

**THE VAJRAYANA MONASTIC TRADITION IN
A CHANGING TIME: A STUDY OF THE
LIFESTYLE OF THE LAMAS LIVING IN THE
MONASTERY.**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTORATE OF
PHILOSOPHY IN ARTS**

WORK DONE UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF:

**DR. RUBY SAIN
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL**

**By
UDEN BHUTIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
FACULTY OF ARTS
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL**

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Certified that the Thesis Entitled

‘The Vajrayana Monastic Tradition in a Changing Time: A Study of the Lifestyle of the Lamas Living in the Monastery’ submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon the work done under the guidance of Dr. Ruby Sain, Professor, Department of Sociology, Jadavpur University and that neither the thesis or any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma, anywhere.

Signature of the supervisor

Signature of the Candidate

(Dr. Ruby Sain)

(Uden Bhutia)

Dated:

Dated:

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Any dream is an amalgamation of desires, determination, hope and perseverance. My PhD Degree Thesis has been a dream. This thesis has been like a flight into a completely new world where I have been tested by time and situations, circumstances and expectations. I have juggled roles, and have had to balance time and space together between expectations. This ride to reach the final outcome of this thesis has definitely been possible most importantly by the immense effort and understanding put in by my (dearest) guide, Dr. Ruby Sain. Not only is she a storehouse of knowledge and a great personality but also a mother to me at all times. Most importantly, she taught me how to think and create. She taught me about 'the concept of ideas'. She has provided me with so many platforms to express myself that grateful may sound like a word too small to explain my gratitude. When at times, I felt like giving up, ma'am has always been there to get me back to the track. Thank you, ma'am...I am indebted to you for life and beyond.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The monastic tradition is an ancient way of life chosen and lived by the Buddhist monks known as the 'Lama'. Monasticism can be traced back to the times of Gautama Buddha where he left all the worldly affairs in order to live a life of solidarity attaining enlightenment. In Tibet, it was the foundation of Tibetan Buddhism. When the Dalai Lama established his community in exile, one of the most important steps he took to maintain and carry on as well as preserve the Tibetan culture was the construction of various monasteries and incorporation hundreds of monks into it. Monasticism is one of the most important characteristics of Buddhism. Throughout this research the term 'Vajrayana' is to be read and understood in reference to and as the Tibetan Buddhist tradition because the monasteries and the monks who are a part of this research follow this form of Buddhism. The Vajrayana monastic tradition that has been passed on from Tibet since the time of Samye, the first monastery in Tibet is still continued today by its followers and monks in the country of exile. The monastic tradition that has to itself many claims of renunciation, abstinence and hermitage has evolved over the time as changes occur universally and constantly. The tremendous leap in science and technology, fast-forwarding our lives and modernization occurring at a rapid pace has caused time and space to change consequently resulting in transformation in each and every aspect of our life, religion: the values, culture and tradition has not been spared either. Whether it is nature's call or human warfare, humans have been displaced over time and have been accommodated in spaces alien to them. The displaced have also always been seen trying to create their own little home in a country different to theirs by means of preservation and maintenance while putting in efforts to continuously remind themselves of their own identity with the help of memories and experiences brought along by themselves or passed on from their elderlies, all of this in a continuously changing time. The monastic tradition that is being maintained by monasteries and monks in the country of exile have also faced the consequences of various changes occurring time and space. This thesis aims to study the changes and continuities of this tradition in the recent times by understanding thoroughly the lifestyle of the monks in the contemporary era and subtly try and understand the degree of changes that have occurred which will signal upon the future of the monastic organization as a whole whilst trying to

understand the role and significance of the monks and monasteries on the social level, thus finding out the significance of religion and religious identity in contemporary time. The Vajrayana Buddhism often referred to, as Tibetan Buddhism is one of the common religions found and professed by many in Kalimpong. The district of Kalimpong lies surrounded by the majestic Himalayas amidst the mighty meandering Teesta. It is home to 42,403 people (census 2011), and was once a part of Bhutan. Three main communities - the Bhutias, the Lepchas and the Nepali, now inhabit it. The thesis is scheduled in the district of Kalimpong specifically because Kalimpong is famous for its monasteries owing to the presence of many numbers of Buddhists present in this area and also because of its connection to Tibet in the past mainly because of its proximity with the Jelep Pass. The common religions found here are Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism along with a few Muslim populations. The Bhutia's belong to the Scheduled Tribes and mostly have their ancestors traced to the land of Tibet. The Bhutias found in the Kalimpong district are mostly Tibetan Buddhist with a few Sikkimese, Lepcha, Sherpa and Drukpa Buddhists. Like church is to Christians and temple to the Hindus, monasteries are an integral part of the Buddhist culture and the religion of Buddhism. On Sunday mornings mostly, you will find many Tibetans in the streets of Kalimpong walking around with a traditional Tibetan bag across their shoulders carrying *tsampa*¹, *sang*² and rice grains as a part of the offerings with Tibetan beads in their hands chanting 'Om Mane Padme Hun' heading towards or returning from the monastery. Kalimpong houses many small and big monasteries within its territorial borders. These monasteries are home to hundreds of monks, young and old who are functioning thoroughly in keeping alive the traditions and cultures of the Tibetan Buddhism in the form of monasticism. These monasteries are considered to be not only centers of religious values but also a storehouse of culture. It is in these monasteries that the Buddhist find peace and identity affirmation. The monks living in these monasteries are seen with high regards in terms of religious value and also morally because the monks are considered to be pure because they abstain from the materialistic way of life. The life of a hermitage may sound simple and easy but in today's world where we are all living in a fast forward phase with everything on the touch of a button and the tap on a screen, do you think the practice of the 'simple and easy' will be that easy in reality?

¹ Wheat flour in Tibetan

² Local pine leaves in dried form usually burnt for smell, used as incense.

1.1 The Terms: Lamas And Lamaism, Lifestyle And Life patterns, Monastery

Before we dive deeper, it is essential to understand the important terms we are going to find repetitively in this study. Lama means a 'monk' and Lamaism means 'monkhood'. The lamas lead a monastic life and spend their whole lives (ought to) in the monastery learning and teaching Buddhist virtues, sacrificing materialistic needs, living a life of compassion and kindness that is free from human desires. The word Lamaism is generally used because Tibetan Buddhism outside Tibet includes practices that are actually not present and carried out in Tibet itself. However, the Lamaism present in the Kalimpong hills is basically about monkhood and their importance in the lives of all Tibetans and other Buddhists. Of course, we cannot ignore the doctrine of reincarnation and the schisms within the religion.

Any study on Lamaism would be incomplete without the inclusion of the monastery. The monastery is the architectural structure where the lamas reside and live their life. It is their home where they live with other fellow monks, practicing Lamaism following the rules and regulations of the monastery that houses them.

The terms lifestyle and life patterns may sound synonymous but carry a clear line of distinction. By the term 'lifestyle', we understand how one lives his or her life considering their timetables for the day, their choice of daily activities and their choice of other materialistic amenities for themselves. It is how and in what manner the person lives his/her life that reflects the values and attitudes of that particular person. The term life pattern will explain the patterns of life shaped in accordance with situation, space and time.

The term lama throughout the study will be used in its popular sense that is the clergy for the monastery. Lamaism shall be synonymous to Monasticism.

1.2 The History Of Lamaism

In 1959, Tibet's theocratic policy was shattered and its people were subjected to a tragic confrontation with Chinese communism. According to the Tibetan exile government, more than 1.3 million Tibetans died as a direct consequence of the Chinese takeover while some 6000 monasteries and temples were demolished (office of Information and International Relations 1990:5 and 7). These figures may be an exaggeration (Sethi 1993), but there is little doubt that Tibetans have suffered a lot. It was impertinent that if the Tibetan culture had to survive there should be a possibility of an asylum and this they found in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Europe and America. Even though they found refuge in the host nations they had to make sure that they kept their culture safe and alive from that of the countries that they were residing in. However, Tibetan Buddhism achieved great success outside Tibet. By the late 1960's Tibetan Buddhism emerged as an active proselytizing movement in the west.

Lamaism may be defined as a mixture of Buddhism with a preponderating amount of mythology, mysticism and magic: the doctrine of the incarnate lamas and the worship of the canonized saints, now such prominent features of Lamaism, are of recent origin (Risley, 1894). 'Change is constant, at the same time temporary. The research focuses on the Lamaism or monastic lifestyle of 21st century that is currently prevalent as this research aims on studying the changes by understanding the current form of lifestyle of the monks who live in the monasteries. The time frame for changes as such is difficult to be very specified as when exactly the changes started occurring but it has been documented as Risley(1894) mentions that worship of canonized saints to be of recent origin then. Wadell (1894) calls Tibet, the land of the Grand Lama and tries to present cults and customs of Tibet through the eyes of a foreigner. In his sectionalized explanations, he focuses on two sections namely 'monastic' and 'popular domestic lamaism' on explaining monastic Buddhism, the order and lifestyle, customs and hierarchy of the monks. He talks about how Lamaism started changing from its parent system and was in contrast to the teachings of Buddha in many ways. The form of Buddhism that was prevalent in Tibet during that time, was known as 'lamaism' after its preists was related to the mystical orientations that is the 'Vajrayana' which was merged with worship of the spirit and Tibetan mythology. Wadell (1894:17) writes, '...Lamas have the keys to unlock the meaning of much of Buddha's doctrine..'. It is

believed that the barbaric nature of Tibet in the 7th Century, was only put down by the rise of Buddhism. It was only after the wedding of King Sron Tsan Gampo where he married two Buddhist wives in 638-641 AD, Buddhism gained popularity in Tibet. The king then sent Thomi Sam Bhota, a messenger to bring Buddhist books from India. After staying in southern India for many years, he returned to Tibet with several books and the Tibetan alphabets. The king was later canonized as Avalokita and his two wives as the white and the green Tara or goddess of mercy. However, there is no record of him building monasteries for the monks. In 650 AD long after his death, during King Thi Sron Detsan reign who had a strong favour for Buddhism. As advised by his family priest, he sent to India for a famous Buddhist priest to establish an order in Tibet, Guru Padmasambhava. Guru Padmasambhava immediately agreed and went to Tibet in 747 AD. This was how Lamaism began in Tibet and it is his Guru Padmasambhava or the lotus born who is regarded as the founder of Lamaism in Tibet. He is also most commonly known as Guru Rimpoche. He was known for his supernatural powers and his most famous weapon to fight the demons, known as the 'Vajra' (Dorje in Tibetan), which symbolizes a thunderbolt. He miraculously built the first monastery of Tibet 'Samye' under the patronage of the then King Detsan in 749 AD. This was when the first order of lamas was instituted. At that time, 'lama' was a Tibetan word meaning superior denoting monks of the highest order but soon it was used for all monks as a gesture of courtesy. The actual form of primitive Lamaism as preached by the Guru cannot be traced because whatever resources were available even during the 1800's were written very late after many centuries by the Guru's disciples. However, the Nyingmapa sect is considered to be its closest. According to Wadell(1894:30), 'Primitive Lamaism may therefore be defined as priestly mixture of Sivaite mysticism, magic and Indo Tibetan demonolatry, overlaid by a thin varnish of Mahayana Buddhism.' and hence started gaining popularity.

1.3 Changing Time

According to the Britannica, ‘Monasticism is an institutionalized religious practice or movement whose member attempt to live by a rule that requires work that goes beyond those of the laity’. The monastic individuals live an ascetic life, alone by separating themselves from the society by living as a religious recluse or by joining a community of people with similar ideas.

In Kalimpong, Vajrayana Lamaism is still being practiced and the proof for that is the presence of monasteries. We find a few Buddhist monasteries housing a number of lamas in their abode. Each monastery is different and similar to each other at the same time. They share similar traits as well as have their own specific characteristics that make them different than the other. Their similarity lies in their lifestyle and life patterns and their differences in their beliefs and practices. Each monastery follows its own guru or the head known as the ‘Rinpoche’ based on the sect to which they belong. In Tibet, there were nine Buddhist sects that followed the teachings of Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. These nine lamaic sects date from the visit to Tibet of the Indian Buddhist monk Atisha who preached celibacy and moral abstinence (Risley, 1894). These nine sects are: Gelugpa, Nyingmapa, Kadampa, Sakyapa, Kagyupa, Chod, Shijay, Shangpa Kagyu and Urgyen Nyendrup. Now we find four sects that survive in strength: the Gelugpa, Sakyapa, Kagyupa and Nyingmapa (Thinley, 1980). These sects follow the same basic teachings of Buddhism brought from Tibet to India at the price of great material and human resources over the centuries. All the sects are holders of the Vajrayana transmissions from Vajradhara and passed down to the guru. The lama is in fact a manifestation of Vajradhara and that is why it is of great importance. This is also the reason why that in many instances Tibetan Buddhism is also referred to as ‘lamaism’. In the late 18th century, there were three kinds of monasteries – Takphu, Gompa and Gompas. The Takphu literally meant rock caves or cave hermitage, Gompa literally meaning a solitary place were proper monasteries and the so called Gompas are basically smaller versions of these temples who have just one or two monks living in it in order to cater the religious needs of the village people who are generally funded and looked after by the same village community. The monasteries then were found mostly in solitary places because isolation from the world has always been a necessity of Buddhist monks to escape worldly

temptations. In nearly every Bhutia family, one son (the second) was devoted to the church. This showed the deeply religious nature of the people and also the attractions offered by the position of lamas giving them superiority than others.

The lamas wore uniforms of three basic colors red, yellow and orange and its sister shades lighter or darker known as the chuba or bakhru with a shirt from within draped over by a shawl. The lama's practiced complete renunciation seeking only solitude whereby they practiced Lamaism to attain peace of mind swore their vows and lived a hermit life. They practiced celibacy hence were forbidden from getting married or falling in love. They lived on simple food and denied eating meat. They left anything and everything materialistic to enter into the monastic world and to live in it.

Times are changing, as globalization takes place it leaves no stone unturned. It goes like a massive whirlwind affecting each and every little thing coming on its way. The changes may vary from big to small but changes have occurred. Monasticism and monastic life are no exceptions. In the 20th century, the lamas in appearance still look the same. Their religious beliefs and values do not differ in thought. The texts they read still have the same content. The cave monasteries are rare and even if there are, have been concretized. It is very rare to find the new monasteries in areas of solitude because concretization has taken place so rapidly that these monasteries are found in the midst of town. In more rugged terms, the hardware of monasticism has changed drastically while keeping alive the basics but what about the lifestyle and life patterns of the monks?

The study shall focus on **three** dimensions. The first one shall be the physical dimension that will include the appearance of the monks, their clothing, belongings and material resources if any. The second dimension shall be their religious and social life and their relationship with the nature and society. The third and the final one shall be the philosophical dimension that is their worldview as to what they think of the world, the religion and their thoughts on life. The thesis is a sociological study to understand the religious monastic life in the present time.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Of Monks and Monasteries

Waddell L.A (1894) writes about the history of *Lamaism*³, its origin and development. He observed that the people of Tibet up to the 7th Century A.D. were at a loss of written language. He writes of the people, ‘...were pure savages. Early in the 7th century A.D. was born Srong-tsan-gampo, whose ancestors since two or three generations had established their authority over central Tibet, and had latterly harassed the western boundaries of China; by doing so the Emperor of China was happy to be friend the young prince and even gave him a princess of the imperial house in marriage. Srong-tsna-gampo had two years previously married the daughter of the King of Nepal; and both these wives being bigoted Buddhists, they speedily converted Srong-tsan-gampo, who under their advice sent to India for Buddhist books and teachers....’ Hence, we can draw that here lies the introduction of the Buddhist religion into Tibet. He also further explains that Lamaism began in the 8th Century A.D. and at the same time the belief and practice of tantricism also dramatically increased. It is around this time that the *lamas*⁴ started accepting the doctrine of Kalachakra. Kalachakra means Supreme deity; that there is no beginning or end and the source of all things. Padma Sambhava known as Guru *Rimbochhe*⁵ by the Tibetans also referred to as the lotus born founded Lamaism. It was started at 740 – 786 A.D. during the reign of King Thi-Srong De-tsan. He started the translation of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit and Chinese scriptures and also built the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet⁶. Guru Rimpoche first visited Tibet in connection with this monastery. It was said that the king was frustrated as all his attempts to build the monastery was failing due to the frequent earthquakes that was being caused by the demons. Shantarakshita, the Indian Buddhist monk; advised the king to call the wizard priest Padma Sambhava who was a famous sorcerer of the Yogacharya School. With the

³ Lamaism – monkhood/monastic life

⁴ *Lamas* - monks

⁵ Guru *Rinpoche* / *Rimpoche*

⁶ Known as Samye

thunderbolt (*Vajra/dorje*)⁷ and using spells he won over the devils and successfully built the monastery in 749 A.D. and established the first community of lamas.

Risley H.H (1894) observes that Lamaism can be understood as a mixture of religion with mythology, magic and mysticism. He highlights here the doctrine of incarnate lamas and the worship of saints and that fact that people readily accepted it as it protected the people from the evil. Risley highlights the curriculum for monkhood, the different lamaic grades and discipline and the daily routine of the lamas in *Sikhim*⁸.

Oldmeadow Peter (2001) tries to bring out the difference between traditional Tibetan Buddhism and globalized Tibetan Buddhism. He observes that monasticism is losing its importance in the globalized Tibetan Buddhism. The laity, in traditional Tibetan Buddhism is strong supporters of the monks and monasteries. A lot of importance is given to religious learning and spiritual practice. He writes, ‘the monks...represent a field of merit and those supporting them can accumulate merit thorough the meritorious deed of giving....’ (2008). However, he seems to have brought out a difference between monk and a lama when he writes ‘ the central figure in Tibetan Buddhism is not the monk but the lama’.

Fermer (2016) in his chapter ‘Among Teachers and Monastic Enclaves: An Inquiry into the Religious Learning of Medieval Tibet.’ gives an insight into the roles of monastery and monks in the medieval Tibetan society. He presents the idea of a Tibetan monastery as he writes on how different monasteries have different guidelines to follow and how they are independent of outside politics and worldly events.

Hopkins Jeffrey (1988) writes about the ultimate reality in Tibetan Buddhism with reference to the Gelugpa tradition, which is predominantly monastic. He observes that if we combine meditation with love and compassion, and provide welfare and service for others we may be able to achieve the ultimate with practice. Even though he does not mention ‘monastic’ in term, we find all these practices in monasticism.

