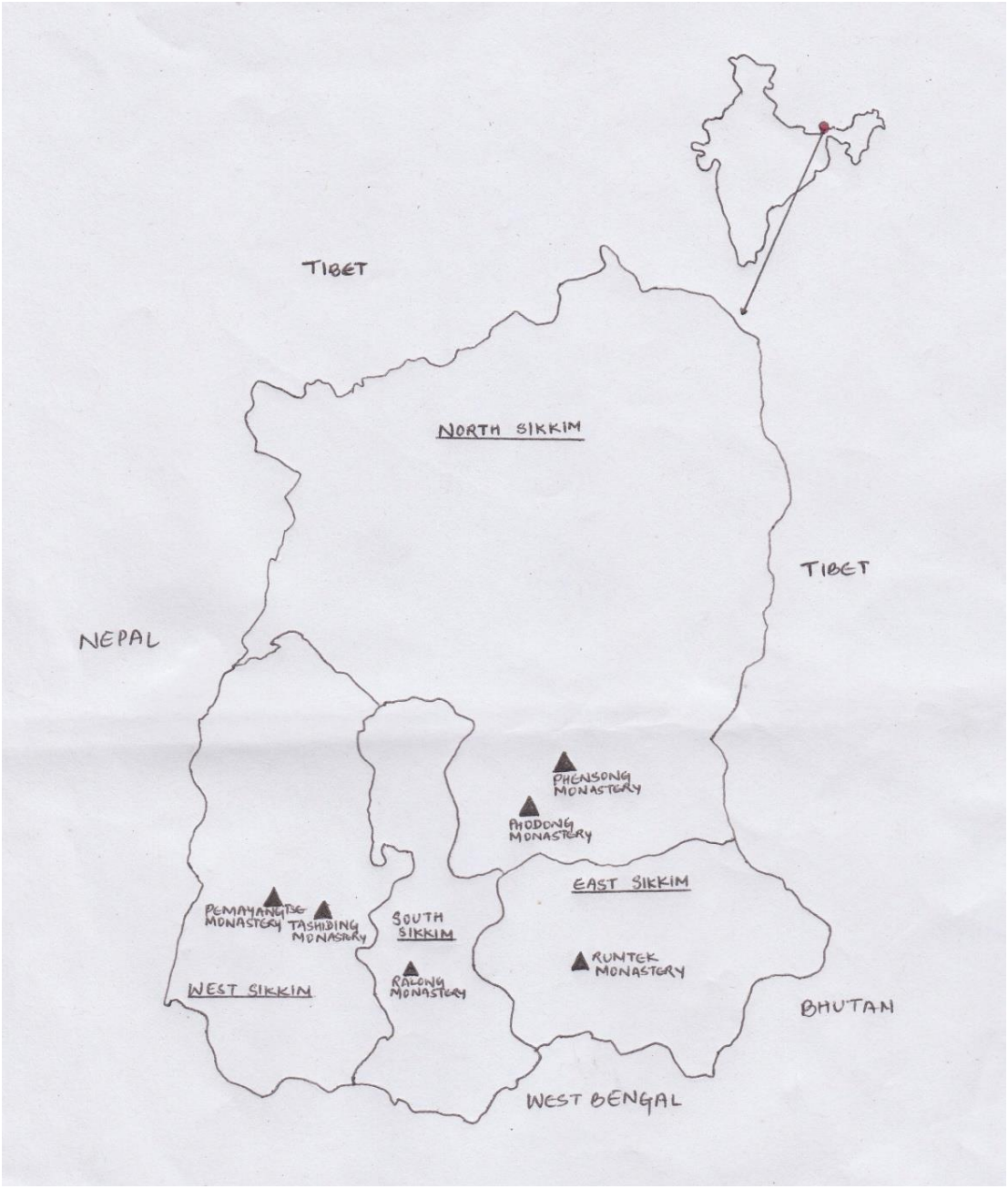
Moreover, the tradition of constructing Gonpas or monasteries was widely followed by the people of Sikkim. But not all Gonpas were the same, some were big, and they were considered mother monasteries. In contrast, smaller Gonpas were usually constructed within the villages. Therefore they are called village temples where one or two lamas engaged in a daily ritual of the *Gonpa* and acted as a caretaker. These types of Gonpas were sometimes called *Lhakhang* or *Mani-lhakhang* by the villagers. Most importantly, these village temples are affiliated with one of the big monasteries and perform according to the orders issued by the mother monastery (Waddell, 1895: 253).

There are different types of Buddhist religious structures in Sikkim, and not all of them can be considered monasteries or gonpas. One of the famous religious structures is *Takphu*, meaning a "rock-cave" or cave-hermitage, and it cannot be included in the category of monastery or *Gonpa.* The four great caves of Sikkim are treated as sacred and related to Guru Padmasambhava and Lhatsun Chenpo. These caves are distributed in four cardinal points- *Lhari Nyingphu* or "the old cave of God's hill" located in the north of Tashiding, and this is the holiest among all caves. *Khando Sangphu,* or "cave of the occult fairies," is located near the Ralong hot spring. *Phe phu,* or "secret cave," lies between Tendong and Mainam hill, and this cave is said to be the longest of the others. The last is the *Dechen Phu,* or "cave of Great Happiness," it is located near Jongri and is mostly covered with snow (Waddell, 1895: 257).

Another important religious structure is *Dupkhang* or *Tsamkhang,* a hermitage built primarily in solitary places like jungles and mountains.

As said earlier, the monasteries' construction started with three lamas, who built their monastic seats. Though within a passage of time or under the successive Chogyals,

many monasteries were established in Sikkim. Most of them belonged to the Nyingma and Kagyu sects of Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism. However, six monasteries were considered to be the most significant monasteries in Sikkim, i.e., Tashiding, Pemayangtse, Phensong, Ralong, Phodong, and Rumtek. The first three monasteries belong to the Nyingma sect, and the latter belongs to the Karma Kagyu sect. All these monasteries are endowed with vast land estates given by the Chogyals of Sikkim.



Map 1: Six important monasteries of Sikkim.

PEMAYANGTSE MONASTERY

Source: The photo was taken by Gnudup Sangmo Bhutia (author)

Pemayangtse monastery is located near Gyalshing, headquarter of the West district. Pemayangtse means a 'perfect sublime lotus' (Waddell, 1895: 21). Regarding the construction and organization of this monastery, two phases could be traced: Lhatsun Chenpo selected the site and constructed a shrine, which was a *Tsamkhang* or a place for meditation, and the second phase was encountered with the visit of Jigme Pao, who was considered as the third reincarnation of Lhatsun Chenpo to Sikkim and resided in Mindrolling Monastery of Tibet. During his time, the present monastery was constructed in 1705 by the third *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal and Lama Khenchen Rolpai Dorjee. The monastery was named "Sangchen Pemayangtse," and the first lama was Lama Khanchen Rolpai Dorjee. It was started with 108 monks and also appointed 108 lay families (Garnapas) to look after the secular business of the monastery. However, according to some scholars, the existence of the Garnapas is still debatable.

Further, Jigme Pao also instructed the monks of the Pemayangtse monastery about the mode of chanting prayers and performing ritual musical instruments as per the practice of the Mindrolling Monastery in Tibet, which is considered one of the most important Nyingma Monasteries of Tibet. Therefore, Sikkimese Monasteries considered Mindrolling as their mother monastery or the head institution. In addition, few Nyingma Monasteries had the trend of sending their monks to seek education from Mindrolling Monastery. Nonetheless, this system stopped after the Chinese occupation of Tibet. The Pemayangtse monastery attributes its code of conduct based on *Vinaya sutra* to Jigme Pao and Chagdor Namgyal (Vandenhelsken, 2003: 59). Jigme Pao returned to Tibet after entrusting the management of the monastery to Khanchan Rolpai Dorgee. For conferring monkhood in this monastery, the *Chogyal* put some qualifications. The monks should come from pure Bhutia blood (descendants of the founding ancestor of the Lhopo clans like Khye Bumsa), good parentage, and absence of physical blemishes. Apart from it, the monks shall maintain celibacy. Accordingly, the *Chogyal* conferred monkhood on 108 monks in the monastery. *Chogyal* also introduced a new rule that every Bhutia family must send their second son to the monastery to become a monk[16]. The *Chogyal* also declared that the monks of the Pemayangtse were to be the chief spiritual guides of every succeeding King and have the customary right of performing all the religious functions of royalty. Its head lama alone had the right to anoint the *Chogyal*. Thus they monopolized the highest religious and political functions in the state. Thus, during Chagdor Namgyal under the influence of Jigme Pao, the importance of Pemayangtse Monastery grew rapidly.

[16] Goldstein in his work described this system as obligatory tax imposed upon the people of Tibet (Goldstein: 2014).

Though celibacy is one of the important qualifications for monkhood in this monastery, most of its lamas did not follow it. Maliene stated in this regard:

> ..., none of the Pemayangtse lamas have been ordained into celibacy (Tib. *ge slong*).... according to Thutop Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma, Chagdor Namgyal implemented a code of conduct in Pemayangtse in accordance with the Vinaya (Tib. *Dul ba*) *sutra*. It is more precisely in accordance with the *vinaya sutra's* section called *pratimoksa* (Tib. *So sor thar pa*). But if most of the Tibetan Buddhist schools consider the *dge slong* ordination in accordance with the prescriptions of *pratomoksa* as necessary in order to engage upon the two paths opened to a lama (the way of Enlightenment and the way of *tantra*), it is however not considered a necessity among the Nyingma-pa...Rather than following the sutra tradition, the Pemayangtse lamas explain that they follow the *tantra* tradition upon which Nyingma tradition particularly insists (Vandenhelsken, 2003: 62-63).

One of the important reasons for making this monastery a pure or celibate monastery was that the founder, Lhatsun Chenpo, was considered a pure Tibetan celibate lama with no deformities. However, not all lamas followed celibacy, but many followed the life of a celibate monk by taking vows of a '*Gelong'* as it is a matter of choice whether to take vows of celibacy or not in Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism.

Thus, the Pemayangtse monastery was the most important monastery in Sikkim. Many small monasteries were under this big monastery. As per the words of Dhamala:

> The Pemayangtse is considered the premier monastery of Sikkim and all the other Nyingma monasteries in Sikkim are subordinate to it. Certain monasteries viz., Dubdi, Sangacholling, Linche and Paathing in Sikkim and Ging in Darjeeling are directly under its control and they follow the rites and rituals according to its conventions. The head lama

of these monasteries are sent from the Pemayangtse (Dhamala, 2008: 127-128).

TASHIDING MONASTERY

Source: Sikkim.gov.in/departments/ecclesiastical-affairs-department.

Tashiding Monastery is considered the most sacred of all the monasteries in Sikkim. It is situated on top of a hill between Ralong and Rangit River in the West district of Sikkim. Several Buddhist masters were associated with this place which further enhanced its sacredness of this place. Padmasambhava is believed to have stayed here for meditation and blessed the land. According to legend, he shot an arrow vowing to meditate at the current monastery is located. It is also thought that the site at Tashiding was accepted as the most sacred in Sikkim by the first three monks because the place was connected to Guru Padmasambhava. Hence, three monks along with the *Chogyal* Phuntshok Namgyal visited Drakkar Tashiding and built the *chorten* (stupa) named Thongwa Rangdrol (Namgyal and Dolma, 2008: 20-21). Tashiding Monastery

was one of the holders of Dzogchen lineage because Lhatsun Chenpo (accredited with the introduction of Dzogchen in Sikkim) visited this place in the 1640s and meditated in a cave called Lhari-nyingpu (Mullard, 2003: 13-14). Therefore, many Buddhist masters continued to visit this place to attain realization. At the same time, Tashiding also became the cremation spot of many Buddhist incarnates and their reliquaries were built there in the form of *chorten* (Vandenhelsken, 2006: 65).

Ngadag Phuntsok Rigzin, one of the three Lamas, coroneted Phuntsok Namgyal, initially built the small monastery. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the Chogyal Lhakhang, a small building in Tashiding, was constructed by Pende Wangmo, the elder sister of *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal. But during the reign of *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal and Jigmed Pao expanded the Tashiding Monastery and completed the internal furnishing of the temple. Jigme Pao himself performed the consecration ceremony of all *Lhakhangs* and *Chortens* at Tashiding. Thus, Tashiding Monastery is one of the important monasteries of Sikkim belonging to the Ngadak lineage and the holiest of all.

In this monastery, Bumchu, a Buddhist festival, was celebrated enthusiastically. This festival mainly falls on the 15th day of the first month (*Chu*) of the Tibetan calendar corresponding to February-March. It is the ceremony to open the urn of holy water for the audience of the devotees. The holy water was believed to have been consecrated by the founder of the monastery, Ngadak Lama. Thousands of devotees both from Sikkim and outside visited the place during this festival. According to the tradition, it was said that originally the Bumchu vase was made by Guru Padmasambhava himself for the *Chogyal* of Tibet, which was later discovered by some tertons and then transferred from one generation to another till the vase reached Ngadag Phuntsok Rigzin from his grandfather Tagshamchen. Thus Ngadag Chenpo placed the vase in

the Tashiding Monastery, and following the tradition of his lineage, every year, a special prayer was organized (Dokhampa, 2003: 25).

RALONG MONASTERY

Source: Sikkim.gov.in/departments/ecclesiastical-affairs-department.

Ralong monastery is the oldest monastery of the Karma Kagyu sect in Sikkim. It is located at Ralong in South Sikkim. The religious name of the monastery is Karma Rabdenlling *Gonpa*. The monastery was constructed in 1730by the fourth *Chogyal* of Sikkim, *Chogyal* Gyurmed Namgyal (1717-1733), on his return from the pilgrimage to Tibet. This monastery was constructed by the *Chogyal* mainly to pay tribute to the XII Karmapa Changchup Dorjee, who treated him cordially during his pilgrimage to Tibet. *Chogyal* not only constructed the monastery but also granted lands to them. The monastery was reconstructed on a larger scale, and the number of the novice admitted to the monastery increased considerably during the abbotship of Bermiok Lama Karma Tenzing Rabgay. It is said that when the consecration ceremony of the monastery i.e., *rabney*, was being performed by the head of the sect Gyalwa Karmapa

of Tsurphug in Tibet, the monks and the people of Ralong noticed many auspicious signs (Dhamala, 2008: 128).

RUMTEK MONASTERY

Source: Photo taken by Gnudup Sangmo Bhutia (author)

The religious name of the old Rumtek monastery is Karma Thupten Choekhorlling. It is located in the East district of the Sikkim state, about 15 miles away from Gangtok. The monastery was constructed during the reign of *Chogyal* Gyurmed Namgyal in 1722 but was destroyed by an earthquake, and another one was constructed on the same site. In 1960, when the head of Karma Kagyu Sect, the 14th Karmapa Thakchog Dorjee (1798-1868), came to Sikkim, he stayed at this monastery till the construction of the second Rumtek Monastery or the Dharma Chakra Centre was completed. It was also the 14th Karmapa who recognized the eighth *Chogyal* Sidkying Namgyal as the reincarnation of Tulku Karma Rinchen. Sidkyong Namgyal was appointed as the head of all the Kagyu monasteries of Sikkim. And the 15th Karmapa recognized Sidkyong Tulku as the reincarnation of Sidkyong Namgyal (Acharya, 2005: 56). The main festival of the monastery is the annual dance held on the 20th and 29th day of the 10th

month (*Mindrug*) of the Tibetan calendar. The new Rumtek monastery, the Dharma Chakra Centre, is located about half a kilometer away from the old Rumtek monastery, and become the chief center of the Kagyu sect. This study center of the Kagyu sect was known as Karma Shri Nalanda Institute for Buddhist Higher Studies was established in 1981. However, there is very little connection between the old monastery and the new one as the new Rumtek Monastery is not considered the Sikkimese monastery and is managed by the sponsorships received worldwide. But the old monastery comes under the Ecclesiastical Department of Sikkim and most notably possessed the properties granted by the *Chogyal*.

PHODONG MONASTERY

Source: Sikkim.gov.in/departments/ecclesiastical-affairs-department.

Another important monastery of the Karma Kagyu sect was Phodong, in the North district. The religious name of the monastery is Karma Tashi Choekhorlling. Originally there was a meditation hermitage or *tsamkhang*, and in the year 1723, during the reign of *Chogyal* Gyurmed Namgyal, construction of a monastery was started at the spot. But, unfortunately, *Chogyal* died in 1734. However, the monastery

was completed in 1740 with the support of devotees. During the reign of *Chogyal* Tsugphud Namgyal (1793-1863), the old monastery was dismantled, and a new monastery was constructed in its place.

In addition, it is important to mention that a branch of this monastery was also constructed in Darjeeling named Karma Dorjee Choelling in the year 1765. Even the name of Darjeeling is derived from this monastery as this monastery was attributed to a renowned *Terton* named Dorjee Lingpa. This monastery was actually constructed in the area called Mahakal or a rocky hill, but it was shifted from the original place to another site called Bhutia Busty in 1878 as the British claimed that the noise created by the rituals of this monastery is disturbing the sanctity of their Church which was situated below that monastery. However, this monastery still comes under the Ecclesiastical Department of Sikkim and receives grants for maintenance.

Phodong monastery is one of the important monasteries of Sikkim and possessed huge areas of land. This monastery also comes directly under the royal durbar and, most importantly, *Chogyal* Sidkeong Tulku, and *Chogyal* Palden Thondup Namgyal was its spiritual patron. Sidkeong Tulku was recognized as the reincarnation of a great monk of a Karma Kagyu sect, and therefore, the Phodong monastery played an important role in state affairs similar to Pemayangtse Monastery.

PHENSONG MONASTERY

Source:Sikkim.gov.in/departments/ecclesiastical-affairs-department.

Another important monastery of the Nyingma sect was Phensang Monastery, which is located in the North district about twenty kilometers away from Gangtok. The Phensong monastery's religious name is Sangngak Choelling. It is believed that Lhatsun Chenpo selected the place for the construction of this monastery, which was constructed in 1721 by the third *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal and Jigme Pao, which was at that time quite small. But this monastery was reconstructed and enlarged in the year 1840. This monastery had to be rebuilt again and again due to fire and other natural calamities, and finally, in 1996, the present monastery came into shape with Government support. This monastery also possessed large estates granted by the *Chogyal* and other royal families.

Moreover, many royal families were directly attached to this monastery. Therefore the monastery and its estates were directly under the control of the *Chogyal*. However, the lamas of the monastery have an independent role to play in the management of the monastery. For instance, in 1902, the Princes Chuni Ongmu (later Rani Chuni Ongmu

of Bhutan) became a nun and took charge of the monastery, including its estate (Dhamala, 2008: 128).

Thus, the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism was firmly established in Sikkim under the first *Chogyal* Phuntsok Namgyal and three pioneer lamas namely Lhatsun Namkha Jigme, Ngadak Phuntsok Rigzin, and Kartok Kuntu Zangpo. They established monasteries of the Nyingma sect around the capital Yuksam and later Rabdentse therefore monasteries of the early period were mainly concentrated in western Sikkim. In the initial stage, these lamas constructed monasteries in the form of *tsamkhang* or hermitages for themselves and maintained few monks. But it was during *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal under the guidance of Lama Jigme Pawo (he was recognized as the incarnation of Lhatsun Namkha Jigme) extended the Pemayangtse monastery and also constructed many other monasteries. Chagdor Namgyal was also credited for establishing the Kagyu sect of Tibetan Buddhism in Sikkim. However, the Nyingma sect remained a dominant sect in Sikkim. Though few people distinguished Nyingma into three sub-sects – Lhatsunpa, Ngadakpa, and Kartokpa most of the lay followers do not understand the differences between the three sub-sects and worship equally. Whereas the lamas based on the religious texts composed by these three lamas distinguished Nyingma into three sub-sects in Sikkim. Moreover, monasteries like Pemayangtse, Ralong, Phodong, Phensong, and Rumtek became significantly powerful under Chogyals of Sikkim.

CHAPTER III

MONASTIC LANDHOLDING SYSTEM IN SIKKIM

This chapter explores the development of the monastic landholding system in Sikkim and its management through the different monastic officials. This chapter also deals with the social structure of a monastery which can be divided into three parts: monastic rule, its occupation, and education. This chapter further analyses the relationship between monasteries and their lay supporters or villagers.

The monastic landholding system emerged because the monasteries needed the property that could give regular income in order to maintain them. Though begging[17] is not in Mahayana Buddhism, begging alone could not be sufficient to provide food to the religious people who depended on monasteries. Regarding the Chinese Buddhist monasteries, Brook revealed the same thing. In his words:

> Landholding was a universal condition of monastic survival in late imperial China. A lay patron might like to invoke the ancient ideal of begging, writing that 'Buddhism looks to people for material support, and monks to people for nourishment,' but when it came to the practical burden in running a monastery, almsgiving was regarded as inadequate. Monasteries could not simply wait for the food to arrive, the lamp to be filled with oil, and the carpenters to set to work with

[17] Before Buddhism begging was an integral part of Hinduism, begging for food was the way of life of those who followed the spiritual path renouncing worldly life. Buddhism also adopted this tradition of begging mainly for food and Buddha himself begged for food. Whereas begging for money was considered as immoral in every religious tradition (Dulaimi, 2019). However, this tradition never became a part of Tibetan Buddhism as the Tibetan monasteries maintained a large monks and it would not be possible for all the monks to beg for food from the laity and even if they start practicing this tradition it would be a severe burden on the laity. Moreover, there were some cases in Tibet that few hermits who does not reside in a monastery do begged for food sometimes. Jasen also says that begging for alms is nowadays discouraged and it should be considered to be a last resort for survival (Jasen, 2018: 33).

> material freely given. 'When the eating fingers become daily more numerous, begging for food does not meet the need,' one patron declared, 'so the monastery has to have property in land.' Or as one abbot put it, 'How can a monastery remain secure in the long term with only a little permanent property?' He answered his own question by raising donations to acquire farmland to keep those eating fingers fed. Another great Buddhist master, Hanshan Deqing (1546-1623), flatly declared that, 'land is the foundation of a Buddhist abbey' (Brook, 2012: 1).

The above statement of Brook is not only related to the Chinese Buddhist tradition but to the rest of the world, which profess Buddhism. This is true, particularly concerning Buddhism in India. The tradition of landholding by the Buddhist monasteries is not any kind of new system adopted by today's Buddhist communities, but it was already started when the first Buddhist communities were set up in India.

It has been stated that Fa-Hien was the first to make a pilgrimage to India in the fifth century A.D., he noticed the prosperous condition of the monasteries in Indian territories and also mentioned the considerable amount of property and assets held by them. The kings and the laymen have transformed viharas for the monks and supported them by providing fields, houses, and gardens, with men and oxen. And this custom existed all over India. Hiuen-Tsang (602-664) also observed that the Nalanda monastery was constructed as a gift to the Buddha by five hundred merchants. The monastery in Nalanda, in particular in its possession of the lands, contained more than one hundred villages. It is also interesting to note that Nalanda has yielded some seals which gave the name of some villages. I-Tsing visited some of the Buddhist establishments of Northern India and reported that the Indian monasteries possess special allotment of land (Ranasinghe, 2008: 2-5). Moreover, King Dharmapala of the Pala dynasty of Bengal supported the Vikramasila monastery

with rich grants sufficient to maintain large resident monks and pilgrims from different countries like China and Tibet.

Similarly, the Buddhist monks of Ceylon have never been a *Bhikku Sangha*, a fraternity of beggars, as stated by Weber. As Ever observed, to both *vihara* and *devale*, the land was dedicated for their maintenance and for the organization of religious festivals. The dedication of land to the *Sangha* based on the idea of gaining merit for the improvement of one's *karma* led to the paradoxical situation that the *Bhikkhu Sangha*, the "fraternity of beggars," became one of the richest landlords in the Kandyan provinces of Ceylon. It has been estimated, that third of all the paddy lands in the Kandyan provinces were actually in the possession of temples, together with large tracts of forests, many villages, and a huge population who give services to the monastery in return for their lands (Evers, 1964: 323-324).

Generally, the main reason for granting land to the Buddhist monasteries was to support the cost of daily worship with flowers, incense, and lamps, including the expenses of their clothes, medicines, etc., copying of manuscripts, upkeep of the monastery, and for various necessities of the bhiksus (Buddhist monks). In this way, the monasteries came to own land, villages, pasturage, cattle, etc., for the maintenance of their resident bhiksus. Big monasteries with their own property of various kinds were able not only to attain self-sufficiency but were also in a position to extend their power and influence in their respective localities. Moreover, the driving force behind the development of "monastic landlordism" was the desire of Buddhist laymen to earn "merit" by donating land to the *Sangha* or monastery (Evers, 1964: 324-329).

However, though monasteries acquired land and other wealth from the lay donors and hence with the passage of time, they accumulated large tracts of land, mainly

consisting of several villages. They also began to hold administrative powers within their jurisdiction by giving justice to the villagers as well as collecting taxes from them similar to that of the landlords or the zamindars. Therefore, Weber calls this system "monastic landlordism." Generally, monasteries were looked at as landlords who owned huge estates divided into numerous village blocks with the support of the State but were exempted from any kind of taxes to the State (Evers, 1969: 685-692). This is applicable to Sikkim also.[18]

Thus the tradition of granting lands to the Buddhist monasteries, which was obviously started in India, traveled to the rest of the world where Buddhism was introduced. As monasticism became fundamental to both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhist traditions, it is present wherever Buddhism exists. Moreover, this tradition adhered to a mass monk ideology, thus needing support to maintain a large number of monks (Goldstein, 2010: 1-2). Therefore, Buddhist monasteries in China, Ceylon, Tibet, etc., own lands granted or donated to them by the rulers or by the lay followers and held control of overall properties, be it agricultural land, forests, water as well as villages.

However, it is also important to mention that whenever Buddhist monasteries received land or other property and turned from a simple religious center to huge landowning-based monasteries, which made them engaged in generating more and more wealth,

[18]This work examines the Buddhist monastic economy in Chinese history, with specific reference to the issue of land ownership in different dynasties. Since landed estates are the foundation for the existence of a monastery, how Buddhist monasteries obtained their landed estates, how they made use of them, and how they protected them were of central importance in their economic life. Related to land was the issue of taxes. Monastic lands usually enjoyed some exemption from taxes and/or labour duties, but such privileges were not as solid as some might think. In different periods and places, tax privileges differed, and there was also the case when monasteries were imposed with more tax burdens than normal households. Tax policy exerted considerable influences upon monastic economy in history. It also examines to understand why Buddhist monasteries were prosperous in some dynasties, and why they declined in other (Yongshan, 2011: 3-5).

they started getting criticism. Nevertheless, the tension between economy and prayer life did not disappear with the redaction of rules or institutionalization of communities in defined monasteries but continued throughout the history of Buddhist monasticism. More particularly, this question has often been the cause of reforms or creations of new monastic movements, mainly in Tibet and Fareast. The economy is, therefore, a very delicate question in monasticism in order to balance between a prayer life and a work life. As stated by Thubten Jigme Norbu, the brother of the 14th Dalai Lama, "wrong to me that so much land held by monasteries not only leads to the possibility of corruption, it also leads to the possibility of stagnation, for we become so tied up in the administration of our estates that we have little time left for religious life" (Wangyal, 1975: 82). Whereas on the other hand, it is also true that a monastery that was too poor could not achieve a quality of religious life.

ESTABLISHMENT OF MONASTERY ESTATES IN SIKKIM

It has already been noticed that the tradition of granting lands to religious institutions is not a new phenomenon; hence Sikkim has no exception to this. When the idea of monasticism reached the kingdom of Sikkim in the seventeenth century, the idea of granting lands to such institutions was also introduced. However, before going into details of monastic estates, it is important to study the political situation of the State. It has been well known that religion and its institution would not survive or flourish unless the state authority provided a suitable environment for their growth through financial support. Accordingly, Buddhism and its monastic institutions developed and survived in Sikkim mainly due to their cordial relationship with the rulers of the land. However, on the other hand, it has also been noted that rulers depended upon religion

and its institution for legitimating their rule over the region. Thus their relationship should be vice versa (Mullard, 2011).

The existence of a monastery cannot be separated from its landed estates. These properties not only provided monasteries with a place to live and carry out their practices but also provided the means of livelihood. Compared to the more irregular donations, the income from the landed properties has always been the most secure and important economic resource to support the monastery. The evidence of granting lands to the Buddhist monasteries in Sikkim was available only from the beginning of the eighteenth century, particularly during the reign of the third *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal. It has been noted that Buddhism was introduced into the land of Monpas (Lepchas) by the three lamas, namely Lhatsun Chenpo, Sempa Chenpo, and Rigzin Chenpo, in the middle of the seventeenth century.

Since the kingdom of Sikkim was established by Phuntsok Namgyal with the help of the three Buddhist lamas, it naturally became a Buddhist religious state on the lines of the Tibetan theocracy. Accordingly, they setup an important religio-political theory that is of *chod-sid lug-nyi*). This theory is centered on the idea that government should indicate not just the secular world but also the spiritual. Unlike the modern western world, in Tibetan societies, the unification of these two systems (secular and spiritual) is considered the perfect mode of governance, whereby religion influences the political system, and the political system (through sponsorship, for example) influences the religion. In this way, a political figure or government is obliged to actively preserve and promote Buddhism; this is noted through the use of the term *chod-yon,* the traditional association between a "religious preceptor-officiant" *chod-nas* and a secular ruler; *jin-dag* (Ruegg 2004: 9) or royal patron/ lay donor. The use of these terms (*chod-yon, lug-nyi* etc) indicates interesting relations in Sikkimese

politics. *Cho-yon* had a role in mediating between the *jin-dag* and the *chod-nas* (Lama or religious donee). Ruegg notes that it was primarily religious and personal rather than an official or institutionalized concept. While *cho-yon* does indeed convey the form of personal religious relationship, it can also be understood in a context of religio-political concept, which can develop into an institutionalized one as *cho-yon* implicates the two realms of the religious order (as represented by the recipients of donation, *cho-nas*) and the temporal order which is the domain of political power and the lay community, who act as sponsors. It is from this relationship between the temporal and spiritual spheres of life, represented as a relationship of patronage that we can understand the formation and extraction of a unified religio-political concept such as *lug-nyi*. Thus, in a somewhat simplified way, *lug-nyi* represents the political institutionalization of the *cho-yon* concept of religious patronage. *Lug-nyi* is probably best understood as a religio-political theory of State and society, in which the united territories of the political and religious worlds play a complementary, although not always an equal, role in the formation and direction of policy. Thus certain guarantees and concessions are set in place, theoretically, to maintain the balance and stability of both social orders, and this includes the promotion of Buddhist traditions, and donation of money for the construction of religious sites and rituals (Mullard, 2011: 24-26).

Mullard says that the theory of *lug-nyi* and the idea of divine kingship or the *chakravatin*, who, on account of his enlightened status, is the ideal ruler, as he would govern according to higher principles than that of the worldly political figure. As such, the *chakravatin* embodies the dual aspects of governance and the State (religious and the secular). However, Mullard says that it is a theory of Tibetan societies and can be found in Sikkim. The themes of theoretical models of kingship,

governance, and State in Tibetan societies can be found in Sikkimese historical sources from the seventeenth-century sources have to be understood as legitimizing agents of the newly formed State and monarchy and not as a reflection of political reality; as the political reality of state formation in the seventeenth-century Sikkim, however, was far more complex and was brought about, not by religious invitations to the first Sikkimese *Chogyal*, but by conquest, alliance formation, and the subjugation of the population under the figure of *Chogyal*. The reason they appeared in later historical narratives is to characterize the formation of the Sikkimese State as the fruition of divine prophecy (Mullard, 2011: 26, 17).

However, there was a significant religious influence in Sikkim, particularly in the seventeenth century. The Tibetan ideas of social and religious systems were introduced in Sikkim. These systems included the adoption of the Tibetan religio-political theory of State and political power, as represented by *lug-nyi* a system based on the unification of the secular/ political sphere with that of the religious/ spiritual. Tibetan influence is not limited to the religious world. However, it is also identifiable through the introduction of economic practices such as land ownership, structures of taxation, and a form of stratification based on the principles of the Tibetan landed economy (Mullard, 2011: 55).

Though there is no clear evidence regarding the land tenure system in Sikkim, mainly during the early phases of the Namgyal dynasty or pre-British period, some the sources indicate that after the establishment of the Namgyal dynasty, the ruler adopted a similar economic system that was prevalent in Tibet. According to the Tibetan economic system, the Tibetan economy was based on the manorial estates, which were divided into two groups and they were- 1, the manorial estates held by lay aristocrats, monasteries, and incarnate lamas, and 2, the other group of ministerial

estates held by the government itself (Goldstein, 2014: 3-4). However, according to Chapela, the Dalai Lama was the sole owner of the whole of Tibet, and therefore the whole land was the property of the State. Land in Tibet could not be owned or legally possessed (for example, property rights, transfer of ownership, etc.) but only used; that is, the "right to use the soil" and dispose (usufruct) of its produce. Therefore, the State, through the government, granted this "permission for land usage" to different groups like aristocrats, monasteries, etc., in exchange for an annual rent (Chapela, 1992: 03-32).

The government estates known as *zhungzhis* were directly granted to the farmers, aristocratic estates as *gerzhis* and religious estates as *choszhis*. There were also important variants, one belonging to the aristocratic estates called *tre-ba* or private farms, granted by the noble overlord on the government's orders, and the *Labrang*, which were private estates of some incarnate lamas and these were mostly associated with the monastic estates. There were also nomad's grazing estates called *shog-kha*, and all the above-mentioned groups possessed some grazing estates (Goldstein, 2014; Chapela, 1992).

With regard to the Tibetan monastic economy, there is not much information available as most of the early scholars mainly focused on politics or religious philosophy. According to Goldstein, the great monasteries in Tibet depended economically on manorial estates, endowment funds, grants from the central government, and donations from the faithful. However, monasteries as a landlord were divided into two such as colleges (*Dratshang*) and the corporation (*Labrang*) associated with a line of religious incarnations. The size of these units varied tremendously, the smallest ones consisting of only one estate and the larger ones

possessing numerous non-contiguous estates scattered across the polity (Goldstein, 1971: 172).

Religious groups (or, more precisely, senior monks on behalf of the monasteries) were very powerful. Monasteries controlled the government and economy and owned over one-third of cultivated land, many pastures, and a large number of serfs and slaves. In the context of the Tibetan economy and production, a small part of Tibet's products was used to keep serfs and herdsmen alive. Most wealth, which was collected through different channels, was used for very costly annual rituals. The expenses for the January and February rituals in Lhasa consumed about 62 percent of the total annual income of the Dalai Lama's government in the eighteenth century. Other funds were used to support the monks and their activities. More than half the income of the Tibetan government also went to the monasteries. Finally, a large amount of gold and silver collected by monasteries was melted down and made into Buddha statues or to decorate towers containing the corpses of senior incarnated monks. A huge amount of money was also used to build and maintain thousands of monasteries. Some of them were very large, e.g., the Drepung monastery had 10,000 monks in 1951. The Tibetan government and its army also needed support. Because more than half of the government officials were monks, and lay officials obtained their reward mainly from the estate appointed to them, the administrative budget in Tibet was relatively small before 1952. While half of the government's income went to monasteries, the other half was used to support its army. In large part, the economy in Tibet before 1952, therefore, can be called a "monastery economy." Generally, the Tibetan society before 1952 can be compared with the European Middle Ages. In both, the great religions prospered and overwhelmed the masses. Hierarchies in both the organized Christian Church in Europe and Lamaist monasteries in Tibet played a major role in society and

the government of the two areas. The Middle Ages in Europe were followed by the Renaissance, but in Tibet, no comparable renaissance occurred. The hierarchies of the Gelug sect, the Dalai Lamas, continued to maintain a monastic monarchical state from 1578 until 1951. Since 1959, monasteries lost most of their estates, serfs, slaves, and high positions in government (Rong, nd. 1-31).

Similarly, according to the tradition, it is believed that the land in Sikkim belongs to the king. All the lands in Sikkim were the property of the king, and the cultivators had no title to the soil, and a man may settle and cultivate any land he may find unoccupied without going through any formality whatever, and once he had occupied the land, none but only the *Chogyal* can turn him out from the land. Also, there were kazis and headmen and various other officials who exercised jurisdiction over specific tracts of lands. These officials enjoyed some authority, but the king's final authority in all matters of importance (Steinmann, 2003: 161). It was customary for the *Chogyal* to give land to its subjects for usufruct age. Like Tibet, in Sikkim, the *Chogyal* divided the land into several estates and distributed it to his ministers called *Dzongpon* and *Kalon,* which later were referred to as *Kazi*. According to the Tibetan economic model, the lands were divided into three categories- the private estates of the *Chogyal*, aristocratic estates, and monastic estates.

However, it is interesting to note that, though Buddhism was established in the seventeenth century by the three lamas and the first *Chogyal* but the tradition of granting lands to the monastery started only at the beginning of the eighteenth century during the reign of the third *Chogyal* (Chagdor Namgyal) of Sikkim. The reason for the late introduction of this tradition was political instability in Sikkim of that period. When the Namgyal dynasty was formed by the Lhopos or Bhutias, the land was already dominated by other ethnic communities like the Lepchas and the Limboos.

These communities had already settled with their chiefs to protect them from outsiders. Therefore, it is said that the first *Chogyal* Phuntsok Namgyal faced many difficulties in consolidating the land and the people under his control. After a few conflicts with them, Phuntsok Namgyal brought the entire land under his rule by signing an agreement famously called '*Lho-Mon-Tsong Sum* Agreement.' According to Mullard, it is one of the most important agreements between the three communities of Sikkim: Lhopo (Sikkimese Tibetans - Bhutias), Monpa (Lepcha or Rongkup), and the Tsong (Limboo). This source is a legal document signed by representatives of these three communities acknowledging the supremacy of Phuntsok Namgyal as the head of a single political order in western Sikkim. It was signed probably in the year 1663 (Mullard, 2010:140). Some say this agreement is significant in terms of the unification of these three communities. After taking the oath of unity and loyalty to Phuntsok Namgyal, it states that they promised to treat each other as a member of one family. It says that Lhopo is a father, Lepcha (Monpa) to be a mother and Tsong (Limboo) children of the same family. At the same time, it was agreed that if people from outside tried to bring disunity and problem into this family, the punishment should be conferred upon them.[19]

However, after the development of *cho-yon* relationship between the new king and the Lama, it was probably with this royal support that Phuntsok Rigzin (Ngadak Phuntsok Rigzin) was able to begin his large scale building projects: constructing three monasteries (including the most sacred in Sikkim) in the space of twelve years. These events gave the impression that Phuntsok Rigzin was the most influential Lama in Sikkim at that time (Mullard, 2011: 112). It was also said that the meeting between

[19]Pemayangtse lamas therefore, killed the Limboo leader Srijunga mainly because he tried to restore Limboo communities and their religion. Secondly, the lamas also participated in fighting against the outsiders like immigration of Nepalese into Sikkim may be because of this reason.

Phuntsok Namgyal and Phuntsok Rigzin was held around 1650 to 1651. The conversation took place regarding the succession of Phuntsok Rigzin's son as a royal preceptor. Accordingly, his son succeeded him in 1656 or 1657. It seems that he was a very important Lama of Sikkim at that time, but in later history, Lhatsun Chenpo (Lhatsun Namkha Jigme) was considered the patron saint of Sikkim and Phuntsok Rigzin received not many highlights (Mullard, 2011: 111). Moreover, it was believed that Phuntsok Rigzin was highly respected by the people of not only Sikkim but its neighboring countries like Nepal and Bhutan. After the foundation of the Tashiding monastery, Phuntsok Rigzin was invited by a ruler of Mustang where he stayed for a year. While returning through Southern Nepal he was endowed with "revenue from the land of a hundred tax-payers" by a local ruler (McKay, 2021: 15).

Many of the religious structures were constructed under the guidance of three lamas, for example, Lhakhang Marpo and at Chorten Thongwa Rangdrol Tashiding, etc., with the royal support during the reign of Phuntsok Namgyal and his successor Tenzing Namgyal. However, these structures are not monasteries in a proper sense as they served as a hermitage or a stupa. The first monastery constructed in Sikkim at the time was the Dubde monastery. It was built under the guidance of Lhatsun Chenpo as he was requested by Phuntsog Namgyal and the monastic community (monks) to establish a center for the *Sangha*. He duly built the monastery (most probably funded by the *Chogyal*) and performed the consecration rituals on the 25th day of the second month of the Fire Pig Year (1647). The name of this monastery was Sangnag Dorjeden monastery and is popularly known as Dubde Monastery in Sikkim. He also constructed one of the most important Stupas in Sikkim named Chorten Thongwa Rangdrol, in Tashiding (Mullard, 2011: 132).

However, the turning point in the history of monasticism in Sikkim was brought by the arrival of a Lama named Jigme Pao, and the Buddhists regarded him in the region as the third incarnation of Lhatsun Chenpo. The arrival of Jigme Pao in Sikkim in c. 1709 caused two fundamental changes in Sikkimese society. The first was his role in transforming the Pemayangtse monastery and the tradition of Lhatsun Chenpo from a minor monastery into a Sikkim's most important and royal monastery, and it became the dominant religious tradition in Sikkim. The second was he was involved in the reconstruction of State and political structures, including the creation of monastic estates (Mullard, 2011: 165). Pleased with the services of Changzod Karwang and his son Changzod Chogthup Tibetan Government had rewarded them with lands at Rhenock in Sikkim. On the other hand, the entire property of usurper Changzod Tamding was confiscated and transferred to Dzogchen Lama and Khenchen Rolpai Dorje as their annual allowance (Upadhyay, 2017, 49).

Further, Jigme Pao went to Rabdentse, where the *Chogyal* received him, offered *chang*, and Jigme Pao enjoyed the hospitality of Sikkimese ministers and the people. He visited Pemayangtse and gave the root initiation of the Rigzin Godem, Dorje Lingpa, and Sangay Lingpa to the monks. He introduced making *torma*, butter statues, and rituals of Guru Dragmar and other teachings of Mindrolling Monastery of Tibet (centre of all Nyingma monasteries). He also gave importance to the veneration of Mount Kanchenjunga. Hence, it was said that Jigme Pao promoted the lineage of Lhatsun Chenpo at the expense of Ngadak Chenpo's repute (McKay, 2021:20-21).

The tension was further evidenced by the role of Pemayangtse in the funeral rites of Chagdor Namgyal. The death of Chagdor Namgyal was often portrayed as an assassination organized by his sister Pende Wangmo in a final attempt to seize the Sikkimese throne (Mullard, 2011: 167). Chagdor Namgyal's corpse was carried from

the hot springs, where he died, to Rabdentse palace, where it remained for seven days. During that time, the monks from Pemayangtse performed several rituals for the deceased *Chogyal*, and on the 19th day of the 2nd month in 1717, conducted the funeral itself (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908).

One month after the death of Chagdor Namgyal, his son Gyurmed Namgyal was crowned as the *Chogyal* by Jigme Pao. This was the first time in Sikkimese history that Pemayangtse monks had led the enthronement of the *Chogyal*, marking the dominance of this monastery in Sikkim. An event further illustrated the ascendency of Jigme Pao in Sikkim's religious-political life to strengthen the position of Pemayangtse and the Mindrolling tradition in Sikkim. In addition, this event consolidated the connections between Mindrolling and Sikkim. From this time, Pemayangtse became, in fact, a branch monastery of Mindrolling, with monks regularly traveling there to study and receive initiations (Mullard, 2011: 168-170).

Pemayangtse's position was also guaranteed by establishing a monastic estate free from tax obligations to the Sikkimese State. This estate extended from the ridge on which the monastery stands north to the Rathong River, north-west to Khechopalri, and south to Gyalshing[20] Legship and the Galed River. According to the monks of Pemayangtse, the third *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal issued a land grant detailing the territory of this estate. It was generally believed that this document was destroyed during the Sikkim-Nepal war when Pemayangtse was looted and sacked by the Gorkha army. Along with the grand deeds, they also lost a large number of valuable records in this plunder as the monks of this monastery were traditional record keepers. The Gorkhas not only plundered Pemayangtse but other monasteries like Sangacholling and Tashiding (Dorjee, 2011: 65-67). In addition to these estates, a

[20] Catalogue of the Sikkimese Palace Archives PD/1.1/003m.

later record[21] indicates that various families traditionally under Tashiding were required to pay taxes (though described as offerings) to Pemayangtse, indicating the political as well as religious supremacy of Pemayangtse over the Ngadag monastery of Tashiding. The main estate of Pemayangtse bordered that of Karma Dhargay of the Drakarpa family (Yangthang Dzong), who played a crucial role in repelling the Bhutanese invasion. Like Pemayangtse, Karma Dargay was given his estate during this period as a reward for his actions and commanding the Sikkimese army. Indeed this period saw the radical transformation of landholdings in Sikkim, caused in part by the betrayal of earlier Sikkimese landlords during the War of Succession and by the creation of new landed families such as the Barfung family in Gangtok. Moreover, Jigme Pao's growing position in Sikkimese religious affairs also had a huge impact on the position of Pemayangtse and the cult of Lhatsun Chenpo in Sikkim (Mullard, 2011: 170-172).

After that, many other important monasteries were constructed under different Chogyals, but the next important ruler was the fourth *Chogyal* Gyurmed Namgyal, as he was one to construct the first Karma Kagyu monastery in Sikkim. It was because when he visited Tibet, he was warmly received by the Karmapa Lama. Actually, it was believed that Gyurmed Namgyal was highly influenced by the Lepcha faith and wizards but this was not liked by the monks of Pemayangtse Monastery who attacked the Lepchas and killed them with stones. As a result, Gyurmed Namgyal not satisfied with the teachings of Nyingma left Tibet in disguise on pilgrimage. Therefore in order to honor him, he promised to build a monastery under the name of Karmapa in Sikkim, and thus it was built at Ralong in the year 1730 and later at Rumtek in the year 1740. Phodong and Phensang were also constructed under the sponsorship of the

[21] Catalogue of the Sikkimese Palace Archives PD/1.1/032b.

Chogyal (McKay, 2021: 22). However, in between, many other smaller monasteries were constructed; many times, they are mostly counted as village monasteries and sometimes with the support of *Chogyal* and kazis.

According to Namgyal and Dolma, in the past, Sikkimese monasteries did not possess lands given by the *Chogyal*. Still, each was authorized to collect contributions from the certain villages named to support them. In the year 1730 A.D., it was only a piece of land in the plains called Phulbari that had first been given to a celibate lama named *Gelong* Ringzing Lhoyang by *Chogyal* Gyurmed Namgyal for services rendered to the State. But the said land was taken by the Pemayangtse Lamas after the death of *Gelong* Rigzing Lhoyang. And *Chogyal* Gyurmed Namgyal allowed the lamas of Pemayangtse to have full rights over the land and its peasants with the agreement that they would perform a periodical ceremony for the sake of the deceased and the *Chogyal's* future welfare (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908: 38).

With time, Pemayangtse possessed the right to collect taxes on the territory between Khalechu, Rangit, Rathongchu, and Rimbik (Dhamala, 1991: 68). However, it was not clear during whose reign the Pemayangtse Monastery received such grants, but as said earlier, the lamas of Pemayangtse believed that it was during Chagdor Namgyal's rule (Vandenhelsken, 2003: 67-68).

Thus, the monasteries of Sikkim enjoyed landed estates received either from the chogyals or the kazis from at least 1730 onwards. It is important to note that not all monasteries possessed landed estates. Only five monasteries like Pemayangtse, Ralong, Phodong, Phensong, and Rumtek owned landed estates as these monasteries were large religious institutions and sheltered a large number of monks. However, Tashiding Monastery being one of the oldest and revered by the people of Sikkim, did

not possess the land until the 1940s. Edger noticed that the chapels and the residents of monks at Tashiding Monastery were in poor condition compared to other monasteries of Sikkim, the reason being misunderstanding between the *Chogyal* of Sikkim and the ruler of Bhutan (Edger, 2005: 69). In contrast, many other smaller monasteries (called village monasteries) hold minimal landed area as one or two lamas looked after these monasteries with the donations received from the villagers.

Along with the landed estates, the monasteries also received the right to collect revenues from the villagers, who were exempted from all kinds of duties towards the State. According to Edger, the lamas were not bound to labor for the *Chogyal* and paid no dues of any kind, no matter how much land was under their possession. This applied to monasteries as well as to the land of individual lamas who could have a family and engage in farming and animal husbandry like the peasants. In 1910 there were forty-three monasteries in Sikkim, of which five owned lands, twenty-nine received annual subsidies from the State for their support, and eight depended entirely on voluntary contributions. For instance, Labrang (thirty monks), Phodong (one hundred), and Phensong (one hundred) were among the monasteries holding grants of land free of revenue. The monasteries of Lachung and Lingthem are among those without lands and are supported by contributions from the villagers. A monastery at Gangtok was built and supported by the family of the Gangtok *kazi* (Edger, 2005: 64; Carrasco, 1959: 193).

MANAGEMENT OF MONASTERY ESTATES

This section mainly focuses on the management of monastery estates before the introduction of new land revenue settlement under the direction of the British in

Sikkim. Management is very important for the organization of the monastery, and therefore, certain rules and regulations were set up in a text called *chayik*. According to Jansen, the exact time period for the introduction of *chayik* is uncertain, but it has been said that during and after the twelfth century when Tibetan monasteries expanded, the first *chayik*-like text emerged. However, he also adds that it is difficult to conclude the emergence of monastic guidelines as most of the texts has been destroyed. By looking at the texts that have been preserved, one can see that the genre emerged only during the twelfth century and that a surge in new *chayik* occurred only after the establishment of the Ganden Phodrang in 1642 indeed when many monasteries were forced to reorganize. This indicates that the guidelines were written when an improved or new monastic organization was felt necessary. The word *chayik* can be translated as monastic constitution, regulations, rules, and codified laws because it covers many topics such as details of punishment, monastic governance, etc. (Jansen, 2018: 14-16, 57).

In the first half of the eighteenth century, a *chayik*, written by the third *Chogyal*, Chagdor Namgyal, was followed in Sikkimese monasteries. During his reign, many of the monasteries were reorganized and converted into full-fledged monastic institutions. He introduced strict guidelines or *chayik* for the smooth functioning of each monastery. Since then, Sikkimese monasteries followed this *chayik* with some redactions brought up by *Chogyal* Sidkyong Tulku. He was famous for bringing religious reforms into the State during the late nineteenth century.

The management and organization of Sikkimese monasteries became more crucial when Chagdor Namgyal granted lands along with the villagers to the monasteries, especially Pemayangtse, under the guidance of Lama Jigme Pao. Moreover, he also

appointed one family to sponsor the upkeep of one monk called *garnapa*[22] (Tran, 2012: 7). The garnapas were generally the lay followers or the villagers of the monasteries, and they were assigned to support the monks and the monastery. Hence, after the firm establishment of monasticism, according to the *chayik* approved by Chagdor Namgyal, monasteries started appointing different officials to manage the monastery's daily activities. However, the *chayik* approved by the third *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal was not available. Moreover, it is essential to note here that no study was done on the management and organization of the monastery's estates-based economy, especially prior to the advent of the British rule in Sikkim.

It has already been mentioned that the land granted to the monasteries and the income generated from the land was called *choe-zhi*. The estates or *cho-zhi* of the monasteries, particularly the big five, were divided into two groups, the demesne land or the primary holdings of the monastery and the peasant's land. Concerning the demesne land of the monastery, in Sikkim, the monasteries have the tradition to allot lands to their lamas and their family mainly to generate income for the maintenance of the Lama and his family. It is a kind of 'monk field' system in Ladakh where every senior monk was provided with lands as an agricultural field for the sustenance of the monk, and it was his family's duty to look after the field and cultivate it.

Similarly, this kind of system also existed in Sikkimese monasteries, where every senior monk gets a portion of land as personal property from the monastery they belonged. Generally, the monasteries support the lamas in providing for their daily needs, but the monks of the Sikkimese monasteries have to support themselves and their families sometimes. This was because many of the monks of Sikkim, whether Nyingma or Kagyu, did not follow the tradition of celibacy and lead a married life.

[22]Few claims that the existence of *garnapa* is debatable.

The reason why Sikkimese monks break their vows was that "Sikkimese society expects them to look after their parents in old age if no other is capable of doing so, an obligation for which they require a wife and the income of a household. And once married, lamas are again back in the community, dependent on its solidarity and celebrating its communality" (Balakci, 2008: 60-61).

Moreover, it has also been said that an important factor, which may have discouraged the maintenance of celibate monasteries, was the chronic shortage of agricultural labor among the Bhutias (*Lhopos)* before the settlement of Nepalese tenant farmers. This shortage of labor encouraged sons to stay together to work their parents' fields as long as their respective families got on and must have made it very difficult to spare the labor of one son and support him as a full-time celibate[23] monk in the monastery. However, whatever may be the case, this made the monks of Sikkim responsible for their families, which ultimately led them to engage in many different income-producing activities.

Thus, the monks hold mainly two types of land under the monastery. Firstly, the monks hold a piece of land within the monastery compound, and on this land, they built their residential quarters at their expense. Since cultivation was not allowed within the monastery compound, the monks used this land for residential purposes only. These lamas were usually the monastery's official lamas who needed a dwelling

[23] The attempt to revive a celibate monastery in Sikkim after Pemayangtse monastery was done Taring Rinposhe (1886-1947) also known as Changzod Kusho or Lhatsun Tenzing Pawo was considered a reincarnation of Lhatsun Namkha Jigme. He was the son of Maharani Yeshe Dolma and thus the half-brother of Sir Tashi Namgyal, the 11th *Chogyal* of Sikkim. However, this mission of Rinpoche and Maharani failed as every single monks broke their vows and eventually took married life (Balikci, 2008).

place or residential area called *Shaa*[24] to construct small houses with their own money. Moreover, in such residences, the families or any other lay relatives were not allowed to reside, except during religious festivals in the monastery. The important feature of this system was the Lama could sell his house to another lama of the same monastery. However, it can be observed that the lamas can only own the house which they had built but not the land; therefore, he is eligible to charge only for the house. Secondly, the lamas also hold cultivable land received from the monastery. This type of land was situated outside the monastery compound or the nearby villages. The lamas usually settled with his family in this land, who supported him by cultivating the fields. Usually, this land was cultivated by the family members of the Lama, but they also received support from the servants of the monastery as many lamas were entitled to receive labor services from the monastery servants or the landless peasants of his monastery. These landless peasants were not paid for their services by the lamas as this was part of labor obligations to the monastery in return for the land they received from the monastery. However, the lamas did not own the land acquired from his monastery and were not permanent but were allowed to use the land and its production to maintain the Lama and his family. In many cases, the families were made to leave the land after the death of the Lama who has received the land from the monastery. In addition, the lamas of Sikkim also receive or inherit land from their

[24]Edger reported that, the monastery of Rumtek was small and poor looking, but there are said to be eighty monks attached to it, which was a large number more than any of the Sikkim monasteries, except Pemayangtse and Ralong. This is due to the great reputation of the head Lama, who comes from the Chinese frontier of Tibet. The monks' houses were very neat and well-built called *Shaa*, arranged in rows near the chapel (Edger, 2005: 65).

parents, unlike in Tibet[25], which could be situated within the monastery estates or the aristocratic estates, or the private estates of the *Chogyal*.

Thus, the lamas in Sikkim hold lands and cultivate the land either with the help of their family members or the landless peasants of the monastery estate. The lamas were exempted from all kinds of revenues and labor services either to the State or to the monastery. Before the introduction of the British land revenue settlement in Sikkim, the lamas were exempted from paying taxes, and they enjoyed all the products from the land within the family. Edger also noted:

> Just as in Egypt the land of the priests "became no Pharoah's" so in Sikkim the Lamas are not bound to labour for the Rajah, and pay no dues of any kind, no matter how much land may be, cultivated by themselves or their bondsmen (Edger, 2005: 64).

However, the lamas were exempted from any kind of taxes to the State, but to the monastery, the lamas had to provide religious services as well as official duties assigned to them in the monastery. Though the lamas and their families were exempted from paying taxes, they also had to fulfill certain duties to the monastery. There was a tradition that the family of the lamas had to provide some products like grains, fruits, tea, butter, milk, etc., during the time of extensive religious services and sometimes also had to bear the expenses for such religious ceremonies in the monastery. Moreover, they also had to provide labor services during such ceremonies.

Furthermore, in Sikkim, like in the case of Tibet, the incarnate lamas and the head lamas of the monasteries also hold large tracts of land for their maintenance. These lamas managed their lands separately from the monastery estate, and later they were

[25]In Tibetan tradition the monks who left their house for monastery also lost all his ownership rights in his family fields and thus many lamas faced economic problems (Goldstein, 2014: 23).

called Lama Landlords. They received their lands from the *Chogyal* and were granted hereditary rights because many of the lama landlords or the heads of the monastery were married monks. About the incarnate Lama's land, mostly the monastery attached to the incarnate Lama takes charge of the land after his death. These lama landlords were also exempted from paying any kind of taxes to the *Chogyal* or to the monastery they belonged. However, the incarnate lamas provided services to the *Chogyal* as they acted as spiritual guides as well as an adviser. Many of the head lamas of the different monasteries along with their duties to their monastery, under the *lhade-medhe* government of the *Chogyal*, also were the members of state administration as councilors (Carresco, 1959:187).

The monasteries also maintained fields mainly for the maintenance of the monastery and its monks because many monks stayed in the monastery, and the institution would take care of the basic needs of these monks. Since the lamas did not till the land, the monasteries mainly depended upon the labors of monastic servants for the cultivation of the monastery's fields. The servants of the monasteries were known as *Nangzen*. Before the advent of the British, there were very few landless peasants and laborers of *Lhopo* origin. These were generally found either in the houses of the aristocracy or were attached to the estates of the large monasteries, where they were expected to cook and bring water and wood for the lamas and cultivate the monastery's fields in exchange for a percentage of the harvest. For the cultivation of the monastery's field, the inputs were basically provided by the monastery itself (Balakci, 2008: 83). Monasteries sometimes also provided lands to the landless peasants in return for their labor services to the monastery, and most of the time, they were exempted from paying any dues to the monastery.

Another important part of the monastery estates was the peasant land. The monasteries were the secondary holder of this form of land as they did not own the peasant land, but they had the right to administer and collect revenues from the peasants or the *misers* of these lands. The monasteries usually leased out the lands to the peasants, who in return paid taxes. The peasants or the *misers* who come under the monastery estate were also called *jindag* or patron of the monastery. The main source of income for the monasteries was land rent, but due to the lack of information, it is not clear how the monasteries collected the land rents and how much rents were collected during this period. However, it can be assumed that no strict rules existed to collect revenues from the people as during those days population was very scanty and mostly settled in remote areas. Moreover, it has been said that, before 1747, there was no systematic way of collecting revenues in Sikkim. It was only during the fifth *Chogyal* Namgyal Phuntsok along with his regent Rabden Sarpa introduced the system of taxation called *Zolung* in Sikkim for the first time (Tran, 2012: 4-5).

Thus, in the early days, the monastery mostly depended upon the lay supporter for donations; most importantly, the main support came from the royal sponsorship. Though the monasteries were granted landed estates by the rulers, they could not accumulate much wealth as the rent was not fixed and tax payers were minimal, and agricultural laborers were a scarce commodity. Thus, many of the monastery lands were empty, or no peasants were settled, which was later put on the lease after the immigration of Nepalese. However, the villagers used to provide certain contributions to the monastery, which can be termed as tax and paid in kind like grains, fruits, wood, tea, etc. It can be pointed out that the *jindag* and their contributions are the basis for the survival of the monastery during those days, as Mullard says:

> "sponsorship" of religious establishments was often compulsory. Those *Miser* attached to the monastic estates in Sikkim are referred to as *jindag*, despite the fact that their 'contributions' to those monasteries was guaranteed through their physical bond to the land they 'leased' from the monastery (Mullard, 2010: 25-26).

The *misers* or *jindag* pay their contributions mainly during the time of religious ceremonies in the monastery. The revenues gathered from the *misers* were generally stored in the monastery treasury and were spent mostly during religious festivals by providing food to the lamas and the lay participants. The *misers* also have to pay labor services to the monastery whenever needed. One member of a family has to go and provide services like constructing monastery buildings. The villagers were also called upon for labor services whenever the lamas made a visit to Tibet mainly to carry loads. Thus, it can be seen that no strict rules were laid down in order to collect revenues from the *misers* during this time in Sikkim, mainly for the monastery estate. The contributions paid by the misers to the monastery depend upon the miser's general well-being and their willingness. Therefore, Bell also motioned that the rents on monastic estates were usually lower than those owned by the laity (Bell, 2000:304).

Concerning monasteries and their property rights, most monasteries owned landed estates granted by the *Chogyal* and some lay supporters who used to offer lands in the name of their diseased relatives to gain merits for them (this mainly occurred only after the advent of British rule in Sikkim). These lands are the collective property of the monastic community. Before the British land revenue policies, these monasteries were exempted from any kind of taxes and labor services to the State. Apart from the contributions from the villagers settled under monastic estates, they also received annual subsidies or allowance from the *Chogyal*. This wealth was treated as the

general possession of the monastery and mostly spent on religious ceremonies, maintaining the monastery, and supporting the monks with their food, clothes, and shelter. Moreover, the monasteries also collected taxes from the traders who fell under the monastic jurisdiction. Though clear evidence regarding such tax was not available, one record from Palace Archives shows that the monastery used to collect trade tax from wool traders[26].

Apart from the cultivable lands and their taxes, monasteries also own large tracts of forests. However, these forests did not generate revenues before the British influence, as the monasteries did not impose any taxes on the usage of the forest produced by the villagers. Monasteries also collected timber from their forests freely for the construction of their monastery. In addition to that, monasteries also own the donations made by lay supporters in wheat, barley, rice, butter, cash, etc., as religious endowments. And from all these properties, monasteries have to survive and maintain. However, it is important to note that the resources they generated from the different sources were used to maintain a large number of monk bodies, daily expenses of the monastery like burning butter lamps, incenses, and those expensive religious festivals.

Moreover, apart from big monasteries like Pemayangtse, Ralong, Phensong, Phodong, and Rumtek, many small monasteries, also called village monasteries held a very meager amount of land. These monasteries usually rented their lands to a few houses and collected rents in the form of agricultural products. Sometimes, the villagers look after the fields of these monasteries or share the land among them, and in return, they support the monastery by paying agricultural shares and money. These village monasteries did not possess much wealth and are looked after by one or two monks

[26]Catalogue of the Sikkimese Palace Archives PD/1.1/031.

who act as caretakers. They are generally connected with their mother or principal monastery.

With regard to the managing body of the Sikkimese monastery, every monastery particularly the big monasteries has its committee. Generally, a committee was set up depending on the size of the monastery to manage their estates and to look after their day-to-day affairs. Traditionally, Sikkimese monasteries appointed their officials according to the hierarchical pattern of the monastery, but later, under Sidkyong Tulku (1914), the level of education became more important than seniority (Jansen, 2018: 59).

However, the management committee of the monastery was referred to as *Udor-choesum*. This committee or *Udor-choesum* consists of three leading heads of the monastery- *Dorje-lopon*, *Omzed*, and *Choe-trimpa*. Apart from these high-ranking officials, there were many other monks who served their superiors in managing the monastery.