Gampopa (1971) talks about the three basic gifts while he writes about the first Paramita that is generosity. He writes that there are three basic gifts for every individual. The first one is the material goods, followed by psychological comfort and dharma. The dharma is the basic

⁷ *Vajra* – Sanskrit, *Dorje*- Tibetan

⁸ *Sikhim* – Now Sikkim

Buddhist teachings. In the monastic context in today's era, Buddhist monks when they provide religious service to laymen receive material goods, which give them psychological comfort.

Gross Rita (1987) has been critical of Gampopa (1971) as she writes that she agrees with others when they say that the Buddhist religion somewhat is not properly developed in providing individuals material and psychological comfort. However, this does not seem to be applicable in today's monasticism.

Sinclair Tara (2008) has highlighted how the Kalmyk Government who has been very serious about the revival of Buddhism ever since the loss of their religion with the development of the Soviet Union. The government had to request the Dalai Lama to send monks to live and teach in the republic. These Tibetan monks (three in number) were sent from the southern part of India. The monks researched in the paper were of the view that authentic Buddhism has to be discovered again and also is to be distinguished from the historical practices that are generally mistaken. She also observes that the revival of religion means that out of the many aspects of religion few are lost, forgotten or corrupted and so the quest for truth results in the reformation of the existing religious knowledge.

Ryokai (1996) compares the ascetic life of a Brahman to the monastic life of a Buddhist monk. It is a comparative account of the ascetic life of two different religions. He shows that the monastic life goes through three stages the physical, the human relationship stage and philosophical stage. He shows some aspect of interrelationship between the appearance of the monks and their philosophical world.

Schopen (2004) has studied the Buddhist monastic law and the archaeology. He provides a new and unique perspective of monastic law. He highlights that there are only a few monks who renounces the 'material world'. He observes that the Buddhist monks had in fact a lot of resources and access to money. He has also documented that they have even availed themselves loan and other financial facilities.

Angrosino (1991) points out that even though modern monastic communities are one of the key institutions for the revival of religion, there is still a crisis for research on it. Angrosino points out that we are greatly missing out on 'what it is like to live in a monastic community

and how insiders perceive the relevance of such a community in a changing world’.

Bureau (1961) writes about the economic life of the monks of the earlier times describing them as ‘little’ community and compares how it has grown to a school of thousands. He observes from the data available that it was the common man who fulfilled the material requirement by the Sangha and provided space in the form of forestlands for the monks to reside. The ancient laws did not allow the monks to even touch or accept any form of precious objects be it silver or gold. The monks were also presented with bowls for begging, clothes and other necessary items like needles and razors in the end of the rainy season. Every morning the monks went out to beg for food in the nearby settlement areas.

Harvey (2000) shows us another side of buddhism as of being mostly and primarily being concerned with ethics. He also applies the religious ethics of Buddhism to the ethics of the contemporary real world. He focuses on understanding karma and rebirth as the root of the ethical values of buddhism along with the four noble truths. He talks about how desires lead to suffering and in the fourth truth we come across the Eightfold Path to achieve Nirvana. He explains how these religious path is practised by the monks in their monastic life and the lay Buddhist.

Samphel (2009) gives us the account of the maintenance of culture and its continuity by the Tibetans in exile. ‘Aided by the growing appreciation of their culture by non-Tibetans, the Tibetan refugees have managed to rebuild and reconstruct in exile what the Chinese authorities destroyed in Tibet’. (2009: 63) He writes on how the Tibetans along with the heads of the four different schools of Tibetan Buddhism in exile have maintained monastic education that was characterized in ancient Tibet. He writes on the daily routine of the monks at the Gomang College of Drepung Monastery in South India as follows:

“...A monk's day begins between 5 to 5:30 a.m. with morning prayer. Breakfast is served at 8 a.m. The rest of the day is spent on attending philosophy classes, text memorization, and debate sessions. Lunch is served at noon. After lunch rest. Classes start after rest. For others, there is private study. This goes on till 5:30 when the evening meal is served. Argumentation and debate are seen as the keys to attaining greater knowledge (Samphel, 2009)’.

Samphel observes that rebuilding monasteries and starting schools of learning have helped the Tibetans maintain their culture and integrity even in exile.

Kurtis Schaeffer's *Himalayan Hermitess : The Life of a Tibetan Nun* is one of the earliest works on the religious autobiography of a female that has been written in the Tibetan

literature. It is also considered as one of the rare works in the Buddhist literature. He has made an important contribution to Tibetan and Buddhist studies. He writes on the religious world of Orgyan Chokyi, the female Buddhist nun. He writes, ‘ Orgyan Chokyi soon left her home to herd the horses for a local monastery, and among the animals the unwanted child found comfort and solace. Orgyan had suffered through a lot of pain emotionally as well as physically at home and she somehow started identifying with the pain and suffering if others as well. She then started loving domestic animals that went on to be her closest friends. When she started her acquaintance with the nuns, she sensed an idea of understanding. It was an empathetic senior nun who advised her to leave household life and join their community (Schaeffer, 2004)’. This goes on to explain that choosing the monastic life then was not only culture and tradition but also because of economic reasons and to escape the sad state of ones reality seeking solace and shelter.

Rath (2010) gives an account of the Longen Monastery in Qinghai Province, China, where detailed description is given of the monk’s activity inside the monastery especially during mealtime. Rath observes that the monks are very disciplined at the Zen monasteries and goes on to compare them with a swimming team. He talks about the precision at which they walk, sit and bow and strikes a comparison with the monks at the Tibetan Buddhist monastery of Longen stating that the monks are very relaxed as compared to them (2010: 17). It can be understood here that according to Rath, the Tibetan Buddhist monastic life is not very orthodox and strict as compared to other forms of monastic life. However, it definitely does not conclude that there is a lack of discipline in the monks as he further describes that despite everyone chatting, fooling around and walking at their own pace, once the final call is made, all of them are settled in there respective places and silence is prevailed (2010: 17) He gently describes the uniformity of the monks and their attire that is the saffron robes commonly known as *Chuba/Bakhu*⁹. He also describes that the monks are vegetarians as they prohibit themselves from taking lives of other living beings for their own consumption following Buddhism. He gives an account of the architectural set up of the monastery as he describes the presence of a full-scale replica of the nine-story tower that the Tibetan yogi Milarepa (1040–1123) had built in as an attempt to satisfy his fickle master, Marpa. He describes that there are also Indian stupas depicting the various important occasions of the life of the

⁹ Chuba/Bakhu is a term used to describe the uniform or the traditional attire of Tibetan Buddhist monks. It is a robe without sleeves, worn with or without a blouse generally saffron/red in color.

historical Buddha, the Shakyamuni. Amongst these building of religious importance, he describes is the presence of a building that has no religious value but is extremely important and essential. This structure is known as the *chakang*¹⁰, or kitchen. The kitchen is managed by a dozen who volunteer to cook for the monks on huge stoves made up of concrete. The stove is generally one of the eye catching objects inside the area as it is the largest structure in the kitchen and looks like some giant home appliance that is approximately four feet high and fourteen feet wide. The stove is so huge that the cooks are required to climb up the ladder to the top of the stove in order to cook. So equating with the size of the stove are also the size of the spatula or wooden stirrers that are almost long as canoe oars, and the number of *zankar*¹¹. They are decorated with auspicious symbols like the dragons and are built right into the stove. He describes this scene of the kitchen of the monastery (2010: 20). He further mentions that the cooks are generally laymen who volunteer to cook also showing the respect laymen have on the monastic community. Rath (2010) has focused on the architecture of the monastery with these detailed descriptions and the fact that laymen volunteer to cook for the monks shows the social significance of the monks in the life of a layman.

Thurman (1995), in his book 'Inside Tibetan Buddhism: Rituals and Symbols Revealed' presents a photograph of man touching his forehead on a stone that has the words '*Om Mane Padme Hung*'¹² engraved on it. He writes, 'The printed words of the Dharma are so sacred that their message can even be absorbed through touch' (1995: 31). This clearly signifies the importance of religion amongst Tibetans. Thurman's work is explained in five parts taking the form of chapters, which explains the history of Buddhist teachings and its origin, the concept of taking refuge, different practices and meditations, Tantric empowerment and the Buddhist years. The way in which Thurman presents Tibetan Buddhism to its reader is very unique and interesting. He does not show it as a practice performed by Tibetans in a land of refuge alien to them but in the way it actually is in reality. Robert Thurman has accurately chalked out the points of the union of ancient symbols and rituals with the modern images of change occurring in Tibetan Buddhism.

Erhimbayar (2006), with a primarily descriptive aim has written an article comparing the general situation of four Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in China. The two monasteries Gegen

¹⁰ Chakhang means kitchen

¹¹ Zankar is the utensil in which the food is cooked and is made up of metal.

¹² A chant/mantra recited by Tibetan Buddhists.

Süme and Dehui Si are in Liaoning and the other two Da Zhao and Shiramüren monasteries are in Inner Mongolia. Erhimbayar compares the financial and economic situation of these monasteries and also provides information on the origin of the monks. He conveys that the objective of the research was mostly descriptive because of the lack of materials on the monastic life and monasteries of the Tibetan Buddhist.

He writes, '.....investigations revealed a total of 195 monasteries' (Altangardi 1995: 178) before 1945. Although many of these monasteries were destroyed in the middle of the last century, the remaining monasteries have been holding religious activities to a varying extent since the 1980s. The current situation of these monasteries can help reveal the modern characteristics of Mongolian Buddhist monasteries in northern China.' (2006: 184).

We can understand that monastic Buddhism has undergone a lot of changes due to modernization and monastic life of the monks has also undergone tremendous change. He writes of the Gegen Sume Monastery as the biggest Buddhist monastery in Fuxin, Liaoning province and has been earlier known as Zhuun Zhao or the East Monastery. This monastery is located 20 km away from Fuxin city and transportation to and fro is not an issue and are well connected. It has immense historical value and has a lot of worshippers to its religious charm, hence popular and influential in the whole Mongolian region. Its construction began in 1669 and continued until the middle of the twentieth century, lasting about 280 years, through six generations of reincarnations who have received immense support and honors from other highest religious heads of Buddhism as well as noble men. This led to more of religious as well as political growth leading to the expansion of the monastery so much so that at one point there were around three thousand monks. This played a major role in the spread of Buddhism. The people in the area are very proud of the monastery. 'In the past, this monastery was very large, occupying a territory of around eighteen square kilometers and comprising ninety-seven buildings and 1,600 worship halls, not taking into account the 800 houses with 3,000 rooms accommodating 800 monks' (Togtonga 1984: 50). Erhimbayar writes that it was so famous throughout Inner Mongolia that older generations still remember it clearly. It is now learnt that locals surrounding the monastery are somehow all related to the monastery in some way. The reason for this he cites is that it may be so in certain way because in the 1960s to the 1980s the monastery had no monks residing there as they left in search of other jobs in the nearby areas. Over the time, the role of the monastery changed over from just religious to administrative roles as they started collecting rents and performing other administrative tasks influencing the local people in a larger context than others. Erhimbayar observes that in some way the local residents show case different characteristics

attitudes that are very much monk-like. For example, he mentions how a respondent who was a teacher mentioned that some of the residents of that area still practice the custom of drinking strong black tea. He also mentions that they are very careful in sharing when it comes to tea and can act miserly. This trait is similar to that of the monks. There is in some way or the other that every part of the life of the residents around the monastery has somehow been influenced by the monastic life. There are many families who are related to the former monks of the monastery who returned to practice normal secular life during the 1950s-60s. Now, this famous ancient monastery has been entering a new period of development (2006:185). He explains how the monastic traits still linger even in the laymen residing in the area near the monasteries and thus showing the very impact and role of monastery and religion in the life of the Tibetan Buddhists living in that area. He talks about the ancient monastery entering into a 'new period of development' but does not elaborate it. Erhimbayar writes on how the monastery was funded during ancient times by emperors and rulers and how in present time with the support from government and tourism, a lot of fund is being collected enabling the monastery to be economically independent. He writes in context to the Da Zhao monastery, located in the center of Hohhot, the capital of IMAR (Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region) and is the most prominent monastery among the other 64 monasteries. In earlier times, the emperors funded the monastery but with time and evolution, the monastery has kept alive its ancient tradition becoming an important site of history and cultural heritage. The rise in tourism has kept a continuous flow of funds, helping the monastery to finance itself for its own development rather than rely on emperors like in earlier times (Erhimbayar 2006: 186).

Erhimbayar's work explains that the act of celibacy is no longer mandatory in order to be a monk and no monk generally performs free service. The idea of old monasticism in which the monks were required to live in the monasteries is no longer valid. He writes, "No service is held on the request of a worshipper. However, some worshippers do invite monks to perform religious rituals in their homes in case of illness. I saw that the reincarnation of this monastery had gone to a village to perform religious activities in May this year. The people who invite the monks give them an appropriate sum of money for their services. The monks of this monastery do not live in the monastery on a permanent basis and only go back to the monastery at the time of regular religious services. Most of the monks get married" (2006: 190).

The account of the monk's life in the monastery in today's era has been clearly described by him that enables us to see the version of monastic life in today's era. He writes that more focus has been given to the discipline and education of monks by inducing a strict environment. Some general rules for work and rest were implemented. For example, the young monks had to get up at 4:30 a.m., and start studying by 5 a.m. the education system were inclusive of all subjects and languages but Buddhism was being taught in Tibetan language and other subjects like literature, geography and history were being taught in Chinese. He also interviewed the assistant of the reincarnation who conveyed the monastery's teaching programme and future plans to buy computers for the monks. If monks so wish, they can go to Labrang¹³ monastery in Gansu Province for further study. In this case, the monastery will support the whole financial expenditure. Thus the monks at this monastery have many chances to study. During my fieldwork, I noticed that the monastery offered sports facilities for young monks. They play basketball, ping-pong and badminton in their spare time, and monks can also watch TV if they want. There are summer and winter holidays of twenty days during which the monks can visit their family, but only once a year. Monks work on Saturday and Sunday for the monastery, for example as ticket collectors, temple gate-keepers and guides to visitors around the monastery. Monday is the monks' day off and they are allowed to go out for shopping. Living together in the monastery ensures the monks maintain good behaviour. Though the rules of discipline in the monastery are very strict, full ordination of a monk depends on each person's own decision. It is said that more than ten monks have gone to Labrang monastery and taken the Gelung (Tib.) vows with 253 precepts" (2006: 191).

Erhimbayar concludes that people became monks because of poverty and unfortunate experiences. Few chose monasticism in order to understand Buddhism in a deeper way. He also states that all the monasteries are adjusting in some way with the modern world. If we are to look into the monasteries here in Kalimpong too, most of the monks seem to have joined because of compulsion from situations that are mostly sad.

R. S. Mann (1985) talks about the role of monasteries in the life and culture of the people of Ladakh. He explains the importance that the religious institution holds in the life of Ladakhi people and how it has brought about a sense of interconnectedness among the people living there. He suggests that a researcher opting for ethnographic study of monasteries must not stick to rigid theory. A lot of flexibility is to be brought about when one uses ethnography as

¹³ Labrang is one of the six great monasteries of the Gelugpa School

a method of study. He writes about how when writing on subjects like that of "Role of Monasteries in Ladakhi Life and Culture", one has to search for various concepts like that of interconnectedness, interrelationship, feed-back arrangement, reciprocity, interdependence, adaptation, governance, subordination and supra ordination of social and cultural traits. However he suggests that one should not understand these concepts by following a strict idea of 'functionalism' or 'structure-functionalism' that go on to give a lot of importance to the ideas of being constant or permanent, welcoming no change. One has to take rather a relaxed approached while understand and exploring these issues. He suggests that in times of change that is continuous and growing dynamism in both the social and the cultural sphere, it is entirely dependent upon the researcher as to how or what tool or methodology he/she uses. If one sticks to being rigid and tick to the theorists idea, then one will not be able to explore fully the changing societies and organization. One has to adjust and re adjust with ideas, if one wants to be successful in this kind of research topics (1985: 34).

He also describes that in Ladakh monastery and religious structure has been ruling over human life. He describes Ladakh as 'isolated, remote and outlying' (1985: 35) and observes that any new visitor to Ladakh would hypothetically agree that the religious structure seems to have an upper hand over human life. He says that it is true to some extent The Gompas¹⁴ and Viharas¹⁵, he mentions are the key structures that have occupied the 'highest elevations of human settlements'. They also have control over many walks of life. The monastic system is well organized in almost every respect. The organizational pattern is so scientifically designed that all activities, in and outside the monastery, get going smooth, without more of imposing supervision, or interruption. The social and religious/spiritual control in the monastery are strong and intact, and the same holds true when their extension to society is assessed. It is chiefly the religious organization of monastery, which holds the key for a large number of community facts. This is applicable to monasteries of 'Yellow' as well as 'Red' sect of Buddhism' (1985: 35). He then goes on to assert the popularity of Lamaism and terms it 'unquestionable'. He explains the various categories of monks and the different positions they hold within the monastery. While discussing the role of monasteries, he describes the need to explore the monastery. The belief in the saying that 'they thrive well under the blessings of religious men chiefly housed in Gompa. And such a belief complex creates necessity for worship. Thus, the blessings are mainly showered, by the Lamas, through worship.' (1985: 37) The key positions of the lamas can be well understood from the fact that

¹⁴ Gompas – Large Monastery

¹⁵ Vihara – smaller monasteries in areas where Gompas are not present

they are considered to be the mediators to God and are representatives of God. 'Simultaneously, it is the religious men of monastery who are believed to have power and influence in various walks of life, including control over spirits and devils which the Ladakhis identify.' (1985:37) He reveals that people tend to believe anything the Lamas say and perform everything that is asked for. The suggestions from the Lamas are well accepted. He writes that with such trends the religious views as put forward by the monasteries find an important place in the social organization as well as in the economic structure and the political sphere. Most of the people do agree that they respect and are highly obliged to the hierarchy of the monks in the Gumpa and most of them would always be at the service or respond to the call of the monks (1985:37). He is of the view that Lamaism dictates the destiny of the people's life and that the words of the lamas are no less than law. The monks are their advisors, guides, friends, philosophers, etc. Any function in the Gumpa or in any religious events, the lamas are given utmost respect even though it is not demanded. No objections are thrown from anywhere. Mann points out that there is a lot of interdependence between the members of secular that is the layman and the sacred orders, the monks. There exists a reciprocal relationship where the monastic and the community get indulged in a give and take relationship whereby the community looks after the monks and monastery and the monastic order takes care of the community. The education system is not much focused upon and carries not much of a value in today's era. The relationship of dependence can be visible in the fact that even specialists that are outside the monastic organization have links with the lamas and depend on them and the monasteries in many instances (1985: 37). He explains an instance where the healer or medicine man consults the lama before giving medications and both decide on the healing procedure.

A. Sumedho (1984) describes the life of a Buddhist monk as a rigorous one. He writes about their lifestyle as that of having a shaved head, wearing red/saffron robes, re-naming oneself to create a new identity, practicing celibacy and meditation are all mandatory characteristics of a monk. He writes that the most important part of the monk's training is to learn how to surrender to the monastic form and tradition in order to live a life that is wholesome in the sense that it does not have any desires, attachment and greed, which is the reason of all sufferings. The main aim is to attain absolute freedom from pain and suffering that comes from attachment and desire and to develop a heart and mind that is kind, loving, compassionate and full of sympathy (Sumedho, 1984).

Tim Mapels (2007) study focuses on the adjustment process of Western ex-Buddhist monks to life after the monastery. The use of the case study method that involved in-depth interviews in order to investigate and explore the experience of five participants who lived as Buddhist monks for a number of years and who later left the monastic life and gave up on their monk identity to live a secular life. It is an extreme example of change and adjustment, since moving from an institutionalized communal religious environment to an individual secular existence is a considerable journey. This study does not directly address the individuals' reasons for leaving monastic life, which would easily merit further investigation, but confines its study to what occurred after leaving the monastery.

Georges Dreyfus (2003) work is an attempt to summarize his experience of fifteen years that he had spent among Tibetan monks receiving education from them. He presents the readers with an ethnographic detail of his personal experience of living in the Tibetan monasteries in India. The work consists of three parts. The first part presents a short history of Tibetan Buddhism, the central nature of monasticism in the studies of monks, and the central roles of teachers and their relationships with students. The second part can be understood as the main part where he analyses the intellectual practices that constitute scholasticism. He focuses on the role of tradition in the education of a monk, a central question of which is the openness of tradition to new ideas. The third part of the book talks about scholastic rationality and its relation to the spirit cults of Tibetan folk religion, and then argues 'that in the Tibetan tradition the freedom to inquire is real but limited' (2003: 306).

Jayadeva Uyangoda's (2007) article 'The Tale of a Monk and His Mercedes in Sri Lanka' is an apt display of modernization and the changing society, an existence of a society that accepts paradoxical ideas. The story is of a Buddhist monk who is a member of parliament of Sri Lanka and he imports and sells a Mercedes Benz car. This story has been an act of entertainment for so many in Sri Lanka. Beyond the entertainment part, this story has a lot of reflect in the nature of politics and change in religious society. Uyangoda further writes that some Buddhists wrote letters to the editor in newspaper columns and expressed their shock and sadness over the conduct of the monk claiming it to be an act of 'unbecoming of the Buddhaputrs' or in simple sense that the act was not completely accepted from a monk. They put forward their views according to their reason stating that a monk should not be buying and selling Mercedes Benz (expensive) cars, but be leading a simple life following the Noble Eight-fold Path with no greed or desires (materialistic) and should be a world renouncer. However, Uyangoda expresses that this point is a problematic one about the authentic

behavior of Buddhist monks in a framework of a world-renouncer because the Sangha behavior in general is being formed in a tradition of transgressing many Vinaya rules, however there has not been a public acknowledgement of the same. He puts the example of monks contesting elections as a case of transgression of the Buddhist rules. The very point that is to be stressed here is unbecoming of a monk in its truest sense when they chose to contest elections in the first place followed by purchasing and selling of high end cars (luxury). This is because a monk is a monk because he/she renounces the materialistic life and all the luxuries to live a simple life free from guilt of desires. However, here the monks are living life like a normal person of the highest order of the society.

Mills (2000) in his book talks about the Buddhist monk and the ascetic aspect. He puts forward that one usually tends to focus on important characteristic whenever we talk about the monk and that is the category of a religious practitioner known as the renouncer or ascetic. He states that in context of Tibetan Buddhism or Vajrayana tradition it becomes difficult to follow one single process, as there are so many varieties of religious practitioners. Hence, if we are to define the sociology of the monk as religious renouncer, therefore, such studies have characterized that renunciation in terms of the monk's 'departure' from the society by disconnecting from the society and its members, and the recreation of the renouncing monk as a rationalized and independent individual with no interconnectedness with society, deprived of particularistic ties and intent upon the process of internalized temporal becoming and the attainment of enlightenment through the individualistic accumulation of karmic merit.

Martin A. Mills (2000) also points out the 'homeless' aspect of the monks and agrees to Carrither (1979), Tambiah (1981), Collins (1982) in accepting that the monks are not departing from social relationships as a whole but are leaving the ideas of household and the life as a part of a particular household family member. It would not be wrong to say that they were moving on to enter the fraternity of people without homes. Carrithers (1979) points out that the monks are actually not separated from the society because once he enters into monasticism, his monastic ordination puts him into another world of monks where he will be sharing some form of kinship because of the practice of same teachings and also he enters into a relationship of dependence with the layman who provide him with his needs. This relationship of dependence will continue to exist in Buddhist monasticism although it may not be continued social and political relations with specific groups of laity (Strenski 1983). The notion of monastic isolation in principle in Tibetan Buddhism has been criticized. The

idea of their existence socially has been often characterized in certain terms in which scholars add that they are actually not. Ortner (1978) does not agree that the reality is anti relational. Mumford 1989 denies that they are sealed off from other subjectivities. Paul (1982) points out that if we define monasticism in a negative way by means of householder values, we will be missing out on the explanation of the fact that that very householder population hold these monks in very high regards. The only answer to this question will be derived by finding amongst the monks the highly valued Buddhist doctrine of Karma, destiny and salvation is inherently valued or not.

In his article, “Of Monks and Monasteries,” Sherab Gyatso writes, “In the exiled community despite the undoubted decrease in wealth and political influence, the monastic visage whilst perhaps battered and bruised remains both recognizable and supremely visible. Reinvention and reform are definitely not the order of the day here. Rather, it is in very familiar guises that the Tibetan monk and the monastery have re-established positions for themselves at the very heart of the new society” (2003: 213). The most important concept in the monastic tradition is Continuity. The idea of the tradition going on for generations and generations is the core concept in the monastic traditions. In the monastic context, the notion of spiritual transmission serves as an assurance of the validity and authenticity of doctrines, social organization and ritual practice. The monks do not think of tradition as a concept but primarily an “embodied” experience.

Jansen, Berthe (2018) focuses on the genre of the *chayik* as a whole and the way in which these texts relate to the larger corpora of both Indic and Tibetan Vinaya texts. He provides a background of the monastic system that was prevalent in pre-modern Tibet. Jansen has explained the various conditions on who was allowed to enter the monastery or the monastic life. Even though a common notion exists that the monastery was open to all, it was actually not. The monastic guidelines provide information on the eligibility criteria for becoming a monk. The works give reasons that are economic, geographical, or that have to do with (ritual) purity. Jansen examines the judicial position of the monasteries in Tibet and looks at the extent to which these institutions were legally allowed and even obligated to punish both laypeople and monks, paying some attention to what kind of punishments were give.

Ellingson (1990) in his work proposes that the genre of Chayik was derived from sources such as common law and traditional rights. In light of the presumed origination in Tibetan

traditional “secular” law, he translates *chayik* both as “monastic constitution” and as “a monastic constitutional document.” He states that the Tibetan *bca'yig* can be regarded as ‘constitutions’ since they have taken as outlines from a huge fundamental and constitutional body of the monastic government (1990).

Rockhili, William Woodville (1891) gives an account of the land of the lamas by sharing the notes he jotted down on his journey through China Mongolia and Tibet. He gives us the facts of the country from the historical, geographical and ethnographical perspective. He has gone in minute details when it comes to defining the monks as he writes down about the tiniest of items used by them and activities performed by them. He highlights the monastic lifestyle of practicing celibacy, solitude and peace.

Mullin (2008) has beautifully listed the stories of the fourteen Dalai Lamas. The account of each of the Dalai Lama is fascinating and so well explained. The sacred legacy of reincarnation has been explained in such a manner that the sacred mythology associated with the reincarnation can be accessible and understood by all. The 14th Dalai Lama’s foreword adds the cherry to the cake.

2.2 Of Continuity and Change:

When anything is displaced from its natural setting, changes are bound to happen. The change may be physical, social, cultural or philosophical. When the Tibetans were compelled to flee their homeland, the very first expected effect to it would be ‘change’ in various spheres but I think the strength of anything be it culture or religion lies in its ability to withstand the change. The Tibetans living in exile take pride in the fact that they have been able to maintain their culture and they attribute their success to a lack of assimilation or to put it in an optimistic notion, as “process of enclavement” (Klieger 1989), to the continuity of the Dalai Lama’s leadership in exile and to the support they receive from aids whether national or international be it in the form of sponsors from the west or donations. Once in exile, one of the primary concerns of the exiled Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Refugee community has most importantly been to preserve the cultural heritage of Tibet that they carried with them. It seemed that they were afraid to see it fade away or just kept alive in memories and works and that is why soon after he arrived in India, the country of exile, His Holiness established many different institutions at different levels in order to preserve the Tibetan culture. In 1959, the TIPPA or The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts was the first one to be established. Later on in 1965, the Norbulingka Institute and the Tibet House in Delhi followed by the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in 1969; the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives at Dharamsala since 1971 represents Tibetan culture in the Diaspora (Bernstorff, 2004). The answer to the fact as to why instant attention was given to the preservation of linguistic, religious and artistic knowledge through both documentation and education (Nowak, 1984) was prompted by two possible threats: firstly the probable disappearance of Tibetan culture in the homeland under the Chinese rule and the disappearance of exiled Tibetans into their host societies. The other reasons for the conservation of culture could be the different official policy decisions by the Tibetan government-in- exile as well as what Basu (2008) perceives that it could be ones own personal choices in regards to the everyday aspect of life like the use of language and communication, dress up, different rituals, food habits and marital functions. The Tibetans in exile live in the hope that one day there might be a possibility of returning to their homeland and in order to keep this feeling alive they feel the need to conserve and preserve their culture so as to always remember the pain and victimization so as

to keep alive the sense of loss. The original refugees who have now up to two to three generations in exile keep narrating their experiences in their homeland so that it passes on to generations, keeping alive the memories. Those born in exile depend upon the memories passed on to them to which cling on to and pass on. For these Tibetans as Diehl believes, ‘Tibet is an idea of a land inconsistently informed by official efforts in exile to preserve and teach traditional culture, images from foreign made documentary films and coffee table books, political and economic information from newspaper clippings, and the first hand stories from older relatives, tourists and new arrivals’ (2002). In Tibet, the memories of Tibetans struggle against the “forced forgetting” (Connerton, 1989) imposed by the Chinese, Tibetans deal with self protective, opportunistic or time-induced forgetting by developing what Diehl calls “tutored mindfulness” (Diehl, 2002).

In exile, the sense of history, identity and responsibility is conveyed to young Tibetans and is reinforced in others through narratives and performances in schools and other institutional settings, events akin to what Keila Diehl borrowing from Connerton describes as “acts of transfer that make remembering in common possible” (Connerton 1989: 39). Connerton (1989) observes that much of traditional knowledge is transmitted to the younger generations and those born in exile in the refugee homes, but it is in the public sphere and in general public participations that such casual tacit or explicit articulations of the traditional ways are confirmed and consolidated outside in exile or in a foreign land trying to affirm ones identity and connecting to ones past and making sense of it with experiences and consensus of others similar to them. So it is in this manner the community works to establish and emphasize on the continuity of cultural activities. As time passes and the gaps in shared memory and experience increase within the group, the self-conscious presentation of self in everyday life becomes more marked, more important (Goffman 1959). The Tibetans seem to rely in developing their connections with their homeland and make sure to play their part in order to affirm individual’s identity and reassuring themselves that their culture or identity will not be lost in the country of exile. Most of the efforts of many native and foreign scholars who have been trying to document the Tibetan culture in exile have been descriptive in nature. It basically comprises of evaluations that are based on the idea of the rich heritage and culture of Tibet bounded by time and space driven by the idea of preservation and loss. Diehl also observes that this framework that tends to ignore and gives only a minute recognition to a variety of newly formed, mixed or popular non traditional practices and refers to them only as an example of slowly disappearing culture and tradition does little to account for the variety of different culture practices that are constantly being developed in exile by even the

refugees who are considered to be the most traditional amongst the lot because of the choices and situations that occur in every day life (Diehl 2002: 67). This popular framework with its interest in “pure survivals” does little to account for the rich diversity of pre-1950 Tibetan culture and is closely related to the attachment to the image of Tibet as an unchanging, medieval “Shangri La.” Diehl (2002) also observes that this framework does not take into consideration that when one tries to maintain being ‘unchanged’ and appear ‘original’, one is also required to make current important changes. Once in exile, the community due to the experience of displacement and various changes in its physical, social and emotional develops a certain consciousness that may be explained as Gramsci called ‘the consciousness of historicity’. A lot of work on Tibetan exile reflects the pride of the Tibetan refugees when it comes to their ethnicity. The continuous rejection of the refugees to the claims of Tibet made by the Chinese and the persistence in pushing against Chinese efforts to make their claims “natural” captures the fact that these refugees take pride of belonging in there. According to Gramsci, the consciousness of historicity spurs self-knowledge, disallows passive acceptance of the status quo and creates a resistance to processes of “naturalization.” The older generation in exile those who escaped from central Tibet more than forty years ago, embody the old ways in their language, dances, religious practice, garments and lifestyles. Diehl (2002) also observes that these are those majority of individuals who have clear memories and personal experiences that are in sync with the knowledge that have been lived by them. The chanting of the mantra and rotation of beads whilst completing a Kora, the head ornaments made of huge beads worn by the bride, chang ma singing at weddings, the drinking of butter tea from silver and wooden cups brought all the way from their land and wearing the heavy felt boots and chuba even during hot summers in India are the ways that can be considered important to what Malkki calls the “continual distillation and disciplining of...categorical purity.” (1995: 223) that is also similar to the concept of perceived ethnic integrity as put forward by Diehl. Most of refugees Tibetans seem to agree that contemporary Tibet has nothing Tibetan in the sense that the culture has been fading there and it is refugees in exile who are more Tibetan than them. They also seem to have an idea of what a Free Tibet will look like. This is also reflected and is evident in the booklets that are published by the various departments of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Information and foreign Affairs, the Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre (TPPRC) and the Planning Commission. In order to understand how and why many Tibetans refugees perceive themselves as “more Tibetan” than Tibetans in contemporary Tibet we may refer to Malkki’s observations concerning how the concept of displacement can transform into a type of

categorical purity (1992: 35). As we write on the culture of any community, be it in exile or not; their religion and religious activity cannot be overlooked. The Tibetan community in exile have been successful in maintain their religious monastic traditions. In his article, “Of Monks and Monasteries,” Sherab Gyatso writes, “In the exiled community despite the undoubted decrease in wealth and political influence, the monastic visage whilst perhaps battered and bruised remains both recognizable and supremely visible. Reinvention and reform are definitely not the order of the day here. Rather, it is in very familiar guises that the Tibetan monk and the monastery have re-established positions for themselves at the very heart of the new society” (2003: 213). The most important concept in the monastic tradition is Continuity. The idea of the tradition going on for generations and generations is the core concept in the monastic traditions. In the monastic context, the notion of spiritual transmission serves as an assurance of the validity and authenticity of doctrines, social organization and ritual practice. The monks do not think of tradition as a concept but primarily an “embodied” experience. The monastic life that is practiced in exile is not similar to the one practiced in Tibet. The monastic life is structured in accordance with a ritual schedule.

When the Chinese invasion started many monks fled into exile, congregating at a place called Buxa Duar in West Bengal. Saklani (1984) in her study noted that 69% of Tibetans continue to draw sustenance from their conviction that they left their country for the sake of ‘saving their religion.’ In the first decade after their reestablishment, the monastic institutions in India had a relatively small population but they were not affected by a decline in recruitment or defection. According to Strom (1995: 40), “The reasons were that the processes of sociocultural change in the diaspora had not gained momentum and that they recruited many monks from the Buddhist societies of the Himalayan region (who prior to 1959 were sent to Tibet for higher education).” Tibet’s border was sealed completely during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). This is when the Tibetans set about transforming their lives and hence set forth in creating for themselves their own society in exile. During this period, the most important ‘mingling’ of two different communities: the lay community and the monastic community happened since they were all on the same boat. However, later on with the passage of time the monks gradually extricated themselves once more with the surviving member of many of the former monasteries in Tibet re-establishing their old centers. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Tibet again started seeing a relaxation in restrictions and so many began to escape Chinese

domination began to relax in Tibet and those who were into religious practice again joined the re-established monastic centers in exile.

Gyatso 2003 and Strom 1995 write that there has been a steady rise in the number of monk population due to the influx of monks from Tibet. Strom observes that the monks from Tibet now constitute the majority whereas the monks from India are proportionately reduced to a small and decreasing minority. The monks from Tibet are predominantly youths or adults who have chosen monastic life as are the majority of the monks recruited from the diaspora (1995:41). The two groups embody completely different sets of knowledge and experience. Whereas the latter have been educated in a modern lay or monastic school for few years and have confronted urban Indian culture, the former in most cases come from rural areas of Tibet. Not many of them have received even the most rudimentary education, if they have been to school before. In general newcomers therefore accept the status quo of the institutions; that is they voice no need for structural changes, the introduction of new subjects and other modifications. In this sense, they represent no challenge to the institution and its dominant elders. Strom noted that some of the young diasporic monks even voice the suspicion that a segment of the newcomers had been sent by the Chinese in order to make trouble. The difference between the two groups is augmented by the fact that most of the newcomers are relatively old when they come to India. They are then too old to join the monastic schools and therefore rarely introduced to subjects other than Buddhist philosophy. As few of them learn Hindi, English or other modern subjects, they remain isolated from India society. The majority of the Tibetan monastic institutions in India are relatively small, local monasteries devoted to ritual practice. These are, in most respects, traditional institutions where social organization ritual performance deviate little from the praxis in Tibet prior to 1959. The majority of Tibetan monks in India are however living in what Strom (1995) terms “central monastic institutions. The latter are institutions devoted to higher education. These are of several kinds, which may be classified as follows:

- a. The Gelugpa monasteries: Ganden, Drepung and Sera (Densa sum);
- b. The Nyingmapa, Kagyupa and Sakyapa shedra, and The Institute of Buddhist Dialectics (IBD).