Dorje-lopon: in the Sikkimese Buddhist monastery, *Dorje-lopon* was the highest post and was considered the head of the monastery. Every *Dorje-lopon* was appointed directly by the *Chogyal*. The main duty of *Dorje-lopon* was to look after overall matters of the monastery, but usually, they were often connected with the spiritual domain of the monastery rather than temporal. *Dorje-lopon* were highly learned lamas, and therefore they were appointed as the councilors in the court of *Chogyal*. In return for his services to the monastery and the State, *Chogyal* granted them lands for maintenance (Dhamala, 1991: 58-76). Though the post of *Dorje-lopon* was not permanent, his position never gets demoted after his removal from the post, and enjoyed the respect of privileges throughout his life.

Omzed: *Omzed* (prayer leader) was also a very high-ranking post right after *Dorje-lopon*. *Omzed* generally was the prior whose main duty was to lead the prayer in the main hall. *Omzed* held a very important position in the monastery as they were generally very learned and trained lamas and usually appointed by *Dorje-lopon* and sometimes by *Chogyal* himself. Apart from leading prayer in the prayer hall (*Lhakhang*), *Dorje-lopon* looks after the spiritual domain and, *Omzed* looks after the temporal domain or the secular matters of the monastery. He supervises the whole establishment and controls all discussions. It is to him that the villagers resort to advice and the settlement of disputes. This office was not held for life but enjoyed high status and privileges in the monastery (Dhamala, 2008: 155).

Choe-trimpa: the third member of *Udor-choesum* was the *Choe-trimpa,* the discipline master of the monastery (Vandenhelsken, 2003: 68). This was an important position that required deep learning, popularity, tact, and the ability to enforce discipline and respect. He was selected by a vote of monks and was approved by the king for three years but sometimes reappointed for one or more terms, as there is difficulty in finding suitable men for this appointment. He was in charge of the monastic library, and one of his duties was to read out the monastic rules, maintain discipline among the monks and inflict punishment on the wrong-doers. He was required to lecture on religion and discipline occasionally to the assembled monks. *Choe-trimpa* was not only the librarian maintaining discipline among the monks but was also the spokesman of the monks.

Chinyer: the members of *Udor-choesum* looked after the spiritual as well as secular affairs of the monastery, like managing estates and maintaining revenues or contributions collected from the misers. These three members usually appointed different officials under them to manage the monastery properly. One of the important

officials was a steward called *Chinyer* or *Nyerpa* (Carresco, 1959: 126), whose main duty was to look after the collection of revenues from the villagers or misers and act as a storekeeper. He also maintained a taxation register or records of the misers and the contributions they paid to the monastery[27]. Mostly, two monks were appointed to this post for three years and dealt with the misers. They were the link between the *Udor-choesum* and menial servants of the monastery. If the menials have any complaint, it is communicated to the *Chinyer,* who would inform the elderly monks of this and place it before an assembly.

Konyer: He was the temple caretaker. He was in charge of dusting and arranging to alter, making offerings of water, and sacred food, and removing the same from the alter. This post was tenable for three years, and this post was mainly given to junior monks of the monastery. Moreover, the big monasteries appointed *Konyer* to look after their branch monasteries located within the villages. It was *Konyer's* duty to manage the village monastery and its properties like land. As already mentioned, village monasteries also hold some land, and one or two houses from the same village cultivate the land using their seeds and labor and submit certain shares to the monastery. Hence, *Konyer's* duty was to collect the monastery's shares of agricultural products from the villagers or misers and transfer them to the head monastery.

Furthermore, there were many small ranking posts like *Uchunpa, Kangsapa, Thungpo, Chapdip*, and these posts do not fall in the hierarchical order although they were selected from among the *U-chho* (elder monks). The *Uchenpa* is responsible for playing the cymbal and leading the service of the monastery in the absence of the *Omzed*. The *Kangsapa* was responsible for the paraphernalia of worship in the

[27]Catalogue of the Sikkimese Palace Archives PD/1.1/003m.

monastery. His duties consist of lighting lamps, burning incense sticks, preparing prayer flags, and so forth. These officials are selected from among the elderly monks who do not have any specific duties and can be available to the monastery at all times *Thungpo* was the conch-shell blower. Generally, two junior monks were appointed by the monastery officials for the term of one year, and *Chapdip* was the holy water pourer (Dhamala, 1991: 61).

At last, there was *Machen,* who was the cook of the monastery's kitchen. *Machen* was usually a layman and generally came from the lower rank of the Bhutia (*Lhopo*) community. However, after the Nepalese migration, many Nepalese began to work as *Machen* in the Sikkimese monasteries.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MONASTERY AND THE VILLAGERS

According to Sengupta, "lamaist religion is a real force that molds the socio-cultural pattern of the people belonging to this faith. The monasteries are the centers of all social activities, since, the monasteries and the Lamas are involved on all occasions in the life of a Buddhist family" (Sengupta, 1985: 65). As the center of all social activities, the monasteries and lamas get involved on all occasions in the life of a Buddhist family from birth to death and in the festivals and ceremonies (Tulku, 1977: 8-10). Since the time of Bhutia's migration into Sikkim, the *gonpa* or the monastery has become the pivot of community life and the prime bond of unity between the two ethnic groups the Lepchas and the Bhutias.

Usually, the *gonpa* was situated at the highest point in the village overlooking the valley and backed by the forest. Outside the confines of the *gonpa* but around, there is a hamlet or cluster of households of the lamas who serve the *gonpa* known as *Shaa* or

Tahashag. Further below, there was another hamlet inhabited by the peasants (Debnath, 2009:33).

All the households or the villagers within the jurisdiction of the monastery are called "*Jindag*". Generally, the *jindag* supports the *monastery,* but sometimes a monastery possesses its land, which may be a source of its income. Those *Jindag* who falls under the monastery estates has to pay compulsory contributions in grains, tea, butter, and sometimes cash. Apart from these contributions, the villagers have to pay labor services to the monastery. However, excepting the five big monasteries of the country, the monastery, in general, did not possess much land (Debnath, 2009: 34). These monasteries entirely depended upon the subsidies received from the State and the donations from the laity for the maintenance and conducting of religious ceremonies. Some of the monasteries were looked after by the landlord or the *kazi* of that area. For instance, the Enchay monastery was under the support of Enchay *Kazi,* and the Chakung monastery was looked after by Chakung *Kazi* (Edger, 2005).

However, it was believed that all the monasteries were important for the Buddhist villagers, whether it was a big monastic institution like Pemayangtse or a small monastery that acted as a temple or *manilhakhang.* The villagers were attached to both types of monasteries and supported them whether compulsorily or freely.

The lamas play a very important role as linkages between the monastery and the villages. As it was believed that the existence of monkhood enables the laity to acquire merit, ensuring improved rebirth in the next life. A villager can add to his stock of merit through services to the monastery in the form of donation, work, and the sponsorship of rituals. The monk provides religious services to the village. Usually, monks were invited by individual families and also to village ritual

ceremonies for the recitation of Buddhist texts. The monks get food and money for their services.

The relationship between the monastery and the peasants is an age-old one. Before the abolition of landlordism in Sikkim in the year 1949, the peasants used to contribute to the monastery through their landlords, apart from their own personal contributions. Often there has been a change in the ownership of land but never was the peasant ousted from his ancestral land of cultivation, nor was there any change in the relationship between the monastery and the peasants. Even now, the influence of the monastery over the peasants has not diminished. The factor behind this was that the monastery greatly regulated the activities of the peasants: the rituals at birth, death, illness, or the agricultural rites are all performed by the lamas. In short, the priests are the intellectual elite whom the peasants consult for guidance. For a Buddhist peasant, hardly a day passes without any contact with the lamas. The Buddhist population has to perform the following activities as part of their religious duties: occasional donations to the monastery either in kind or in money and these being particularly heavy during festivals; free labor service for the construction or repair of the monastery; and payment of high fees for various sorts of services rendered by the lamas (Debnath, 2009: 38).

Moreover, Edger has reported that the Sikkim monks earned profit from the ceremonies mentioned above, especially dead rituals and other religious ceremonies. Edger noticed:

> it is evidently one of the most important functions of the Sikhim monks to help the soul of the dead to make the journey from this world to the abode of the terrible king of death, who holds a mirror in which the naked soul is reflected; while an attendant demon holds the scales in

> which good deeds, poured in by the guardian Lama of the deceased, are weighed, against the evil deeds collected by a demon probably his evil genius….Ceremonies of this kind are considered absolutely necessary to the welfare of the dead, but they must be a most cruel tax on the living; for the Sikhim monks an immensely big fraction of the whole population are mainly supported on the profits derived from them (Edger, 2005: 58-59).

It has also been mentioned that the right to conduct not only dead rituals but all kinds of rituals of the villagers belongs to a particular monastery. For instance, if one monastery burns the deceased person's body while another takes charge of the departing soul, both the monasteries are entitled to dues (Edger, 2005: 59).

Apart from these elaborated rituals, the villagers also have to support their sons who were studying in the monastery as a monk. They often have to feed some members engaged in monastic activities. Almost every household has one or more monks to support. In Sikkim, though the monks could hold lands and properties, not every monk possessed landed properties; therefore, they had to depend upon their families. Not all monks were learned or educated to perform rituals and read scriptures. There was a tradition that the family of a monk had to provide food and money to all the monks of the monastery during monthly religious ceremonies in the monastery, or in other terms, the family had to sponsor the costly ritual ceremonies on behalf of their son. Therefore, economically speaking, according to Debnath, the lamas are a parasitic class of society. They, along with the expensive religious rites and customs, cause huge drainage of savings for the people (Debnath, 2009: 35). However, many a time, there is a custom that somewhat lessens the burden of the villagers for instance, when a member of a family dies, all the relatives and friends support and help the

deceased and his family by providing money and items required during the ceremonies to offer to the lamas.

However, on the other end, the monastery also carried out its economic activities mainly to perform monthly and annual religious observances along with the help of the villagers through a different mechanism, and one such system were suggested by Miller known as *jisa* (also *Chisa*), which was a Tibetan word meaning 'community property'. According to him, *jisa* is a mechanism that can convert or translate the gifts into religious merit for the donors, whether monks or laypeople. As a means to the acquisition of religious merit, the *jisa* system is deceptively simple. The following "model" underlies all monastic economic activity.

> 1) A monastic community is established in a lay Buddhist community, with a basic endowment in the form of goods, land, and sometimes villagers, for its support.
>
> 2) Members of the lay community who desire more religious services than the *Sangha* offers donate the means to pay for some extra service. In so doing they become Patrons of that service.
>
> 3) The monastic community accepting such patronage in each case appoints a monk as treasurer (*nyerba*) of the fund or *jisa*, which is kept separate from the monastery endowment. Responsibility for performance of the service that the patron desires is delegated to one or more monks.
>
> 4) A new patron-client relation has now been established, the donor-patron becoming the client of the deity or deities whose favor he seeks. The *nyerba* acts as mediator between the donor and the deity. In taking this role he acquires religious merit as an individual.
>
> 5) Provided that the services are performed as the donor specified the *nyerba* may pocket some of the income from a *jisa* fund. Thus helping

> to support a monk, the *jisa* indirectly helps to support the monastery (Miller, 1961:428).

Moreover, he says that the *jisa* system existed mainly to support and preserves the monastery by making it economically strong in periods of economic scarcity. Under this system, the monastery can transfer their economic burden to lay patrons like maintaining the monastery structure, purchasing books, the cost of food, etc., to carry out the regular monthly and annual rituals in the monastery. The basic idea of this system is to increase the funds provided by the lay patrons to become economically independent, and this system can be found in Sikkimese monasteries. Here the monasteries lend money both to monks and to laypeople. Any monk who feels able to do so may accept a sum of money that is described as *ging-khang* or *khang-sa* (permanent principal). Sometimes this takes the form of the product from one of the monastery fields, which the monastery servants and landless peasants cultivated. In accepting such a loan, he becomes the *nyerba* for some particular ceremony, and he was obliged to pay for the ceremonies from the interest or profit received from lending the money to a layman or investing it in trade, or from the sale of the field crops. The principal, or the field, must revert to the monastery at the end of a stated period, never more than three years. Generally, the villager signed a form of contract with the monastery and took the field from the monastery for three years, and within that period, the villager or the borrower must cultivate the land using his own seeds and technologies and earn profit. In return for the field, the villager or the borrower had to take the financial responsibility of the monastery, particularly for monthly rituals performed in the monastery. During such monthly rituals, the villager had to provide grains, tea, butter, *chee,* etc., for three years. Since the acceptance of such a loan brings religious merit, even well-to-do lay people would take loans on the above terms. A few Sikkimese monasteries can count on receiving sufficient annual

contributions above their endowment income to finance an enlarged ceremonial calendar. Others may need some small extra source of income to support one prolonged ceremony or for some special service. Local patrons or villagers (*jindag*) are then asked to provide a sum, sufficiently in advance of the need, which is then employed as capital in a loan that will produce, in the form of interest, the amount required to pay for the ceremony. The *jindag* get their capital back and also gain merit through supporting the ceremony. It is not quite clear whether in Sikkim the endowment and *jisa* funds are kept entirely separate. But in small monasteries where the *sangha* depends mainly on a fixed landed endowment and where it may not be easy to attract outside support, the loan practices are the only means by which special ceremonies and services can be performed (Miller, 1961: 431).

Hence, Sikkimese monasteries are responsible for conducting various religious ceremonies in the monastery, which is usually very expensive, and they need more funds during such times. But there is one important variable that the monastery provides loans to villagers or to a particular person who becomes a *nyerba,* and it was his duty to perform monthly ritual ceremonies out of the interest from that principal amount which he or she borrowed from the monastery. Usually, there are four monthly rituals which may cost no more than one hundred and fifty rupees in the olden days. This system is beneficial for the villager as well as the monastery as they both can earn merit whilst minimizing their economic burden. Whereas, on the other hand, the annual rituals like *kagay* and other big rituals have to be carried out by the monastery itself using their community funds, and one interesting thing is that the lamas of that monastery and their family members have to support or provide necessary items to full fill these rituals. At the same time, the villagers also have to

support the monastery with grains, *chee,* and other articles as well as physical labor during the ceremonies.

Sometimes, it is said that monasteries and the monks are the parasites of the society (Debnath, 2009) who attract a large sum of property in the form of money, land, etc. from the people, but for the Buddhist laymen, they are the most highly respected class of people and believes that it is their honor to support them in every means. Thus, there exists a cordial relationship between the Buddhist lamas and the villagers today.

Furthermore, Sikkimese monasteries also run local level administration within their own jurisdiction under the authority of the *Chogyal*. Apart from collecting revenues (contributions) from the villagers, they also offered many different roles in order to maintain law and order within the area. Prior to the British period in Sikkim, the life of every people was deeply connected with the monastery and its lamas. It was through the monasteries that the villagers received information delivered from their *Chogyal*. These monasteries sometimes acted as granaries as they used to collect a large number of grains from the villagers as contributions or taxes, thus providing loans to the villagers in times of need. It is important to note here that the monasteries were also used to provide justice to its people. There was a tradition that if some unlawful circumstances took place in the villages, then the people sought help from the monastery's lamas, who solved the cases and had the right to punish the guilty.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF SIKKIMESE MONASTERIES

There were certain differences in the order of monks in Tibet and that in Sikkim. In Tibet, at least one member of each family had to accept the monastic life, and the moment they were entering the monastery to get their initiation into the world of

Dharma, they lost the identity of their previous lives as laymen. Children from the age of five used to be admitted into the monastery. They had to start from the lowest stage of the training to undergo a planned series of rigorous practices to equip themselves with the intricacies of the *Dharma*. Thus the monks in Tibet had the best of their training systematically from their senior Lamas. However, because of the Tibetan system, the third *Chogyal* of Sikkim, Chagdor Namgyal, introduced a conventional rule that the Pemayangtse lamas attribute their 'code of conduct' or '*chayik'* to Jigme Pao, but it was mainly implemented by the *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal after the Lama's departure. This 'code of conduct' was the oldest one in Sikkim, mostly followed in all the monasteries of this land, but it was rewritten in 1870 by *Chogyal* Sidkyong Namgyal (Vandenhelsken, 2003: 59-60). Again, it was rewritten in 1909 by Sidkyong Tulku for all Sikkimese monasteries, which states that it was a work "in accordance with all the Sikkimese monasteries' own rules, the local customs, capacities, and intentions." Thus Jansen says that, when structural changes took place in a particular monastery (e.g., it changed affiliation or it had been rebuilt after it had been destroyed), the *chayik* of that monastery was seen to need revision or replacement (Jansen, 2018: 30). This was not a new thing that the religious heads composed the rule book time and again as there was a tradition of rewriting the code of rules from the time of venerable Sariputta Thera, who had suggested that 'an abstract rule would not allow the community to adapt changing circumstances (such as dispersion of its members, excess of material goods or the development of scholarship). Since circumstances were likely to change, it was better to lay down rules as the need arose (Wijayaratna, 1990: 121). In addition to that, it has also been suggested that monastic guidelines or *chayik* can have various purposes. Jansen distinguished three subgenres among the *chayik*: (1) guidelines for multiple

monasteries written by someone whose religious authority is acknowledged by those monasteries; (2) codes written for multiple or all monasteries of a particular region, encouraged or enforced by a political ruler; (3) rulebooks for individual monasteries that contain references to specific situations and local practices. Often it will prove difficult or impossible to distinguish the first two. Examples of this are the Sikkim monastic guidelines in which the author has religious as well as political authority (Jansen, 2018: 21).

The guidelines of Sikkimese monasteries are quite different from the monasteries in Tibet. Here the lamas, being the members generally of the Nyingma (Old School of Tibetan Buddhism) or Red Hat Sect, are allowed to marry and lead a normal life in a family. Only the lamas, who have taken the full vows of monkhood and have taken self-imposed celibacy and abstinence by renouncing the worldly life or the *Rinpoche* or incarnates, spend, if they so like, their lives in the monastery. But it was not compulsory for the lamas to stay in the monastery in Sikkim, and many of them had their own houses and landed properties. However, Vandenhelsken in her article says that there were two types of religious men who were theoretically in opposition: the religious man living 'in the world,' which means living in a society with their men (as married and householder); and the celibate Lama, a religious man living 'out of the world,' detached from society, and completely devoted to religion. However, the Pemayangtse lamas have getting married been seen as a recent one because it was strictly prohibited during the reign of Chagdor Namgyal (Vandenhelsken, 2003: 63).

According to the rule or *chayik* established by Chagdor Namgyal, every second son of a Bhutia family should be sent to the monastery to become a monk (a kind of tax obligation). Similar to Tibet, men from all classes were admitted to the monkhood, but Chagdor Namgyal made a special rule that only a son from the pure Lhopo

(Bhutia) clan descended particularly from Khye-Bumsa should be allowed to enter the Pemayangtse monastery to be a part of its monastic community. It has also been said that those families who do not fall under this pure clan (*Bebtsen-gay*) have to pay a certain amount of fees to get admission to this monastery. In Sikkim in the second half of the twentieth century, Carrasco observed that all monks had to pay an admission fee, with the notable exception of those belonging to the nobility. This admission fee was formalized at certain monasteries, while at most monasteries, the price were not fixed but rather an offering by the parents (Carrasco, 1992: 185-194).

The orders of the monks are divided into several rungs, from *trapas* at the bottom to *Dorje-Lopon* as the Head Lama. It was the general custom among the people of Sikkim to send one son, normally the second of the family, to the monastery, which was a reflection of the deep religious conviction of the people and the social position and privileges accorded to the monks. In Pemayangtse, admission is said to be stricter than in any other monastery in Sikkim. As we have seen above, admission was open only to children (boys only) of pure Bhutia blood, and they should not suffer from any physical blemishes or deformities. They were admitted between the age of eight and ten, and before any formal admission was made, the parentage of the boy was thoroughly checked. If admitted, he was placed under the most suitable tutor after consulting the boys' horoscope, and many a time, the boy has been placed under the guardianship of his cousin lamas, who also becomes his tutor. The final decision rests with the *Dorje-Lopon* and the *Omzed* Lama. Once the admission is confirmed, the boy's parents offer food and *chee* to the monks, and a great feast is held at the monastery to mark the boy's admission. Under his tutor, the boy learns the preliminaries of writing and reading. He has to read and learn books of prayer and worship. During this period, he stays with his tutor and renders menial services to his

tutor. This preliminary learning takes two to three years, and it was then decided whether the boy could be admitted to the *ge-tsul* (novitiate) or not. Entrance of the novitiate was of more significance than his first recruitment since it means that from now on, the boy was subject to the discipline of the general monastic order. He was then ceremoniously shaved, assumed the dress of a monk, and received a religious name. These were, however, done only after a thorough examination of the boy's parentage, physical examination, the giving of an entrance donation, and an aptitude test by the elderly monks. The boy was asked to recite by heart the prayer he had learned so far. The formal acceptance of the boy by the monastery is followed by presents from the novice's parents to the monks. These usually consist of a pig or a bullock, a load of rice, and a load of *chee* according to their financial capacity. On the successful completion of all procedures, he was presented with a scarf of honor by the monks and was considered a member of the monastic community. The second stage of training includes making *torma* (votive offerings to the gods in the form of sacrificial cakes), blowing copper trumpets, playing cymbals, performing religious dances, and studying certain subjects such as medicine, astrology, and painting. It is found that most of the monks if they did not choose at all to study any particular subject, they could take to painting and other crafts (Kotturan, 1983; Dhamala, 2008:61).

Once a *ge-tsul* was promoted to the position of a junior monk, his further promotion was determined according to the hierarchical pattern of the monastery. The promotion usually depended upon the monks' intellectual accomplishment, and no examination was held for this. On the completion of these duties, one passes the stage of *trapa* or learner and becomes an elder monk or *U-chho*. Traditionally, the junior monk or *ge-tsul* had to pursue training towards the grade of *ge-long*, but in Sikkimese

monasteries, many of the monks did not take the full vows of monkhood and lead a life of a married men. The *U-chho* alone can fill the higher posts of the monastery like *Konyer*, *Chinyer*, *Omzed*, *Choe-trimpa,* and *Dorje-lopon*. However, it has been noticed that most of the high-ranking lamas usually belonged to aristocratic families. Very few common monks can climb the higher status after getting rigorous training in monastic education.

Hence, education was very important for every monk, and the actual purpose of monastic education was to enhance the spiritual progress of the monk, mainly to liberate one from this cyclic existence. Though spiritual progress was the ultimate goal of monastic education at the same time, the students were also taught to enhance their overall development. Therefore parents in the olden days admitted their children into the monasteries mainly to get an education and improve their life. Not only that the monks were treated as learned and superior by the layperson. Therefore, they received great respect and privileges that most of the rulers and aristocrats in the olden days were monks and studied in the monasteries. When Sikkim was under the Chogyals, his administration was called as *lhade-medhe* under which half of the state officials were lamas, and the other half officials were lay aristocrats, and all the members received their education from the monasteries only.

The curriculum of monastic education consisted of religious rituals, poetry, painting, sculpture, and astrology, including mathematics, medicines, philosophy, literature, *tantra,* etc. Monks have to learn religious dance called *cham,* use of ritual objects, and vocal recitation. The books of ordinary worship and ritual and textbooks for the boy probationers and novices are also an essential part of the monastic library, and they must be daily repeated till their contents are fully learned by heart (Risley, 1894: 294).

Monastery plays an important role in imparting education, and it is one of the oldest forms of learning. An ideal monastery possesses the facility of imparting higher studies through *Sheda,* where monks can acquire higher Buddhist studies. In the monastery, *Dubda* enables the scholars to utilize their knowledge to train and enlighten their minds. In addition to this, it should have a main shrine for worshiping where the students may practice ritualistic systems and works (Acharya, 1998: 4). A well-established *Sheda* and an equally suitable *Dupda* are the two essential components to lend significance and respectability to the monastery. It is not always possible to have these two essential organs in all the monasteries for many reasons, and it is true in the case of Sikkim also. Therefore, it was said that the course of training obtained at Pemayangtse monastery was regarded as a standard one that the other monasteries tried to live up to (Risley, 1894).

Initially, Sikkim borrowed this monastic education system from Tibet. Sikkim also had the tradition of sending its monks to Tibet to receive greater knowledge from the high learned lamas. Pemayangtse and Tashiding monasteries and others were sending young monks to Mindrolling and Dorje-Dak monasteries of Tibet for higher learning. These lamas usually came back to their respective monasteries and taught whatever they had learned. This kind of system also existed in Ladakh, where the lamas used to go to Tibet for higher studies in the great monasteries of Tibet. Only a few people received this education of basically ritualistic practices due to the lack of a well-organized monastic school in Sikkim (Sinha, 1987: 3). However, this kind of interaction between the monasteries of Tibet and Sikkim remained till the closure of Tibetan borders in 1959.

After getting all the instruction from the teachers and completing their studies, they were given different responsibilities to serve the monastery as *thungpo, chapdip,* etc.

On completing all these services, he becomes an important functionary of the monastery. However, this system of education was followed only in a few renowned monasteries like Pemayangtse, Tashiding, Phensong, Enchey, and Kathok of the Nyingma sect and Ralong, Rumtek, and Phodong of Kagyu sect (Acharya, 1998: 3-4).

Therefore it has been said that *Chogyal* Sidkeong Tulku brought many religious reforms to the Sikkimese monasteries and gave more attention to the education of the monks in the early twentieth century. Jansen mentioned:

> Sidkyong Tulku, in writing his monastic guidelines for all Sikkimese monasteries in 1909, rules that the monks interested in learning had to be provided for economically. The text says that those who study diligently should always be given tea and soup by the central monastic administration until they complete their studies. The guidelines further state, with regard to those who had some education: "Unlike before, [they] need to get a position and rewards and relief from tax, corvee duty, transportation duty and so on, commensurate with their achievements" (Jansen, 2018: 92).

As the British had already entered the kingdom and stressed English education and English medium schools, Sidkyong Tulku stressed improving monastic education in the monasteries of Sikkim. Therefore, he visited most of the monasteries, investigated the overall scenario of the monasteries, and opened a school in Phudong, Phensong, Rumtek, Pemayangtse, and Ralong. Sidkyong Tulku also used to invite other learned lamas from other countries like Tibet and Bengal to teach Buddhism to the pupils of Sikkimese monasteries[28]. Gradually the number of monastery schools was increased in most parts of the Sikkimese monasteries like Temi, Pakyong, Rhenock, Kamlet, Chidam, Wok, Chakung, Soreyong, Chambong, Dentham, Rishim, and Song (Dhamala, 1990: 61).

[28]Administrative Report of Sikkim, 1913-1914.

However, education was very important for all the monks, but not all monks were educated. Though most of the monks could read and write, thus these monks usually faced economic problems or difficulty fulfilling their needs. Similar to Tibet, the monks of Sikkimese monasteries have to look after their maintenance. Since the Sikkimese monks were allowed to marry, they lived as ordinary householders in the villages and attained the monastery at certain periods, particularly during religious ceremonies, during which time they received their shares of money, grains, and *chee* donated by the lay supporters. From an economic point of view, these monks were comparable to other peasants, and the only difference was that they were exempted from taxes (Carrasco, 1959: 124).

Concerning the income of the monks, most of the Sikkimese monks possess landed property and are engaged in cultivation, but many of the lamas do not cultivate themselves. Their fields were cultivated by his family members and servants or landless peasants of the monastery he belonged. These landless peasants were not paid by the lamas but were only served tea and food. These lamas earned extra income from carpentry, *thanka* painting (religious scrolls), and most importantly, performing different kinds of religious rites in the house of the villagers. However, there were only a few lamas (high ranking) whose economic condition was excellent but it has been mentioned that economically most of the lamas of Sikkim were not better than other lay bustiwallas (David-Neel, 1931).

Thus, Sikkimese monasteries flourished after the arrival of Jigme Pao, and under the patronage of *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal, monasteries began to enjoy landed properties for their maintenance. Gradually, the number of monasteries increased, and some of them are big and attached to great Lamas, and there are many smaller monasteries usually identified as village monasteries. The bigger monasteries mostly

possessed greater wealth as well as bigger responsibilities in the State. Moreover, all the monasteries in Sikkim were under the direct control of the *Chogyal*, who supported these monasteries by every means. Though these monasteries have their managing bodies to look after the monasteries as well as the monks, the head of the monastery has to consult with the *Chogyal* on important matters of the monastery. Even the monastic rule book called *chayik* was written by Chogyals like Chagdor Namgyal, Sidkyong Tulku, and Tashi Namgyal. Though there were few monasteries that remained poor for a quite long time but generally under the tenure of Chogyals the Sikkimese monasteries had a golden time.

IV Chapter

Impact of British Administration on Monastic Economy

The British rule and its administration in Sikkim have brought significant changes not only in the political sphere but also in the economy as well. When the British first assumed its power by positioning their first political officer John Claude White in this tiny kingdom basically from 1889 started introducing many rules and regulations. One of the most important changes brought forward by the British administration under J.C. White was the introduction of a new kind of land revenue system in the kingdom. This new land revenue system subsequently changed the existing traditional economy which also brought changes in the economic condition of the Sikkimese monasteries.

The Entry of the British into Sikkim

By the late eighteenth century, the Gorkha forces were extending their control in the Himalayan hills particularly eastern regions, whereas the British were consolidating their position in the plains of North India. The Gorkhas were also interested in invading Sikkim and they were successful in capturing a few Sikkimese territories by 1816. But the Gorkha's interest in expansion was interrupted by the British when they tried to capture British Indian territories. In order to stop the Gorkha expansion, the British came across a small kingdom of Sikkim who was also facing some difficulties with the Gorkhas and the British at once saw the advantages of an alliance with Sikkim. At this juncture, the British do not have an interest in possessing Sikkim but they had a strong interest in Tibet mainly for trade, and they were looking for a suitable way to reach Tibet. Therefore, when they realized Sikkim's connection with Tibet geographically, culturally, and politically the British developed their interest in

Sikkim. However, the British were successful in getting an alliance from Sikkim and the British in return promised the Sikkimese territories captured by the Gorkha forces. Eventually, the armies of the British and Sikkim defeated the Gorkhas, and the British signed the treaty of Sigauli with Nepal in 1816 which ended the conflicts between the British and Nepal (McKay, 2021: 32-33).

However, in February 1817, the Anglo-Sikkim Treaty or Treaty of Titalia was signed and the British rewarded Sikkim by restoring the hill territory and Morang for supporting the British. Moreover, according to the Treaty of Titalia, Sikkim was also made to agree to certain British conditions like not allowing any other Europeans to reside in Sikkim, and in return, they promised to protect any future Nepalese aggression (McKay, 2021: 34).

This new development completely changed the history of Sikkim during the 19th and 20thcenturies (Gurung, 2011: 36). However, the disunity between the Lepchas and the Bhutias consequently led to a very chronic situation of armed conflict between the Bhutia ministers and the Lepcha ministers in the kingdom in which many of the Lepchas fled to the Ilam district of Nepal[29]and due to this internal conflict, Gorkhas started their aggression into the land which made Tsugphud Namgyal take help from the British. After the treaty of Titaliya, the British had taken it upon themselves to protect Sikkim from the depredations of the Gorkhas of Nepal, they were now willing to help the Sikkim ruler whenever any dispute arose between him and the Gorkhas. One such dispute arose in 1827 over Onto hill situated on the east of the River Mechi. On the Raja's request for arbitration, the Governor-General of India, Lord William

[29] In the year 1826, nearly eight hundred Lephas from Chidan and Namthang fled to Ilam (patrimonial estate of Bolek family) when Changzot Bolek the then Lepcha Prime Minister was murdered by Bhutia ministers (Warner, 2014: 27).

Bentinck, sent Colonel Lloyd and Mr. G.W. Grant, I.C.S., in 1828 to investigate and settle the dispute (Basnet, 1974: 32).