Densa sum, the “Three seats of learning,” are in fact six monasteries since each of the three consists of two distinct “colleges” (tratsang) which have separate economies and (apart from a common body) administrations as well as different curricula (as regards commentaries to

the basic texts) and ritual traditions (Strom 1995). Whereas the other shedra¹⁶ are specialized schools for higher education, Densa sum are also monasteries with particular ritual traditions as well as communities consisting of houses constituted on the basis of the regional origin of members. Densa sum are large independent institutions with a highly decentralized internal structure. These are crucial differences which account for the fact that the shedra of the three oldest orders have undergone much greater changes in India than Densa sum particularly in terms of educational organization. In contrast to the traditional education of the monastery proper, the education of Sera Je school is organized according to modern principles of school administration. However it also functions as a traditional monastic school aimed at the memorization of religious texts. The school thus represents an interface between the two contexts: old and the new or Tibet and the West (Strom 1995: 42).

¹⁶ shedra - school

CHAPTER 3

OBJECTIVES

This study focuses on sketching and evaluating the monastic life of the monks in the present time. It aims in understanding the lifestyle and life patterns of the monks. It also tries to understand the effects of modernization on the personal, social and economic life of the monks living in the monasteries of Kalimpong district. The objective of the study is to find out the following:

1. To examine the lifestyle of the monks inside the monastery and their life patterns.
2. To understand the reasons for joining the monastic way of life.
3. To study the role of the monks and monastery as an organization.
4. To understand their socio economic, educational and health status.
5. To analyze the social life and social relationships of the monks.
6. To understand if there is any variation of their lifestyle in doctrine and in practice.
7. To identify the degree of importance of the use of technology in the daily lives.
8. To understand the degree of importance they have in the community and cultural life of the layman and the view of the layman on their lifestyle.
9. To understand the intergenerational differences in their beliefs, lifestyles and life patterns.
10. To understand their views and ideas regarding the future of monasticism in Tibetan Buddhism in the coming era.

11. To find out the problems they face, if any.
12. To find out the continuity and change in the monastic life of the monks and monasticism as a whole.

CHAPTER 4

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

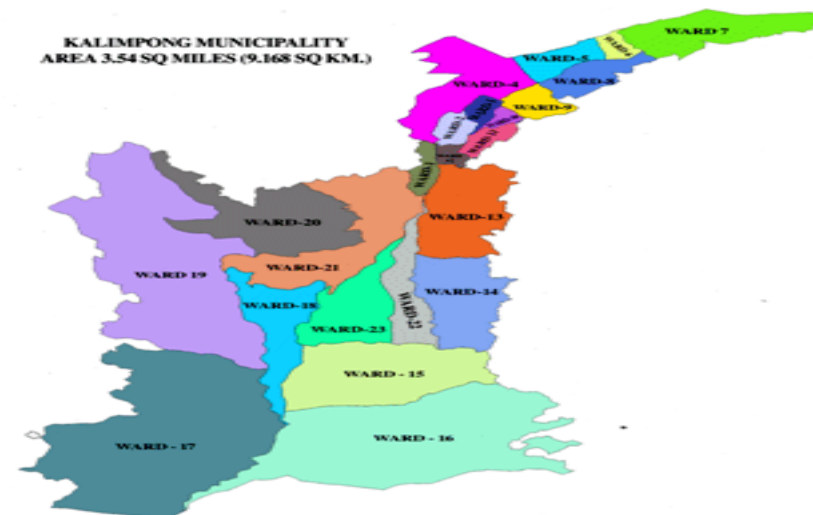
Saklani (1984) has been vocal about the idea that Tibetans have been very much successful in the maintenance and continuity of their ancestral way of life even in exile even though they have been in the direct face of acculturation with the host nation.

The study focused on the notions of acculturation, adaptation and change as the important ways through which one may chalk out the history of Tibetans in exile. They were based on the ideas of preservation of the past culture and its continuity. Basu (2008) states that it is not surprising that the anthropologists' primary research agenda for long became to assess the Tibetans' rate of adaptation to their new surroundings and their degree of acculturation. Here, the point of interest lies in the construction of their religious life in a country that has a majority of population following another religion. In his article, "Of Monks and Monasteries," Sherab Gyatso writes, "In the exiled community despite the undoubted decrease in wealth and political influence, the monastic visage whilst perhaps battered and bruised remains both recognizable and supremely visible. Reinvention and reform are definitely not the order of the day here. Rather, it is in very familiar guises that the Tibetan monk and the monastery have re-established positions for themselves at the very heart of the new society" (2003: 213). The most important concept in the monastic tradition is Continuity. The idea of the tradition going on for generations and generations is the core concept in the monastic traditions. In the monastic context, the notion of spiritual transmission serves as an assurance of the validity and authenticity of doctrines, social organization and ritual practice. The monks do not think of tradition as a concept but primarily an "embodied" experience. The monastic life that is practiced in exile is not similar to the one practiced in Tibet. The monastic life is structured in accordance with a ritual schedule. Once the monasteries were constructed, the monk population had to be increased in order to fill it up. Gyatso and Strom write that there has been a steady rise in the number of monk population due to the influx of monks from Tibet. Strom observes that the monks from Tibet now constitute the majority whereas the monks from India are proportionately reduced to a small and decreasing minority. The monks from Tibet are predominantly youths or adults who have chosen monastic life as are the majority of the monks recruited from the diaspora (1995:41). However, this study aims to understand that is the population of the monks still on the rise as the influx of monks from Tibet has come to an almost complete closure? Are the monks from

India rising in population? The study also seeks to understand if the monastic institutions are that are constructed to maintain past culture and identity are being able to do the same in this current time. The influence of technology and modernization that has left no stone unturned, has it affected the monastic life? What are the changes and continuity in the lifestyle of the monks and their life pattern? This study aims to layout the view of the layman as well towards the monastic community and their identity. The research seeks to source the honest views of the monk community regarding the future of monasticism.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH SETTING: THE LOCATION AND GENERAL BACKGROUND



- Map of Kalimpong Municipality
- Map showing the tourist places in the Kalimpong district.



Any research on any topic would be incomplete without the description of the area where it is being studied. That is because the geographical location, the environment and its people have

an important role in bringing about changes, reactions and contribute tremendously to the problem being studied directly or indirectly.

The study of the monastic life of the monks of a monastery would be almost incomplete without studying the place where the monastery is situated. Firstly, a monastery is only constructed in a particular location after researching on the fact of its accessibility to its religious followers. Secondly, the monastery is constructed looking at the demand and the conditions that will enhance the proper functioning of the institutions. So, the study of the research setting and its general background is utmost important. The mighty Himalayas, flora and fauna and the pleasant weather of Kalimpong has been the reasons of its popularity as a major tourist destination in the eastern Himalayas and also has helped a lot in providing a calm environment for monastic life to function well. The mountains and the hills have almost been commonly used terms when describing monasteries and monastic life because it has been seen that monasteries in Tibet were generally constructed on hilltops and mountains in order to provide calm, soothing, peaceful and solitary environment. Even in exile, the construction of monasteries was considerably done in hilly regions and hill areas across and nearby the areas of Tibetan settlement. Kalimpong itself being a small hill town and considered as hill station by many, there are many monasteries that are located within the Kalimpong district. Even though there is no presence of a recognized Tibetan settlement in Kalimpong district as such, yet the presence of Tibetan Buddhist is found especially around the 10th mile and 11th mile area. In that particular area itself we can find two famous monasteries. Kalimpong district has many monasteries out of which the following monasteries within its jurisdiction has gained a lot of recognition and is famous amongst the people:

1. Zang Dhok Palri Phodang Monastery also known as Durpin Gumba, Durpin
2. Tongsa Gumba, 10th mile
3. Tamang Gumba, 9th mile
4. Sakya Tsechen Thinley Dargye Ling Monastery, 11th mile
5. Tharpa Choeling Monastery, Tirpai
6. Kagyü Thekchen Ling Monastery, Lava
7. Sangchen Dorjee Gumpa, Pedong

Apart from these monasteries, there are small monasteries that are found in rural village areas that have been constructed by the village community themselves for religious reasons and maintenance of culture and run by the villagers themselves housing one or few monks and sometimes with no monks at all. The following two monasteries have been the area of research for this thesis mainly because it lies within the Kalimpong town and is the biggest of all the monasteries in terms of its architecture and housing within the Kalimpong town.

1. **Zang Dhok Palri Phodang**

It is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery located at Durpin hill in Kalimpong. Commonly known as Durpin Gumpa by the locals, it is one of the famous monasteries in Kalimpong. It was consecrated in 1976 by the visiting the fourteenth Dalai Lama. The monastery has many rare scriptures that were brought into India after the invasion of Tibet in 1959 by those in exile. The monastery belongs to the Nyingma sect. The religious head is the Singdup Rinpoche who is of Indian Origin. The Rinpoche funds the monastery and is also financially supported by Tsechu Offering Association, which is a local association of Kalimpong.



a. Zang Dhok Palri Phodang monastery on a clear day.

2. Sakya Monastery

The Sakya Tsechen Thinley Dargye Ling monastery commonly known as Sakhya Gumpa was established in 2006. The monastery is located at 11th mile, Topkhana just a mile away from the main town. The religious head of the monastery is the Khondung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche who is the son of Sakya Trizin Ngawang Kunga who was the head until 2017. The monastery belongs to the Sakya Sect.



The Sakhya Monastery

Many scholars have explained various meanings of what the word Kalimpong could have meant or mean. K. P. Tamsang in his work, ‘The Unknown and Untold Reality About The Lepcha’s’ opines that the original name is ‘Kalenpung’ which in the Lepcha language means “Hillock of Assemblage”. The he further goes on to suggest that this name was however

modified in the passage of time into ‘Kaleebung’ and later into Kalimpong. There is another meaning of Kalimpong that the locals generally would like to associate with that is “Ridges where we play” because of a myth associated with it that during non agricultural days, the Lepcha men would play and organize a lot of field sports here. There is a literal Tibetan translation of the word Kalimpong and it means “The Stockade of King Ministers” from the two Tibetan words ‘Kalon’ meaning Kings and Ministers and ‘Pong’ meaning Stockade. There are some Tibetan Scholars who translate ‘Pong’ as assembly and hence mean “Assembly of Kings and Ministers”. The locals also call Kalimpong as ‘Kaleybung’ or the Black Spurs.

Kalimpong or locally pronounced as Kaleybung is located geographically at an altitude of 1300 metres is an east Indian hill town in the Himalayan foothills of West Bengal. Kalimpong was earlier a subdivision of the Darjeeling district until the 14th February 2017 where it was declared as a district. After splitting from the Darjeeling district, Kalimpong became the twenty first district of West Bengal on the fourteenth of February, 2017. Kalimpong as a district consists of the Kalimpong Municipality that houses twenty three wards and three community development blocks that is Kalimpong I, Kalimpong II and Gorubathan with a total of forty two gram panchayats

Population (Town)	49,403
Population (District)	2,51,642
Altitude (town)	1250 metres
Climate	Summer Max – 27 C, Min – 16 C Winter Max – 17 C, Min – 5C
Tourist season	Mid-February to June October to mid-December
Languages spoken	English, Nepali, Hindi
People	Gorkhas, Lepchas, Tibetans, Marwaris, Bengalis and Biharis

Distance from major cities and time taken by road	Siliguri – 68 kms, 2 ½ hours
	Darjeeling – 55 kms, 2 ½ hours
	Gangtok – 72 kms, 3 hours
	Bagdogra – 80 kms, 3 hours
	New Jalpaiguri – 75 kms, 3 hours

Source: Census 2011 and Kalimpong District Administration files

Historical Overview

There is the lack of a proper and authenticated earliest recorded history of Kalimpong. The history of Kalimpong was recorded only after the Anglo-Bhutanese War of 1864. In 1865, Kalimpong was taken over by British from Bhutan. The Treaty of Sinchula that was signed on 11 November 1865 gave Kalimpong importance and prominence.

Earlier Kalimpong was a part of the Sikkimese kingdom that was inhabited by three major communities – the Lepchas or Rong, the Bhutias and the Limbus or Tshongs. The first King or the Chogyal of Sikkim is believed to have brought a consolidated rule over the whole of Sikkim including Kalimpong. Later on Tensung Namgyel was born in 1664 was put to the throne in 1670. He went on to marry thrice, His first wife was a Tibetan and he had a daughter named Pende Amo. The second wife was a Sikkimese, bore him a son Chador Namgyel, and the third wife was the daughter of a Limbu king. Chador Namgyel (1686) succeeded his father in 1700 when he was just 14 years old. His half-sister Pende Amo was offended as she was older and was also the first child of the royal family and so she sought the help of the Bhutanese and the child kind fled to Tibet. Chador Namgyel returned to Sikkim in 1706 and the Bhutanese were coaxed to evacuate the entire kingdom that lied to the west of the Teesta River. However the Bhutanese still maintained their position at the Damsang fort and the area east to the Teesta which is now the present day Kalimpong. The first time any official reference was made in regards to Kalimpong was by Ashley Eden of

Bengal Civil Service in his report to the Secretary to the Government of India. Surgeon Rennie (1866), in his book *Bhotan and the story of the Dooar War* made another reference of Kalimpong but did not show Kalimpong on the map in his book. After the Anglo-Bhutan War (1864) and the Treaty of Sinchula (1865) the area was transferred to the District of Darjeeling. This is when Kalimpong came into significance and was set on for development because Kalimpong was an important centre for trade with Tibet as the Jeleppla pass was close by and the access to the centre of Tibet would be easier. The British government then started to acknowledge Kalimpong as a hill station followed by the consumption of the locals by the Scottish missionaries who started developmental activities in Kalimpong. The Chumbi Valley of Tibet was comfortably accessible via the Jeleppla Pass. The distance between the pass and Kalimpong was nearly 100 kms only. Hence trade with Tibet was channelized through Kalimpong. Mules were a form of transportation then, and items like grain, fur and wool were traded. The town started to prosper and a lot of people were attracted to it and hence people from the plains and others started to flock in along with Britishers building summer cottages and well to do families visiting it as a hill station.

Alex McKay writes, “...but in 1866, the Darjeeling district was expanded to include areas newly annexed from Bhutan. While primarily comprised of the Duars, this new territory also included the Lepcha hamlet of Kalimpong. Situated on a ridge at a height of around 4,000 feet, some 30 miles from Darjeeling, Kalimpong was to become the center of missionary activities in this region, while Darjeeling remained the political center” (McKay 2007: 69).

McKay also mentions about the difference between the character of Kalimpong and Darjeeling referring to McGovern (1920) that Darjeeling held an official post and had little influence of the missionaries as compared to Kalimpong where the missionaries had already started functioning well. The Scottish were owners of most of the important buildings and huge areas of land. The local aristocrats were the senior missionaries and Dr. Graham, the then head of the mission was a sort of king like figure for all. People including non-Christians also went to seem to even seek justice and advice. Rev William Macfarlane was the key person who actually helped in the early development of Kalimpong as missionary centre. Rev. Macfarlane was born in Perthshire, 1840 and educated at St Andrews University. The Church of Scotland’s Foreign Missionary Committee sent him to Bodh Gaya (now Bihar) where he remained from 1865 until that mission closed in 1870 where he happened to meet several Lepcha youths who had been sent to a church orphanage in Bihar by a tea planter in

Darjeeling. The Scottish Missionaries had an important role in the development of Kalimpong by improving the field of education and various welfare centers for the poor. In 1886, the Scottish University Mission Institution was started in 1886 for the boys and followed by the Kalimpong Girls High School was established in 1890. In the year 1900, Rev. J. A. Graham, founded the present Dr. Graham's Homes, which was aimed to be a school cum orphanage for destitute Anglo-Indian children. So, these features were strong enough to attract a lot of people. By 1907 Kalimpong had taken a new frame and in 1916 was made a subdivision and recently in 2017, it was declared as a separate district.

Economy

The economic development of Kalimpong was brought to a halt by the Chinese aggression in 1962 after which trade through the Jelepela pass was closed. More than 80% of people in Kalimpong live their livelihood by means of income from farming. The economy of Kalimpong is mainly agro-based. The temperate climate of Kalimpong has led to the practice of agro-horticulture and also there is rich variety of plants and flowers. Basically, the products grown and cultivated here are potato, paddy maize, oilseed and millets. They cultivate mostly vegetables, cash crops, grains flowers and some are into dairy and mushroom culture. The cash crops grown are broomsticks, ginger, large cardamom, betel nut, oranges, peas and tea leaves. In the Gorubathan block of the Kalimpong District, there are a total of six tea gardens that manufacture high quality CTC grade. The Samabeong tea estate near Lava is the only one that produces orthodox organic variety of tea. The tea gardens provide sustainable environment as well as attract tourists. The quality of tea is also quite praise worthy. The six tea-estates are Samabeong, Upper Fagu, Lower Fagu, Kumai, Ambik & Mission Hill of Kalimpong district and falls under the Gorubathan Development Block. Kalimpong is also known for Dalle Khursani (*Capsicum Annuum*) a variety of small but very hot chillies. As mentioned earlier, the climate also favours the growth of beautiful ornamental plants like orchids, Gladioli, cactuses and Azelias. Many nurseries have come up as businesses. Apart from agriculture, Kalimpong generates economy from education institutions, handicrafts, nurseries, local products and tourism.