While in Sikkim, Colonel Lloyd came upon a small village on a ridge called Dorjeeling later called Darjeeling. He thought that the site was ideally suitable for the development of a sanatorium where the soldiers and the officers of the British East India Company could rest in summer, away from the devastating heat of the plains. However, from 1834 to 1835 when Sikkim was attacked by Nepal, *Chogyal* turned to the British for help who then entrusted the task to Colonel Lloyd at the same time he took this opportunity to negotiate with the *Chogyal* for the cession of Darjeeling in return for an equivalent in land or money. Though *Chogyal's* demand for an equivalent area of Debgong was acceptable to the British because that area was already given to the Raja of Jalpaiguri in 1828 and therefore the British promised to pay annual payment to *Chogyal*. The Governor-General also wrote to the *Chogyal*, thanking him and accepting the grant of the land. Hence, Darjeeling became a part of British Indian territory and never reverted back to Sikkim. *Chogyal* at first had high expectations from the British about monetary compensation but the British never fulfilled *Chogyal's* expectations which eventually led him to protest against the British. After a long request and protest from *Chogyal's* side, the British offered Rs. 3,000 per annum in 1841. In the year 1846, the amount was raised to Rs. 6,000 per annum. Moreover, the loss of Darjeeling to the British further caused trouble for *Chogyal* as the Tibetans who were always suspicious of the British, visited their wrath on the *Chogyal* of Sikkim by forbidding him to visit Tibet more than once in 8 years. The subjects of the *Chogyal*, who had enjoyed grazing rights across the Tibetan border in the frontier area, were thereafter denied these rights. The occupation of Darjeeling by the British was to herald the gradual penetration of the British authority,

this time eventually reducing the *Chogyal* of Sikkim to a mere puppet (McKay, 2021: 46; Warner, 2014: 28).

Accordingly, The British received an opportunity to penetrate into the mainland when the disunity between the Bhutia- Lepcha councilors aggravated to a new level. The Bhutias and the Lepchas have divided themselves into two factions and the British took advantage of this situation. The man who was in opposition against the British was Dewan Namgyal. He was anti-British and pro-Tibetan therefore he did not support the British interests in Sikkim. Hence, many misunderstandings between the British officer (Dr. Campbell) at Darjeeling and Dewan led to small conflicts between them after which Sikkim was forced to sign a treaty of Tumlong in 1861. This treaty expelled Dewan Namgyal from Sikkim and most importantly after the signing of this treaty, Sikkim remained theoretically independent but *Chogyal* had to make many concessions to the British. Hereafter, Chebu Lama who was always in support of the British was made the new Dewan, he was also rewarded with large tracts of land. Though Chebu Lama was highly appreciated by the British, he was remembered as a villain in the history of Sikkim (McKay, 2021: 68-74).

Finally, the British could have annexed Sikkim to their Indian Empire, but it could not fulfill the British desires. The British were not interested in Sikkim as their main interest lay in Tibet. Apart from using Sikkim as the base from which to conduct trade negotiations with Tibetans, the British had also counted upon the goodwill of the Sikkim ruler in smoothing out things with his northern neighbours. The British hold over Sikkim and their manifest zeal in extending their trade northwards produced only hostile reactions in both Tibet and China. Their efforts to keep the British at bay were correspondingly increased (Basnet, 1974: 40- 41).

The 1890 Anglo-Chinese Convention completed the British hold over Sikkim that had begun with the 1861 Treaty. The Treaty was the result of a clash between Sikkim and the British. The convention had followed the Tibetan occupation of Lingtu and the resultant clash between the Tibetans and the British. The Tibetans had not only been a great loss in the field but also completely brushed aside during the negotiations by their suzerain China. Sikkim was sacrificed at the altar of Anglo-Chinese relations. Thutop Namgyal was thoroughly disillusioned, but it was too late for him to mend matters. His ordeals had begun before the convention was signed (Basnet, 1974: 57).

John Claude White was appointed in June 1889 as the first political officer of the protectorate state. He was an engineer by profession and worked in the Public Works Department but he was not qualified for the post of Political Officer which required usual military training or at least should have an ICS background. He was selected to oversee the administration of this kingdom. It was said that he was a "mean, petty and domineering individual who, during the following two decades in which he dominated the state of Sikkim, carried on a long a vendetta against both the Maharaja and his son Tsodag Namgyal" (McKay, 2003: 27). Administrative reform became his first priority and accordingly State Council was formed comprising of eminent like Chief Dewans, Kazis, and Lamas of Sikkim. He retained the post of President in the State Council by himself. The *Chogyal* was sent to Kalimpong. Though he returned to Sikkim in 1891 he was no less than a prisoner in the hands of J.C. White (Gurung, 2011: 42). White formed a council with the Khangsa Brothers, Sheo Dewan, the Gangtok, Tashiding, Enchey and Rhenock Kazis, and Lari Pema of the Pemayangtse Monastery, as members, and himself as the President. White addressed himself to the administrative work of the state. On the condition of Sikkim he observed:

> Chaos reigned everywhere; there was no revenue system, the Raja taking what he required from the people, those more remote had toll taken from them by the local officials in the name of the Raja, though little found its way to him; no court of justice, no police, no public works, no education for the younger generation. The task before me was a difficult one, but very fascinating; the country was a new one and everything was in my hands (Basnet, 1974: 58).

Introduction of New Revenue System

We do not have much information about the pattern of land ownership of Sikkim before the establishment of the Namgyal Dynasty. However, after the Namgyal, as in any monarchy, the Sikkimese theory of landholding was established on the principles of pre-eminence of State. Thus, it is obvious that land grants with ownership rights to the celebrated families for their services to the State were introduced after the accession of the Namgyal dynasty in Sikkim. Although, the method and procedure of revenue assessment from such land grants till the advent of the British are obscure. However, under the monastery estates, they received contributions in the form of grains and other products from time to time, especially during religious festivals as well as labour services to the monastery as a tax which they were bound to prove. Even during the reign of Thutop Namgyal (1874-1914), the State was assessing revenue in kind that consisted of agricultural produce and transit duties (Upadhyay, 2017, 85-86). Similarly, Balikci writes about the significant role of the Lamas in the revenue collection before the British intervention (Balikci, 2008).

However, after the appointment of J.C. White as a political officer, he said,

> With the departure of the Raja and Rani to their temporary quarters, the task of reorganising the country began in earnest. Chaos regained everywhere, there was no revenue system, the Maharaja taking what he required as he wanted it from the people, those nearest the capital having to contribute the larger share, while those more remote had toll taken from them by the local officials in the name of the Raja, though little found its way to him; no courts of justice, no police, no public works, no education for the younger generation. The task before me was a difficult one, but very fascinating; the country was a new one and everything was in my hands. The first step was to appoint the Council, a measure which had up to now been delayed by the Maharaja's attitude, and the following men were selected. The two brothers, the Khangsa Dewan and the Phodong Lama, the Shoe Dewan, Lari Pema (a lama from the important monastery of Pemiongtchi), the Gangtak, Tassithing, Entchi and Rhenok Kazis. All were of the utmost help and assistance to me, more especially the first three.... The coffers were empty, and the first thing to be done was to devise some means by which we could raise revenue. A commencement was made by roughly surveying the different districts and assessing them at so much per acre, taking into account the nature of the soil (White, 2009: 26-27).

Accordingly, White introduced a new system of assessment and collection of revenue in 1889 intending to enhance the revenue of the government. He along with Phodong Lama and Khangsa Dewan facilitated some Nepalese of Darjeeling, especially Laximidas Pradhan and his uncle Keshab Narayan Pradhan, to get the Thikadarship for cultivation and mining, as the Bhutias were averse to digging earth for their religious belief. However, *Chogyal* and his followers were not happy with this development (Gurung, 2011: 60).

Under this new administration, the basic feudal structure remained intact but it was strengthened under British protection. Many new estates were created and were handed over to the lessee holders. Before the British, it was said that there were twelve kazis who exercised jurisdiction over specific tracts of lands. These officers collected revenue from the peasants settled in their jurisdiction and paid a certain fixed contribution to the *Chogyal*. Further, a cultivator did not have a claim to the soil he tilled, but, he could settle down in the unoccupied areas without any formality and no one could uproot him except the *Chogyal*. The system of collection of taxes in this form was adopted long back in 1747 with the appointment of Rabden Sarpa as a regent of *Chogyal* Namgyal Phuntsog and the system was then known as *Bisa Panja* (Upadhyay, 2017: 87).

However, the British administration divided the whole of Sikkim into different estates which are also referred to as elakhas and there was a total of 104 estates in Sikkim out of which 15 estates were managed by the Maharaja as Private Estate and were divided into 62 revenue blocks, Monasteries had 5 Estates consisting of 38 revenue blocks, 13 estates were under Managers appointed on commission by the Durbar and the rest 71 estates were with the kazis and thikadars. Altogether there were 71 landlords of whom 13 were Lamas, 21 were kazis, and 37 thikadars. Within their territorial jurisdiction, the landlords enjoyed a certain degree of civil and administrative power, including magisterial power (Gurung, 2011: 61).

The land at the block level was further distributed among the people called bustiwallas and mandals who became the first intermediaries between the kazis and rayots. The second type of intermediaries was the kazis and thikadars between the mandals and bustiwallas, and *Chogyal*. The difference between the mandals and bustiwallas depended on the area of land they held. A *bustiwalla* could hold 20 acres

of land where as 30 acres were fixed for the mandals. They, however, did not usually cultivate the land themselves but further leased it out to tenants, known variously as adhiadars, kutdars, chakhureys and pakhureys, under certain conditions. The right of the bustiwallas was hereditary and transferable. The kazis and the thikadars were to assess the land revenue to be paid by the tenants and the bustiwallas and mandals were responsible for the collection of revenue from the tenant fixed at the time of commencement of lease and deposition to the kazis and thikadars who in their turn paid a fixed amount to the State treasury. Tenants like *chakhurey* and *pakhurey* were found in Monastery Estates. Besides tilling the land, one member of the tenant was to render compulsory labour daily in the households of individual lama or the monastery (Gurung, 2011: 61).

The lessee landlord system introduced by J.C. White proved so successful that in 1889 land revenue constituted as high as 67 percent of the total revenue of Sikkim. The growth in the economy led to competition and social confrontations and in 1897 restriction on the transfer of Bhutia-Lepcha land to others, including the Nepalese, was imposed. In 1917 the land prohibition law was redefined as Revenue Order No. 1. Apart from this, inequality regarding payment of revenue also prevailed. For the same amount of land, the Bhutias and Lepchas used to pay less than the Nepalese. The rate of House Tax between the Bhutia-Lepcha and Nepali subjects was also unequal, i.e., Nepalese used to pay rupees 6 while it was rupees 2 for the Bhutias-Lepchas. The new revenue policy benefited the kazis and thikadars immensely but the condition of the tenants deteriorated further due to the presence of intermediaries and their extortionist behaviour, besides insecurity of tenure. Correction measure was introduced in 1925 by making the provision of collection of revenues directly by the collectors but its effect on the condition of the tenant was marginal (Gurung, 2011: 63).

There are no effective checks on these powers and the landlords are free to abuse them for their own gains. The more fines a landlord can impose, the larger his shares would be, for he receives one-half of the collection as his fees and the other half goes to the State. A grabbing landlord has no difficulty in dispossessing uncompromising peasants of his possession, be it a paddy field or a herd of cattle. Most of the landlords live away from the estates and their powers were exercised by ignorant underlying who were concerned only about filling their pockets. And the landlords of Sikkim also had the habit of exploiting their villagers through forced labour. The villagers were forced to carry loads across the passes by their landlords while travelling to Tibet. Moreover, many times they were not paid, and even if they get paid would barely support them to buy a meal for the journey to and from (Gurung, 2011:63-64).

Reassessment of Monastic Estates

The new land revenue settlement program initiated by J.C. White from 1889 onwards brought a significant impact on the economic structure of Sikkimese monasteries and their monks because to J.C. White "the monks are ignorant, idle and useless, living at the expense of the country, which they are surely dragging down" (McKay, 2021: 119). From the very early period, these monasteries possess huge tracts of land granted to them by the Chogyals. Though, Sikkimese monasteries held lands according to the size and importance of the monastery; for instance, Pemayangtse monastery possessed more than eighteen thousand acres of land which gradually decreased to nine thousand acres where as other small monasteries possessed not less than a hundred acres. However, it is widely believed that the monasteries do not own land granted to them by the Chogyals but were only authorized to use it, and may be due to this reason most of the Sikkimese monasteries lost their land to the State during

the British administrative rule or may be because of the increased value of the land for revenues. Moreover, the confiscated lands were leased out to influential lamas and other lessee lords. Moreover, some of the monastery lands were converted to private estates of the royal families for their personal use. At the same time in order to compensate the monasteries for their land, the state granted subsides to the monasteries. But the lamas were not happy with the decision of the state and some of them filed a petition requesting that thikadarship of their monastic lands should be granted to the monastery instead of other lay lessee lords. For instance, in 1907, the Dubdi monastery land was resumed by the state and converted to private estate and the annual subsidy was granted to maintain the monastery but the head lama of the monastery prays that if the said lands are resumed then the thikadarship should be granted to the petitioner as he has been the hereditary lama of the place since some fifteen generations back. He also prays that the subsidy to be granted to the monastery should at least be Rupees 300 per annum but then Political Officer J.C. White at a council meeting decided to raise the subsidy from Rupees 200 to 210 only. Also, the thikadarship of Dubdi monastery land was not given to the petitioner[30]. Similarly in the following year (1908), monasteries like Sangachoelling, Kechopalri, and Melli lost their lands to the Maharani who claimed these lands as her dowry[31]. The Namchi monastery (Ngadak) also lost land to the state which was handed over to Lasso Kazi and the monastery was promised with subsidy after the inspection of the monastery rent books[32]. However, it can be seen that the monasteries does not own the lands granted by the Chogyals and they were only authorized to use the revenues earned from these lands. As mentioned all lands belong to *Chogyal* and the cultivators have

[30]Sl. No. 5, File No. 41/1/1907, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[31]Sl. No. 7, File No. 3/1908, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[32] Eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP880/1/1/1.

no title to the soil. According to the Sikkimese landholding law, '*Chogyal* was the owner of the land and only usufruct and not outright ownership devolves on the residents of the land' (Namgyal, 2011: 46-47).

After 1910, many monasteries whether big or small lost all or part of their land to the state. Smaller monasteries like Tumlong Ani *Gonpa* and Manilhakhang (North Sikkim) were resumed by the state even though they generate a very small amount of revenue. The thikadarship of these lands was given to some influential kazis at a ten percent commission[33]. However, some monasteries were given *patta* (for fifteen years) in the name of their head lama but later many of them lost their land to the state on conditions like mismanagement of the monastery land. For instance, a *patta* of Rayong land (1806 acres) was issued to the Dolling monastery in the year 1900 but the land was resumed by the state in the year 1907 on the ground of mismanagement[34]

Table No. 4.1. Revenue accounts of Tumlong Ani Gonpa for the year 1932-1933.

Sl No.	**Revenue demands**	**In rupees**
1	Land rent of a dry field	26.0
2	Land rent of paddy field	39.13
3	House tax of 4 houses at rupees 5	20.0
4	*Bethi* of 4 houses at rupees 1	4.0
	Total	89.13

Source: Sl. No. 147, File No. 1/2/1935-36, Finance Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[33]Sl. No. 50, File No. Nil/1913, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[34]Sl. No. 10, File No. 1/8/1907, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

Moreover, before the British land settlement, there was no strict system of issuing pattas or maps for the granted lands. Therefore many landlords and some monasteries faced difficulties in claiming the land which was formally granted to them by the Chogyals, and due to the lack of evidence, they lost some of their lands to the state during the time of the land survey (1889). In this case, the Pemayangtse monastery lost Sakyong land to the state. Pemayangtse monastery requested the state by saying that during the settlement made by Mr. White Sakyong land was cut off from the Pemayangtse monastery, which was thus lost to them for no fault of theirs, and the cost to regain the possession of the land was great, they also said that if the same land cannot be given free it may be given to them on payment of rent and that the lamas will also pay up the debt due by the Sakyong *kazi* to the Durbar. However, the application was rejected saying that Sakyong land has never belonged to the monastery so cannot be restored and the Pemayangtse land was already settled in 1889[35].

The following table shows the monastery estates and their demands for the year 1916:

Table No. 4.2. Monasteries and their current demand of land revenue for the year 1916.

Sl. No.	**Landlords**	**Land**	**Revenue Demand**
1	Pemayangtse Monastery	Pemayangtse	118.75
2	Pemayangtse Monastery	Tsendongpong	23.75
3	Pemayangtse Monastery	Talot	42.75

[35]Sl. No. 79, File No. 5/22(I)/1919, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

4	Pemayangtse Monastery	Cangia	25.00
5	Maharaja	Phensong	45.00
6	Maharaja	Phodong	90.00
7	Bermoik Lama/ Ralong Monastery	Ralong	204.75
8	Rumtek Monastery	Rumtek	126. 75

Source: Sl. No. 60, File No. Nil/1916, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

Thus, under British rule, the lives of Sikkimese monasteries as well as lamas in general were greatly affected economically. In Sikkim, there was a tradition that lamas were exempted from paying any kind of taxes to the state as they provide services to the state as well as to the monasteries. But this tradition was hampered when the land became an extreme source of a revenue generator for the state. The lamas of Sikkim were ordered to pay house rent (reduced rate), *bethi*, road cess, labour services like *jharlangi*, and land rent to the state. However, this new system was challenged by the lamas of various monasteries by submitting petitions to the state and requesting them to exempt their taxes since they were providing services to the state as well as monasteries. For instance, the lamas of Chakung Dechenling monastery argued that if the lamas were counted as peasants then they cannot manage the work of the monastery as before and they will be 'pony with the double saddles'. They also mentioned that till now they have worked in the monastery by eating their meal and not getting any subsidy like other monasteries, and they also requested for rent free land around the monastery compound. However, when the Chakung land was surveyed it was found that the area of 208 acres was under the monastery. At this

juncture, the state instead decided to provide a subsidy of rupees 30 to the monastery[36]. Moreover, evidence has also been found that Dikilling Monastery (Pakyong) possessed a small portion of land which used to produce land rent of Rs. 402. However, it was made that the revenues now have to be paid to the state by all the villagers whether lay bustiwallas or the lamas. Additionally, to compensate for their loss the state promised to pay a subsidy of Rs. 300[37].

Moreover, after many requests from lamas of various monasteries of Sikkim, the state decided exempt taxes of a few lamas of every monastery- *Udor-choesum*, *Omzed*, *Choetimpa*, *Nyerpa*, and *Machen*. In addition to that *Chogyal* also issued a notice stating 'the *Chogyal* of Sikkim has been pleased to exempt the head lamas and the lamas who are working in the monasteries with personal labour '*jharlangi'* as long as they are on the duty at the monastery[38]. Apart from that strict rules and regulations were set up regarding dealing with the defaulters. The lamas were not spared from this rule and if they failed to pay rent on time they would be punished. For instance, Tenzing Lama of Pathing Monastery was arrested by police and made to pay the rent[39]. Such cases were sometimes tried in the court after paying court fees but since the monasteries were under the patronage of the Chogyal the monasteries were exempted from paying court fees, revenue stamps, etc. [40]

However, it has also been noted that lamas of some monasteries like Sangachoelling, Dubdi, Kechopalri, etc. were exempted from all kinds of taxes by the *Chogyal*

[36]Sl. No. 84, File No. 41/1/1913, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

[37] Eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP880/1/1/1

[38] Sl. No. 348, File No. 16/10/1926, General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[39] Sl. No. 6, File No. Nil/1919, Judicial Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[40] Sikkim Code Volume V, Sikkim State Judicial Department Notice No. 436/J, Old Laws of Sikkim.

because these monasteries directly come under the Private Estate of Maharaja and Maharani[41].

About Tashiding Monastery which was considered one of the most important and sacred of all small monasteries in Sikkim[42], it has been seen that this monastery was looked after by Lasso Kazi of Tashiding and he was supporting the monastery with regular subsidies. Under the British administration when the land of Tashiding Monastery was surveyed it was found that the said land was under the possession of Lasso Kazi but at this juncture, the lamas of the monastery raised a question regarding the monastery land but the state refused to hand over the land to Tashiding Monastery. This land was later resumed by the state and handed over to Kewzing Kazi. However, *Chogyal* decided to provide a subsidy of Rs. 400[43].

Management of Monastery Estates

With regard to the management of the monastery estates in Sikkim under British rule is quite confusing and very small works have been done on the topic due to the lack of sources. Most of the documents are in the Tibetan language and are difficult to read. On the other hand, these documents are not available to the public in many monasteries. However, the source even though they are limited along to the archival sources gives a picture of the management of the monastery lands.

Under the new administration, many monasteries lost their rights over the land which they have been enjoying for a very long time. However, only five monasteries were

[41] Sl. No. 135, File No. 1/50(I)/1922, General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[42] Administrative Report of the Sikkim State for 1922-1923. Calcutta: Government of India.

[43]Eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP880/1/1/1

left with their estates, they were Pemayangtse, Ralong, Rumtek, Phensong, and Phodong. Though in some of the archival sources, it is mentioned that, the Dikiling monastery also held lands under Kartok lama (head lama) but based on some later sources[44] it can be assumed that those lands do not belong to the said monastery but it was registered under Kartok lama (head lama of the monastery) himself as an individual lama or apart from the *sangha*. Similarly, according to some sources, after the death of the head lama of Rumtek monastery, a dispute arose between Rumtek monastery and Gyaltsen *kazi* who was a nephew of the diseased lama. The lamas of the monastery claimed the land because they considered that land monastery property. But the said land was given to Gyaltsen *kazi* which proves that the head lamas of Sikkimese monasteries could enjoy landed property similar to other kazis and thikadars or landlords and they also have similar kind of responsibilities like that of kazis and thikadars to collect revenues from his areas and to submit the state's share on time[45] . Moreover, Rumtek Monastery was never free of land disputes because in the 1920s this monastery involved in a land dispute with the head lama of the monastery. As the lamas accused their head lama of using the monastery's orange garden and other fields for personal benefits, however, this case continued for long period[46].

[44]Sl. No. 46, File No. 5/25/1912, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[45]Sl. No. 81, File No. 5/72(I) 1924, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[46] Eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP880/1/4/37.

Table No. 4.3. Monasteries with landed estates.

Sl. No.	Name of the Monastery	Area in Acres	Land Revenue Demand	Number of Households
1	Pemayangtse	19,091	-	435
2	Ralong	9,575	-	245
3	Phodong	12,442	-	130
4	Phensong	5,481	-	102
5	Rumtek	2,793	175	-

Source: *Administrative Report of the Sikkim State, 1933-1934*. Calcutta: Government of India.

The estates of all the above mentioned monasteries were surveyed and demarcated mainly under the supervision of Sidkyong Tulku[47]. Actually, when Sidkyong Tulku returned to Sikkim after his education he was given the responsibility to look after the Department of Education and Forestry. Moreover, the administrative charge of all monasteries of Sikkim was also given to him. Sidkyong Tulku being an incarnate lama (automatically becomes a spiritual head) and in charge of monasteries introduced many reforms. When the monastery's lands were surveyed Sidkyong Tulku himself took part in many of the surveys (McKay, 2021: 213). After that, the monasteries were issued *sanad* or *patta* in the name of the head lama of the monastery for the period of fifteen years after which they have to renew their contract again similar to Bhutia feudal lords like kazis. Thereafter, these monasteries were treated as

[47] Sidkyong Tulku was the tenth *chogyal* of Sikkim.

feudal lords with powers to lease out lands, collect revenues, and administer courts within their jurisdiction.

There were two categories of monastery estates in terms of their management. The monastery estates were either managed by the monastery wing of the Raja's Private Estate like Rumtek and Phudong monasteries because *Chogyal* Sidkyong Tulku was the supreme head lama or a *rinpoche* (incarnate lama) of these two monasteries (Boot, 2008: 179). The other three monasteries like Pemayangtse, Phensong, and Ralong were managed by the monastery themselves under the supervision of the three important lamas of the monastery called *Udor-choesum*. These official lamas were comprised of *Dorje-lopon* (head lama), *Omzed* (prayer leader), and *Choe-trimpa* (disciplinarian). They managed the monastery estates with the help of other different officials and these officials were usually selected by the *Udor-choesum*. Whereas, the officials like *mandal* and *muktiyer* were directly selected by the Maharaja for the monasteries which were under the control of Private Estates.

Generally, under this new administration, it is said that the monastery holds only a small portion of land as the primary holders which comprised of monastery compound further divided into two known as *narangma* (an area inside the monastery walls where no cultivation was allowed) and *chirangma* (an area outside the monastery walls and used for cultivation and pasturage as *kutbari*) and the rest are leased out to the secondary holders known as bustiwallas. According to Dhamala, there are different categories of land in the monastery estates and they are (1) Land held by the monastery in its own name or in the name of its monks. They are known as primary holders. (2) Land given by the primary holders to the share-croppers on fixed terms and conditions of crop sharing i.e. land given on *adhia* or *kut*. (3) Land was given to a people called chakhurys, servants of the monastery, who were given rent-free land

instead of the menial services they rendered to the monastery or its lamas. (4) Non-agricultural land such as forest and bazaar areas. (5) Land held by the bustiwallas who owned the land which is inheritable and paid taxes to the monasteries (Dhamala, 2008:135-136).

According to this system, all the landlords have to maintain a register detailing the name of the bustiwallas within their estates. Accordingly, all those monasteries also have to maintain registers and keep the record of those bustiwallas who were paying taxes and submit it to the state along with the taxes. One of the most important changes seen by these monasteries under this system was that now they have to submit half of their taxes to the state. They can retain land rent for their maintenance but the house tax had to be paid to the state exchequer[48].

With regard to the assessment of the revenues from the peasants was not that clear but according to some sources, it can be evident that the monasteries also collected revenues from the peasants just as other landlords. There were few variations as some of the peasants (*chakurys*/*nangzen*) have to follow different rules and regulations imposed by the monastery authorities. According to the archival sources it can be seen that before 1914 no such assessment have been done with regard to the collection of land revenues from the peasants. There was a system that every landlord used to levy the rates of rent from the peasants by themselves without consulting the state authorities. This system was not liked by *Chogyal* Sidkyong Tulku who thought it would be a very bad idea as this system leaves the poor and ignorant peasants at the tender mercies of the landlords and some of whom may not always prove honest and just but rather rapacious and greedy. He believed that it is the duty of the state to protect the peasants from such landlords. Therefore, the Maharaja decided to fix the

[48]Sl. No. 46, File No. 5/25/1912, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

rate of revenues according to the nature of the soil which should be forceful throughout Sikkim except for Lachen, Lachung, and Chungthang[49]. According to this decision, in May 1914 a proposal was brought forward by J. Gould and Maharaja also agreed to this proposal in order to introduce some sort of regular settlement within the state. As per this settlement the land was classified under different groups and a different rate was fixed for both the Nepali peasants and the Bhutia-Lepcha peasants. The peasants also have to keep a record or *Khasra* detailing the number of plots they possessed, the name of the peasants and have to mention whether they were rent free or not and they also have to mention whether they held personal property and an institution like monastery along with the name of the manager who is looking after the plot[50].

However, the above mentioned settlement could not be implemented fully in all the areas due to the sudden death of *Chogyal* Sidkyong Tulku. He was succeeded by his brother Tashi Namgyal as Maharaja who introduced new settlements in the state and under this land was classified according to their arability or according to the *pathi* of seed sown and a new rate of assessment was fixed on 26th January 1915. Upadhyay says that "unlike the rates of Maharaja Sidkyong, the rates introduced by Sir Tashi Namgyal were a bit incongruent between the Lepcha-Bhutia and the Nepali peasants" (Upadhyay, 2017: 88). The following is the table showing a rate of assessment in the year 1915:

[49]Sl. No. 21, File No. 10/1/1912, General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[50]Sl. No. 98, File No. 17/2/1914, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

Table No 4.4. The rate of Assessment in Sikkim in 1915

Nepali	Rs. 2.00	Rs. 1.50	Rs. 1.00
Lepcha-Bhutia	1.50	1.13	0.75

*Note: 1st class means those lands which can produce one *muri* of paddy out of four manas or less of seeds in an average year.

2nd class is those lands where the peasants could produce one *muri* of paddy from four or six manas of seeds.

3rd class lands are those that could produce one *muri* of paddy out of more than six manas of seeds.

Source: Sl. No. 98, File No. 17/2/1914, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

Apart from land rents, peasants have to pay various other taxes such as house tax, road cess, grazing fees, *bethi* tax, etc to the state or the monastery depending on the estates.

House tax: house tax was known as *dhuri khazana* and in Sikkim, every household had to pay this tax to the state. As already mentioned the monasteries had to submit the house tax collected from the villagers within their estates at different rates. In the year 1928 every lay villager was paying Rs. 5 per house where as the lamas were paying at a reduced rate of Rs. 2.37 per house. It is important to note here that the house tax included road cess, excise duties, etc[51].

[51] Sl. No. 111, File No. 18/1/1930, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive

Bethi: along with the house tax, the peasants have to pay labour tax of Rs. 1 per house according to the notification of 1924. Earlier, the peasants have to provide labour services in the house of their lords or the monastery authorities like *muktiyar*, *mandal*, etc. which was from 1924 onwards *bethi* tax was collected in cash[52].

Jharlangi: after the opening of Sikkim as a trade route by the British, the construction of roads and bridges became very necessary and for that, the state depended upon the labour of common people. Therefore, the feudal officials asked their mandals for the supply of labour from the villages. This also included transportation duties. The fare of the labourers was paid by the imperialists to the local authorities but, these officials forced their peasants to work without any wages. As a *jharlangi* labour the peasant had to leave his home at least for a week or sometimes even more and had to proceed for an unknown venture. He himself had to arrange warm clothing for his night's stay along with food and all other necessary items (Upadhyay, 2017, 115-116). Being one of the estate holders the monasteries also have to supply labour services for the construction of roads and bridges as well as transportation duties from the villages and it was the duty of the monastery *mukthiyar* and *mandal* to provide labour supply from the villages. Though they used to get some wages from the state it was a very hard time for them or the villagers because they had to leave their home for many months due to the distance. In addition to that, not all the villages of the monastery estate have to go for labour services at a same time but it was on the roster system that one or two villages were chosen for the services and all have to go on rotation wise. For example, once the state asked the Phodong *Mukthiyar* to supply coolies for transport at Dikchu from Phensong monastery estates and it was the time of Phensong

[52]Sl. No. 113, File No. 3/8(I)/1921, General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

village to go for the said duty but the Phensong monastery asked the Phensong villagers to supply labour services in the monastery as it was going under construction and to exempt them from State duties. Under British rule, the monks were also made to pay for labour services along with other taxes. While looking at the sources, it seems that the villagers were happier to work in the monastery rather than in the state[53].

Tax on other agricultural products like cardamom which they called as *damthay khazana* was also an important source of revenue for the monasteries. At the same time, they also receive half of the royalty of the monastery forests from the state. They also collected revenues from market or Bazaar areas. Not all monasteries possessed bazaar areas but only Pemayangtse owned Gayzing and Legship Bazaars, and Ralong owned Rabong bazaar (Dhamala, 2008: 136).

Table No. 4. 5. Villages and Bazaars under the monastery estate.

Sl. No.	**Name of the Monastery**	**Name of the villages**	**Name of Bazaar**
1	Pemayangtse	Pemayangtse, Tsendenpong, Cangia, etc.	Gayzing, Legship
2	Ralong	Ralong, etc.	Rabong
3	Phodong	Tumlong, Rangang, Ramthang, Taney, Sheyam, Detham, Namok, Tingchim, Sangam	

[53]Sl. No. 132, File No. 5/10(XXI)/1916, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

4	Phensong	Phensong, Phanyel, Chewang, Phamtam, Rangrang, Kabi, Tingrim	
5	Rumtek	Marchak, Nawli, Tumlabong, Namin, Chuba, Magim, Sangey, Kambey	

Source: Sl. No. 194, File No. 5/32/1924, General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

Apart from the revenues collected from the bustiwallas, monasteries also received subsidies from the state. It was an age old tradition established by the *Chogyal* of Sikkim as a patron to all his religious institutions or monasteries. All the monasteries in Sikkim received subsidies from the state mainly based on their size and religious importance. Moreover, the state mainly conducts a yearly survey to know how many new monasteries were constructed to revise the monastery subsidies[54]. Unfortunately, some village monasteries were deprived of state subsidies like Chongay, Samdong, Norbuling, Linge-Phage, etc[55]. However, when Sidkyong Tulku became the in charge of all monasteries in Sikkim, he not only introduced changes in the social and religious conditions of the monasteries but also increased the subsidies to the monasteries whose conditions were not good. Sidkyong Tulku said that 'unless the state gives some sort of encouragement to the monasteries nobody will take lively interest for the improvement of their monasteries'. He also sanctioned state grants to those monasteries which needs immediate repairs[56]. Moreover, during his time many new monasteries were constructed.

[54]Sl. No. 30, File No. 21/2/1919-20, Finance Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[55] Administrative Report of the Sikkim State for 1918-1919. Calcutta: Government of India.

[56]Sl. No. 103, File No. 22/4/1914, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

Table No. 4.6. The subsidies sanctioned and proposed by Sidkyong Tulku till 1916.

Sl. No.	Name of the Monastery	Sanctioned Subsidies	Increased Subsidies	Total
1	Pemayangste	400	-	400
2	Labrang	300	-	300
3	Gurulhakhang	80	-	80
4	Lachen	40	40	80
5	Lachung	50	10	60
6	Lentsi	200	-	200
7	Lingay	100	-	100
8	Pabing	120	-	120
9	Sangachoelling	200	-	200
10	Simik	120	-	120
11	Talung	120	-	120
12	Toenkar	50	-	50
13	Kartok	300	-	300
14	Tummin	100	-	100
15	Ringen	100	-	100
16	Lingthem	50	-	50
17	Gyathang	30	-	30
18	Rinchenpong	100	-	100
19	Simeu	100	-	100
20	Tuming	100	-	100

21	Tashiding	300	-	300
22	Dubdi	210	-	210
23	Melli	125	-	125
24	Dolling	120	-	120
25	Kechopalri	160	-	160
26	Sangachoelling	300	-	300
27	Namchi	300	-	300
28	Yangyang	150	-	150
29	Bermiok Lama/Ralong	500	-	500
30	Sangmo	50	-	50
31	Labrang Lama	75	-	75
32	Chakung	40	-	40
33	Chungthang	-	30	30
34	Lachen manilhakhang	-	20	20
Total				5,090

Source: Sl. No. 85, File No. 41/4/913, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

Mode of Collection of land revenues

The managing body of the monastery is called *Udor-choesum* or *Duchi*. It is important to know that in Sikkim all the monasteries were under the direct control of the Maharaja as he was considered the supreme head of all monasteries looks after the welfare of the monasteries. Though monasteries like Pemayangtse, Ralong, Rumtek were given the right to manage the monastery and their estates by themselves many times the officials of these monasteries were appointed by the Maharaja. Whereas, the

other two monasteries like Phodong and Phensong directly came under the ruler and their estates were managed by the Private Estates. It was the Maharaja, who appointed a manager to collect taxes from the villagers on behalf of the monastery and he could mostly be lamas from the same monastery though they were their *Udor-choesum*[57].

There were different intermediaries whose main duty was to collect revenues from the villagers on behalf of the monastery. The *Udor-choesum* appointed the mandals according to the number of blocks they possessed and the mandals were responsible for the issue of revenue demands and the collection of revenue from the bustiwallas. In the monastery estates, the *mukhtiyar* and the mandals were appointed by the *Udor-choesum* and in some monasteries by the Maharaja. They were mostly the lamas from the same monastery. Their main role was to work as a village headman and collect taxes from the peasants of their respective villages. A peasant had to deposit his taxes in times, which included house tax and land tax known as *dhuri khazana* and *zamin khazana* (Upadhyay, 2017). Moreover, the general rule was that the mukhtiyars and the mandals were given ten percent of the revenues that they have collected from the bustiwallas as a payment or commission for their services but in the monastery estates, these intermediaries were not entitled to take ten percent as their commission but in turn, they were exempted from paying taxes for the service. They can hold the office usually for two to three years.

Another type of official was *karbari*. According to Upadhayay, 'the term *karbari* is probably derived from a Nepali word *karobar* which basically means dealing. They were appointed by the kazis or thikadars on the recommendation of the local mandals to work as a dealer between the peasants and the higher authority. The nature of the

[57]Sl. No. 60, File No. 86/1912, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

appointment varies from one to another karbaris. In some cases, they were appointed on a hereditary basis, and in others; they were replaced by the new ones. The major duty of the appointed karbaris was to deliver messages to the peasants from the higher authorities about the schedule of tax payments. They pre-informed the villagers about the visit of *kazi* or other higher ranking officers to their respective villages or the elakhas (Upadhyay, 2017: 105). Even in the monastery estates, karbaris were appointed basically by the mandals themselves or sometimes consulting with the higher authorities but there was no strict rule was prevalent. These karbaris were mostly laid people and they were exempted from paying *khazana* for the field in place of the service as karbarishipp[58]. Lastly, the highest authorities of the monastery estates are *Udor-choesum* comprised of *Dorje-lopon*, *Umzed* and *Choetrimpa* and their tax exemption was permanent.

Though the monasteries were given the full right to collect revenues from their bustiwallas by the state the rule was made that every monastery has to submit the house tax after collection of revenues from each and every house to the State. The main duty of the *mukhtiyar* and the mandals was to maintain a register or *dadha* detailing the number of houses each year along with information like how many new houses were built and how many deserters were in each year. They have to submit the house tax along with the register every year to the State and thus one can find only the register or record of house tax collected by the monasteries from their bustiwallas and no record on other tax collection can be found. Since the monasteries were allowed to keep all other revenues like land rent, cardamom, bazaar tax, etc. to maintain the monastery therefore it was their duty to maintain the record in the monastery itself and unfortunately, those records are not available today.

[58] Sl. No. 521, File No. 24/2/1929, General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

With regard to the collection of house tax, every mandals have to buy a booklet of house ticket from the state, and then the mandals distribute the house ticket to every house before collecting the tax. The monasteries collected house tax from the bustiwallas at the rate of five rupees and from the lamas Rs. 2.38. It is important to mention that, not all lamas were granted to pay reduced house tax it was only fourteen lamas of the monastery who were performing duties in the monastery were allowed with reduced tax by the state. However, other lamas have to pay house tax similar to that of lay bustiwallas. These lamas were sometimes called *busti* lama but interestingly the lamas settled under the Private Estates were allowed to pay only the reduced house tax to the Maharaja. The sources show that there were seven hundred and thirty seven lamas in the area of Dubdi, Sangacholling, Khechopalri monasteries who pay only the reduced rate of rupees 2.24[59].

In addition to that, the lamas and their family can hold land under two different heads usually they hold land in the monastery estates but some of the lamas also hold plots in the *elakha* of other landlords. For example, one lama named Gonday lama of Rumtek monastery and his wife hold a house and a field in the monastery estates for which they pay taxes to the monastery but at the same time, they also hold some fields under Enchay Lama Kazi. They have one *kholma* house in the field but the *kazi* was asking for a house tax from them but they revolted by saying that there is no system of collecting taxes on such temporary *kutcha* shelter house (*kholma* house). Moreover, it has also been mentioned that they had never supplied Enchay Lama *Kazi* with any *bethi* and *jharlangi*. It is also mentioned that those bustiwallas who stay in one area

[59]Sl. No.111, File No. 18/1/1930, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

having *pucca* house and hold some lands under another *kazi* where they only cultivate the land were known as *pharkay* land or *pharkay bustiwalla*[60].

The collection and payment of revenues by the landlords were also fixed under this administration or uniform dates were fixed in the year 1916. It was made that the revenues to be collected in two phases from the bustiwallas like half of the land rents to be collected till 30th of November and other part was to be collected till 28th of February. The payment of house tax was also fixed and according to that, in September the mandals or the monastery authority has to inquire about the changes in the number of houses of tenants to assess the house tax, and then the mandals have to make the payment of house tax to the state from November to December[61].

However, later on, the rule regarding the collection of revenues was changed in the year 1923 and the state came up with more strict rules. There were three rules and according to Rule I- 'Time of Payment by peasants to landlords', it has been mentioned that the lords and the managers can collect payments from the tenants between 1st September to 31st December and from 1st of January, the lords and managers may attach the moveable properties of defaulting tenants. Under Rule-II 'Time of payment by landlords to Durbar', though this section does not apply to the monasteries as they do not pay the land rents to the *Durbar* another section of the rule talks about the house tax. It said that, the house tax should be collected by 28th of February from the *bustiwalla* and by 31st of March, the landlords and the managers have to pay to the Durbar without fail and if he fails to submit the said tax within the time his property would be auctioned and canceled his lease. Rule III says that the

[60]Sl. No. 95, File No. 5/24/1928, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[61]Sl. No. 123, File No.15/8(I) 1915, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

landlords and the managers are required to submit detailed accounts of the houses in their respective estates at the time of payment of house tax[62].

Sikkimese monasteries usually possessed large tracts of forests within their estates and had the right to use it for meditation purposes, timber to build the monasteries, fuel, and fodder, etc. or they held full authority over its forests. However, when the state decided to form a separate department dedicated to the forests of Sikkim under Sidkyong Tulku it changed the whole system. It was in the year 1909 that Sidkyong Tulku (Maharaj Kumar) was made the in charge of the forests department and under him, many rules and regulations were adopted in order to protect the condition of the forests. In the council meeting of the same year (30th April 1909) Sidkyong Tulku made a rule that each and every forest will remain under the control of its landlords as long as he looks after it efficiently. He also ordered to demarcate the forest areas and divided them into blocks for grazing purposes at the expense of the landlords. Cultivation was not allowed within the forests and overgrazing was also stopped. It was the duty of the landlords and the managers to look after the forests and grazing areas and they should avoid the entry of the cattle of one landlord into the block of another landlord[63]. That they should also demarcate some of their jungles into gorucharans (the plot reserved for the supply of fodder for cattle and dry sticks for fuel for the peasants are known as *gorucharan*) and only one or two pairs of ploughing oxen a milking cow to be grazed freely within the gorucharans. This rule proved to be problematic for the peasants therefore on 21st July 1915, the circular made by the *Chogyal* ease the problems by saying that the villagers are permitted to graze all their cattle, goats, as well as plough bullocks in the *gorucharan* and only the

[62]Sl. No.97, File No. 11/2/1926-27, Finance Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[63]Sl. No.116, File No. 9/2(III)/1915, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

professional graziers are to be excluded from the *gorucharan*[64].In addition, it was also notified that no trees would be allowed to be cut down in the reserve or demarcated forests.

Though the forests were under the control of the landlords or the managers Maharaj Kumar (prince) had the central authority. Even the monasteries had to take permission from Maharaj Kumar to cut down the trees if they need to build or repair the monastery. However, it was made that only half of the royalty on timber sold from the monastery forests and three-fourths of the grazing fees would be given to the monastery, and the state retained only one-fourth of the grazing fees as supervision charges[65]. In the year 1926-1927, it was mentioned that from timber and firewood Pemayangtse monastery received rupees 75.86 and rupees 14.06 respectively whereas Phodong monastery received half royalty only from firewood and i.e. rupees 5.5[66].

The state also came up with another rule to benefit the *bustiwalla* that all the landlords and the managers of the monastery were strictly prohibited from realizing grazing fees from their bustiwallas when they graze their cattle in *gorucharan* and *busti*- land outside the Reserved Forests. Pemayangtse held 95 *gurucharan* areas, Rumtek had 93 *gorucharan* areas, and Rayong had 16 *gorucharan* areas[67]. Any landlord and manager found infringing this order will be deprived of his right of getting three-fourths of the forest grazing fee realized from his reserved forests[68]. Moreover, some of the forest rangers and other officials were appointed during this time but the landlords and the

[64]Sl. No.120, File No. 9/7(III)/1915, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

[65]Administrative Report of the Sikkim State, 1910-1911. Calcutta: Government of India.

[66]Sl. No.96, File No. 1/3/1926-27, Finance Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[67]Sl. No. 152, File No. 19/11 (III)/ 1917, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

[68]Sl. No. 46, File No. 38/XXII/1911, Durbar, Sikkim State Archive.

managers of the *elakha* were given the authority of a Forest Officer and are held responsible to the State for the good management of his forest[69]. That is why many landlords and monasteries like Pemayangtse monastery were punished and fined due to their negligence in managing their forests and breaching the forest rules in the year 1925-26[70].

Types of Peasants under Monastery Estates

It is to be noted that the procedure of providing lands under the monastery estates was somewhat similar to that of other lessee lords. The peasants can ask for unoccupied land for cultivation directly from the monastery authority or a mandals which was later changed and many new systems developed. However, before the British administration, the region was very sparsely populated and the Lepcha people cultivated the land but mostly attached to forests and its products, whereas the Bhutias or the Lhopos were not much into cultivation as they mostly depended upon animal husbandry and trade. Therefore, when White came to Sikkim he found very few subjects were attached to cultivation and paying rents and a large amount of land being left useless mainly in terms of revenues to the State.

Thus, Nepalese were particularly encouraged to settle in Sikkim by the British for two important reasons; firstly, to accelerate the economic growth and secondly to counteract the supremacy of the Sikkimese royal family and the Bhutia councilors. While others said that J.C. White, the first Political Officer of Sikkim was predominantly responsible for the large-scale migration of the Nepalese. Before

[69] Administrative Report for the Sikkim State, 1914-1915. Calcutta: Government of India.

[70]Administrative Report for the Sikkim State, 1925-1926. Calcutta: Government of India.

assuming his new administrative responsibility in Sikkim as the Political Officer, J.C. White had spent a year or so in Nepal and thus had an experience of working and understanding the Nepali way of life. In 1906 he expressed his willingness to open up the hitherto forbidden North district for the Nepalese in the interest of Sikkim[71]. Moreover, Lepcha councilors and landlords were also responsible for Nepalese migration as they always favoured the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim for economic benefits. The prominent among them were Tseepa Lama, Khangsa Dewan, Phodong Lama, and Lasso Athing (Gurung, 2011: 117-118).

Immediately, after the treaty of 1861, the British Government began to encourage the Nepali settlement in Sikkim. However, the majority of the councilors opposed the British idea vigorously. The dissatisfaction of the councilors ended with the division of the Sikkimese aristocrats. The pro-immigration faction was led by Khangsa Dewan likewise anti-immigration faction was led by Dala Athing Densapa and Tarching Lama of Pemayangtse. They held Khangsa Dewan and Phodong Lama responsible for giving lands to the Nepalese and alleged that the duo did not comply with the orders of Thutop Namgyal to stop the Nepali settlement. Amid opposition and dissatisfaction of a larger section, they settled a large number of Nepalese at Rhenock in East Sikkim. Such monopolistic approach of Khangsa Dewan and Phodong Lama infuriated other aristocrats leading to which a dispute arose. The opposition of the anti-immigration section was obvious as they probably perceived it as a direct encroachment of the British in the Sikkimese affairs. This dispute can be regarded as

[71] J.C. White justified the Nepali migration on the economic ground saying that "the un-enterprising, lazy and unthrifty aborigines would not respond to the strong inducements held out to them to open up this new land." He writes, "The Nepali ryots is hardworking and thrifty as a rule, pays his taxes regularly and at the same time is a law-abiding and intelligent settlers" (Administrative Report for the Sikkim State, 1905-06. Calcutta: Government of India).

the outburst of a long standing hidden transcript of the anti-immigrant faction. Exhibiting their age old anti-British concealed ideas they ordered the Nepalese of Rhenock to vacate the place and petitioned the ruler to approach the Governor of Bengal. Abiding with the petition of anti-immigrant aristocrats, Thutop met Ashley Eden, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal at Kalimpong, and pleaded with him for the stoppage of Nepalese immigration. However, no positive response could be secured from the Lieutenant-Governor that eventually dangled his endeavours to forbid Nepali settlement. On the other hand, the hidden transcripts of the aristocrats were still appearing with the trivial magnitude that was evident from minor skirmishes between the Nepalese settlers and the agents of anti-immigrant Bhutia laymen and the monks (Upadhyay, 2017: 68). It was said that the Pemayangtse monks tried to expel the Nepalese but Phodong Lama came in support of these newly settled Nepalese with weapons to defend them. After first Phodong Lama tried to bribe the head of Pemayangtse Monastery with Rs 700 per annum as compensation and when this offer was refused fighting broke out. At this juncture, a monk and an attendant from Pemayangtse were killed. Later with the intervention of the British, the affairs were settled in favour of the Nepalese and Khangsa Dewan and in frustration, Thutop Namgyal decided to retire to Tibet (McKay, 2021: 93).

Apart from the economic reason, there is a political dimension also associated with the process of migration. In the context of Sikkim, the British interest had always met a fitting challenge from the pro-Tibetan forces within Sikkim and Tibet as a whole. Sikkim proved to be a common bone of contention between the British and the Tibetan rulers. The Tibetans had always considered Sikkim as an extension of Tibet, and the successive *Chogyals*, except for Tashi Namgyal, looked towards Tibet as an

ultimate source of guidance in all respects, including management of monasteries and religious matters (Gurung, 2011:118).

Thus, in order to combat such a strong contender and challenger, it was obvious for J.C. White to turn towards the Nepalese who had already proved they are being excellent both in times of war and peace. Gurung writes:

> The Gorkhas (Nepalis) made as good a peasant in peace-time as he made a soldier in war. The Bhutias and Lepchas made poor farmers partly because of their ignorance of the methods of cultivation and partly because of a natural indolence. The Lepchas had always been used to easy going ways and was averse to hard labour or, for that matter, any other form of strife and struggle. The Bhutias, while heaving natural aptitude for trade, was loath to physical labour (Gurung, 2011: 118).

Thus the tenants in Sikkim could be classified into two categories which are as follows:-

Primary holders: under the monastery estates the bustiwallas or the *miser* which Bhutia used to call their subjects who settled there for ages and cultivates the land received from the Maharaja. Traditionally, they can possess the land and had the right to transfer it to their successors. These bustiwallas pay land rent, house rent, labour services when needed and support the monastery therefore they were also called *jindag* or patron by the lamas. The immigration of the Nepalese population also increased the number of this type of *bustiwalla* through a system called '*chardam'*. It is a free grant of land as there was no tradition of selling the crown lands to all *paharia* immigrants who care to settle in the country and reclaim the soil from its

jungles. A nominal sum of rupees 1.25 called *chardam* was usually paid to the *mandal* of the block in which new land is reclaimed by the intending settlers. These *chardam* settlers can later sell their land and transfer it to anyone. From the sources of Rumtek monastery, it can be noticed that the monastery authority provides not only the jungles on *chardam* but the lands of those bustiwallas who left the land uncultivated for more than one year[72].

Moreover, under this new land revenue settlement, the monasteries were made to submit the detailed accounts of bustiwallas (primary holders) settled within their elakhas every year. Phensong monastery has also maintained its records regarding house accounts. From the year 1929 to 1933, the total number of houses paying house rents was 102 under Phensong monastery. However, the houses occupied by lamas, mandals, *mukhtiyar*, and nangzens were given *minah* (tax exemption) from the state.

Table No. 4.7. The number of houses under Phensong Monastery (1929-1933).

Sl. No.	Occupation	Number of Houses	House Rent/Free
1	Bustiwallas	88	4.4
2	Lamas	14	2.6
3	Nangzen	14	Free
4	Mandal	06	Free
5	Dhashags (cells for monks)	30	Free

Source: Sl. No. 107, File No. 38/9/1929, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[72] Sl. No. 24/2/1929, General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

Secondary holders: secondary holders are those people who derive a plot of land for cultivation from the primary holders (either *bustiwalla* or monastery demesne land). They are called adhiars, kutdars, chakureys and phakureys.

Adhiar: The adhiars have to pay 50% of the produce to the monastery. There is hardly any remission of the landlord's share in case of crop failure. The adhiars in most cases are allowed to raise subsidiary crops. But this contract is given only when the tenant accepts his total subordination to the landlord. Judging from the financial condition, therefore, the adhiars can be termed to be a privileged class among the various categories of tenants. But even in the case of *adhia* system, the basic principles, which are universally accepted in tenancy practices such as fixity of tenure, fair rent, and transfer of rights, are not adhered to. Again in the hilly areas, the cost of production is quite high. The adhiars very often did not get adequate returns for their inputs and labour (Gupta, 1992: 39). Further, he had to take prior permission from his owner for the tilling up of land and for raising the next crop. If he raised paddy in the land of his landlord, he had to pay 50 per cent of the total produce as per the prevalent practice along with 50 per cent of total paddy straw gathered during harvest for the cattle. The same process of share was applicable in any of the crops an *adhiadar* raised. In case of the failure of the crop, the adhiadars had to pay the share of their landlord (Upadhyay, 2017: 92).

Kutdar: they are found in large numbers throughout Sikkim. The kutdars are the most unfortunate and harassed category among the tenants. They account for more than 50% of the total households in the agricultural sector. In addition to the high rent which they pay, they have also to pay the land-owner rent and bear some other burdens too. As there are no other definite lease terms, the arrangements can be and are often arbitrarily determined by the landowner at his will. Many of the *kut* leases

are made verbally. The system of middlemen also exists in various places. The middleman tends to exploit the tiller in as many repressive ways as he possibly can. The agent landlord normally does not give any concession in case of crop failure and if the tenant is not able to pay the fixed amount of *kut*, the equivalent amount was put against him as debt which the tenant has to pay back with interest added to it. Normally, the agent landlord makes sure that he gets a document in writing in support of the dues to him from the tenant. When the poor farmer could not pay back in time the landlord as well as the monastery estates managers insists that the former hand over to him any of his holdings registered in his name. In some cases, where the product was not adequate to meet the *kut*, the land-owner extracts the dues by depriving the *kutdar* of his cattle or other moveable property, or even goes to the extent of exploiting the labour of children in the form of "kamaras" and "gothalas". The kutdars are also liable to pay "*Theki Salami*" (in the shape of various agricultural products such as meat, poultry, and fruits) to the landlords as a token of complete subordination to him. However, it comes to the surface that the tenancy pattern of *kutdar* varied from village to village and landlord to landlord. It depended on the tract of a land a *kutdar* had taken for a lease. It was determined according to the stipulated amount of a particular grain that had to be taken by the tenant as a rent irrespective of the amount of production. As there were no fixed lease terms, the arrangements were determined by the land owner at his convenience and the *kut* leases were usually made verbally. However, there were some exceptions and Upadhyay mentioned that few bustiwallas have maintained written agreements between a *kutdar* and a *bustiwalla* who was sometimes also called a *pattadar*. However, mandals, being the elites of feudal Sikkim, used to maintain *kut* leases in the form of a written document. But, the majority of the rural population used to follow the traditional methods of granting *kut*

leases in an unwritten manner, and in most cases, the owners of the land decide the conditions of the leases (Upadhyay, 2017: 93).

Chhakurey* and *Phakhury: exist mainly in the Monastery Estates and the Private Estates. Before the British rule, there was a landless peasant under the monastery and they were known as *nangzen*. But after the influx of Nepalese people, few monasteries provided lands to a group of landless peasants in the demesne land of the monastery as well as in the private land of the head lama and they came to be called chakhurys. However, no Nepalese were allowed to settle in the North district of the State therefore the monasteries like Phodong and Phensong do not have landless peasants called *chakhury*. They only have landless peasants like *nangzen*[73]. The monastery and individual lama private holders give the land to their tenants called chakureys and phakureys in place of the services of manual labour rendered by them to the monastery and the lamas. Since there are no terms and conditions laid down for this compulsory labour, normally the tenants have to send one member of their family for such labour daily or as and when required by the monastery. Within the Monastery Estates, the lamas as primary holders hold large areas. They can't undertake personal cultivation of such large areas held by them. They settled these lands with the tenants under various repressive and unsatisfactory conditions (Gupta, 1992: 39-40). Similar to *kutiyar* land lease terms, the process of a lease in these estates was also made verbally. Since there were no terms and conditions laid down for this compulsory labour, normally the tenants had to send one member of their family for such labours daily or as and when required by the monastery (Upadhyay, 2017: 93).

[73]Sl. No.111, File No. 18/1/1930, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

Apart from these forms of tenancy, feudal Sikkim had also witnessed another form of tenancy that was not much popular as compared to the other three forms discussed above. This less trendy tenancy was then known as *massikatta* system. The family papers of some semi-landlords of erstwhile Sikkim provide a clear sketch of the functioning of the *massikatta* form of tenancy in Sikkim. A tenant had to deposit a fixed amount to a concerned landlord to secure a plot of land for cultivation in *massikatta* system. According to the conditions mentioned in the documents the tenant used to get a plot of land for a period of five to ten years. The important feature of the *massikatta* method of tenancy is that it was done through a written agreement (Upadhyay, 2017: 94).

Condition of Peasants under Monastery Estates

After the British involvement in the Sikkimese administration, a fully matured structure of feudalism appeared in the territory of Sikkim. The power of *Chogyal* was minimized to such an extent that all the power of the kingdom was absorbed by the British Political Officer and it was the Political Officer along with the council members administering the kingdom according to their will. Though there was a tradition that all land belonged to the *Chogyal* and people had the right to use the land and in return a tax in the form of contribution was offered to the king as well as the monasteries but no such records have been found that a strict and uniform system of land revenue was prevalent under the *Chogyal*. However, it could be possible that during those days, few aristocrats like kalons and other officials exploited the peasants to meet their needs but the Sikkimese peasants began to encounter more problems under the British administration.

After the allocation of various estates to the many new landholders, the peasants or the bustiwallas began to feel more pressure upon them from the estate holders who were assisted by their subordinates like *kazi*, thikadars, mukhtiyars, mandals, karbaris. The only motives of private estate holders' appear to be earning and to get their pockets full and to gain these they often cheated poor peasants (Upadhyay, 2017: 94).

Prior to the British administration in Sikkim, most of the monasteries were granted lands as well as the support from the bustiwallas or misers who from time to time provides their monastery and lama with food and other necessities and these bustiwallas were exempted from paying taxes to the state. But after the introduction of the new land revenue system, only five monasteries were allowed to hold their estates, and the rest of the monasteries were left to depend upon the donations. Under such circumstances, the five monasteries were also counted as one the landlords like that of kazis and thikadars and they were made to follow similar kinds of rules framed for the feudal lords. Earlier, the main duty of the monastery was to perform religious ceremonies and preach Buddhism but under this new system, a new job was conferred upon these monasteries i.e. to collect various kinds of taxes from their *bustiwalla* in a very systematic way. Though the monasteries were allowed to retain land rent collected from their *bustiwalla* rest of the other taxes have to be submitted to the state.

Thus, it can be assumed that the bustiwallas were made to pay more shares under this new system to the monastery and this brought more miseries in the life of the bustiwallas who used to pay contributions according to their capability, and now they have to pay a fixed rate of taxes along with labour service to the monastery as well as to the state.

Though it has been found that under the British administration many feudal lords exploited their bustiwallas in many different ways. As Upadhayay says, the peasants were expected to bow their heads before the Landlords and were asked to use respectable languages. They were not allowed to wear good quality clothes and shoes while visiting their lords. The peasants also have to pay various free labour services to their monastery like making the cowshed, tilling the land, chopping down trees, etc. These peasants have also deprived of their wages of labour services like *kalobhari* where every *bustiwalla* had to supply transport duties to the state but all the monies as wages will be kept by the landlords or sometimes paid a small number of wages keeping a larger share with him (Upadhyay, 2017). However, the bustiwallas of monastery estates did not suffer much like that of other bustiwallas but some sources show us that even the peasants of monastery estates were exploited by the intermediaries like *mukhtiyar* and *mandal*. In Tingchim, the villagers did not entirely escape the abuses of the forced labour and experienced difficulties under Kunga Gyaltsen, a monk of the Phodong Monastery and Phodong *Mukter* from 1922 until 1934, who abused his rights to free labour and falsified the number of houses under his jurisdiction in order to pocket some of the house taxes which should normally have been handed over to the state. Tingchim villagers were regularly called for legitimate porter duty for the state but the *mukhtiyer* also forced them to work in his personal fields (Balakci, 2008: 51). Some more cases can be found regarding the exploitation of bustiwallas of the monastery estates through the *mandal* or other officials, for instance, the peasants of Rumtek monastery filed a complaint saying that the managers of the monastery collected a heavy amount of rent and *bethi* from them.

Thus, the peasants of monastery estates could not escape from the clutches of greedy mandals and managers of the monastery[74].

Apart from collecting revenues from the bustiwallas, the monasteries also provide loans to the bustiwallas in times of need, however, when they failed to return the debts on time to the monastery, they can file complaints against the debtors[75].

Moreover, as monasteries occupied a high position in the society, therefore, they also dispensed justice to the society and this system is not new as in many of the villages in the Tibetan cultural areas, the monastery or the monks played important role in solving problems whether civil or criminal cases. Similarly in Sikkim, the monasteries and the monks had the power to dispense justice among the villagers as no proper courts in the modern sense were available. However, during the British time, the administration of justice got little improved and now the courts began to be called *Adda* Courts, and the landlords, mandals, and *Chogyal* at the top carry out the business. The head of the *Adda* Courts under the Monastery estate was called *Adda* Lama who could try the cases up to the valuation of Rs. 500.

Management of Monasteries under the British Rule

According to the tradition, the supreme head of all the monasteries in Sikkim was the *Chogyal* and it was his duty to promote and preserve the religion by constructing monasteries in the state. Before British rule in Sikkim, the raja and other royal families was the biggest patron of the monasteries who used to provide the monasteries with land and other necessities. But after the land settlement programme,

[74]Sl. No. 113, File No. 3/8(I)/1921, General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[75] Sl. No. 35, File No. Nil/1930, Judicial Department, Sikkim State Archive.

the value of land increased and most of the lands were resumed from the monasteries and given to the Private Estates and to the State in order to generate more revenues. Moreover, under the British administration, many new departments were set up and the department of the monastery was kept under the prince Sidkyong Tulku in the year 1911. However, most interestingly the Tashiding Monastery never came under the control of Sidkyong Tulku even after becoming the head of all monasteries of Sikkim. Actually, *Chogyal* Thutop Namgyal kept Tashiding Monastery under his control and according to him the Tashiding Monastery and its properties especially the holy water vase should be under the direct control of the ruling *Chogyal*[76]. He played a very important role in changing the lives of Sikkimese monasteries as well as its lamas. Basnet pointed out,

> Tulku had the benefits of sound modern education. He had also been to Oxford. Back from Oxford in 1908, he had been given charge of some departments in the administration. During the last years of Thutop's reign Sidkeong had already been influencing many of his father's decisions. His modern education had thoroughly changed his outlook. He made it obvious that he was determined to sound the knell of feudalism in Sikkim. The monks were alarmed when Tulku talked of the monasteries' discharging their social responsibilities. This was a revolutionary heterodoxy coming from a man who was supposed to safeguard the interests of the privileged few (Basnet, 1974: 64).

Sidkyong Tulku was the younger son of *Chogyal* Thutop Namgyal. It is important to note that Sidkyong Tulku was an incarnate lama of Phodong Monastery (particularly the Kagyu sect) who was supposed to lead a life of celibacy and confined himself in the development of Buddhist tradition in Sikkim. But when Choda Namgyal (eldest

[76] Eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP880/1/4/34.

son of *Chogyal* Thutop Namgyal) refused to return to Sikkim from Tibet, J.C. White in frustration announced Sidkyong Tulku as the next *Chogyal* removing Choda Namgyal from the throne with the support of British Government. J.C. White despite receiving opposition from Thutop Namgyal as well as from the Phodong Monastery sent Sidkyong Tulku to study English, Hindi languages, and other secular subjects. He also received his education at Oxford. He travelled widely outside his kingdom and observed many new things (McKay, 2021: 194-199). Moreover, it was said that Pemayangtse Monastery supported the decision of the British and was willing to grant relaxation of the rules to free the second son from his character as an incarnation of the founder of the Phodong Monastery, as it would confer upon it importance over other monasteries of the state (Rao, 1972: 118). But it was Phodong Monastery protested this decision in fear of losing him as their religious head to politics (Jasen, 2014: 600).