Flora and Fauna

Kalimpong is a part of the Eastern Himalayas that is one of the sixteen hotspot zones in the world and boasts a rich bio-diversity. The Neora Valley National Park (88 sq. km) is a national asset which is situated on the north-eastern face of the district with its dense subtropical and impenetrable temperate forest. There are six natural subtropical forests that are located at different zones in Mongpong, Chunabhatti, Pubung-Mangzing, Dalimkot-Gourbathan, Kumai, Jholung Paren to Todey, via Godak.

The rain forests can be found at the foot of Kalimpong near the banks of the river Teesta and Relli. These forests are rich in the flowering species of trees mainly Acacia (Khair), Meliosma Pinnata (Dabdabe), Albizia (Siris) and Dalbergia (sissoo). In the lower hills, we can find the Sal trees. The deciduous subtropical forests consists of species like Gynocardia odrata (Gante), Callicarpa (Guenlo), Duabanga (Lampate), Terminalia (Saj), Phyllanthus (Amala), Cinamomum (Tejpat), Engelhardia (Mauwa) and Ficus (Khaniun). The presence of climbers like Entada (Pangra), Tinospora (Gurjo), Combretum (Thakauli), Mucuna (Kaoso & Baldengra), Cissus (Charchare) add more to the beauty of the forests.

The evergreen temperate forests showcase the beautiful Himalayan flora. With as many as seven species of Rhododendrons in the Neora Valley, explorers are attracted a lot to this place. There are around 300 species of orchids out of which the popular ones are Paphiopedilum, Pleione, Herminium, Oberonia, Coelogyne, Dendrobium, Cymbidium, etc. along with the common ground orchids. Cinchona Plantation is also one of the main attractions of this place as it is the only medicinal plant garden of the of the country. A large stretch of plantation has been done in Kalimpong at Munsong Rongo and Gairibas.

There is a presence of huge diversity in the fauna of this region. According to the District Administration files, around 130 mammals, 550 birds, 125 freshwater fish, 51 reptiles, 25 amphibians, 43 moths and 24 butterflies are found. There is also the presence of many endangered species of wildlife in Kalimpong like the red panda and munal pheasant, Himalayan black bear, clouded leopard tiger, Himalayan tahr, goral, gaur and pangolin at widely different altitudes. The Siberian weasel, today cat, Asiatic black bear, common India leopard, barking bear, Indian bison, Moupan hare and Himalayan squirrels are also said to be present in the forest belts.

Religion and Ethnicity

Kalimpong boasts of its ethnic diversity, as there is the presence of a variety of ethnic groups that form the population of the district. These ethnic groups live in harmony and respect each other's culture proving a proper example of unity in diversity and the mosaic culture of India. At present, the different religious ethnic groups are the Hindus who are a majority, followed by the Buddhists, Christians and Muslims respectively. Sikh and Jains are also found in minority.

Religion	Total Population	Male Population	Female Population	Population %	Literacy
Hindu	32454	16650	15804	65.69%	59.01%
Muslim	2111	1148	963	4.27%	3.6%
Christian	6224	2939	3285	12.6%	11.71%
Sikh	248	216	32	0.5%	0.5%
Buddhist	8106	4016	4090	16.41%	14.89%
Jain	85	40	45	0.17%	0.16%
Other religions and persuasions	78	41	37	0.16%	0.15%
Religion not stated	97	50	47	0.2%	0.17%

Source: Census 2011

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

When one goes on to research on a topic that has almost little attention of the scholarly world, one feels like entering a blank canvass where one can scribble anything one feels like without having to attest it but at the same time face the risk of large criticisms in times to come. In order to provide complete justice to and collect authentic information without any bias, it is imperative that a proper, systematic and theoretical analysis is conducted. Research methodology fulfills this demand gives us a clear concept and equips us with proper methods to gather data and information. Research methodology is the sum of all the processes that involves in making a research complete as it deals with the process of describing, explaining and also making predictions of a phenomenon in order to come to a solution of the problem specified. Thus, the research methodology is actually the systematic, theoretical analysis of the procedures applied to a field of study (Kothari, 2004). The research methodology girdles the research design, the approaches, sampling methods, data collection techniques and the processing and the analysis of data.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher dedicates her effort to analyze the underlying social implications of certain trends of the responses of the monks towards their lifestyle. To accomplish this, the researchers uses both qualitative as well as quantitative study is conducted, depending on the demands and supply of the situation and the sample. The study using **mixed method** was not a choice, but it was imperative and absolutely necessary. In order to measure the concept, quantitative methods are used for data collection especially statistical data by means of means of questionnaires and the collected data, observation and field notes are analyzed by means of qualitative methods. Photographs and videos have also been documented as visual aide. Here comes the need to plan a research design which is the blue print of the research. This helps in data analysis and its significance lies in the fact that it not only guides but also determines the execution of the research process. The design of this research will be completed with the different stages as mentioned under:

1. Conceptualizing the level of religiosity in their lifestyles.
2. Taking into account the units of analysis that is as to whom the researcher wants to focus the study on.
3. Sampling

4. Deciding on and opting for the methods of data collection
5. Analysis of the findings

The researcher here intends to perform a descriptive research using ethnography techniques as well as quantitative techniques because that offers a detailed account of what is going on, paints the picture of the phenomenon and at the same time describes the frequency of a particular phenomenon in accuracy.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

The study deals with the lifestyle of the monks living in the monasteries in Kalimpong (town). A generalized view of monks that exist in today's time is that they are religious individuals who have quit the worldly life in totality in order to pursue a life of spirituality, renunciation and religious devotion. It is generally also expected of monks to be different to the laity in many different spheres as in life choices, needs and lifestyle. In this research, the researcher attempts to answer whether these generalized view or expected ideal monk lifestyle exists or if modernity in terms of technology and lifestyle has affected them. The research aims at bringing about a clear idea of the lifestyle of the monks living in the monastery.

UNIT OF ANALYSIS: The research focuses on the religious group of monks, only those who live inside the monasteries. It is characterized on some socio demographic features like age-group, place of birth, economic status, religious orientation, languages known.

SAMPLE SIZE

A Sample is a portion of people drawn from a larger population. It will be representative of the population only if it has same basic characteristics of the population from which it has drawn. The total sample size is 150. 150 monks were taken into account for quantitative data collection.

SAMPLING: The main concern of sampling is not about the types of units but how many and of what particular description and by what method should be chosen (Singleton and Straits, 1999:134). The researcher hence must decide on a sample design taking into consideration its reliability for the particular study. Broadly, we learn about two types of sampling: Probability and Non-Probability. The sampling type that has been selected for this study is Non Probability Sampling and the method used is Purposive Sampling and Snowballing.

The need to use Purposive Sampling also known as judgmental sampling in this research was because the researcher intended to study a category of people known as the Vajrayana Buddhist monks who were living in a certain location that is inside monasteries in Kalimpong and deliberately studied them only. The researcher knew where to exactly find them and her category was clearly defined. The chosen variables are given importance and it represents the population but the selection is deliberate and based on judgment. The researcher has also used snowballing sampling along with purposive sample because the monks were not available for communications all the time even inside the monasteries, so she had to get hold of a few monks who would then bring their other monk friends for a conversation and interviews. In this way, the research gained volume. Snowballing was also used to gain acquaintance of an old monk, who was living in the monastery but had left sometime ago due to old age.

RESEARCH APPROACHES

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH: This type of research involves the collection and analysis of data that can be measured in quantity by means of statistical/mathematical representation. It gives the researcher an ability to generate statistical data. the researcher has conducted statistical analysis generating the socio-economic factors, age, languages and food habits etc.

QUANLITATIVE RESEARCH: It is the type of research that deals with non-numerical data and is generally descriptive. Qualitative research has been used in social research since ages ago and is continued to do so. This type helps in interpreting and investigating meanings, symbols and social processes. Ethnography is a form of qualitative research where the researcher is in contact with the unit of analysis, acknowledges theory as well as the researchers role and depends on data collected through observation, participation and interviews. The research uses participation and observation to gather data. Open-ended questions also allow generation of qualitative data and their analysis. This research has used the said methods.

The researcher has used both quantitative and qualitative research during the survey in order to study the lifestyle of the monks living in the monastery. The study of a large but confined institution such as a monastery having its own norms and strict discipline requires flexibility at the end of the researcher. Since the monks have their own strict lifestyle guided and

monitored by the monastery, the researcher needs to conduct the data collection by means in a way that will not hinder their timetable or obstruct their way of life. Also, because the main objective of the study is to understand their lifestyle, this cannot be done by hear say or just limited to questionnaires. This requires detailed participant observation, field study, in order to refrain from addition of any external viewpoints and biasness thus focusing on the exact actual data that can be collected. This led to the choice of the qualitative method: ethnography by using observation and participation, visual data, writing of notes and analysis. It involves the application of the methods that is very much obvious to our common sense and we can easily make sense out of in our daily lives and can be systematical and rigorous scientifically at the same time (O'Reilly, 2005:1). Taylor (2002) understands ethnography as the involvement of empirical work, especially observation, with the aim of producing a full, nuanced, no-reductive text, in the ethnographic tradition. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) keep themselves away from marking boundaries around ethnography because since we all study the social world using the same techniques, there is not much distinction between ethnography and other methods. They give us a very loose definition of ethnography suggesting that it basically involves "the ethnographer participating...in peoples daily lives watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions (1995:1) " and collecting any and every data related to the research, any information that is related to or gives some kind of information on the topic. Savage (2000) suggests and stresses on the fact that it is not possible to bring up a standard definition of ethnography but it obviously includes participant observation using various methods that may evolve through the study, focusing on the meaning of individuals actions and explanations and not much on the quantitative part. Oommen (1997) states that ethnography is a set of ideas or theory about research that rests on a number of fundamental criteria or critical minimum markers. Willis and Trondman (2000) explain ethnography as a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents and the jotting down the encounter without reducing the experience.

Malinowski writes, 'Proper conditions for ethnographic work...consist mainly in cutting oneself off from the company of other white men, remaining in as close contact with the native...can really only be achieved by camping right in their villages' (1922:7). This view shared by him is one of the key features to define what real ethnography is. One cannot perform ethnographic study by sitting in their room, collecting data over telephonic conversation; this loses the reliability and validity of the data. We should get out there and do it for ourselves, we should get into conversation and adapt to their ways to understand what is

actually going around. Also, we should not dare to bring the respondent out of their natural setting. O'Reilly believes it is 'unscientific' to do so (2005:10).

Keeping all this mind, the research was conducted in their natural setting inside the monastery, without hampering any of their of their daily chores and activities, speaking to them only when in their leisure. I would like to mention that I began my research with qualitative study and then concluded with quantitative study in the field because I was somewhere skeptical that if I formerly started the questionnaire interview, it might alter their lifestyle later on as they might be consciously doing so. It is often seen that interviews create consciousness among respondents ending up with the fact that the respondents try and show an image of them that has been created falsely to acquire a place in good books of the researcher. This is human nature I think, because we also like to show the best version of our self to someone who is newly acquainted to us. What people say they do might not always be what they actually do, this might change according to the circumstances and situation. So, with this thought in mind, I decided to carry on my research first with participant observation. Ethics is very important in ethnography and their importance can reflected in the inclusion of a section of ethical ethnography in many books (O'Reilly 2005, Taylor 2002, Atkinson et al. 2001, Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, Pink 2001). Even though my identity as a researcher was disclosed to the senior monks and office staff leading to an overt image of myself, this did not hamper my data collection as a participant observer because most of the monks seemed to be least bothered about my presence in their territory and the reason for this could be because:

- (i) I have been a frequent visitor to the monastery as a sincere devotee and many might still be thinking that I am there for devotional purpose and nothing more.
- (ii) Since I was just an observer there (for the first few weeks) they were not conscious of my existence.

The ethnographic research suggests that we learn about the lives of the people or at least an aspect of their lives from their own perspective and their own experiences. This is possible by participating in their lives by observation and presence. This involves doing things over time, being physically present, mentally grasping scenes and writing notes followed by collection of data via interview and statistics wherever relevant. The first step to participant observation is to gain access to the group. It was quite easy for me as I already had an access to the monks as I, myself being a Buddhist would visit the monasteries regularly and had

contacts with a few monks who decided to help me out. In fact, gaining access was easy because all the monasteries were flattered by my interest in them. This access was overt making it convenient for me to study them.

Time

Participant Observation takes a lot of time. The field survey of this research stretches over a period of two years, and a total of more than nine months to be precise from December 2016 to December 2018. As Malinowski observes there are some peculiar situations that catch our attention when we view it for the first few times but as soon as we become used to it, we stop seeing them from that perspective and there are some situations that can only be understood once we are familiar to the local situation (Malinowski, 1922:21). Malinowski's statement makes a lot of relevance as there are different phases and these phases seem to have a different meaning that changes with time. It is extremely important to give and take time when it comes to participant observation. The viewpoint changes with the passage of time. At first, you are a newcomer to the setting so you see things differently, then slowly you will see smaller things that you missed out in the first place. These smaller details will help build up the analysis and reach out to respondents. My first observation as a newcomer was that the senior monks in the Sakya monastery gather during recess in the office to have a cup of tea. Later on, I discovered that it was not for the tea they gathered, but to discuss the various issues to occur during the day like classes and rituals and if any changes is required, the cup of tea was just an addition which may or may not be there. As time passes and your familiarity develops, you will realize that you have learnt so much in the process about them and their life, their ways, methods, rules and customs. As the whole field survey took over more than 9 months, the outcome has been informative and authentic.

Language

Tonkins (1984) states that many ethnographers are not ready to admit that they do not know the language or lack their skills. This leads to difficulty. Language is the key to any research. An important necessity especially if you are performing a research outside your group speaking a different language is learning the language. Fortunately, the respondents knew the local language (Nepali) and my (little) knowledge of Tibetan made things very smooth and easy. I, however, admitted to the respondents about my weakness in the Tibetan language and so the monks happily obliged to respond in either Nepali or English and in cases of monks who knew only Tibetan, a monk who acted as an interpreter helped me a lot.

Participation And Observation

The key elements of participation and observation are what make participant observation. One should participate in the group in such a way that people are familiar with your presence and act the natural way, the way they would minus your presence or act in manner where they are not conscious of somebody watching over them. Being there, watching, taking part and observing while making mental notes and later writing them down. This was done during the entire study. A detailed study was done in different settings and different times. For example, when they had lunch in the dining, I would be the first one to be there, sometimes helping the kitchen staff and the last one to leave. This helped me in getting a better insight.

Case study/ Life History Interviews

The case study approach was employed as an accepted and well-established qualitative research method (Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg, 1991; Rose, 1991) in order to understand their life history. The participant identification was done and respondents for the life history interview was specifically chosen using the age - monastic time criteria and willingness to be interviewed, monks were selected who were above the age of 25 and had completed at least 15 years of monastic life. This was done so because there would be the probability of more interesting experiences /information that could be gathered for the research. A semi-structured interview was conducted since I wanted to explore the ideas with the respondents and at same time I had to get a fixed response for a few criterias. The fact that the Case study method allows the researcher to investigate real life situations and take a holistic approach was the reason why it was chosen and also because it has no written boundaries as such making it exploratory, giving the respondent to describe without limits and very relevant when a researcher wants to know more on it or may add a 'why' or a 'how' in middle of a conversation leading to in depth data collection. The participants were explained that while every effort to ensure the confidentiality of their information would be made, total anonymity could not be promised as their might be people who know them already and might be easily able to identify them once they read the life history. Towards the end of the research, the participants were given the opportunity if in case they wanted to change or remove any information from the transcripts of the interview. This was done so because I did not want to risk their monastic identity just in case their life history might have an adverse effect later on as they live under certain norms.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

1. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule : A set of questionnaire was randomly supplied to all the monks at the end of the ethnographic research to collect the data for the statistical part of the research. The questions were close-ended and open ended. The close-ended questions were specific and aimed at statistical analysis. This part was very necessary to understand their life patterns and also to compare if the information received from the monastic administrative authorities regarding their lifestyle were true or not.
2. Observation and Participation: This method was extremely important to gather data via field notes and diary. Observing the activities, sometimes being a part of it and noting down experiences or making mental notes whichever was feasible has been an important part of the method of data collection.
3. Documentary Sources: This consists of official and unofficial data gathered and used from newspapers, journals and chronicles.
4. Literary Sources: The literary sources available in print or digitized form has been accessed and used to gain and supply both practical and theoretical knowledge which has been very fruitful in the accumulation of data.
5. Personal Sources: Photographs and videos taken by the researcher has been a part of the data gathering method.
6. In-Depth Interview: For the case study method, life histories were documented. In-depth interviews were conducted with monks who agreed to share their life stories and shared their perspective on monasticism in the changing time. Accurate and detailed information has been collected using this method.

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

7.1 Lamaism in the Vajrayana Tradition: Then and Now

It is a well-known fact that traditionally monasteries had an important and huge role in the lives of Buddhist laymen in Tibet. However, the role of the monasteries as an organization and the monks has not been fully explored by researchers and academicians. According to the estimates, there were over six thousand bigger and smaller monasteries were built in between 997 and 1959. The literature was mostly written by the monks and consisted of the study of doctrines and some contained information and their views on Tibetan society prior to 1959. The 14th Dalai Lama comments that, ‘In the Tibet we had a vast literature, much of it consisting translations of Sanskrit scriptures into Tibetan and subsequent commentaries to them. But more popular were the smaller indigenous works... others were the small works of the individual lamas containing pithy advice based on their own experiences.’ (Mullin 2008: xi) It is very unfortunate that most of the documentation work were lost and destroyed when the People’s Liberation Army arrived in Tibet in the 1950s and later during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976. Ellingson (1990) and Jansen (2018) are a few among other scholars who have been vocal enough to explain that there is a lacuna when it comes to documentation of the role of monasteries. Ellingson points out that there is a ‘need for understanding the monastic system, the most distinctive and characteristic of Tibetan socio-political institutions, on its own terms in order to develop a balanced and integral comprehension of Tibetan policy as a whole.’

Recently there has been a rise in the study of and this is one important reason to believe that there is a lack of research in the field and not much is known about the monastery as an organization and the extent to which modernity has affected it. Any organization and its structure will vary over time and space. This research brings to an understanding that not many structural changes have occurred in Tibetan monasticism. The successive lineage of the Dalai Lama as an institution is a strong example to prove this. This claim has also been made by Jansen (2018) as he writes, ‘...however, when viewed comparatively, for example by looking at Christian monasticism, Tibetan monastic policies changed surprisingly little. While the political climate has now changed entirely for monks, both in exile and in Tibet, the monkhood is—for the most part—a continuation of what came in before Tibet’ (2018: 5).