However, after Sidkyong Tulku's return from Oxford as said earlier he was given the authority to look after the monasteries of the State. Thereafter, he made a tour of many of the monasteries and in 1909 he framed a monastic rule or *chayig* for all the big and smaller monasteries and the lamas of the State though all the monasteries have their own rules or *chayig* but were made compulsory in all the monasteries in Sikkim. According to this rule book it has been mentioned that the yearly monetary allowance for the monastery, the tax income from its monastic estates, as well as the income provided by donors in order to bring about merit for the dead and the living, and so on, need to be written in an account book, specifying what came from where. This amount should be used to restore cracked and aging walls on the in-and outside and to restore the receptacles of body, speech, and mind. Thus each year one needs to have a roster that shows who does the chores. On the tenth of the month and during

rituals the butter lamps are to be filled. The trust funds for the scriptures and other works should be developed without ever letting them deteriorate, by which every religious festival can continue. It has also been mentioned that those who were appointed as monastery officials, being aware of the responsibility that befalls them and acting to the best of their abilities, need to prioritize the general good, and therefore when standards have slipped, they need to carry out punishments after having investigated the case. Another important point was that it was not allowed to keep horses, cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, pigs, etc. within the surroundings of the monastery. Moreover, it has also been mentioned that it was not allowed for the various larger monasteries to make decisions on important issues without notifying Sidkyong Tulku. From now on, there will be a yearly investigation into whether affairs were handled appropriately in accord with the above mentioned points, and when it turns out that the conditions have been met there will be rewards, if they have not been met, there will be a severe punishment that will not just be verbal (Jansen, 2014: 613-616). Another interesting point Sidyong Tulku added in his *chayig* was about the sex life of the Sikkimese monks. He suggested the monks of Sikkimese monasteries not to have a spouse and also not to engage in any sexual relationship with stranger women but instead asked them to have such a relationship with one's brother's wife. However, Sidkyong Tulku also said that the marriage of monks can lead to a decrease in the monastery's property like lands, therefore, by encouraging polyandry within the Sikkimese Buddhists Sidkyong Tulku was trying to protect their properties (McKay, 2021: 217).

Since the *Durbar* was responsible for the management of the monastery, every monastery has to report and consult with the *Chogyal* regarding the appointment of the head lama or other small issues like mismanagement and disobedience by the

lamas of the monastery. Accordingly, many cases have been reported against the lamas[77].

Moreover, it has also been noted that the *Durbar* was strict vigilance towards the monasteries of the land therefore a committee was set up by Sidkyong Tulku and he became the President of this committee. This committee was established mainly to observe the conduct of every monastery because the *Durbar* has noticed that many of the monasteries were not properly functioning and misusing the revenues collected from their estates and areas as well as the subsidies received from the state. Then Sidkyong Tulku instructed every monastery to keep records of their income and expenditure in detail which would be examined by the committee formed by Chogyal. The members of this committee were selected from monasteries like Pemayangtse, PHodong, Ralong, Rumtek, and Phensong[78].

However, it was believed that Sidkyong Tulku was influenced by the English education and its tradition therefore he brought many reforms to the state religious system and came up with many new and strict rules and regulations which have to be followed by every monastery as well as the monks of the state, for instance, Sidkyong Tulku asked the monks to visit the market place and preach Buddhism to lay people. Being a spiritual head of Sikkimese monasteries, he tried to improve the overall quality of Sikkimese monasteries and inspected every monastery, and hence during this journey, he dismissed several monks for incompetence and a few monastic heads for negligence (McKay, 2021: 216). Therefore, Sidkyong was not liked by many of the monks especially Pemayangtse and Ralong as they enjoyed full freedom and follow their rule book or *chayig*.

[77]Sl. No. 6, File No. Nil/1919, Judicial Department, Sikkim State Archive.

[78] Eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP880/1/1/1

Moreover, Sidkyong Tulku not only imposed new and hard rules upon the monasteries and their lamas and monks but also tried to protect bustiwallas from the corrupt kazis and their managers. For instance, Sidkyong Tulku expelled Ongay Kazi of Rhenock from Sikkim for imposing various customs duties without permission from the *Durbar* [79].

The monastery estates were either managed by the monastery wing of the private estate or by the *Udor-choesum* of the monastery. The estates of Rumtek and Phodong monasteries fall under the former category whereas the estates of Pemayangtse, Tashiding, Phensong, Ralong monasteries were under the latter group. In the estates managed by the monastery wing of the private estates, the correction, transfer, and mutation of the records of rights of land were solely in the hands of private estates. The *Udor-choesom* was not kept informed of the matter. The land rent, local rates, and other taxes such as grazing fees, royalty from forests products, and tax on cardamom (*damthay khazana*) were collected by the private estate, and only a share of the revenue used to be given to the monastery for its maintenance and performance of religious ceremonies. The land rents were collected through block mandals who instead of getting a commission for it received tax exemption known as *minah* on their holdings. The estates of Ralong, Tashiding, Phensong, and Pemayangtse monasteries were managed directly under the *Udor-choesum* of the respective monasteries through *Twimi*. They were responsible for the maintenance of records and issue of revenue demands to the bustiwallas. Both land rent and local rate (*dhuri-khazana*) were collected by the mandals on behalf of the monastery. The revenue thus collected was utilized for the maintenance and the performance of religious

[79] Sl. No. 23, File No. II/V/1909, Land Revenue Department, Government of Sikkim.

ceremonies of the monastery. At present, all the monastery estates are managed by the Government through its respective departments.

Lastly, the Lamas who were the spiritual leaders often belonged to the noble families of Sikkim as well as Tibet and were the custodian of the important monasteries of Sikkim like Pemayangtse, Tashiding, Phodong, etc., besides exercising significant influence, as an advisor to the *Chogyal*, in the political-administrative affairs of the State. The monasteries owned huge landed property over which the Lamas enjoyed both revenue and administrative control. However, the involvement of the British in Sikkim's affair (more explicitly after 1889) saw a reduction in the political and economic powers of the Lamas and their monasteries. Moreover, during this period the monasteries and the lamas were burdened with extra responsibilities owing to which the Sikkimese monasteries and the lamas could not grow intellectually compared to Tibet.

Chapter V

Monasteries in Sikkim from 1947 to 1975

Following the Indian independence in the year 1947, Sikkim also witnessed a significant impact on its status and became a protectorate of India's Government. Most importantly, the most significant effect of Indian Independence on Sikkim was the idea of democracy, which led to the origin of different political parties who began to demand independence from the *Chogyal* and demanded the abolition of the monarchy. Many ordinary people came under the influence of these political parties, and Nepali communities mostly supported their agendas. And on the other hand, native people like Lepchas and Bhutias supported the *Chogyal,* which eventually led to communal disharmony. Moreover, another essential demand of the parties was Sikkim's merger under the Indian Union, which became successful in the year 1975 though many people adversely criticized this event.

However, 1947 to 1975 was not a pleasing time for Sikkim's people, especially the *Chogyal,* as it witnessed many communal disturbances. The *Durbar* tried every possible means to bring some changes or reforms in the state, mainly to appease the angry subjects. For instance, forced labor was abolished, the lessee system was also prohibited, and most importantly, a scientific land survey was conducted for the first time in the state. Moreover, during such difficult times, the big monasteries of Sikkim were also targeted by the bustiwallas who were fighting to abolish landlordism. It is evident that the rights of these monasteries were apparently challenged as they held massive estates under their authority. Unfortunately, these monasteries' fate changed under this new era of political change. The possession of landed estates by the monasteries was, for the first time, challenged by its people, and demanded its

abolition. Eventually, the monasteries were made to dispossess their estates and offered subsidies for their maintenance by the Government.

The departure of the British and the Political Changes within Sikkim

Indian independence in 1947 brought new dimensions to the course of history in the region. After the 15th of August 1947, the British maintained that the British paramount over the Indian states would automatically lapse. The princes would be free to join the Indian union or remain independent (Kotturan, 1983: 90-91).

While India was preparing for independence at the beginning of 1947, an official Sikkimese delegation led by Maharaj Kumar Palden Thundup Namgyal[80], with Rai Bahadur T.D. Densapa, a Private Secretary to the Maharaja, was already in Delhi as a member. As a member of the Chamber of Princes, the delegation first discussed the further political relations of their State with Delhi with the other states. They could not have gotten any positive guidance from that body since the princes themselves were in confusion. Some had already decided to cast their lot with the Indian Union. Some were ready to declare independence on their own. However, most of the states had taken the attitude of wait and see (Kotturan, 1983: 92). However, Maharaj Kumar Palden Thundup Namgyal fought to save his kingdom from the fate of becoming a part of the Indian Union (Hiltz, 2011: 116).

[80] Palden Thondup Namgyal (1923-1981), was the second son of chogyal Tashi Namgyal. He was recognized as an incarnation of eminent Kagyu Lama Sidkyong Tulku therefore, he received monastic education in Tibet. In 1933 he was installed as the head of Phodong and Rumtek monasteries. However, he also attended school and received modern education. He acted as an adviser to his father chogyal Tashi Namgyal and actively participated in modern day politics of Sikkim. Due to his elder brother's accidental death Palden Thondup was consecrated as the twelfth chogyal of Sikkim in 1963 (Hiltz, 2003:70).

By its very true nature, the standstill agreement was a temporary measure. It was realized that the relations between India and Sikkim must be brought on a new basis, which required time for deliberations and discussions. For the conduct of these deliberations in a friendly atmosphere, this interim agreement became necessary. According to this agreement, "all agreements, relations and administrative arrangements as to matters of common concern existing between the crown and the Sikkim state on 14 August 1947" were deemed to continue between the Government of India and Sikkim pending the conclusion of a new treaty. Thus it ensured the continuation of the status quo in common interest matters like defense, external affairs, communication, and currency. The agreement did provoke some questions and discussions in the Constituent Assembly when B.V. Keskar, the deputy minister of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, explained the position thus: concerning Sikkim, in many matters, it is controlled by the Government of India, but in many matters, it stands independently, not exactly as a state within India. It is between a state in India and an independent state (Kotturan, 1983: 94).

Formation of Sikkim State Congress

Meanwhile, the conditions within the state itself were changing rapidly. The people were getting restive at the impact of fast developments in the neighborhood (India). Like in other states, the independence movement in British India had given inspiration to similar movements in Sikkim. First, it was confined to isolated pockets with predominantly social rather than political aims. In the capital Gangtok, there was the Praja Sudharak Samaj under the leadership of Tashi Tshering. West of the Teesta at Temi Tarku, there was Praja Sammelan under the leadership of Gobardhan Pardhan.

And finally, there was the Praja Mandal based at Chakung under the leadership of L.D. Kazi. Indian independence and the establishment of popular governments in some states encouraged them to come together with pronounced political aims. At the beginning of December 1947, the leaders of these regional organizations met at Gangtok and came out with a plan for a joint political party for the whole of Sikkim. On the 7th of December, in a largely attended public meeting at Gangtok, the new political party, the Sikkim State Congress, was inaugurated under Tashi Tshering's leadership. The formation of the Sikkim State Congress was a landmark in the political history of Sikkim. With the party's inauguration, a resolution was also adopted for political and economic reforms at the same meeting. A five-member delegation called on the then Maharaja, Tashi Namgyal, and presented a memorandum incorporating the three demands formulated at the meeting. These three demands were: Abolition of Landlordism, the formation of an interim government as a precursor for a democratic form of Government, and finally, the accession of Sikkim to the Union of India. These three demands awakened the Sikkim Maharaja and his *Durbar*, which thought it reasonable to alleviate the state's rising tempo of political activity by appointing "three secretaries to the Maharaja" from the major communities- the Bhutias, Lepchas, and Nepalese. These secretaries' functions were not fully defined though it was understood that they were to be associated with the state's administration as people's representatives. Unfortunately, these three secretaries to the Maharaja so fully identified themselves with the administration as they (Bhutia and Lepcha) have begun to take more side of the Maharaja that the State Congress had second thoughts about their utility and called for their resignation. By giving representation on a communal basis, the Maharaja and his *Durbar* cleverly brought about division in the State Congress ranks and the political movement it

represented. The Lepchas and the Bhutia members of the three secretaries of the Maharaja refused to abide by the State Congress directive to resign. The Bhutia member Mr. Sonam Tshering was largely instrumental in forming a rival political party, called the Sikkim National Party, with partisan interests and toed the Sikkim Durbar's official line. The declared objective of the National Party was the preservation of the status quo in internal affairs. Accordingly, a clear resolution was passed on 30th April 1948 in its inaugural session, and it said: 1) historically, socially, and culturally, Sikkim has closer affinities with Bhutan and Tibet. 2) From the religious point of view, being Lamaist, she is quite distinct from India. 3) The party's policy is to maintain intact by all means the indigenous character of Sikkim and preserve its integrity. Those who stood to gain by preserving the feudal order, including the Maharaja and his *Durbar*, supported the National Party. On the other hand, the masses largely composed of the Nepali settlers stood for the State Congress (Rose, 1978: 208).

Moreover, it was interesting to also note that when *Chogyal* was fighting with the government of India with regard to the status of Sikkim, at the same time he was also dealing with internal problems created by different political parties. Chogyal was in fear of loosing his sovereignty, therefore, to protect the Namgyal dynasty, its tradition, religion, and the people of his kingdom (Lepchas and Bhutias) he formed the National Party (Hiltz, 2011: 116).

In December 1948, two State Congress leaders, Tashi Tshering and Chandra Das Rai visited Delhi and had discussions with the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and other central leaders. The state's political situation as elsewhere in India was fluid, and the two leaders were satisfied with the support and encouragement received in Delhi. Back in Sikkim, they were anxious to build up the political aspirations of their

people. With this in view, soon after their return, the State Congress's annual conference was held in Rangpo. The three demands that the State Congress had formulated at their first convention in Gangtok were still to be realized. The Rangpo conference decided on direct action to force the Government to comply with its demands. The conference called for a No Tax campaign and asked the people not to pay taxes unless their demands were met. The state government tried to meet the threat by a wholesale arrest of the leaders, but further public demonstrations supported the State Congress. Through Mr. Harishwar Dayal's good offices, the then Indian Political Officer, a temporary truce was arranged, and the arrested leaders were released, but the situation remained tense. The State Congress kept up its pressure for an Interim Government, pending an agreement for the full responsible Government as an integral part of the Indian Union. The demonstration organized for May Day 1949 was an eye-opener to the *Durbar*. For his safety, the ruler had to seek protection at the residence of the Political Officer; only an Indian garrison that had been posted there at Gangtok could bring the situation under control. Finally, the *Durbar,* apparently on the Political Officer's advice, yielded, and a popular ministry under Mr. Tashi Tshering was sworn in on 9th May 1949, with four other ministers. Soon after, a disagreement arose between the *Durbar* and the State Congress ministers. The Maharaja was unwilling to part with any real power, whereas the ministry wanted to function as a full-scale government with the Maharaja remaining a constitutional head. The *Durbar* insisted that the secretaries submit papers directly to the *Chogyal* for his consideration. The ministers should function as advisers to the ruler on appropriate departmental matters. However, the ministers demanded decision-making powers along with a cabinet system of Government. Finally, this confrontation reached its peak when the chief minister, without the approval of the *Chogyal*, issued

an order reducing the house tax. This disagreement led to the dismissal of the ministry less than one month after its appointment (Rose, 1978: 208).

Eventually, the Maharaja invited Central intervention, finding the situation getting out of control. Dr. B.V. Keskar, the then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Sikkim to investigate. Dr. Keskar found that the differences between the *Durbar* and the ministry had reached a breaking point and came to the conclusion that what the state needed was an impartial, capable administrator to restore normalcy. Accordingly, a senior civil servant, Mr. J.S. Lall, took over the state's administration in August 1949 as Dewan. After taking office Dewan tried to bring normalcy to the state by organizing its administration. He designated four "officers-in-charge" to head the various departments and an officer superintendent to coordinate relations between the departments and the prime minister's office. Subsequently, he made several attempts to change or reorganize the secretariat, but the usual result was the compounding confusion and a further lowering of morale (Rose, 1978: 209).

Meanwhile, the standstill agreement was signed in 1950, and the understanding was that a new treaty would be signed later to settle once and for all Sikkim and its relations with India. A full-scale Sikkimese delegation led by Maharaj Kumar Palden Thundup Namgyal came to Delhi in early 1950 to negotiate with India's Government, and all eyes were now turned to Delhi (Kotturan, 1983: 97). Thus a new treaty was signed on 5th December 1950 at Gangtok called the India-Sikkim friendship treaty, which replaced the standstill agreement. According to this treaty, Sikkim was allowed complete internal autonomy while external affairs like defense and communications remained in the central Government's hands (Rao, 1972: 145).

With the task of getting the Central Government to agree to Sikkim's special status, the *Chogyal* and his *Durbar* began to move forward to consolidate their position in the state. It was Maharaj Kumar who was the prime mover in this matter. In the early fifties, the state's adequate power still rested with the Dewan J.S. Lall, appointed by the Delhi. On 23rd March 1950, a "Constitutional Proclamation" was issued by the *Chogyal*, giving details of an administrative setup for the state. This Proclamation provided for a State Council consisting of seventy members- six elected from the Bhutia-Lepcha community, six elected from the Nepalese, and five nominated by the *Chogyal*. It is believed that through this, *Chogyal* introduced the curse of communalism into the very constitutional framework. Even then, there was no fairness in distributing seats to the communities as the majority Nepali community was reduced to the position of a minority group. The Sikkim *Durbar* could easily plan to get the upper hand in the State Council, ostensibly the state's highest constitutional body (Basnet, 1974:99-100).

Under the new constitution, Sikkim went to the polls in 1953 (the first general election). To vindicate the political polarization on communal lines, the six Bhutia-Lepcha seats were won by the National Party, and the six Nepali seats went to the State Congress. The seventeen-member State Council came on the 7th of August, 1950, with the Dewan as its President. Subsequently, an Executive Council was also formed, one each from the two parties (Rao, 1972: 151). According to Rose, a dyarchical system was created, under which specific departments were "transferred" to the executive councilors. In contrast, the remaining departments were "reserved" as the charge of the secretariat officials. The "transferred" departments were education, press and publicity, forests, agriculture, public works, bazaars, excise, and state transport, whereas the "reserved" category included ecclesiastical (Buddhist

monasteries and their lands), Sikkim Nationalized Transport, police, finance, land reforms, and Panchyat (Rose, 1978: 209).

In 1954, Dewan J.S. Lall was replaced by Nari Rustomji, also appointed as the chief secretary mainly to guide him in the administration of the reserved departments. Rustomji also tried to bring some stability to the state and change the negative image of *Chogyal*. Thus, Sikkim remained comparatively free from political troubles for a few years after the 1953 first general elections. Though the next elections were due in three years, it was postponed indefinitely for no reason. Before Sikkim went to the polls for the second time in 1958, on 17th March 1958, the *Chogyal* issued a proclamation providing for the composition of a new State Council consisting of twenty members, fourteen elected, and six nominated- three more than the original Council. Out of the fourteen elected seats, six were reserved for the Bhutias and Lepchas combined, six were reserved for Nepalese, one seat for the monasteries as *sangha* seat, and one general seat for the Sikkimese at large. The new Council remained the same concerning the majority Nepali community. However, it was believed that the creation of a general seat brought equilibrium with the *Sangha* seat, which was mainly dominated by Bhutia-Lepcha. Despite the communal voting system in the second general election, the State Congress won a majority of the elective seats. But there were widespread allegations of corruption and malpractices in the conduct of the elections. An election tribunal was appointed to investigate the issues, and in May 1959, the tribunal announced that three of the elected members – K.R. Pradhan and N.K. Pradhan from the State congress and Sonam Tshering from the National Party were found guilty of corruption and dissemination of false propaganda, and they were disqualified from holding office (Sinha, 2008: 106-107).

After the second general elections of 1958, the political situation became tense in the state. The angry political parties decided to challenge the authority of the durbar since they felt betrayed by the *Chogyal*, bringing together different parties under one umbrella. L.D. Kazi[81] and Sonam Tshering became the main lead who decided to wage a struggle against the Sikkim *Durbar's* rising wave of undemocratic practices. A new political party emerged under the name of Sikkim National Congress in May 1960. Their objectives were to establish a constitutional monarchy, a council based on communal parity, but elected by a joint electorate, and an independent judiciary High Court established by a charter. L.D. Kazi was elected President, and Sonam Tshering, and D.B. Tiwari as vice presidents (Basnet, 1974: 116-117). The third general election was held in March 1967, where the Sikkim National Congress won the majority of the seats. It secured eight out of the eighteen elective seats, the National Party got five seats, and the Sikkim State Congress secured only two seats. However, after the formation of the Executive Council, a conflict developed within the Sikkim National Congress, and the party got divided into two factions (Sengupta, 1985: 162). And thus, no administrative development and reforms were introduced.

By the fourth general elections held in April 1970, the state's people had become even more politically conscious. The National Congress led by L.D. Kazi again came out as

[81] Lhendup Dorje Khangsarpa under the patronage of Namgyal studied in Enchay monastery and then later returned to Rumtek Monastery with the support of Rhenock Kazi and Gyaltsen Kazi (relative of former head lama of Rumtek Monastery) in 1921. However, Lhendup Dorje was later accused of breaking the rules of the monastery and misusing the monastery property for own benefit. Moreover, as mentioned in chapter four that the head lamas of most of the big monasteries used to enjoy some landed properties either granted by chogyal or by the monastery that property always causes some disputes within the monastery and the families of the head lama. According to Lhendup Dorje, he had bought some orange groves from his relative who was the head lama of Rumtek Monastery however the case was not solved and he couldn't repossessed those properties. He was also expelled from the monastery. It was believed that this was the reason for Lhendup Dorje to become one of the challenging opponent for *chogyal* (Mckay, 2021: 276-278).

the largest single party in the enlarged State Council. The political atmosphere in the state was none too healthy, as could be guessed from the diversity of political parties. The uneasy peace reigned in the state till it was again rocked by the fifth general elections held in January 1973 (Kotturan, 1983: 109).

Finally, in the year 1973, the fifth general election was conducted. This election brought a wave of unrest within the state, which eventually led to its integration with the Indian Union. The National Party won the majority seats in this election, often including the *sangha* seat. At the same time, the Sikkim National Congress secured only five seats, and the Janta Congress got two seats. Thus, the two parties accused the *Durbar* of rigging the election, and the leader of the National Congress L.D. Kazi was utterly disillusioned with the *Durbar* and decided that the only alternative left for them under such circumstances was intensive popular agitation. The leader of another party, K.C. Pradhan of the Janta Congress, also came to the same conclusion. The two parties formed a Joint Action Council to start the agitation (Sengupta, 1985: 164-166). The Sikkim *Durbar* intensified the crisis by arresting K.C. Pradhan on disorderly behavior on 26th March 1973. The Joint Action Council condemned the arrest and submitted to the *Chogyal* a memorandum containing the resolutions passed by the Council seeking changes in the electoral system and demanding administrative and political reforms. However, the *Durbar* did not pay attention to the growing agitation, and thus a mass demonstration started, and people clashed with the police, leading to severe *lathi*-charge and firing. This was followed by a general upsurge which affected the countryside more than the capital, Gangtok. The southwest and western Sikkim administration had collapsed, and the youthful volunteers of the two political parties took over and established parallel administrations. At this juncture, *Chogyal* was desperate to save his position and invited the Central Government's intervention to

establish law and order in the state. Simultaneously, the leaders of political parties sent appeals to the Prime Minister for Central intervention to save the situation. New Delhi sent B.S. Das as Administrator and the Indian Army to solve the problems between the *Durbar* and the political parties. Finally, Das successfully brought some peace by signing a tripartite agreement in May 1973. This treaty was signed between the *Chogyal*, the Indian Foreign Secretary, and five representatives from the National Party, the National Congress, and the Janta Congress. The agreement envisaged the future constitutional setup and Sikkim's relation with India (Sinha, 2008: 114).

Following April 1973, the Sikkim National Congress and Janta Congress merged to form the Sikkim Congress. Subsequently, in February 1974, the Assembly election was announced by the *Chogyal*, and the total seat was now increased to 32. In this election, L.D. Kazi won the majority by capturing 29 seats out of 32 members Assembly. The newly constituted Assembly met on 10th May 1974, and L.D. Kazi became the first Chief Minister of Sikkim. The Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution for the development of the Sikkim-India relationship. It also stated that the role and functions of the *Chogyal* cannot be more than those of the constitutional head. The Assembly also requested the Government of India to depute a constitutional expert to frame a constitution for the state. In response, the Indian Government sent Mr. Rajagopal to draft a constitution for Sikkim. Moreover, the Assembly also passed the Government of Sikkim Act, and this Act provided for a democratic set up with the *Chogyal* as its constitutional head (Gurung, 2011: 203-204). After some initial hesitation, the *Chogyal* signed the Constitution Bill on 4th July 1974. And thus, the country passed on from autocracy to democracy. As the days passed, it became clear that the *Chogyal* did not like the new setup and hoped to become an independent sovereign. With this end in view, he encouraged the anti-Indian elements in his state

and clamored for a revision of the 1950 treaty. As it turned out, the state's relations with India became more rational and stable. The *Chogyal* became a figurehead linking the constitutional arrangement. The *Chogyal* was also dissatisfied with his status as a constitutional head of a state of which he was an absolute ruler till the other day. He tried to break the new arrangement by confronting the popular ministry headed by L.D. Kazi. As a result, the ruling party began a campaign for the removal of the *Chogyal*.

There was suspicion that the *Chogyal* was using his still considerable popularity with the Bhutia-Lepcha minority to raise unnecessary fears in that ethnic group to which he belonged. He could also maneuver to create a split in the ruling party, which almost reached a breaking point. The pressure from the state government to remove the *Chogyal* increased, and the Central Government could have ignored it only at peril to itself. The position became intolerable when the Sikkim guards acting on the instructions from the *Chogyal* opened fire at a Sikkim Congress demonstration against the *Chogyal*. Following an urgent request from the Chief Minister, the 400-strong Sikkim guards were disarmed by the Indian army on the 9th April 1975. Now the confrontation between the *Chogyal* and the state government had reached a point of no return. The State Assembly met on the 10th of April, 1975, and a resolution demanding the abolition of the office of the *Chogyal* and the merger of the state with the Indian Union was adopted unanimously. This was followed by a state-wide referendum on the 14th of April, which endorsed the decision of the State Assembly by a significant majority. Now another amendment to the Indian Constitution admitted Sikkim as the 22nd state of the Indian Union. On 16th May 1975, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed signed the 36th Amendment to the Indian Constitution, formally integrating Sikkim with the family of Indian states. The President of India

also appointed Mr. B.B. Lal, Chief Executive, as the first Government of Sikkim. Within hours in Gangtok, Mr. B.B. Lal took over as the Governor of the state (Kotturan, 1983: 111).

Land Reforms and the Question of Monastery Estates

From 1946 onwards, people from different parts of the state were demanding some political and social change under various political parties. Ordinary people of Sikkim are also asking for some changes to be introduced in the land tenure system. Therefore, many of the peasants from different parts of Sikkim started demanding land reforms with the support of the newly created political leaders. Hence, a series of deputations were sent to the authorities for the abolition of slavery, protection against forced labour, and demand that people be allowed to pay their taxes directly to the state instead of landlords (Upadhyay, 2017: 192). Eventually, in response to popular demand by the people of Sikkim, J.S. Lall, and the then Dewan of Sikkim, mainly to appease the angry subjects of Sikkim, through a Government notification dated 20th August 1949, ordered that all the land revenue previously paid by the agents like mandals of the estates shall be now directly paid to the Government. Even though it did not specifically mention the abolition of the landlords system, this notification notified that the bustiwallas, paying land revenue to the thikadars and kazis, would pay the land revenue directly to the Government. However, this step was interpreted as abolishing the landlord system by *Chogyal* (Gupta, 1992: 40).

However, the notification of 1949 failed to reference the abolition of the Estates, which are managed by monasteries and the *Chogyal*. Following the dissolution of the landlord system in Sikkim, the land reform program was started by the Government

in1950, and for the first time in Sikkim, the scientific method of land survey was carried out throughout the state. Under this land survey, the cultivable areas were divided according to specific standards, and rates of land revenue were imposed– productivity, proximity to a market, and communications. Based on this survey report, Nepali cultivators were charged a higher rate of land revenues than Bhutias and Lepchas, but this discriminatory land revenue system was abolished in 1966. Moreover, a program was also launched where it was decided that all land would be registered in the landholder's name (Rose, 1978: 219-220).

After the land survey report of 1951, the Government came up with a new system of land revenue collection. Under which districts were divided into blocks that could consist of a village or several villages, the mandals were now made the block agents for the Government. In return, they can retain seven percent of the revenue collected from his jurisdiction as compensation. However, even after the abolition of the landlord system (1949), two institutions continued to enjoy their traditional rights within their estates, and they were monasteries and *Chogyal's* private estate. The monasteries continued to collect revenues from their bustiwallas. As already mentioned, five monasteries possessed estates, and two monasteries (Phodong and Rumtek) were under the direct control of *Chogyal's* private estates. Therefore, the land revenues of these two monasteries were collected by the agents of *Chogyal's* private estates. The other three monasteries – Pemayangtse, Phensong, and Ralong collected their land revenues through their managing committee called *Udor-choesum.* This committee appointed an agent called *mandal* who would collect the land revenues on behalf of the monasteries. The mandals working for the monasteries were not commissioned like other mandals. Still, as a reward, they were exempted

from payment of land revenue for the land they held as their holdings, and this system was called as *mina* (Rose, 1978: 221; Gupta: 1992: 42).

Moreover, the Government's land revenue office in the district had no revenue collection duties on monasteries estates. The monasteries were allowed to keep all the revenues collected from their estates as subsidies from the Government for the maintenance of the monastery. Hence, the monasteries were also given the responsibility of maintaining the revenue records of their bustiwallas. During this period, the monasteries received revenues through house tax (*dhuri khazana*), land rent, cardamom (*dhamthay khazana*[82]), forest royalty, and ground tax from the bazaar situated within the monastery estates.

Regarding private estates of *Choyal* and Phodong and Rumtek monastery estates (part of private estates) were divided into two, and the *Chogyal's* agents looked after one part. The other part was handled by the land revenue office in the district. Interestingly, after collecting the revenues from the *Chogyal's* estates, the land revenue office turned over the collected revenues to the *Chogyal* after deducting the collection charges, and the Government does not receive any revenues from this institution (Rose, 1978: 221).

Thus, the existence of monastery estates and private estates even after the abolition of the landlord system in Sikkim in 1949 that were running their independent organization outside the control of the state government was considered a different picture in the newly established administration of Sikkim, as Gupta mentioned,

[82]*Dhamthay khazana* was revenue earned from the sale of cardamom and many of the monasteries had cardamom field. Some monasteries cultivated their cardamom field by themselves with the help of monastery servants, and some big monasteries used to provide their cardamom field to other bustiwallas on contract basis.

control over agricultural land, collection of land revenue, forest, and maintenance of land records are part of state activities in any modern administration (Gupta, 1992: 43).

However, these two institutions, particularly monastery estates, were for the first time challenged in the year 1961. The absolute power of the monastery over bustiwallas settled in its estates was questioned by the Sikkim State Congress. Interestingly, it can be noticed that all the political parties were aware of the functioning of monastery estates outside the purview of state administration even after the termination of the landlord system. Still, they were busy establishing their political career by fighting elections. It was only after the 1958 proclamation issued by *Chogyal* that he included the *sangha* as a new seat in the State Council, and that was not liked by other contenders as they felt betrayed after the introduction of the communal voting system because they believed that the *sangha* seat was created by *Chogyal* mainly to benefit himself as Bhutia and Lepcha dominated this community.