Jansen (2018) explains that the rules as stated in the monastic “law” codes imported from the Vinaya and in the texts of the monk vows that is common to all Tibetan monastics tend to result in a uniform set of guidelines and morals that they tend to follow. He also goes on to explain that there are also other factors that have a role to play in making the rules of what is accepted and what is not. He further writes that Buddhist ethics that were transmitted via the Buddhist text like the sutras, Jataka tales and different biographies of religious had in someway been able to instill the ideas of morality but he confirms that there were also other ways and factors that influenced their moral ideas and values. The geographical area, the culture, the political atmosphere and economical status were important factors that contributed to the development of their moral values that cannot be overlooked. Jansen also writes, “...monks were also influenced by the religious and political affiliations of the monastery and the charisma of particular spiritual leaders (2018: 3)”.

Never the less, the tremendous impact of monastic Buddhism in the culture of the Tibetans cannot be overlooked. Buddhist monasticism is seen as the prime concept of Buddhism. It is true that, however, relatively little is known about the role of these monasteries and their inhabitants in Tibetan society. Its importance is reflected both in doctrine and in practice. This research brings to light that the monasteries are not just a driving force for religion but so much more than religion itself. If we take the case of Tibet, where monasticism was dominant due to Buddhism, monasteries had a role to play in the society as a whole. This study brings out that the monastery still has an important role to play among the Buddhist followers and does definitely influence the Buddhist community and society to some extent. This research aims to bring out role and position of the monks and monasteries in a Tibetan society and also their views and ideologies and how much is actually put into practice? The relationship between theory and practice and doctrine and reality has garnered a lot of debate among scholars in all the fields. Even though it is difficult to determine the relationship, this study aims to reflect on how much is put into practice and if at all there is a line of similarity in theory and practices. The rules or the monastic laws/vows of the monks... are they really put into practice? This study tries to make sense of the monastery as an organization and its functioning in order to understand to what extent do they preserve the monastic tradition in this changing time while balancing between ‘moving forward’ and ‘preservation’ of the monastic tradition. In order to make sense of all these it is important to understand the way the monastery and the monastic life was in pre-modern Tibet. There is a lack of the study of the exact or approximate nature of the monastery and its functioning. In one instance, Ekai

Kawaguchi, the Japanese Buddhist monk who traveled widely in Tibet from 1900 to 1903 comments that there is a lack of “social engagement” by “Tibetan priests.” Kawaguchi comments that they are absolutely away from issues affecting the society or remain aloof from the society itself. The reason for this he puts forward is because Tibetan monks are socially aloof. Kawaguchi points out that it is this social aloofness that is again the consequences of a Tibetan ideal of a hermitic lifestyle where the monks voluntarily quit the outside world and have no role to play in it. This current study however reflects the contrasting nature of this view. As time passed, the role of monasteries has been gaining so much importance. This is evident in the comments made by Carrasco (1959) as he goes to say, “the church plays such an important role in Tibet, it should be examined as a whole and in its monasteries have been both lionized and demonized for their impact on pre-modern society in Tibet.’ Jansen (2018) further goes on to highlight the importance of Tibetan monastic Buddhism and comments that we cannot deny the importance of Tibetan monastic Buddhism because it helps us to understand the Tibetan culture but also its history.

This research addresses key points that the monastic organization has changed a lot in the recent times as we compare it to the ones earlier in Tibet. Having said this, we cannot in any way deny the level of continuity when it comes to the maintenance of culture and ideology along with the historical continuity. However, the focus here is not just on the monastic organization but also on the monks and their life style and life patterns. It becomes impertinent to study their attitudes on their religious identity, the society they live in and their views on the future of monasticism. This study explores this continuity as it studies the way of life of the monks living in the monasteries because it is this continuity that has been able to create the space that the monks hold in the society. The study explores their life pattern and lifestyle while trying to understand what the monks really feel about themselves ‘becoming monks’. It will be evident further that most of the monks were enrolled into the monastic life when they were very young. The youngest monk was enrolled when he was seven years old. This again brings a point of contemplation, ‘Does not one regret the decisions of your life taken when you hardly knew what it meant in the long run? Or does one stick to it because one lacks options to move out or because one does not know what the other world looks like? The study has also shown that there is quite a rise in the number of defection. Many monks have left the monastic journey in the middle of the path, while many break vows and continue on their journey of monkhood on their beyond the premises of the monasteries. The monastery as an institution has so many important functions in constructing the identity of a

monk. It is the monastery that instills discipline and social control whilst developing ideological and spiritual growth. The importance of monasteries for Tibetans can be reflected in the following paragraph, where the construction of the first monastery has been regarded as an important milestone for the Tibetans and the spread of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. The earliest extant monastic guidelines come from the late twelfth century, but according to traditional sources, Trisong Detsen introduced Monastic Buddhism in the eighth century with the establishment of the Samyé monastery in 779. Samyé is considered to be the first ‘real’ monastery in Tibet since it was the only place where the process of monks ordination took place. Tibetans have viewed the founding of Samyé as a crucial turning point concerning the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. Jansen observes that the introduction of Buddhism during the time of Songtsen Gampo was a civilizing force and the establishment of Samyé is thought of as an achievement that assured that Buddhism would prevail in Tibet (Jansen 2018: 32).

7.2 General Background:

In order to understand the life pattern of the monks and their lifestyle and to uncover the effects of modernity and the preservation of tradition, it becomes quintessential to gain a fair insight of their basic details, socio economic facts, their linguistic ability and religious background.

Age is a very important factor for any process because it involves time and space together. For this study, age had to be considered in **two different situations**: the age of the monk at the time of survey and the age of the monk while joining the monastery. This is because most of the monks join the monastery while they are young; it is very obvious that the views and opinions change over time and space. Hence, it is very impertinent to gain a sound knowledge of their age (then and now) in order to study the change in their perspective (if any) over time.

Table No. 1

Current Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
1-10	35	23.33
11-20	23	15.33
21-30	35	23.33
31-40	15	10.0
41-50	20	13.33
51-60	21	14.0

60 and above	01	0.66
Total	150	100

The above table shows the age of the monks at the time of the interview. It is seen that there is only one monk who is above the age of 60 residing in the monastery. The maximum numbers of monks are aged below 30 years. It is to be noted that all the monks are male in gender as the monasteries where the research has been conducted enroll only male monks.

Table No. 2**Age of the monks at the time of first enrollment in the monastery**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
1-10	95	63.33
11-20	53	35.33
21-30	02	1.33
31 and above	00	00
Total	150	100

The above table shows the age of the monks when they first joined the monastery. It is hereby understood from the table that approximately 63% of the total respondents were enrolled into monasticism between the ages of 1 to 10 that is their early childhood. As per the current study, no monk interviewed had joined later than they were 30 years and older and only 1% approx. monks joined after they were twenty years until thirty years old.

Table No. 3**Native Place or Original place of Residence/Birth**

If we are to study any social organization and its significance, it becomes our first responsibility to understand where are the participants of that organization from. Their native place is of utmost importance because it enables us to understand the influence of the particular organization over different places across the world.

Place of Birth	Frequency	Percentage
West Bengal, India	32	21.33
Sikkim, India	13	8.66
Nepal	90	60.0
Bhutan	10	6.66
Others	05	3.33
Total	150	100

The above table explains the native place or the place of birth of the monks. A large proportion of the total number of monks that amounts to sixty percent were born in Nepal (mostly from the remote places), thirty percent of the monks are born India and are from the states of West Bengal (21.33%) and Sikkim (8.66%). A few of them are from Bhutan and belong to approximately 6.66% of the total number. The remaining 3.33% are refugee Tibetans born in Tibet.

Table No. 4**Languages known by the Respondents**

The language is one of the most important features of a human society. It is the method in which we interact and communicate with each other. The knowledge of various languages other than ones own native dialect tends to reflect on ones access to different places and culture.

LANGUAGES		Frequency	Percentage
TIBETAN	READ	150	100
	WRITE	150	100
	SPEAK	150	100
ENGLISH	READ	132	88
	WRITE	132	88
	SPEAK	132	88
NEPALI	READ	20	13.33
	WRITE	20	13.33
	SPEAK	140	93.33
HINDI	READ	20	13.33
	WRITE	20	13.33
	SPEAK	140	93.33
OTHERS: (French)	READ	02	1.33
	WRITE	02	1.33
	SPEAK	02	1.33

The above table shows the linguistic ability of the monks. All of the monks are fluent in Tibetan and can read and write in Tibetan. Eighty eight percent of the monks can converse, write and read in English. Ninety three percent of the monks can speak in Nepali but only thirteen percent can also read and write. All the monks can speak in Hindi but only thirteen

percent can read and write. The result for Hindi and Nepali reading and writing lot is similar because of the usage of the same alphabets. Two of the monks could also speak, read and write in French. They have learnt it on their own and with the help of the books their French sponsors sent them. It was seen during the research that most of the monks speak in Tibetan for daily conversations within the monastery. They generally use Nepali language while they are out of the monastery boundaries because they say it is easier to use local dialect as Nepali is the local language and everyone know how to speak and understands. The few monks who do not know how to speak in Nepali are from Bhutan and Refugee Tibetan.

Table No. 5

PARENT'S PROFESSION

A profession helps in creating ones social identity and crafting ones social position in a hierarchically established society. Ones profession is a mere reflection of what status one holds in a society that is marked by materialistic parameters to put an individual in a certain section of the society according to how much one earns and also according to the respect and prestige it holds. Since most of the monks join at a very early age, it is quite necessary to understand the socio-economic background they come from because this will serve as an indicator to understand the various reasons for joining the monastery and choosing this hermit lifestyle.

PROFESSION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MONKS	20	13.33
GOVERNMENT/SEMI - GOVERNMENT JOB	05	3.33
AGRO-HORTI BASED	82	54.66
PRIVATE FIRMS	03	2.0
DAILY WAGE LABORERS	40	26.66
Total	150	100

The above table shows the profession of their father and/or mother. It is to be mentioned here that few of the monks no longer have surviving parents but have given their profession while they were living as data inputs. More than fifty percent of the monks that are approximately fifty five percent of the sample size come from families surviving on agriculture for their living. They cultivate seasonal vegetables and paddy either in their own land, which is very few, or mostly as tenant laborers. Another huge margin of approximately twenty seven percent of the monks have parents who work as daily wage laborers who work as masons, carpenters and porters and around thirteen percent come from the family of monks. For this group, it is generally taken as a family tradition that has been continuing as a generation. ‘The father has been a monk, so one of the son has to be one, this is going on in my family for as long four generations’, says Jhampel, a 19 year old monk. A small margin of three and two percent of the monks have their parents working in government sector and private firms respectively.

Table No. 6**Religious Background Prior to Ordination**

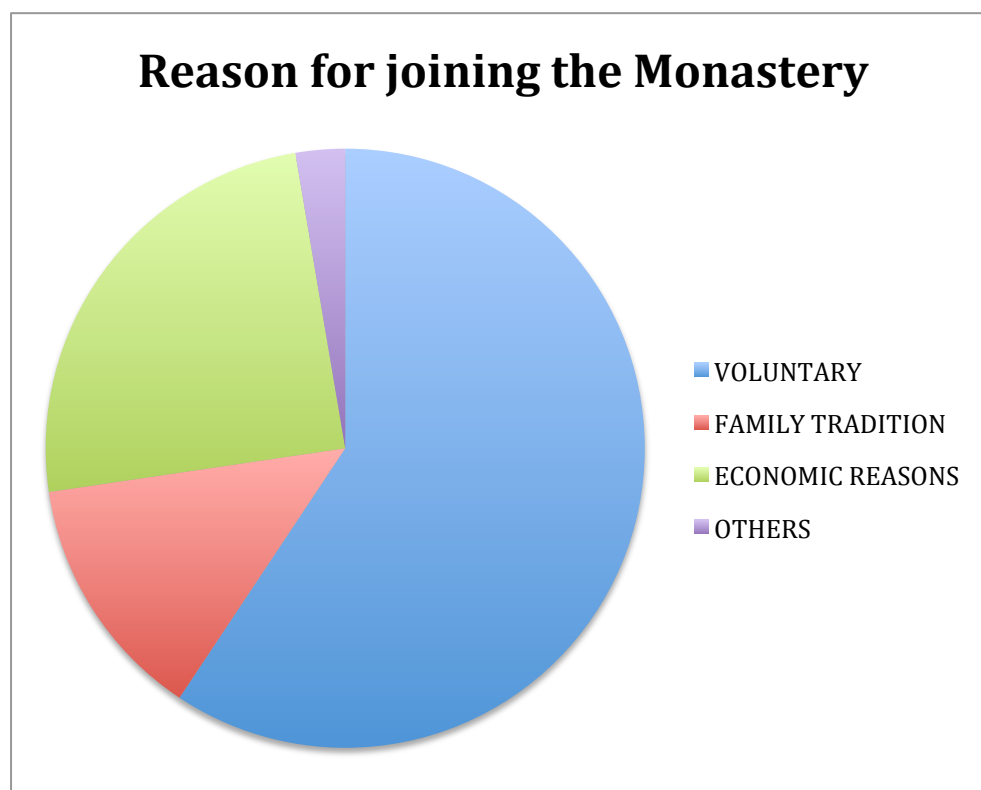
The scholarly world has a myriad of definitions for religion. It is however a unanimously accepted fact that there is no society that exists without religion. Having said this, there are different types of religion and we are also aware of individuals and groups who do not believe in religious ideas or religion in itself but the existence of religion in the society is one of the major features of our society. It may be considered as a way of life for some and way of belief for some. In this study, the religion of the monks prior to their ordination was also studied in order to understand if Tibetan Buddhism has influenced people outside their realm.

RELIGION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
BUDDHIST	132	88
HINDU	18	12
CHRISTIAN	00	-
MUSLIMS	00	-
OTHERS	00	-
TOTAL	150	100

The table presented here shows the religious identity that the monks had prior to ordination. The monks were Buddhist mostly, that is eighty eight percent of the monks were born Buddhists but the study revealed that twelve percent of the monks were Hindus by birth and followed Buddhism after entering the monastery. The Hindu born monks was mostly from Nepal and belongs to the Thapa and Gurung community and some are from the scheduled castes. No person from either Christian or Muslim community was seen to have opted for monasticism during my study.

Figure No. 1**Reasons for joining the Monastery**

When decisions are made, the theory of cause and effect is always considered. The study of the life pattern and lifestyle of the monks would be incomplete without observing their reasons to spend the rest of their life in solitude. The figure below shows the reasons for the monks choosing the monastic life.



The above pie chart shows that 79% of the monks chose the monastic life voluntarily, 25% was due to economic reason, 18% opted for it because it was a family tradition and a minimal of 3% said it was due to other reasons. On being asked for the reasons they said they ran away from home initially and then later came to the monastery to seek shelter and ended up being monks. One of them cited that it was the loss of a loved one that led him to monasticism. A very strange phenomenon has been understood here that the monks who have chosen the voluntarily for opting monkhood somehow had economic reasons to support their

voluntary choices but would not like to accept that it was merely economic reasons that led them to monasticism.

Table No. 7

Sibling Details of the Monks

The details regarding the number of the siblings is sought in this research in order to see if there exists any relation between their choice in choosing monastic life and economic condition and/or tradition. This is because the income of the family is always seen to affect the number of members surviving on it and also as the Tibetan Buddhist tradition exist many orthodox families still believe in sending one child for a monastic life.

NUMBER OF SIBLINGS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
0 (only child)	01	0.66
ONE	11	7.33
TWO	13	8.66
THREE AND ABOVE	125	83.33
TOTAL	150	100

The above table shows that only one monk was the only child of his parents. He joined the monastery when he was 8 years old. His parents were surviving then until one day his mother ran away with some other man and left him to his father. His father fell terribly ill and so his relatives brought him to the monastery. Few months after he came to the monastery, he learnt that his father had died too. The table shows that maximum of the respondents that is around

eighty three percent had three or more siblings in his family. Approximately nine percent had two more siblings and seven percent had one more at home.

7.3 The Lifestyle And Life Pattern

The Word Web dictionary explains lifestyle as ‘ a manner of living that reflects the person’s values and attitudes’. The Wikipedia has its explanation of lifestyle as, ‘Lifestyle is the interests, opinions, behaviors, and behavioral orientations of an individual, group, or culture’. When the term was first used by Alfred Adler (1929), it meant an individual’s basic character that has been since early phase of socialization; now we commonly use it to mean a way or a style of living since 1961. When we talk about certain sections of the society, common man generalizes a set of values and guidelines with them. For example, when we talk about beggars in general our idea of their lifestyle would be poverty, poor living conditions, improper hygiene and sanitation and diseases, lack of discipline and haphazard way of life. Like wise, the thought of monks brings to our general idea of their lifestyle as socially aloof, solitary, spiritual, religious, compassionate, slow but steady, disciplined and calm. Along with this are also attached notions of¹⁷, ‘lack of modernity¹⁸’, ‘oblivious to technology’, ‘practice of celibacy’, ‘and no economic assets as they do not have greed’ and ‘no sense of fashion’

Chayik: The Original Monastic Guidelines

Before I put into words the results of the survey regarding the current lifestyle of the monks, it is of utmost importance that I explain the monastic guidelines that existed and exists for the Tibetan Buddhist monks since the days of early Tibet from the existence of Samye¹⁹. Ellingson comments, “...a broad survey of *bca’-yig*²⁰ . . . provides what might be considered a general outline of normative monastic polity (1990:207).”

Jansen explains *bca’-yig* as ‘A chayik or a chayik-like text in its most basic form is a

¹⁷ Phrases and words taken from the excerpts of conversation with the laymen when asked, ‘what do they expect or think of a monk to be like?’ The answer to this question clearly denotes their expectations and idea of a monk and hence what their lifestyle is expected to be like.

¹⁸ By modernity, it is referred to as the knowledge of computers, western trends

¹⁹ The first monastery in Tibet.