Eventually, in a meeting held in March 1961, the party adopted the resolution that in the monastery estate, the monastery management committee formulated rules and regulations, and imposed them on the bustiwallas. Moreover, these bustiwallas' life was no better than that of a slave. This party further demanded that such exploitation from the monastery upon the bustiwallas should be stopped, and people in Sikkim should be brought under a single law. Therefore, the working committee of Sikkim State Congress at its meeting (1960 -1961) expressed their thoughts on the continuation of the monastery estates even after the abolition of landlordism in Sikkim. Hence, this party requested the Maharaja to bring every part of Sikkim under a uniform system of administration (Dhamala, 2008: 145).

However, though the political parties continued to request the *Chogyal* for political and land reforms in the state, their voices were unheard by the durbar. The growing differences between the *Chogyal* and the political parties disturbed the state administration. They led to political chaos, which ultimately disturbed the state's overall development and its people. The situation became worse after the third general election in 1967 when the Sikkim National Congress was confident it to win the election. Still, due to some manipulation from the *Chogyal's* side, the National Party won this election. Hence, people lost faith in the election system and became more politically conscious. *Chogyal,* after the third general election, maintained some peace within the state but could not establish his authority for an extended period as *Chogyal* faced the great unfortunate experience of his life after the fifth general election, which took place in 1973. Unfortunately, this general election led to widespread public disorders in the state, which eventually led to the merger of Sikkim with the Indian Union in 1975. Moreover, the monarchy was abolished, and Sikkim adopted constitutional democracy under the Government of India (Gupta, 1992: 40-45).

After forming the democratically elected Government in 1974, the demand for agrarian reforms had become progressively stronger. The newly elected Government constituted a committee on Land Reforms to study agrarian reforms' various aspects and make suggestions. Thus, after the merger, the democratic Government formed a committee under the leadership of Mr. N.B. Khatiwara in 1975 to look after the problems of land revenue and recommended the measures of land reforms in Sikkim. The committee held a high degree of uncertainty among the majority of tillers regarding the period of their occupancy and continuity of land given to them. The committee recommended that laws be passed to achieve the security of tenure, fair

rent, and heritable tenancy rights. To achieve the objective, the committee recommended specific measures. Firstly, the committee tried to ensure that there should be no eviction of tenants even under the appeal of personal cultivation. If the landowners wish to take land under personal cultivation, the tenants must be allowed to cultivate at least 3.5 standard acres, and in no case, the household land of the tenants would be touched. Secondly, the provisions mentioned earlier should be supported by a provision for a ceiling on agricultural holdings, and in no case, the ceiling should exceed 16 standard acres. Thirdly, the committee held that the Private Estates should be seized from the responsibility of maintaining land records, and the entire responsibility should be transferred to the elected Government. Lastly, this committee also recommended that the monastery estates be abolished, and the whole revenue should be brought under the Department of Land Revenue (Gupta, 1992: 43-44).

Furthermore, according to Dhamala, 'the Land Reform Committee of 1975, for the first time, expressed the need for the abolition of monastery estates openly. They thought that the existence of the monastery estates in political and administrative in Sikkimese governance could be seen as a separate entity operating mainly outside the control of the Government. The committee also visited various monastery estates and concluded a popular demand for their abolition from the bustiwallas. It suggested that on the abolition of monastery estates, the entire revenue collection should be brought under the department of Land Revenue. The Government should appoint collection agencies on payment of a usual commission. As a first step towards this direction, the Government should acquire the land records held by the respective monastery for the correct assessment of land revenue. It was also recommended that the monasteries be allowed to retain their homestead farm along with the buildings and structures used to

accommodate monks, and these may be exempted from paying land revenue and other taxes' (Dhamala, 2008: 145-146).

Accordingly, the Government of Sikkim responded to the recommendation of the Land Revenue Committee of 1975, and subsequently, the Sikkim Agricultural land Ceiling and Reforms Act of 1977 was passed. The law defined the ceiling of an agricultural holding. As a result thereof, the surplus land over the ceiling level held by the landholders would be treated as vested land. Those vested land would be distributed among the *sukumbasi* (they were the landless peasants who were in a habit of moving from one area to another. They cultivate the land of a particular estate and settled only for a year or two. Thus they do not have a permanent house so they do not have to pay any house rent. They lived in a shed built within the field called *kholma* house[83]) and agricultural labour. The Act of 1977 provided that the ceiling limit shall be determined according to certain principles. Firstly, in the case of an unmarried adult or a person with no family or the sole surviving member of any family, 6 ½ standard acres was the upper ceiling. Secondly, the family with no more than five members was allowed12 ½ acres, and thirdly, families with more than five members were allowed 12 ½ to 20 ½ standard acres. Concerning monastery estates, the Act of 1977, contrary to the committee's recommendations (1975), did not ask for its total abolition. Instead, the Act of 1977 put certain limits on the holdings according to certain principles and thus divided the monasteries into two groups – Group A consists of five big monasteries (Pemayangtse, Ralong, Phensong, Phodong, and Rumtek) and Group B consists of other monasteries of Sikkim. Hence, it was decided that the monasteries mentioned in Group A (five big monasteries) were allowed to

[83] Sl. No. 95, File No. 5/24/1928. General Department, Sikkim State Archive.

possess 60 standard acres. The monasteries mentioned in Group B were allowed 25 standard acres fixed as the ceiling (Gupta, 1992: 45).

However, it has been mentioned that the Agricultural Land Ceiling of 1977 was not successfully implemented, and many changes were introduced in this Act in 1978. However, the Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reforms Act of 1977 allowed the six big monasteries to hold sixty standard acres of land, but the Government has failed to take any steps in this direction. As a result, the monasteries were deprived of income from estates. To enable the monastery to meet its expenses, the Government decided in 1978 to pay each monastery an annual subsidy of Rs. 2500 pending the Government's decision to implement the provisions of the Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reforms Act 1977.

Moreover, a new land survey operation was also undertaken from 1980 to 1982 as per the recommendations made by the committee (1975) for the whole of Sikkim. Monastery estates were also surveyed, but the finding of the survey showed that there was a change in the size of the monastery estate. It has been noticed that the monastery lost many of its holdings, and the main reason was the acquisition of some parts of the monastery land by the Government in the name of development. Another reason was the transfer of land title to the bustiwallas by the monastery authority after collecting site *salami*[84]. Another important reason was the illegal encroachment of monastery lands by some bustiwallas. According to the recommendations made by this land reforms committee, the Government issued a notification by which it withdrew the monastery's power to collect the revenue and other taxes and authorized

[84]*Salami* was a custom prevalent there in Sikkim where the kutdars or shares croppers submit the payment in various kinds like agricultural products, meats, eggs, and fruits to their landlord. But during this period many monasteries handed out their lands to kutdars or sharecroppers and chakhureys permanently by taking salamis mainly in the form of cash from them.

the District Officer of the respective district to collect the revenues and deposit the revenues to the state treasury. While, the state also maintained that they would give a part of revenue collected from the monastery estates to the monastery concerned (Dhamala, 2008: 146-147).

The Income and Expenditure Pattern of Big Six Monasteries of Sikkim

These monasteries' primary source of income was land rent, house tax known as *dhuri khazana*, cardamom or *dhamthay khazana*, and forest royalty share and bazaar tax. Apart from that the monasteries also collected a share of agricultural products from their sharecropper called adhiadars and kutdars. Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter that there were few categories of monks and lamas in the monastery who were exempted from any taxes in place of salaries. Firstly, the monastery managing committee, *Udor-choesum* or *Duchi*, and their exemption were lifelong. Secondly, employees were employed for a period up to a maximum of three years, and for them, the exemption was for the period of employment. Thirdly, the mandals were exempted from paying land revenue in place of their services of collecting land revenue from the monastery estate. They do not get any commission or salary for their service. This practice of exempting the employees from taxation is called *minah*. Fourthly, the last category of employees who enjoyed tax exemption was *chakhurey*. *Chakhurey* was the servant who provided menial services to the monastery, and in return, *chakhurey* was given rent-free land. As already mentioned, the task of revenue collections was of the block mandals appointed by the *Udor-choesum* or the *Duchi* of the monastery. The mandals were responsible for the issue of revenue demands and the collection of revenue from the bustiwallas. The collection of the cardamom or

damthay khazana was usually given to interested candidates for two years on a contract basis. Sometimes the monastery also leased out their cardamom field to some individuals on a contracts basis in return for annual payment. The forest produce of a monastery or royalty share was collected by the State Forest Department and out of which the department provide 50% share on the sale of timber and 1/6 share on other forest produce to the monastery concerned. Concerning the collection of *kut, and adhia* a person was appointed known as a grain contractor by the *Duchi*, particularly for two years. However, after the 1975 land reforms, the responsibility of collecting land revenue from the monastery estates was given to the District Officer who deposits the revenues in the Government accounts instead of submitting them to the concerned monastery. The Department of Local Self government collected the bazaar tax. The monasteries were allowed to collect the grains from the bustiwallas through their grain contractor (Dhamala, 2008: 138-140).

The income of these estates varies from monastery to monastery, and it depends on their area of cultivable and cardamom land, several bazaars, and forest resources. The monastery also collected local rent known as *dhuri khazana* (house tax) at one rupee per house per annum. The Pemayangtse monastery had two markets and they are Gyalshing and Legship. The monastery look over the administration of these bazaars and collected taxes. From these two bazaars, the monastery collected the ground rent and stable tax. However, the *Bazaar* department started maintaining bazaar areas of the monastery and collected all the taxes and it was said that the department only provided revenues of ground rent to the monastery. moreover, the Pemayangtse Monastery also collected cardamom or *damthay khazana*. The monastery also collected agricultural products like paddy, millet, and corn as an annual share from its

kutdars and adhiadars. Apart from that, the State Ecclesiastical department provided Rs. 600 as an annual subsidy (Dhamala, 2008: 140).

Table No 5. 1. Table showing the income of Pemayangtse monastery in 1973.

Source of Income	Total Receipts (in Rs.)
Land rent and house tax	7,428
Forest royalty share	8,000
Tax on Cardamom or *Dhamthay khazana*	8,000
Bazaar taxes	3,200
Total	26,628

Source: Dhamala. "Monasteries of Sikkim with Special Reference to the Economic Structure." *Essays on TibetanCultural Heritage*, edited by Karubaki Datta, Serial Publication; 2008th edition, 1 January 2008, 122-149.

Regarding the Tashiding Monastery, as mentioned in previous chapters, the Tashiding Monastery, one of the oldest and most sacred monastic seats of Ngadak lineage, did not have any landed estates before 1949. This monastery used to depend mainly upon the annual grant or subsidies of Rs. 300 from the *Durbar*, and also public contribution. But it was only during the reign of *Chogyal* Tashi Namgyal that this monastery was granted lands to generate some income. Thus, the Tashiding Monastery also started collecting revenues from different sources like local rent and the cardamom or *damthay khazana*. However, the detail of revenue collection was not available.

Similar to Pemayangtse Monastery, Phensong Monastery also collects revenues from different sources like land rent, house tax, forest royalty share, and cardamom or *damthay khazana*, but Phensong Monastery does not have a *bazaar* area.

Table No 5.2. Table showing the income of Phensong Monastery in 1973.

Source of Income	Total Receipts (in Rs.)
Land rent and house tax	2073.87
Forest royalty share	1000.00
Tax on Cardamom or *Dhamthay khazana*	2728.30
Total	5802.17

Source: Dhamala. "Monasteries of Sikkim with Special Reference to the Economic Structure." Essays on Tibetan Cultural Heritage, edited by Karubaki Datta, Serial Publication; 2008th edition, 1 January 2008, 122-149.

Phodong Monastery also generated income from different sources; mainly land rent, house tax, forest royalty share, bazaar tax, and cardamom or *damthay khazana*. Moreover, they also collected their shares of agricultural products from kutdars and adhiadars.

Table No 5.3. Table showing the income of Phodong Monastery in 1973.

Source of income	Total receipts(in Rs.)
Land rent and house tax	5,172.00
Forest royalty share	2732.00

Bazaar tax etc.	2402.00
Tax on Cardamom or *damthay khazana*	5784.00
Total	16,090.00

Source: Dhamala. "Monasteries of Sikkim with Special Reference to the Economic Structure." Essays on Tibetan Cultural Heritage, edited by Karubaki Datta, Serial Publication; 2008th edition, 1 January 2008, 122-149.

Similarly, Ralong Monastery collected revenues from different sources as forest royalty share. Ralong monastery also collected revenues from land rent, house tax or *dhuri khazana*, bazaar tax, and cardamom or *dhamthay khazana*. The monastery also collected its *kut* share through its contractor.

Table No 5.4. Table showing the income of Ralong monastery in 1973.

Source of Income	**Total receipts (in Rs.)**
Land rent and house tax	5000
Forest royalty share	7000
Bazaar tax. etc.	6500
Tax on Cardamom *damthay khazana*	7000
Total	25,500

Source: Dhamala. "Monasteries of Sikkim with Special Reference to the Economic Structure." Essays on Tibetan Cultural Heritage, edited by Karubaki Datta, Serial Publication; 2008th edition, 1 January 2008, 122-149.

Lastly, the Rumtek monastery collected revenues from land rent, house tax or *dhuri khazana*, forest royalty share, bazaar tax (this monastery possessed a piece of land at Gangtok *bazaar*). The monastery also collected the annual *kut* share from its kutdars through its contractors. The monastery also receives a government subsidy to perform monastic daily rituals.

Table No 5.5. Table showing annual income of Rumtek Monastery, 1973.

Source of income	Total receipts (in Rs.)
Land rent and house tax	9,700
Forest royalty share	13,700
Total	23,400

Source: Dhamala. "Monasteries of Sikkim with Special Reference to the Economic Structure." Essays on Tibetan Cultural Heritage, edited by Karubaki Datta, Serial Publication; 2008th edition, 1 January 2008, 122-149.

Apart from the above mentioned revenues as the monastery's income, the monasteries also have a tradition of maintaining a fixed fund called *kongcha*. This fund was generally collected from the lay supporters as a donation. Interestingly, the monasteries provided the funds to one or two devotees from their estates mainly for one year. The borrower, in return, has to pay back the principal amount to the monastery. Most importantly, it was the duty of that borrower to bear all the expenditure of the annual ritual of the monastery with the interest amount.

The expenditures of these monasteries were varied because they mostly depended upon the strength of monks that particular monastery possessed. Depending upon their

ranks, all the monks receive an annual share from the monastery account. The monasteries also pay the salaries of different officials working in the monastery. However, most importantly, the major part of the monastery's income goes towards the monastery's daily and monthly religious performances which were usually expensive.

Table No 5.6. Table showing the Annual expenditure of six big monasteries.

Monastery	Annual expenditure (in Rs.)
Pemayangtse	26,002
Ralang	18,830
Phensong	9,890
Tashiding	18,762
Phodong	7882
Rumtek	11469

Source: Dhamala. "Monasteries of Sikkim with Special Reference to the Economic Structure." Essays on Tibetan Cultural Heritage, edited by Karubaki Datta, Serial Publication; 2008th edition, 1 January 2008, 122-149.

Effect of the abolition of Landlordism on Monasteries

After India's independence in 1947, Sikkim, a neighboring country, also witnessed great change. Particularly, the idea of democracy and the constitution influenced Sikkim's educated and politically ambitious individuals. To achieve their goals, they first established political parties, started awareness campaigns, and educated the

masses of Sikkim regarding the autocratic rule of the *Chogyal*. In the initial stage, the people backed by the political parties started demanding administrative, land, and political reforms.

However, *Chogyal* Tashi Namgyal introduced only a few reforms and granted a minimum of political liberties. For instance, he abolished forced labour like *jharlangi*. *Chogyal* enjoyed absolute power in the country with the support of kazis, and a few big monasteries. Kazis and these big monasteries enjoyed the full rights of revenue collection and judicial functions. They were also empowered to register documents for the sale or transfer of landed properties. There were no effective checks on these powers, and the landlords were free to abuse them for their gains. Consequently, mostly the peasants were helpless and exploited (Sinha, 2008: 95-96).

Hence, with time, the people of Sikkim became more politically conscious and finally demanded the abolition of the landlord system. People with the support of different political parties started a demonstration against the landlords. Thus, to pacify the people, *Chogyal* issued a Government notification on 20th August 1949. It was decided that all the revenue previously paid to the agents of estates shall be directed to the Government (Gupta, 1992: 42). Though this notification does not directly abolish the landlord system, it destroys their power and privileges. Though the system of landlordism was indirectly abolished in Sikkim in 1949, this notification does not introduce any changes concerning monastery estates. Thus, monasteries continued to enjoy their privileges and collected all kinds of revenues within estates, and maintained all the revenues for the maintenance of the monastery without paying any revenue shares to the Government.

However, as mentioned earlier, in the year 1961, the monastic estates were challenged and demanded their abolition by the members of the Sikkim National Congress. Thus, it created a significant impact on the age-old status of the monastery estates and the economy of the monastery. It can be assumed that this step was taken by the political parties due to the introduction of the *sangha* seat in the state council in 1958 by the *Chogyal*. But nothing no progressive steps were taken to abolish the monastic estates by the Government. Eventually, in 1973, when Sikkim fell under the political turmoil, people organized mass agitation, and youths supporters of different political parties took the administration of districts under their control. But most importantly, these youth, during the process of their agitation, also burned down the land and the revenue records of the monastery estates, particularly Pemayangtse and Ralong monasteries.

However, when Sikkim Congress came to power, they formed a Land Reforms Committee of 1974 to demolish the feudal agrarian structure and improve the condition of the tenants; accordingly, the Government formulated the Sikkim Cultivators' Protection Act in 1975, followed by the Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceilings and Reforms Act in 1977. The first Act protects tenants and landless labourers by prohibiting the landlords from terminating cultivation by the tenants and evicting them from such lands without due process of law. The second Act aims to bring about an equitable distribution of landholdings by fixing an upward land ceiling of up to 20 ½ standard acres of cultivable land for a family with more than five members and a family with only five members, the land ceiling was fixed at 12 ½. Most importantly, for the monasteries, the Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reform Act of 1977 limited the holding size of the monastery land to sixty standard acres of land (Gupta, 1992: 43). Thus, through this, the monasteries lost the power of

collecting land revenues from their estates. Though the monasteries were allowed to keep sixty acres of land under their name, they received a large tract of non-cultivable land, including forest and barren land.

Hence, in the post-merger period, the monasteries of Sikkim gradually lost their control over their lands due to many reasons. The second land survey and settlement report of 1986 showed a drastic reduction in the size of the monastery estates as compared to the 1958 report (first land survey). There were mainly two reasons for such reduction of the monastery land. Firstly, the Government took the monastery land for different developmental works without any compensation. For instance, it was said that large tracts of land of Sakya monastery were taken by the Government for the construction of a jail. Secondly, during the survey and settlement of 1986, the lease-out lands of the monasteries were now recorded in the names of bustiwallas as primary holders. In the process, the monasteries lost a few of their cultivable lands without any compensation. Unfortunately, in the survey report of 1986, the land recorded under the monastery covers only those lands the monasteries held as primary holders. A major part of this land was under forest, monastery buildings, and steep slopes.

Table No 5.7. Table showing an area of the Monastery Estates in Sikkim in1958 (Area in acres).

Monastery Estate	**Cultivated Area**	**Total Area**	**No. of Revenue Block**
Pemayangtse	7782.36	9541.85	12
Phensong	2849.97	5227.18	5
Tashiding	917.57	1678.66	1

Phudong	4317.43	9535.03	9
Rumtek	1853.87	2633.35	5
Ralong	4275.32	6428.82	6

Source: Boot. "Monasteries in Sikkim: A Geographical Study." Essays on Tibetan Cultural Heritage, edited by Karubaki Datta, Serial Publication; 2008th edition, 1 January 2008, 151-184.

However, in 1980-1982, another land survey in Sikkim was made. According to this land survey, it can be seen that the monasteries lost a major part of their land. However, the total area of monastery land was not given.

Table No 5.8. Table showing an area of the Monasteries in Sikkim in 1982.

Name of the monastery	No. of Blocks	Area in Acres
Tashiding	2	130.6860
Pemayangtse	5	110.7780
Ralong	4	59.6245
Rumtek	4	87.8720
Phodong	7	45.1320
Phensong	4	150.5260

Source: Dhamala. "Monasteries of Sikkim with Special Reference to the Economic Structure." *Essays on Tibetan Cultural Heritage*, edited by Karubaki Datta, Serial Publication; 2008th edition, 1 January 2008, 122-149.

While comparing the above two tables shows a considerable decrease in the area of monasteries estates. There were mainly two reasons: firstly, as mentioned earlier the Government had from time to time taken away the monastery land for establishing its offices or residential quarters. Secondly, the monastery had leased lands to the bustiwallas, and they were known as the secondary holders of the land. But during the survey and land settlement of 1980-1982, these lands were recorded in the names of secondary holders like chakhureys and kutdars. And in some cases, the monasteries allocated their lands in the name of their sharecroppers after taking site *salami*, whereas the monasteries were left with only a small area of land which mainly covers monastery compound and some attached forests, and those were recorded in the name of a particular monastery as primary holders (Dhamala, 2008: 136-137).

Hence, all the monastery estates were managed by the Government and handed over 50% of revenue to the respective monasteries. Despite several Government Acts, a number of lesser-known monasteries of Sikkim still possess the land, including cardamom land though their size was very small. On the recommendation of the Sikkim Agricultural Land Ceiling and Reform Act of 1977, each monastery estate receives Rs. 2500 to meet the expenses of daily and periodic religious rituals. Latter, the amount of subsidies was increased to Rs. 10000 but this amount was not sufficient for any of the monasteries, and each monastery depends on donations from their devotees (Boot, 2008: 178-183).

Lastly, the Sikkimese monasteries played a significant role in shaping the country's cultural and political sphere, and in return, they received much political and financial support from the state. The monasteries and their monks were not treated as a parasite of society. They were highly respected and for their growth people supported the monasteries financially and physically. However, this existing tradition was disrupted

by some external influence which ultimately led the monasteries to lose all their rights and properties. In the history of Sikkimese monasteries, this period was the most difficult part as they were challenged by their people. Maybe this was the reason that most of the monasteries in Sikkim were poor, the conditions of the monks were also not good, and the monasteries were forced to wait for the donations and Government subsidies to arrive.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Sikkim became a Buddhist kingdom in the seventeenth century when the three Tibetan Nyingma lamas namely Lhatsun Namkha Jigme, Ngadak Phuntsok Rigzin, and Kartok Kuntu Zangpo visited Sikkim. The main reason for their visit to Sikkim was both religious and political because Tibet was witnessing a great political as well as a religious revival in the 1640s. During this period the Gelug sect of Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism became a dominant sect and was successful in unifying Tibet under one power. At this juncture, many high eminent lamas particularly of the Nyingma sect tried to escape this turmoil and protect their religious tradition and started migrating to other neighboring states like Sikkim and Bhutan. Hence, these three lamas came to Sikkim and were successful in establishing the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism to which they belonged.

However, the activities of these three lamas in Sikkim were not only confined to the religious establishment but also engaged themselves in the political establishment of Sikkim. It was during this period that they supported Phuntsok Namgyal a local chief to become a *Chogyal* or *Dharma Raja* after which they established Namgyal Dynasty. They adopted the Tibetan style of governance according to which *Chogyal* was conferred with both spiritual and temporal powers. With these powers, *Chogyal* was also given the responsibility to establish Buddhism and protect the *dharma*. Thus, the three lamas with the support of *Chogyal* started the journey of monastery constructions in Sikkim particularly around Yuksom the first capital of the Namgyal dynasty.

The first monastery constructed in Sikkim was the Dubdi monastery in the year 1701 near Yuksum by Lhatsun Namkha Jigme, after which he also built a small monastery at Pemayangtse in 1705. Likewise, Ngadak Phuntsok Rigzin built a monastery at Tashiding and Kartok Kuntu Zangpo at Dikilling. Furthermore, the monastery construction continued under different Chogyals and most of the monasteries in Sikkim belonged to the Nyingma sect. It was only during the reign of the fourth *Chogyal* Gyurmed Namgyal that other sects of Tibetan Buddhism particularly the Kargyu sect came into existence in Sikkim with its first monastery at Ralong constructed probably in the year 1730. Thus, Nyingma and Kargyu became the dominant sect of the land. All the prominent monasteries of Sikkim belonged to these two sects – Pemayangtse, Tashiding, and Phensong monasteries belonged to the Nyingma sect, and Ralong, Rumtek, and Phodong belonged to the Kargyu sect.

Though the establishment of monasteries in Sikkim started during the reign of the first *Chogyal* Phuntsok Namgyal but the tradition of granting landed estates to these monasteries started only during the time of the third *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal. It was not a sudden gesture of *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal because he borrowed this tradition from Tibet. He received monastic education during his exile in Tibet thus; he was greatly influenced by the monastic tradition prevalent in Tibet. Another significant moment of Chagdor Namgyal was that he invited Lama Jigme Pao of Mindrolling Monastery to Sikkim. Lama Jigme Pao was considered the third reincarnation of Lhatsun Namkha Jigme the founder of Pemayangtse Monastery. The visit of Lama Jigme Pao was a turning point in the history of the Sikkimese monastic tradition. Under the guidance of Lama Jigme Pao, *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal extended the Pemayangtse Monastery into a royal monastery. Pemayangtse Monastery was also granted landed estates by *Chogyal* Chagdor Namgyal mainly to

support the monastery and its monks. Moreover, several new rules and regulations were introduced along Tibetan lines and the most significant change introduced were the tradition of celibacy to be adopted by the monks of Pemayangtse Monastery. Hence, it can be observed that the main reason for the grants for landed property to this monastery was to maintain a large number of celibate monks. Though the tradition of celibacy could not survive the tradition of granting landed properties to the monasteries continued.

Similarly, other monasteries like Ralong, Phensong, Rumtek, and Phodong received landed estates from the Chogyals. However, the Tashiding monastery received landed estates only during the eleventh *Chogyal* Tashi Namgyal in 1949. Moreover, there were many other smaller monasteries in Sikkim having a small portion of lands granted to them by the Chogyals and lay followers. But, the big five monasteries- Pemayangtse, Ralong, Rumtek, Phodong, and Phensong possessed huge landed estates and enjoyed similar rights and responsibilities like that of aristocratic landlords.

The monastic estates were called *chozhi* and they can be divided into two parts, primary holdings, and secondary holdings. The primary holdings include the lands directly owned by the monastery like the monastery compound, attached forests, and other cultivable and non-cultivable lands. Interestingly, Sikkimese monasteries had the tradition of allotting their primary land to their senior monks as their allowance. The monastery also maintains agricultural lands mainly to support junior monks of the monastery and also to carry out daily rituals smoothly. The monastery fields were mainly cultivated by the monastery servants called *nangzen*. On the other hand, the monasteries were also given the right to collect revenues from the villagers who were settled within their secondary holdings and were called *miser*. Before the

establishment of the British administration in Sikkim, no strict rules existed to collect the revenues from the misers. On the other hand, the revenues collected from the misers were considered as contributions rather than a tax. Though it was compulsory for all the misers to make contributions to the monastery it was according to their well-being. The misers were also obliged to provide labour services to the monastery as well as the senior lamas. The Sikkimese monasteries under the Namgyal period enjoyed great prestige and wealth.

Moreover, the monasteries managed their landholdings through different monastery officials. Though *Chogyal* being a *Dharma Raja* was the head of all the monasteries in Sikkim, every monastery was looked after by their committee called *Udor-choesum* comprised of three senior lamas of the monastery. *Dorje-lopon* was the spiritual head of the monastery and was directly appointed by the *Chogyal*, he looks after every matter of the monastery. There were *Omzed* and *Choe-trimpa* who look after the discipline of the monks and also act as an intermediary between the monastery and the misers. The duties of collecting revenues from the villagers were given to mandals who were appointed by *Udor-choesum* of the monastery under the *mina* system.

However, the expansion of the British control over Sikkim from 1889 onwards brought significant changes to the existing system. J.C. White was appointed as the first British Political Officer in Sikkim to look after the administration of Sikkim. He set up a Council with a few pro-British aristocrats and also included the Head Lama of Pemayangtse Monastery as a member of this Council.

Under White's administrative tenure, Sikkim witnessed a great change, particularly in its land tenure system. J.C. White tried hard to enhance the revenues of Sikkim therefore with the support of the Khangsa brothers allowed Nepalese to enter Sikkim

mainly to carry out cultivation in those empty lands of Sikkim. Moreover, White divided the whole Sikkim into different elakhas and there were a total of 104 elakhas in Sikkim out of which 5 elakhas belonged to the five monasteries - Pemayangtse, Ralong, Phensong, Phodong, and Rumtek.

Moreover, under the British administration, the fate of Sikkimese monasteries changed. The five big monasteries were put under the category of aristocratic landlords and they were also made to sign a contract or *patta* of their landholdings for fifteen years after which they have renewed the contract. The monastery lands were surveyed and introduced many changes which were not acceptable to the monasteries. And in the process, some of the monasteries lost their holdings. During this period not only the big monasteries but also numerous smaller monasteries suffered. Many of the smaller monasteries lost all their lands to the state and to compensate for their loss they were provided with very small amounts of subsidies. The state resumed their lands mainly on the ground of mismanagement by the lamas and those resumed lands were kept under the direct management of the state, some were leased out thikadars, and some portions of lands resumed from the monasteries were given to the *Chogyal's* Private Estate.

Furthermore, the state not only resumed the monastery's lands but also introduced many changes concerning revenue collections. The five monasteries earlier enjoyed all the revenues collected from the villagers or misers even though it was in the form of contributions but under this new rule, these monasteries were now forced to submit half of the revenues collected from their villagers to the state. The monasteries mainly collected land rent, house tax, *bethi* tax, cardamom tax, and also bazaar fees from their villagers. Out of these taxes, the monasteries have to submit house tax and *bethi* tax to the state. The monastery's forests were also taken under the control of the State

Forest Department and the monasteries do not have any control over their forests and their grazing areas. It was decided that the state would provide half of the royalties to the monasteries as their forest revenues. Thus, under this new system, the lives of Sikkimese monasteries as well as lamas, in general, were greatly affected economically. There was a tradition that the lamas in Sikkim were exempted from all kinds of taxes to the state other than performing religious duties to the *Chogyal* and the monastery. However, this tradition was tempered by J.C. White as he believed that the lamas were useless fellows who lived on the labour of lay followers and does not contribute any revenues to the state. Therefore, his administration imposed taxes on the lamas who now have to pay land rent, house tax, *bethi* tax, and other labour services to the state. However, the lamas challenged this new rule through petitions, and under much pressure few lamas of every monastery were exempted from paying taxes to the state and they were *Udor-choesum*, *Nyerpa*, and *Machen*. Moreover, the villagers of the monastery estates were also given an extra burden. They now have to pay labour services to the monastery as well as a state like *jharlangi* along with other taxes.

The condition of Sikkimese monasteries further deteriorated after the withdrawal of the British administration in Sikkim followed by India's Independence in 1947. At this juncture, Sikkim witnessed great political tension and the authority of *Chogyal* was challenged by the political parties who were in demand of land and political reforms in Sikkim. Consequently, *Chogyal* faced protests and demonstrations thus, in response *Chogyal* to pacify the violent subjects introduced some land reforms whereby the landlord system was abolished in 1949. *Chogyal* also started the land survey program throughout Sikkim from 1950 onwards. And after this survey, every district was divided into blocks. Though *Chogyal* introduced land reforms, and

abolished forced labour, and landlordism, he could not pacify the citizens and the leaders of political parties. Therefore, the protests and demonstrations against the *Chogyal* continued which eventually led to the abolition of the Namgyal dynasty.