²⁰ Pronounced as and written as Chayik there after, means rulebook.

formal, written address directed to a group of religious practitioners and concerns the future of that group. This text may not necessarily be limited to religious practitioners. The term basically denotes an abbreviation meaning a document or a text that establishes the rules. the word chayik have their origins traced to the works mentioned in the Mulasarvastivada Vinaya²¹. Following the scholars, there has not been an exact book or literature of defining what the monastic policies and rules were but it is for sure as many make claims that the monastic guidelines lack Indian influence. In the third century, a document from Central Asia containing regulations for the monks was written. This text was fragmented and consisted of punishment that was given to monks for different kind of offenses. Scholars like Schopen (1996) mention that however there is a lack of research. The earliest Tibetan texts then came to be known as Chayiks. In one of the religious history works of the 15th century, there is a mention of the monastic guidelines. However, whether this work still exists is worthy of attention and research. So, it would not be wrong to conclude that it was from the 12th century that actual existing work regarding monastic guidelines was done. Ellingson's work (1990) explains that the first text that was similar to monastic guidelines or a Chayik and it basically contained advices on how to run the monastery and instructions given by Lama Zhang who was born in 1123 and died on 1193. It is learnt as a tradition that these were spoken by Lama Zhang during his last days at the monastery of Tsel Gungtang and his successor recorded, wrote and preserved it to pass down to generations. A lot of information regarding the monastic organization is gained from this text. Chandra (1980) and Jansen (2015) have mentioned about the existence of various Tibeto -Mongolian Chayiks that survive and help us in the study of the genre of Chayiks. Ellingson proposes that the Chayiks are derived from two different sources that is the common law and the traditional rights. He considers the Chayik to be the monastic constitution and monastic constitutional document. (1990:205) He also explains that most of the Chayiks are oral (1990:218). However Jansen comments that it could be problematic to translate Chayik into monastic constitution as Chayik as a term has been also used to denote many non-monastic communities. In Bhutan, Chayik means legal codes for all the citizens. In certain villages in Tibet, it means rules that are jotted in a notebook.

Hence, there are multiple meanings of Chayik but it relates to guidelines. It may be punishments, do's and don't's, restrictions, moral advices, laws, regulation, standards, protocol, codes of conduct, values, spiritual advices, rulebooks or manuals. Here we

²¹ It is one of the oldest Buddhist schools of India. The monastic order is still continued in the Tibetan Buddhism.

understand Chayiks as the monastic guidelines to live their life. To put it in a very simple manner, it will help us in understanding what should the lifestyle of a monk be according to tradition and history.

The monastic law is a parallel law as it contains laws that can be found in a secular society. It is also an addition to existing Vinayana laws. Gyalwa Nawang Lobzang Gyatso, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1664) has written a set of monastic guidelines to which he writes in the beginning that the book consists of the ways to bring about liberation by being disciplined by following the rules and moral values.

There is different type of guidelines for different monasteries. Firstly, the highest religious authority of the sect to which that monastery belongs may set up the rules. Secondly, it could be that a political party or ruler for the monasteries belonging to a particular region enforces the rules. Thirdly, it could be the rules set by individual monasteries that are influenced by local practices.

In this study, the first type of guideline is applicable. It is to be noted here that the Chayiks are inaccessible to layman. The monks will not let you see and even touch in many cases. They will not let you know the exact words of the Chayik or the content because they consider it to be very precious and holy. It is so sacred in the sense that the lama told me not to ask about it. He said, ‘it is for the monks, you are a layman.’²² The Chayik is consulted only in rare cases where situation demands of a clarification from the rulebook. For everyday affairs, many practical rules have been added for the smooth day-to-day management of the monastery. The monastery in which the survey has been conducted has its own rules, following the sect to which they belong that is the Sakya and the Nyingma Sect. There not much difference in the rules that the monks are supposed to follow.

Rockhili writes, ‘...and have been ordained Gelong, taking on them vows of chastity, poverty, abstinence from tobacco, liquor, gaming, etc.’ (1891: 91)

The guidelines are given here below. I have differentiated between two types of rules – pragmatic and non-pragmatic. Under the pragmatic rules, I would like to place the following-

1. Practice of celibacy
2. Not harming another living being
3. Non-consumption of Alcohol, tobacco and other addictive substances
4. Not entering into a marital bond
5. Non-consumption of meat

²² Excerpt from a conversation with a monk on 21st January, 2017 at 10:30 am

6. No acquiring of property (not very direct when it comes to expression but existing, see non pragmatic rule no. 1)

7. Disciplined lifestyle

The non-pragmatic rules –

1. No greed wants and desires.
2. No lying and stealing
3. Compassion and Kindness
4. Renunciation from the materialistic world
5. Solitude and aloofness
6. Spiritual and religious life with no place for recreation (monks are mostly indulged in spiritual and religious activity)

The above rules stem basically from the vows the monks take at the time of ordination. The ordination takes place twice in the life of a monk. The Rinpoche²³ or the highest religious authority of the sect ordains the monks when they first join the monastery. This is known as Domba Bogpai Choga. The first Domba is known as Getsul that makes them a semi monk and the final Domba that takes place only after they reach twenty years of age is known as Gelong that makes them a fully ordained lama or monk. This is done with three monks at once so that they are treated as brothers (Choe Drok) in ordaining Domba. After the final ordination, the highest religious authority will give the monks a new name and hence a new identity. The vows ascertain that you will remain a monk for lifetime and be brothers to the monks ordained together.

Now keeping these as the backdrop, let us now study the results of the survey.

²³ The reincarnate highest lama

7.3.2 The Lifestyle Survey

Table No. 8

Consumption of unwanted substances

SUBSTANCES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALCOHOL	0	0
TOBACCO/CIGARETTE	0	0
GUTKA/PAN MASALA	35	23.33

None of the monks interviewed consume alcohol or tobacco but twenty three percent of the total monks among the 150 consume Pan Masala and Gutkas. They do not consider it to be wrong morally but are well aware of the negative health impacts.

Table No. 9**Ownership of technical gadgets**

GADGETS OWNED	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MOBILE	100	66.66
LAPTOP	-	
TABLET	-	
NONE	40	26.66
ALL OF THE ABOVE	10	6.66

The above chart shows the different gadgets that the monks own. 66.66 % of the monks have mobile phones only, 10% have laptops, tablets and mobile phones and 26.66% do not own any gadgets and are mostly children.

Table No. 10**Usage of Internet**

USAGE	Frequency	Percentage
SOCIAL NETWORKING	25	22.72
STUDYING/SURFING	25	22.72
GAMING		
ONLINE SHOPPING		
ALL OF THE ABOVE	85	77.27

Out of the 110 monks who own gadgets, all of them use the Internet. 77.27% of the monks agreed to use them for all the above stated activities and 22.72 % of the monks said that they used it only for social networking and surfing things on Google.

Table no. 11**Do you have any Social Network Profiles (facebook/instagram/others)**

Social network profiles	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	65.33
No	52	34.66
Total	150	100

65.33 % of the monks have Facebook/instagram profiles. The other 52% do not have such profiles over the Internet. On being asked for reasons, many did not have such devices specially the children and the few other said they did not have any interest in it.

Table No. 12**Finances: Bank Accounts, Loan and Insurance**

The following table shows if the monks have the following finance related products:

PERSONAL	BANK	62	41.33
ACCOUNT			
ATM CARD		62	41.33
NET BANKING		00	00
LOANS	(IN	00	00
PROGRESS/	TAKEN		
EARLIER)			
INSURANCES		00	00

The study revealed that only 41.33 % out of the total of 150 monks have access to personal banking and ATM cards. None of the monks have taken loan or insured any life or property.

Table No. 13**Activities performed during leisure**

Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Play games	25	16.66
Listen to music	34	22.66
Watch movies	46	30.66
Read	25	16.66
All of the above	20	13.33

The monks mostly like to watch movies during leisure. 30.66% of the monks watch movies and majority watches Hollywood movies. 13.33 % of the monks like to do all the activities. 22.66% like to listen to music while 16.66 % likes to play and read.

Table No. 14**Favorite Food apart for Tibetan Dishes**

Food Items	Frequency	Percentage
American	43	28.66
Indian	60	40.00
Italian	27	18.00
None	20	13.33

The above table shows the choice of food of the monks apart from Tibetan food items. Tibetan food items were not included as a choice because everyone has a love for their own food. 40% of the monks preferred Indian food. 28.66% opted for American food. 18% of the monks chose Italian while the rest 13.33 % did not prefer anything else.

7.3.3 Just Another Day Inside The Monastery: An Ethnographer's View

The day at the monastery (1) begins early morning at 5 am when the monks get ready for the day. A group of young monks too lazy to open their eyes blindly but perfectly walk in the corridor and head to the bathroom, as they are so accustomed to turns and nooks of the tiny corridors outside their dormitory. There is a faint murmuring sound that surrounds the dormitory area with giggles here and there. The senior monks quite calm as compared to the bubbly active small monks walk around in groups. These groups have been formed by similarity in thoughts and choices. They consider their group to be the family they have here.



In the picture: Two young monks brushing in the morning. Pic Courtesy: Self

After the morning prayers that are held sharp at 6 am, the young monks move ahead towards their study class. The study class is a room full of small and young monks and this is no different to the classrooms of any school except for the fact that all these young men are clad in saffron and yellow and have shaved heads. The hour passes by and there is a high-pitched bell at 7:30 am that calls them for tea and breakfast. The dining hall is filled with chatter and giggles as monks proceed towards their first meal of the day. Here again, the group of monks who went to brush their teeth together comes together to eat their breakfast. This is such a strong affirmation towards the fact that the monks have built in their own social circle within the walls of the monastery. Their idea of a family may not be conjugal or affinal but based on the proximity of their presence, likes and dislikes and understanding of each other. The idea that monks should be socially distant seems to disown the same claims that it makes. This is because, they may be considered as socially distant because the idea that they are ‘supposed to be that way’ has been instilled in our minds ever since and their residing in a monastery

away from the common people and their own homes, the uniforms and their shaved heads add to the strengthening of this notion but they have their own social world inside the monastery and they are active in it. The dining room does not show robotic movements of silent monks. Instead, after chanting of prayers the monks begin to eat and also comment, ‘ I don’t like this vegetable’, said a monk sitting beside me. Another monk, in his early twenties called over to his friend and asked him to lend his charger while also adding, ‘Winner Winner Chicken Dinner!’ I later on learnt that it was a code language to tell him that he would be online gaming that night. While another monk, got up to get a glass of water a fellow monk teases him and congratulates him on getting his new slippers. The congratulatory wishes grew as others playfully asked him for treat on owning these slippers. Just when I was surprised as to why buying slippers was a huge issue and called for celebration, another monk buzzed in and said, ‘Rich boy! Who buys these expensive slippers? This ‘CROCS’ cost almost three thousand rupees’. This conversation had left a very huge space for contemplation. The first point was: their expenses and second: their choices; the details regarding, which I shall discuss later.



The Dining Hall

The ritual class begins at 8 am and continues on to 9:30. The Vajrayana rituals are taught during this class by the Gegen (teacher who is also a monk). At 9:30 the monks again break for tea. During this teatime, I learnt that the teachers and older monks discuss

various things. It is a sort of a short period for discussing the activities to be performed during the day. The formal school starts at 10 am with the assembly and continues on to the day.



The school ends at 3:30 pm with a tea break and rest for another hour. At 4:30 the monks again go for self study followed by dinner at 6 pm. At 7 pm a ritual class takes place and there ends the day. Since there is no mention of leisure time formally except for Sundays, leisure activities are usually performed during breaks and self study periods and after the classes are over.

The day at the monastery (2) begins at five a.m. in the morning as they all assemble for the incense prayer (sang puja). After the prayer commences, Tara Puja is done. As the bell rings at 6:30 am, an indication for breakfast being served is passed. The meal is served until eight a.m. but since the monastery lacks a proper dining hall, monks carry their food to their rooms and eat there. A proper moment of conversations at the table could not be captured in this monastery since there is a lack of structural seating arrangement. The meal served is purely vegetarian. On one instance, in this monastery monks were seen consuming non-vegetarian food but the cooked food was brought for them by someone outside the monastery as a gesture of serving them a delicacy. The class begins at eight in the morning with ‘Tibetan’ class for half an hour after which tea is served for all at 9:30 am. The classes continue until three in the evening with lunch break at 11:30 – 1:00 pm. At 3:30 pm begins their Puja or the ritual classes that goes on for two hours, followed by another one hour of activity class where they learn about debate, quiz and other activity. The dinner is served at 6:30 pm and continues up to 7:30 pm after which the study hour commences until 9 pm where the day officially ends. However, things to be noted here is

that the monastery lacks infrastructure because of which the clarity and proper follow up of the schedule seems a little difficult. Since, there are only three rooms available for use: one library, one office room and one hall, the classes take place very casually. There is a lack of a structure that can be called a classroom or a dining hall. It was also understood that prior to the availability of these three rooms, classes were held in areas near the shrine. The monks here have free access to their phones and enjoy leisure time. However, they are not permitted to use the phones during classes or puja (prayer).

7.3.4 Health and Nutrition

The monks are provided nutritious food but consumption of meat is strictly prohibited inside and outside the monasteries. The consumption of meat would lead to the breaking up of initial ordaining vows and they would no longer be called a monk. While talking to one of the monks in monastery (1), he said, ‘we go into summer retreat so that we do not even step on an ant, eating of meat means killing of animals for food and our doctrine does not allow that’. The monastery has a nurse who is continuously on duty in one of the monasteries and two doctors who visit twice a month. At the Monastery (2), a medical team of seven to eight members from France visit the monastery every year to conduct free treatments. All the expenses on the medicines and treatment of the monks are born by the monasteries. It has also been noted that since 2015-2019, no monks have been diagnosed of critical illness but every year according to the monastery data, at least 110-15% of the monks complain of minor illnesses like mostly fever, dysentery and headache. Since the medicine is dispatched from the health section, a count of it is possible. Any study regarding nutrition requires the knowledge of the food taken. Presented below is the menu of the items served at the monastery (1). The head lama has been kind enough to give me a handout. The meal details also reveal that the food habits are also very traditional as all the dishes served are Tibetan dishes mostly. The maintenance of tradition is reflected very much in their food habits as well.

At the monastery (2), pure vegetarian food is served in all the three meals. However, an instance of consumption of meat outside the monastery was revealed during a conversation. A 14-year old monk in conversation with his friends playing football comments, ‘where did the energy from yesterday’s meat go?’ (*An excerpt from my field notes, July 2018*). On further interrogation, it was revealed that they had feasted on non-vegetarian food outside at a Jinda’s house (sponsors). However, during the filling up of questionnaires mostly everyone claimed to be vegetarian and this is true with monasteries being the boundaries.

བདུན་གཅིག་པོ་བཞེས་ལག་རེའུ་མིག			
one week routine of food			
ག་ཟེང་	ཞོགས་ཇ་ Break fast	གུང་ཚོགས་ Lunch	དགོང་ཟས་ Dinner
ཟླ་པ་ mon	བག་ལེབ་དང་ཞོག་ཞོག Tibetan Bread with potato	འབྲས་རྒྱུ་ཚལ་ Rice Dal Vege and Chilly	ཚལ་མན་དང་སྒོ་ཐང་ Cho Cho with Egg soup
མིག་དམར་ Tue	ཀྲིང་མོག་དང་སྒན་མ་ཞོག་ཞོག Tin momo Bean with potato	འབྲས་རྒྱུ་ཚལ་ Rice dal vege and chilly	འབྲས་རྒྱུ་ཚལ་ Rice dal vege
ལྷག་པ་ wed	འབྲས་བཞོས་མ་སེ་པན་ Fried rice with chilly	འབྲས་རྒྱུ་ཚལ་ Rice dal vege and chilly	ཀྲིང་མོག་དང་ཚལ་ Tin momo with vege
ལུང་བུ་ thu	སྒྱུ་སྒྲིག་བག་ལེབ་དང་ར་རྩེ་མ་ Oil Bread with Raje ma potato	འབྲས་རྒྱུ་ཚལ་ Rice dal vege and chilly	ཐེན་ཐུག་ Thing thuk
པ་སངས་ fri	འབྲས་བཞོས་མ་སེ་པན་ Fried rice with chilly	འབྲས་རྒྱུ་ཚལ་ Rice dal vege and chilly	བག་ལེབ་དང་ཚལ་ Tibetan Bread with vege
ཐེན་པ་ sat	བག་ལེབ་དང་ཞོག་ཞོག Tibetan Bread with potato	འབྲས་རྒྱུ་ཚལ་ Rice dal vege and chilly	ཀྲིང་མོག་དང་ཚལ་ Tin momo with vege
ཉི་མ་ sun	ཀྲིང་མོག་དང་སེ་པན་ Tin momo with chilly	འབྲས་རྒྱུ་ཚལ་ Rice dal vege and chilly	འབྲས་བཞོས་མ་སྒོ་ཐང་ Fried rice with Egg soup

7.3.5 Rituals and Ritual Class: The Education System of the monastery.

Ritual is very important and a part of what makes Tibetan Buddhism. The Vajrayana tradition is passed on to all the young monks. The Tara Mantra is recited every morning and on the Mondays, the prayers for the medicine Buddha ritual are recited. Rituals like the ‘four hundred torma’²⁴, where four hundred tomb shaped cake like doughs are made and offered to the God are also performed along with the collection of Dharanis. Every year, the monastery performs the ritual of Mahavairocana. These celebrations are very powerful to purify sins. The Mahakala pujas are performed four times during each month that is on the 8th, 14th, 23rd and 29th following the Tibetan lunar calendar. The monastery considers its main role to teach important ritual education to the monks so that they are learned enough to take part in the annual Vajrakilaya function and the Mahavairocana ceremony to purify sins committed by human kind. The ritual class consists of the following lessons:

1. Pronunciation and letter
2. Small prayers
3. Regular prayers
4. Mahavairocana lessons
5. Mahakala lessons
6. Vajrakilaya lessons

The monks are taught them word by word so that they are fluent while reciting them. Most of the monks had received basic formal education while they were first enrolled; most of the monks except a few were able to identify alphabets and numbers. The monasteries have two educational programs for the monks. Formal education and knowledge is nowhere neglected or ignored in the monastery. Even though the upper hand on traditional religious knowledge cannot be over looked, yet formal education is also quite pressed for. The teachers or geshes for the ritual education are learned monks but for formal education, learned qualified layman is hired as teachers. The two education programs are known as

1. The Sopen School
2. The Shedra School

²⁴ Cake like dough sculpted into the shape of a tomb or balls offered to the God

The Sapen School:

The Sapen School can be understood as a combination of modern education and spiritual traditional knowledge. The monks are made to learn the main Buddhist ritual education by heart to the point that they can recite them fluently. In the Sapen School, the monks are also taught how to play various instruments like horns, trumpets and cymbals that are a major part of the ritual ceremony. Arts and crafts relating to the different rituals like measuring and creating sand mandalas, carving, painting, crafting thread crosses, making tormas and making butter sculptures are also taught as these are very important in the rituals and no ritual is complete without these items or sounds from these instruments. Apart from the main Buddhist ritualistic education, the monks are also provided with a modern education system. The education system starts right from the pre-school level to class Nine. The different subjects offered are in guidelines with the curriculum based on the Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration's textbooks. The subjects taught in the monastery are: Tibetan, Nepali, English, Math, Calligraphy, Social Science, Buddhist philosophy and Sakya Legshed (Elegant Sayings of Sakya Pandita) and others. The system of examination is also prevalent in the monasteries where two examinations are held annually. When they reach class nine they have to pass the Vajrakalaya Examination which is considered like the board examination in order to enter into the Shedra School.