However, during such difficult times, the monastery estates were for the first time challenged by the people of Sikkim, mainly after the introduction of the *sangha* as a separate assembly seat in 1958. It was the working committee of the Sikkim State Congress during their meeting that expressed their views on the abolition of the monastery estates. It was discussed that the monastery estates were functioning independently and exploiting the villagers of their jurisdictions. Thus, they put their demand for the abolition of monastery estates in front of the *Chogyal* but it was not fulfilled. However, it was only after the formation of a democratically elected government in 1974 that the abolition of monastery estates was seriously addressed. In addition to that, it was also noticed that the villagers of monastery estates also demanded the abolition of these estates. Thus, during the process of abolition of monastery landholdings, people attacked the monasteries and their offices. People destroyed the land records maintained by the monasteries and threatened the in charge lamas with *khukuri* (Nepali sword).

Hence, the state government came up with a new plan according to which the monasteries of Sikkim were divided into two groups that are Group A consisting of big six monasteries holding estates, and Group B consisting of other smaller monasteries. The monasteries having estates were now allowed to hold only sixty acres of land as primary holding and other smaller monasteries were allowed only twenty-five acres of land. Thus, the tradition of monastery landholdings was abolished after 1975. Though the monasteries were allowed to maintain a few acres of land most of the monasteries were now left with barren land, steep slopes, and areas

covered with forests thus the monasteries could not generate much revenue from these lands.

Lastly, it can be seen that the history of the monastery landholding system in Sikkim was divided into three phases – Pre British, During British, and Post British. The first phase falls from the formation of the Namgyal dynasty probably in 1642 to the coming of the British administration in 1889. During the first phase the Buddhist monasteries were constructed in Sikkim and they were provided with large areas as well as landed estates attached to villagers by the Chogyals of Sikkim. The monasteries and their monks were highly respected and provided with immense wealth and prestige.

The second phase (During the British) starts from 1889 to 1947. The fate of Sikkimese monastery landholdings was changed drastically under the British administration. The British administrators treated the monasteries and their lamas as a parasite of society. Therefore, they imposed taxes on monasteries and their lamas. Moreover, the monasteries participation in the state politics was also reduced.

The third phase was the Post British period which starts from 1947 to 1975. Under this phase, the fate of Sikkimese monasteries was completely changed. This was also the period of abolition of the landlord system and the monarchy (Namgyal dynasty) in Sikkim. With the fall of the monarchy, the age-old tradition of the monastery landholding system was questioned and challenged by the people of the land. This was not a happy period for the monasteries as they lost all their privileges granted to them by the Chogyals, hence, during this phase, the monasteries were forced to depend upon the donations made by the laities and the subsidies from the state for

their survival and this was also the reason that most of the Sikkimese monasteries were in poor conditions.

Appendix I

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༄༅།། འབྲས་ལྗོངས་རྒྱལ་པོ་ནས་

མིང་པ་ Doling Lama   Old Pattas   ལ་ ...

ཕ་མིང་

རུས་མིང་

ཚེས་གྲངས་ 1st January 1900

ཁྱོད་རང་གིས་ཞུ་བ་བཞིན་ས་ཚད་ (ཨེ་སྐར་) དེ་ཙམ་གྱི་ ....

སྒྲིག་ཆ་བཅད་ཚམས་བྱེད་རྒྱུའི་སྐོར་

འབྲས་ཁུལ་ས་ཁོང་ནང་ལ་

ཀ་རྫིས་མིང་པ་   དེའི་འོག་དུ་

ལོ་ངོ་རེ་ཙམ་གྱི་ཁྲིར་

བཀའ་རྗེན་ས་ཁྲ་ (སྤྲ་སྤྲང) འདིའི་གཞི་གསལ་བྲུ་དོན་བཞིན་ཁྱོད་རང་གི་བློ་འདོད་ལྟར་གནང་བ་ཡིན།།

(༡) ཁྱོད་དང་ཁྱོད་རང་གི་བུ་རྒྱུད་དང་ཞུལ་འཛིན་པ་སུ་དག་ཡིན་རུང་ས་ཐལ་ལོ་རེ་བཞིན་གྱི་དུ་ .... ཞིབ་རྫོད་བྲར་གསལ་གྱི་ཆོས་གྲང་ལྟར་རིམ་འབུལ་འཇལ་དགོས་ཅིང་པ་ཟད་ཁྱོད་དང་ཁྱོད་རང་གི་བུ་རྒྱུད་དང་ཞུལ་འཛིན་པ་སོགས་ཀྱིས་ལོ་ལུགས་དང་མཐུན་པའི་ས་ཐལ་ཕུལ་བའི་འགྱོར་འཛིན་ཀྱང་ཡིན་ནས་བཞག་དགོས་པའི་ འགྱོར་འཛིན་སྟོན་གྱི་མེད་ན་ ཁྱོད་རང་ནས་ཐལ་ཕུལ་རྫིན་པ་དེ་ར་མི་ཐྲོད་པའི་ ཁྱོད་རང་གིས་ཐལ་ཕུལ་ཚར་ཟེར་བའི་ཞུ་བརྡོད་དེ་བསམ་འཛོམས་མི་ཡོང་།།

(༢) བཀའ་རྗེན་ (སྤྲ་སྤྲ) དེའི་ནང་ཁུད་ཀྱིས་སྐོར་གྱི་ལོ་དུས་ཚང་སོང་བ་དང་ དེ་རྫིས་ཐལ་བབས་ཀྱི་བཀའ་རྗེན་གསར་པོ་སྐྱར་གཟིགས་གཅིག་གཞུང་གི་དགོངས་མངགས་དང་སྟུན་པ་སྒྲིག་ཆ་བྱ་ཆོག་པ་ ཁྱོད་དང་ཁྱོད་རང་གི་བུ་རྒྱུད་དང་ཞུལ་འཛིན་པ་སུ་དག་ཡིན་པ་དེ་ཆོས་བཀའ་རྗེན་འདིའི་འབྲུ་དོན་ལྟར་གནས་པ་བྱུན་ བཀའ་བརྗེན་འདིའི་ལོ་དུས་རྫོགས་ནའང་ ཡང་སྐྱར་ སྐྱར་བཟོས་འདི་ནང་ལྟར་ལོ་བཅད་བྱེད་དེ་བཅད་ཆོས་བྱ་ཆོག།།

(༣) ཁྱོད་རང་གི་བཀའ་བརྗེན་འདིའི་ས་ཆའི་ནང་ཁུད་དང་ དེའི་ཐག་ཉེར་རྒྱུག་ཆུ་དང་ཆུ་འབྲུར་དང་ཞིག་གི་ཆུ་ལོ་གཏོང་བྱེད་སོགས་གྲོན་བྱུང་ན་ ཁྱོད་རང་གཅིག་པོའི་ཆོད་དུ་བདག་འཛིན་བྱས་པའི་དབང་བཀའ་བརྗེན་འདི་ལ་མེད་ དཔྱང་དེ་སྐོར་ནས་ཟར་ཟེར་ལ་སྒྲིག་པ་སོགས་བྱུང་ན་ གཞུང་ས་ནས་སྐྱ་ཚབས་ཡོངས་དེ་སྒྲིག་འཛུགས་ཐག་ཆོད་པའི་བཅད་ཆ་གནང་རྒྱུ་ཡིན་ དེ་སྟེང་ནས་ས་སྒྲིག་པའི་རིགས་བྱུང་ན་གཞུང་ས་ཕྱོགས་ལ་མ་དགོས་པའི་གཞན་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ཞུ་འགྱོར་བྱ་མི་ཆོག།།

(༤) བཀའ་བརྗེན་འདིའི་ནང་ཁོང་གི་ས་ཆ་ ས་བྱིང་ཆ་དང་ས་ཐུན་སྤོ་སྤོ་གང་ཡང་གཞུང་སའི་དགོངས་པ་དང་བཀའ་འཁོག་དང་མ་སྟུན་པར་མི་སུ་དག་ལ་ཡང་ཚོང་བྱེན་བྱ་མི་ཆོག དཔྱང་བཀའ་རྗེན་(སྤྲ་སྤྲ)སྐྱར་བཟོས་བྱེད་དེ་མི་གཞན་དག་ལ་གསར་བྱིན་བྱ་མི་ཆོག།།

(༦) ཁྱོད་རང་གི་བཀའ་བརྟེན་གྱི་ས་ཁོང་ནས་ གཞུང་དོན་གྱི་ཕྱིར་འབྲས་ལྗོང་རྒྱལ་པོ་ལ་དགོས་བྱེད་བྱུང་ན་བརྟེན་ཀྱང་ཡིན་རུང་ཡང་ན་ཞག་ཤེད་ཀྱི་ཕྱིར་ཡིན་རུང་གང་དགོས་པའི་ས་ཆ་དེ་ ཕྱིར་ལོག་ཕུལ་དགོས་ དེ་ལྟར་གཞུང་དོན་ནས་དགོས་བྱེད་རིགས་བྱུང་སྟེ་ས་ཕྲན་ཚུར་ལེན་ན་ ས་ཁྲའི་ནང་ཁུད་ཀྱི་ཕྲལ་བབ་དེ་བཞིན་རྩིས་གཞི་བྱས་ཏེ་ཕྲལ་ཆེ་བབ་ཆུང་བབ་ཡང་ཆ་བྱ་རྒྱུ།།

(༧) བཀའ་རྟེན་ས་ཁྲ་ཕྲ་སྐྱ་དེ་བཞིན་ཁྱོད་ལ་གནང་བའི་ཆོས་གྲང་དེ་ནས་ཟླ་བ་དྲུག་གི་ནང་ཚུན་ས་ཚམས་ཀྱི་ བརྡགས་རྡོ་བཙུག་ནན་བརྟན་བྱེད་དགོས་ ས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྡོ་གཙུག་བརྡགས་དེ་བཞིན་ཁྱོད་དང་ཁྱོད་རང་གི་བུ་བརྒྱུད་དང་ཤུལ་འཛིན་པ་སུ་དགོས་ཀྱང་དུས་རྒྱུན་ཞིགས་པར་བཅོས་ཏེ་བཞག་དགོས་ དེ་ལྟར་ས་ཆོས་གི་བརྡགས་རྡོ་བཙུག་ཁྲིད་ཁྲིད་མ་བཞག་ན་བཀའ་ཤོག་ཕྲ་སྐྱ་དེ་བཞིན་དོན་མེད་དུ་རྒྱུར་ཡོང་།།།

(༨) གཞུང་ཁོང་གི་སྐུ་ཚབ་ས་འཇལ་བའི་ཕྱིར་བཏང་ཆོས་ ཁྱོད་རང་དང་བུ་བརྒྱུད་ཤུལ་འཛིན་སུ་དག་ཡིན་རུང་ དེའི་གྲོག་རཾ་གང་ཡོང་བྱ་དགོས།།།

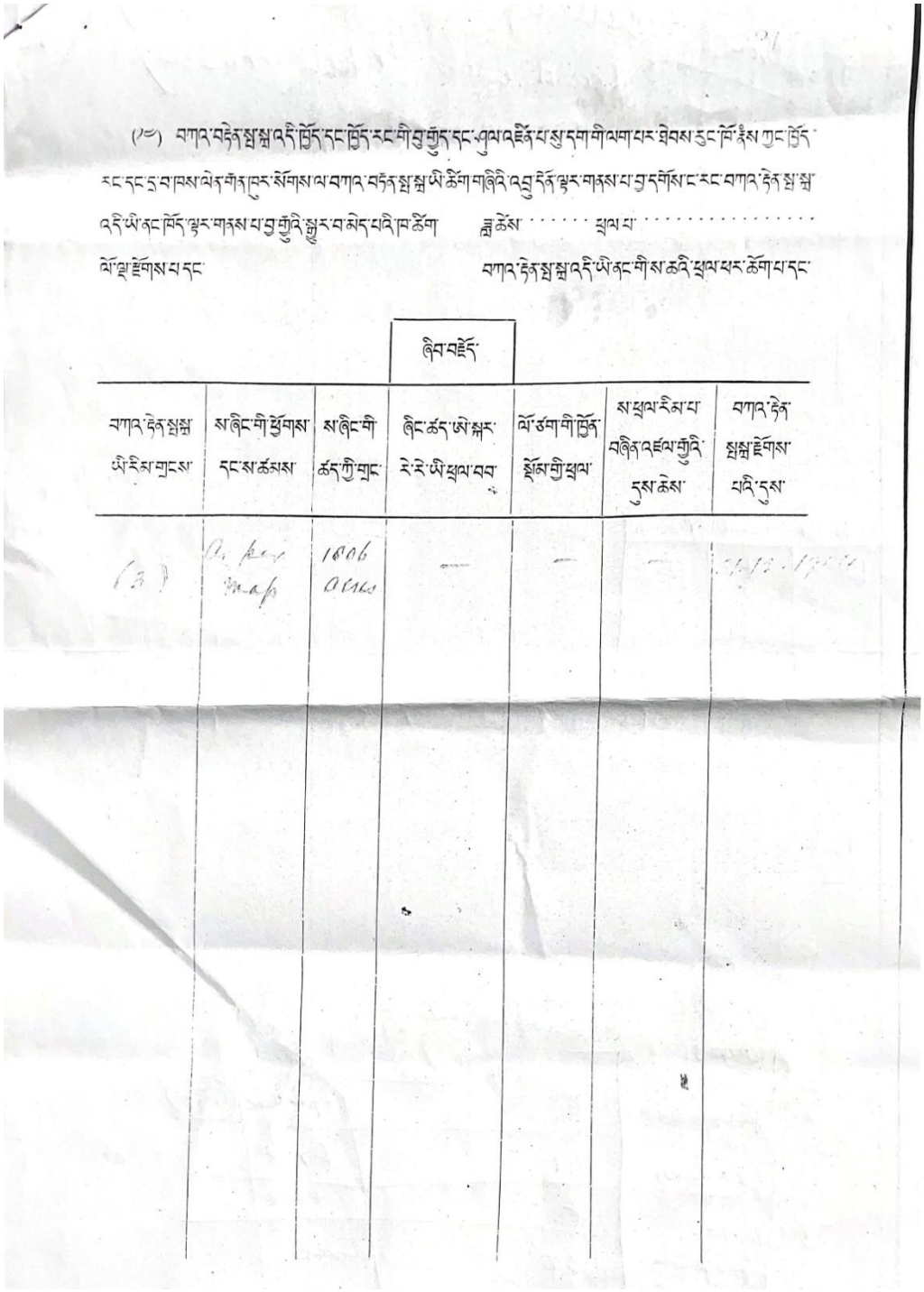
(༩) གཞུང་ས་ཆོག་གི་བཀའ་ཤོག་བྱུང་རིགས་དང་བསྟུན་ སྐུ་ཤིས་དང་ཟ་བྱེད་སོགས་ཡུལ་གྱི་དུས་བབ་དང་མཐུན་པའི་སྐུ་ཆ་དང་རིན་ལེན་ནས་སྐུ་ཤིས་དང་ཟ་བྱེད་ཕུལ་དགོས།

(༡༠) ཁྱོད་དང་ཁྱོད་རང་གི་ཁྲིམ་ཆོས་སོགས་གཞན་ཡང་མི་གཞན་དག་ སུ་དང་ཡིན་རུང་ས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཕར་ཤུད་ཚུར་ཤུད་སྐོར་སྒྲིག་མིན་གྱི་ཟར་ཟེར་བྱུང་ན་གཞུང་སའི་སྐུ་ཚབ་ངོ་མ་ཡོང་བ་དེ་ཡིས་ས་ཆོས་སྐྱར་བཟོས་ཀྱི་ཕར་ཤུད་ཚུད་ཤུད་འདི་བྱ་ འདི་བྱེད་ཀྱི་དེ་པའི་དགོངས་མངགས་ཐག་ཆོད་ཀྱི་བབ་བཀོད་ལྟར་ཁྱོད་རང་ ན་ཀྱང་ཉན་དགོས་ དེ་ལ་ཡང་སྒྲིག་མིན་བྱུང་ན་གཞུང་སར་མ་དེགས་པའི་གཞན་དག་ལ་ཞུ་འགྲོར་བྱ་མི་ཆོག།

(༡༡) བཀའ་ཤོག་ཕྲ་སྐྱ་འདི་ཡི་ས་ཁོང་ལ་སྤྱོད་ཁན་མི་འབྲས་ལྗོང་ནང་ཁུད་ལ་གསར་བཟོ་དང་ལོ་སྙིང་སྐྱར་བཟོས་སོགས་ བྱ་དགོས་བྱུང་སྐབས་གཞུང་དོན་གྱི་ཕྱིར་གཞུང་གི་སྐུ་ཚབ་དང་བཀའ་ཤོག་བྱུང་ན་མི་པོ་མོ་ལོ་བཅོ་ལྔ་ཡན་བྱེད་གང་ཡོད་ཚང་མས་མི་རེ་བཞིན་ཉི་མ་བདུན་བདུན་གྱི་རྩིས་གཞི་བྱེད་དེ་སྐུ་ཆ་མེད་པར་འུ་ལག་དུ་ཐོན་དགོས།།

(༡༢) ཁྱོད་རང་དང་ཁྱོད་རང་གི་བུ་བརྒྱུད་དང་ཤུལ་འཛིན་པ་སུ་དག་ནས་ བཀའ་བརྟེན་ཕྲ་སྐྱ་འདི་དོན་ལྟར་ཕྲལ་བབ་སོགས་དུས་ཆོས་དེ་ལ་ན་རིམ་ལྟར་མ་བྱུང་ན་ཁྱོད་རང་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཁང་ཁྲིམ་ནོར་རྫས་ནས་ཕྲལ་གྱི་བབ་རྡོས་ཙམ་གྱི་རྒྱུ་དངོས་གཞུང་ཕོག་ནས་ཚོང་སྒྱུར་བྱས་ཏེ་ཕྲལ་བབ་ལེན་ཐུབ་ ད་རུང་གང་སྤྱིའི་སྒོ་ནས་དེ་དུས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་ཁྲིམས་ལྟར་ཕྲལ་གཞུང་ཐོག་ནས་འདུས་ཐུབ་ འདི་ནང་ལྟར་མ་གཏོང་བའི་ང་མན་པོ་ཡིན་ཅག་ཅིག་ཁྱོད་རང་སུ་དག་ནས་ཟེར་ན་ཡང་གཞུང་ས་ནས་བསམ་འཛོམས་མི་ཡོང་ གང་སྤྱིའི་སྒོ་ནས་ཁྱོད་རང་སུ་དག་ནས་ཀྱང་སྐྱོན་འབྲས་རིགས་བྱུང་ན་ བཀའ་བརྟེན་ཕྲ་སྐྱ་དེ་བཆད་བཏང་ཀྱི་ཡིན།

(༡༣) བཀའ་བརྟེན་ཕྲ་སྐྱ་འདིའི་འབྲུ་དོན་བཞིན་མ་གནས་པའི་རིགས་བྱུང་ན་ གཞུང་ས་ནས་བཀའ་བརྟེན་ཕྲ་སྐྱ་དེ་བཅད་སྐྱུར་མཛད་ཀྱི་མ་ཟད་ ཁྱོད་རྣམས་ཀྱང་བཀའ་བརྟེན་ཕྲ་སྐྱའི་ནང་ཁུད་ནས་ཕྱིར་སྟོན་མཛད་ཀྱི་ཡིན་ཅིང་ དེ་མན་སྐྱོན་བརྗེག་ཆེ་ཆུང་དང་སྟུན་པའི་གང་འོས་ཞིག་ནས་ཕྱིར་སྟོན་མཛད་ཀྱི་ཡིན་གཞུང་ཐོག་གི་བཀའ་ངོ་མ་ལ་དབུ་ཙུག་གི་ཞུ་འགྲོར་གང་ཡང་བྱ་མི་ཆོག།།།



(ཅ) བཀའ་བཅོན་སྤྱན་འདི་ཁྱོད་དང་ཁྱོད་རང་གིའུ་གྱུད་དང་ཤུལ་འཛིན་པ་སྲ་དག་གི་ལག་ཐེབས་རྐང་ཁོ་རྟོག་ རང་དང་དུ་བ་ཁས་ལེན་གི་ཤ་ཁྲང་སོགས་ལ་བཀའ་བཅོན་སྤྱན་སྐྱ་ཡི་ཆོག་གཞིའི་འབྲུ་དོན་ཉར་གསན་པ་ཐུ་དགོས་ང་རང་བཀའ་བཅོན་སྤྱ་སྐ་འདི་ཡི་ནང་ཁོད་ཉར་གསན་པ་ཐུ་ཀྱུའི་སྐྱེར་བ་ཚེལ་བའི་ཁ་ཆོག་ སྒྲུ་ཆོས་ ..... ཟླལ་པ་ .....

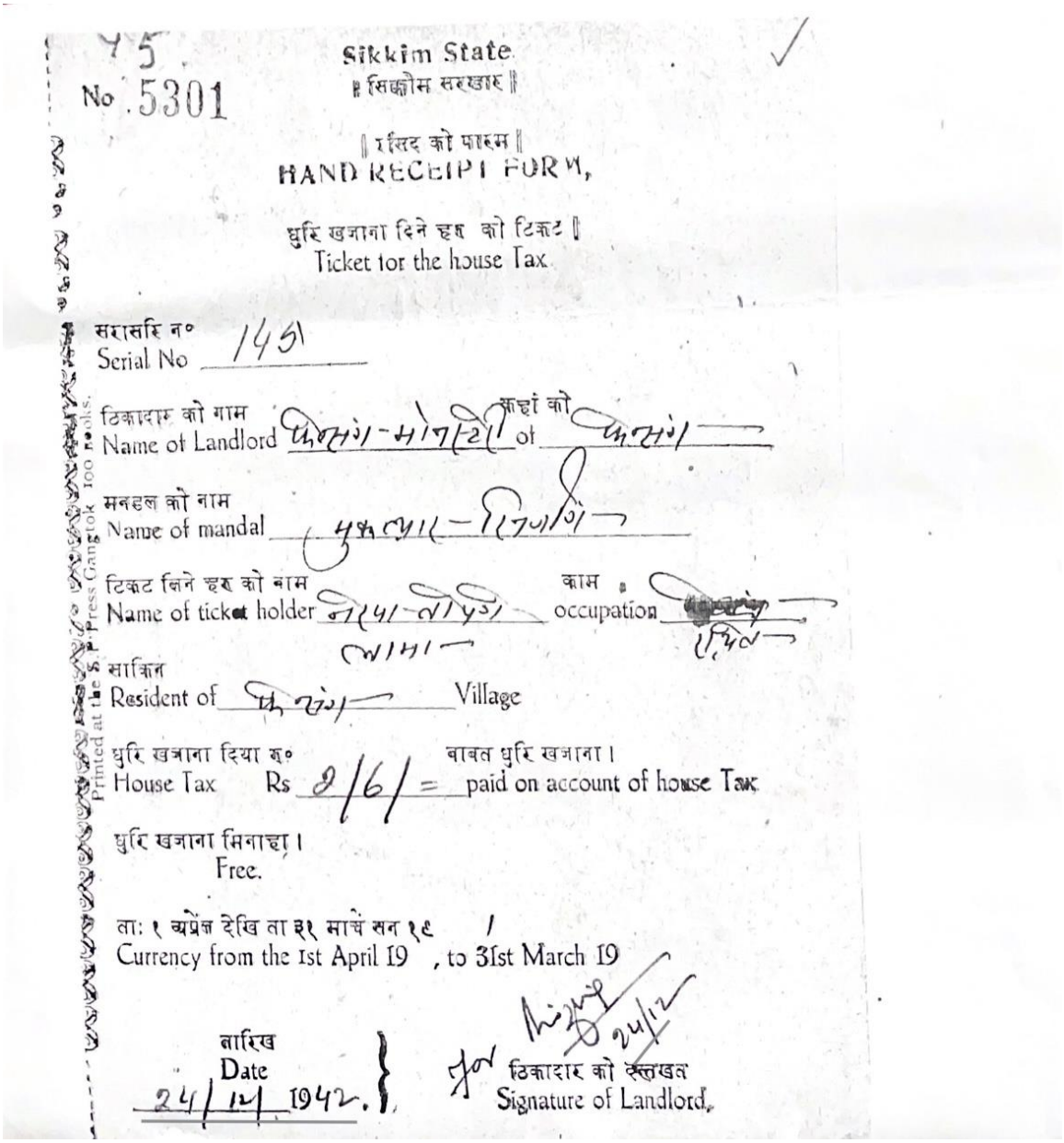
ལོ་ཟླ་རྫོགས་པ་དང་ བཀའ་བཅོན་སྤྱན་འདི་ཡི་ནང་གི་ས་ཚའི་ཟླལ་ཐར་ཆོགཔ་དང་

ཞིབ་བཤེར་						
བཀའ་བཅོན་སྤྱན་ཡི་རིམ་གྲངས་	ས་ཞིང་གི་ཡོ་གས་དང་ས་ཚམས་	ས་ཞིང་གི་ཚན་ཀྱི་གྲང་	ཞིང་ཚད་ཨེ་སྐར་རེ་རེ་ཡི་ཟླལ་བབ	ལོ་ཏག་གི་ཁྱོན་སྡོམ་གྱི་ཟླལ་	ས་ཟླལ་རིམ་པ་བཞིན་འཛལ་གྱུའི་དུས་ཆེས་	བཀའ་བཅོན་སྤྱན་རྟོགས་པའི་དུས་
(3)	Rough map	1806 Acres	—	—	—	

Source: Sl. No. 1, File No. X/X/1809-1907, Land Revenue Department, Sikkim State Archive.

Appendix II

House Ticket of a Lama under Phensong Monastery (1942)



Sikkim State
॥ सिक्कीम सरखार ॥

No. 5301

॥ रसिद को फारम ॥
HAND RECEIPT FORM,

घुरि खजाना दिने हरु को टिकट ॥
Ticket for the house Tax.

सरासरि नं॰ 1451
Serial No

ठिकादार को गाम
Name of Landlord [illegible] कहां को of [illegible]

मनहल को नाम
Name of mandal [illegible]

टिकट लिने हरु को नाम
Name of ticket holder [illegible] काम occupation [illegible]

साकिन
Resident of [illegible] Village

घुरि खजाना दिया रु॰ 2/6/= बाबत घुरि खजाना।
House Tax Rs 2/6/= paid on account of house Tax

घुरि खजाना मिनाहा।
Free.

ता: १ अप्रेल देखि ता ३१ मार्च सन १९ /
Currency from the 1st April 19 , to 31st March 19

तारिख
Date
24/12/1942.

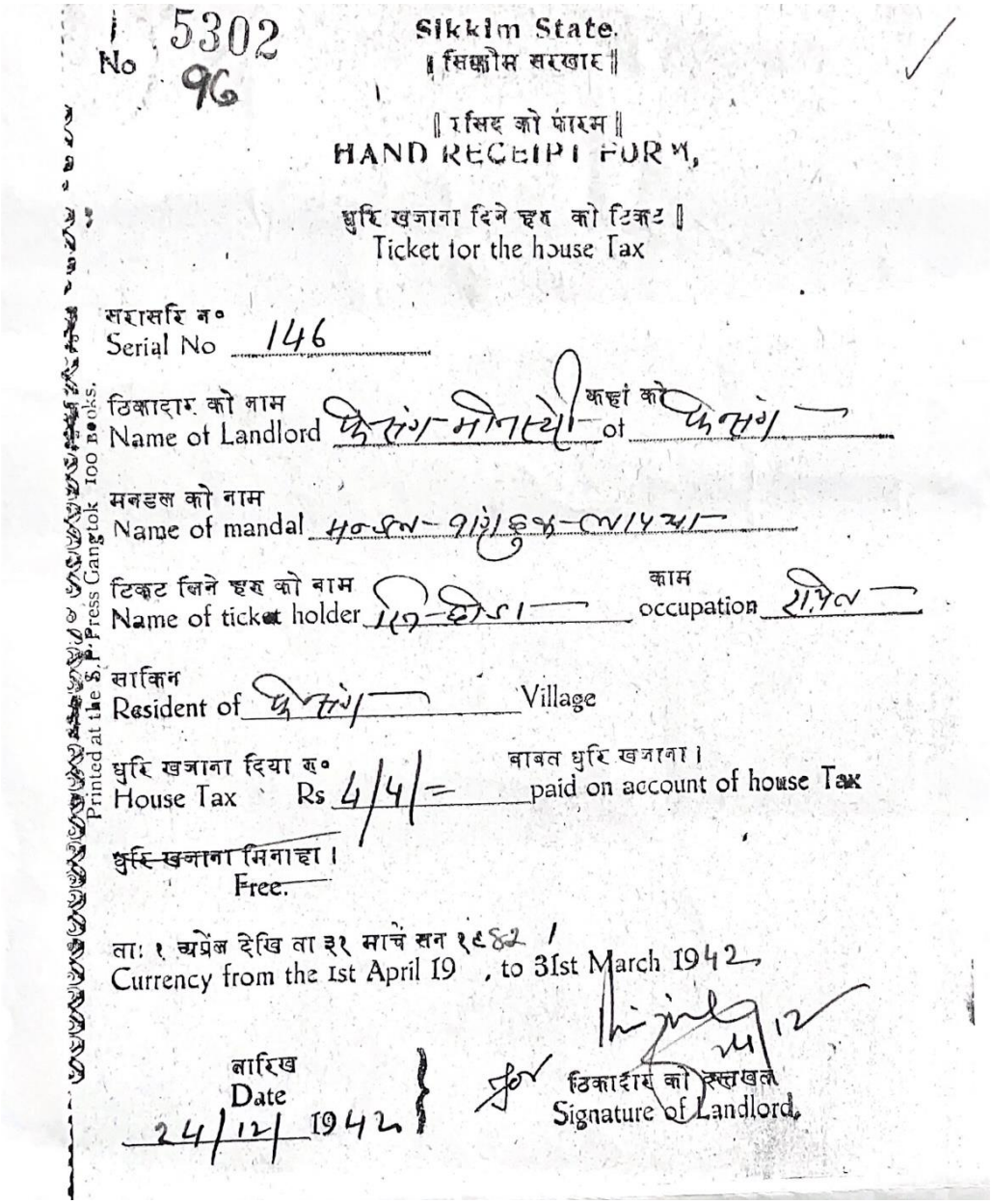
ठिकादार को दस्तखत
Signature of Landlord.

Printed at the S. P. Press Gangtok 100 nos.

Source: Sl.No. 107, File No. 38/9/1929, Reg. Numbers of houses under Phensang Lama, Sikkim State Archive.

Appedix III

House Ticket of a peasant under Phensong Monastery (1942)



No 5302
96

Sikkim State.
॥ सिक्कीम सरकार ॥

॥ रसिद को फारम ॥
HAND RECEIPT FORM,

धुरि खजाना दिने हरु को टिकट ॥
Ticket for the house Tax

सरासरि नं०
Serial No 146

ठिकादार को नाम
Name of Landlord फेन्सांग-मोनास्ट्री of फेन्सांग

मनडल को नाम
Name of mandal [illegible]

टिकट लिने हरु को नाम
Name of ticket holder [illegible] काम occupation [illegible]

साकिन
Resident of फेन्सांग Village

धुरि खजाना दिया रु०
House Tax Rs 4/4/= बाबत धुरि खजाना।
paid on account of house Tax

~~धुरि खजाना मिनाहा।~~
~~Free.~~

ता: १ अप्रेल देखि ता ३१ मार्चे सन १९४२ ।
Currency from the 1st April 19 , to 31st March 1942.

तारिख
Date
24/12/1942

for ठिकादार को दस्तखत
Signature of Landlord.

Printed at the S. P. Press Gangtok 100 Books.

Source: Sl.No. 107, File No. 38/9/1929, Reg. Numbers of houses under Phensang Lama, Sikkim State Archive.

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