The Shedra School

It is the college of the higher Buddhist philosophy studies. Once the foundational studies are completed, one now needs to study of major Buddhist scriptures. This course will give away teachings on the preliminaries and perform the preliminary practices with proper instructions for a year after the completion of secondary school. The performing of these practices will help in purifying wrong and sinful deeds that have been accumulated in the past lives and will also accumulate merits as one performs it. Then in order to increase knowledge, the monks have to study and understand the contents and realize the spiritual meaning of the treatise. The monks are then asked to go for retreat of the combined Arya Manjushri and Sakya Pandita practice. Along with that in order to remove obstacles from one's path and succeed in one's Dharmic activities, the Vajrapani Bhutadama retreat should be completed. After the retreats are completed, it is mandatory for the monks and is a pre requirement for them to study various fields of religious knowledge for a period of two years. The knowledge

of the following texts are considered mandatory for getting admitted into the higher institute that is the Shedra School.

The main syllabus consists of:

1. Signs and Knowledge by Lowo Khenchen
2. Signs and Knowledge by Jamgon Loter Wangpo
3. Doorway to the Dharma by Lupon Rinpoche Sonam Tshemo
4. Doorway to the Wise by Jamgon Sakya Pandita
5. Illuminating the Sage's Intent by Jamgon Sakya Pandita
6. Letter To A Friend by Acarya Nagarjuna

Once the above course of study is completed by the monks which is a sort of preliminary education, the monk is then admitted to the actual higher institute or the shedra where they study the following subjects for a few years ranging from eight to ten, whatever may be the requirement according to the tradition of Sakya shedra or institute.

The first subject that is studied is Pramana. It is the reasoning which precisely and accurately explains the eight points of words and meaning of logic so that the reality is meaningfully explained and the negative or incorrect views of the other person is ignored or removed.

The second subject of learning is the Madhyamika. It is actually the knowledge of the middle path. It is this knowledge that helps us understand the depth and meaning of being empty or the emptiness that surrounds us which illuminates the profound meaning of emptiness and rejecting of false reality and deceitful ideas. This can happen when we depend upon scriptures and reasoning.

Prajnaparamita is the Perfection of Wisdom, which brings into a concise form of all the subjects into eight thousand lines explaining the idea of selflessness. The learning and practice of the prajnaparamita is considered to be indispensable.

Abhidharma is another subject that is studied and is also known as the Supreme Science. It gives the explanation and the understanding of the ideas of purity and impurity. It teaches us the methods to deal with answering questions. It is also referred to as a highly technical and systematic method of study. It helps one in understanding the ultimate reality as perceived by the Buddhists.

The Vinaya consists of the different graceful sayings and quotes on ideas of self-discipline that focuses on the seventeen fundamental points which helps one in growing and shaping our ethical and moral conduct.

The Trisamvara is the Clarification of the Three Vows that has eighteen scriptures that distinguishes between the practices that are dharmic and non-dharmic.

The candidates who are successful in completing the study of these six volumes will graduate as Kachupa that is equivalent to the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in our modern education system, and Lopon, which is the equivalent to Master of Arts (MA) degree.

The Summer Retreat

It has been derived from the ancient Indian text Vinayasutra. The mythology states that once upon a time Lord Buddha decided to stay at Jetavana of Shravasti, the capital of Kosala kingdom. During the period of stay, his monk followers went around begging. At the sight of this, many men started complaining that while they were going around begging; the monks were harming, hurting and killing the tiny living beings as they had been stepping on them while walking as they went in search for alms. They questioned that if a bird can stay inside for four months during the rain, why cannot Lord Buddha and his monks. After hearing the views of the common man, the monks went to the Buddha and told him about it. The Buddha then declared the three months summer retreat at Shravasi from the 16th of the waning moon of medium summer month according to the lunar calendar. However, many perform this ritual after one month because many monasteries are located in mountains and many monks reside in caves.

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the summer retreat is held just for one and a half month as there is a tradition that both waxing and waning moon can be counted as a month. During this period, the monks will stay indoors and perform religious activities and prayers. Most of the monks do not eat their evening meals. Every morning during this one and a half month the sixteen Arahat puja will be carryout with Sand mandala and every evening Mahakala puja and Aspiration Prayers (Monlam) will be recited to bring about harmony and prosperity in our society.

In the other monastery, the schooling system is not very defined as there is a lack of infrastructural facilities like classrooms, blackboards, desks and chairs. A few faculty members are present who are monks and teach both religious and formal education. There is no specific teacher for a specific subject as compared to the other monastery. The system is not very much formal or so it seems. The education system offers ritual classes, that teach them about various worship rules and techniques, ritual methods, mantras and practices. The monks are also taught how to blow the different instruments required for religious purposes,

make religious symbols and religious drawings. In terms of formal education, languages like Tibetan and English is taught, classes on mathematics and grammar is also taken. The system of homework and assignments are also carried out. However, in comparison to the other monastery the education system here seems a bit less organized and narrow. There are instances of monks who have chosen to go for higher Buddhist studies but the number is very few.

7.4 Moving Forward in a Changing Time

With most of the monks holding mobile phones in their hands, heads bent and faces reflecting the images of the virtual world as being relished by those eyes staring through those tiny screens, the break time at the monastery seemed like any other scene of recess with uniforms on. The older monks are also quite accustomed to the use of mobile phones and even though they lack the knowledge of the software details and hardware built, they are equipped enough to share files and make video calls through the internet as the bare minimum. At the highest level of the usage of the technological devices, the monks use it for research (to search for answers of any question that they seek to know), study of various topics including religious ones, as a storehouse of files (in forms of virtual drives), surf the internet, emails and most importantly social networking. Social networking is seen in the form of usage via What's App, We Chat, Facebook, You Tube and Instagram. Most of the monks who are in touch with me and who have been acquaintances have all got access to these methods of social networking. They have even added me to their friends list in many cases. The study shows that some of the demands sought by the monastic guidelines traditionally cannot go hand in hand with the changing time. The word renunciation that is associated with the monks seems to have lost it's meaning when it comes to staying away from normal social life. The lack of being physically present in the layman's social life is being supplemented by the virtual presence. So is this really renunciation? One of the monk's during my conversation said, 'We are also humans, we also like to have fun and we have to move forward along with the society.' The statement gave me answers to so many questions all together. Tibetan Buddhism is pragmatic and there is not better way to prove this than here. While maintaining the guidelines by not being physically involved in person, the virtual presence is said to be satisfying so many odd wishes and desires of the monks. Yet, again a point of argument is raised.. are the monks supposed to have wants or desires at all? The earlier incident I mentioned above regarding the purchase of a particular brand of specific

slippers by a monk. This shows that the monks have a fair idea about the sense of fashion. Another monk who had become friends with me told me that the only thing he misses about not being a layman is college life and that is because college life meant wearing fashionable clothes to college everyday. The monks are aware of brands and many of them are brand conscious. I observed that the jackets and slippers/shoes of most of the monks aged between 18-30 are of expensive brands. These are the two items where they can enjoy their monopoly even though the color choice is strictly limited. The monks also seem to own gadgets of expensive brands. I interviewed a 55-year-old monk who is a teacher at the monastery. He entered into the office where I was waiting for him. He like all the other monks bowed down as a mark of respect and dropped his phone in that moment. I bent down to pick it up. It was an iPhone 7 worth approximately 70,000 INR at that time. After that almost every one in 5 monks owned an iPhone. Many monks also agreed to have shopped online for inner garments, earphones and other items. The monastic lifestyle seems to have altered in its true sense of meaning. Most of the monks laugh away when asked, 'are you supposed to do all this? Or 'do you think it is acceptable'? All these collectively bring to an understanding, that the monk's lifestyle is greatly influenced by modernity. The concepts of modernity like capitalism and consumerism have touched their lives indirectly or directly. I doubt if the monastic law of 'no greed, no wants or desires' is still being maintained.

7.4.1 On Celibacy, Marriage and Love

One of the most important guidelines of monasticism is the vows and practices of celibacy and the avoidance of falling in love and thus marriage. The monks are not supposed to marry and are expected to practice celibacy because once one is attached to a family, one tends to form a strong sense of affection and a sense of attachment that is not accepted by Buddhism. Buddhism promotes detachment from desires, wants and greed of the common world to attain salvation. Rockhili writes of monks as... 'Gelong who strictly adhere to the vows of chastity, poverty, truthfulness, and all the other obligations they have taken upon themselves in entering the order'. (1891:91) The monks are fully aware and very strict and conscious when it comes to the question of chastity and its maintenance. The monks had a unanimous answer and were very confident in saying 'no' as an answer when they were questioned if they ever intended to get married. On being cross questioned about so many other monks marrying outside the monastery, many assured that some punishment would be meted to them from the higher superior. The question celibacy when discussed with many senior monks said that 'it

would be wrong to even discuss it'. This reflected their orthodox mindset and also the continuity of tradition. When the question of love came into discussion, few monks revealed that they had someone whom they had mutual affection for but never expressed it due to the monastic rules. Instances of conversations with girls over the phone and social networks were also highlighted but again they denied any such claims or accusations. One monk revealed that he joined the monastery after his 'love' passed away; he felt that 'the only way to live forward for the rest of the life was this.' The study revealed that the monks have clearly framed a mindset and a strong will power to not be attached to anything in this world. The strong willed statements that the monks gave in context to the topic like 'that is out of question' and 'we are not meant for that world' are suffice enough to explain how much they adhere to this law.

7.4.2 On Expenses and Earnings

The monks mostly have no expenses to bear except for their own lifestyle products that they would like to have. The monastery takes care of the tiniest of the needs from books, clothes, basic toiletries, food and medicines. The expenses the monks mostly incur are from recharging their mobile networks, eating out and other personal purchases. The monasteries runs on expenses met by highest religious authority, foreign funding and by local donations. Some of the monks, who hold a position in the monastery are offered allowances and strictly deny calling it as salary. Rest of the monks earn a little when they visit different households for performing different rituals. The sponsors from foreign countries also support some of the monks financially and they also receive some money from their family members.

7.4.3 Role of the monks and the monastery as an organization now: how they view the society and what the society views of them.

The role of any religion in the society cannot be ignored. The monastic organization had a key role to play since the time earliest existing history of Tibet to pre-modern Tibetan societies and the contemporary Tibetan society. Fermer writes, 'The organization of larger and more prominent monastic institutions in traditional, pre-occupied Tibet (up to the 1950s) is known to have been based on different levels of interaction and coexistence.' (2016: 422) Even in today's time, interaction and coexistence are two important concepts that we need to consider while studying the roles of the monks and monastery and the perspectives of society. This is because unlike earlier times, the location of the monastery has been shifted from secluded aloof places like mountains to the heart of a buzzing town, from areas of only

Buddhist inhabitants to areas dominated by residents of another religion, from being just holy sites to sites of tourism. The monasteries have played the role of being a religious abode, a place of peaceful and calm ambience and a holy site. It maintains and preserving its own culture and traditions but at the same time being secular in its beliefs. Every Sunday, the monastery is flocked by its devotees but one surprising outcome is that one out of every five person who visits, is a non-Buddhist. The monks are very happy about this but they never put a step forward for proselytization or ask the visitors as to why they are praying to a God of a different religion. The monks go on doing their chores without affecting the activities of the monastery. The monastery helps in providing spiritual refuge in times of chaos to its devotees. It is a place where people come to rest their burden of worries and go home with hopes and beliefs that everything will be okay. The monastery seems to be a place for recreation of the elderly lot. Old Tibetan mothers and fathers, in their semi Tibetan attires sit inside the monastery chanting mantras ‘Om Mane Padme Hun’ while turning the 108 beads in their fingers. The lot is also seen performing Kora (walking meditation) around the Manes or prayer wheels. After doing the rituals, they all find a suitable place near the garden and start chatting away. Many bring along tumblers of hot butter tea or warm water as refreshments. Monasteries have the concept of membership for the layman known as Kyidu. It is like the local community membership with a nominal annual fee. A bond of brotherhood due to their membership to the same mother organization then ties the members of the monastery to each other and then they go on to help each other in times of need or rejoice in each other’s happiness. While my survey on, one of the member’s daughter was getting married and all the other members were invited. They were the ones helping too. I would like to comment that this role that the monastery plays being the parent organization, is very important for binding the society together. This is specially when it comes to societies of current time, that is the modern era and of societies that exist in the geographical territory of a bustling town. This is to emphasize on the facts that in the recent time people are so busy, family is mostly nuclear and people rarely have time. In such situations, the role of monasteries as a binding factor cannot be ignored. The monastery also has a role to play in eradicating social problems. In one instance, Ekai Kawaguchi, the Japanese Buddhist monk who traveled widely in Tibet from 1900 to 1903 comments that there is a lack of “social engagement” by “Tibetan priests.” He then puts forward the view that they are totally not engaged or remain aloof from the problems of the society. The reason for this he puts forward is because Tibetan monks are socially aloof. Kawaguchi points out that it is this social aloofness that is again the consequences of a Tibetan ideal of a hermitic lifestyle where the monks voluntarily quit the

outside world and have no role to play in it. This current study however reflects the contrasting nature of this view. Many monks that have joined the monastery and chosen this life is because of the economic problems they were facing at their homes. The monks came as a rescue in such times. If poverty is considered as a social problem, the monastery definitely has a social role to play in the society. The monasteries send monks to Tibetan Buddhist households to perform various rites at various occasions. Like priest is to Hindus, the lamas play the same roles. The lamas visit the layman's home for rituals during the annual puja, death, birth and other rituals to ward off evil or for better health. The interaction is of utmost importance here, the continuous interaction between the monks and the lay society has helped in the coexistence of the monasteries as well as the Tibetan society. The monks are seen with the eyes of respect and looked up for as they are considered to be the most sacred, pure and honest of all human beings by the Tibetan Buddhists. They are accepted to be the epitome of purity and honesty. They are expected to be sober, simple and calm away from the nuances of the daily materialistic world. The common man also view them to be the learned of all men, many consider their instructions to be words of wisdom and some laymen also talk about their power to predict futures. In funeral sites, the monks are believed to have the knowledge to even predict what the next birth life of the dead person will be. The truth of the statement lacks verification. The relation between monks, monasteries and the Tibetan Buddhist society is that of interdependence. The Tibetan Society exists because the monks and the monasteries have been the torchbearers of the preservation of the Tibetan culture and religion and the monasteries and monks exist because the lay Buddhist society have given them the prime position and have followed their religious instructions giving them the highest position in the society. So, the concept of primacy in understanding the roles of the monks and monasteries are coexistence and interaction. The monks not only occupy the highest authority in monastic communities but also prominent status among the Buddhist laity. As the monks and the monastery, view the laity to be of prime importance to them so does the laity. They exist on the values of trust and interdependence. However, it is learnt that the layman have certain expectations from the monks when it comes to the lifestyle. There are comments from devotees that the 'monks nowadays are not as good as the old ones', 'monks these days do not follow the rules', and 'it is rare to find ethical monks these days'. These are few of the many comments made by Tibetan Buddhist community members. The reason for them saying so as they accuse them of not being religious enough, not performing rituals in the traditional way, using short cut method, not attending or hesitating to attend rituals at poor households as they will not be able to pay much, breaking of vows by drinking, gambling and marrying

secretively. However, these are just few cases and it definitely does not overshadow the positive comments but we can in no way ignore them.

7.4.4 On the future of monasticism

As lord Buddha has said, 'Everything that has a beginning, has to end.' The monks and the monastic organization as a whole are apprehensive about the future of monasticism. The decline in the number of monks being newly recruited every year is cause for serious concern. The rise in the number of defection cases from the monasteries is rising. While there were thirty new admissions in the Sakya monastery between 2016-2019, the number monks that ran away or went home and never came back were sixty-five. The causes for the decline as the monks put are:

1. Lack of will power: Monastic life requires a lot of will power as you have to always be under the surveillance of higher authorities and follow the strict guidelines and lead a disciplined way of life. Not many can succumb to such life. Since these monks are sent to the monastery at a very early age, when they start thinking on their own they realize they are not mean for this life.
2. The attraction of the normal life: Normal life or the life of a common man comes along with much freedom. Freedom to do almost everything that is legal to the constitution. This attracts them a lot.
3. Hidden Dreams: While interviewing the monks I had asked them, what would they have been if not a monk and then came their dreams flying out from their heart. Many monks want to pursue arts, photography and some even wanted to be a doctor. Many monks run away to chase their dreams.

If we look into the data, the rise in number of monks relinquishing monkhood is just the double of the number of monks being recruited. During the time of the research, one such case evolved. This was important because it was not just any other monk but the highest ordained reincarnate lama or the Rinpoche who was the religious head of the monastic institution or Labrang of Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monastery in Lava, Kalimpong. He was identified as a monk when he was just nine months old. He took to Facebook to announce that he was leaving monkhood to live his dreams of becoming a doctor.

Below is an excerpt from an e-news daily,

‘Buddhist renounces monkhood on Facebook to ‘fulfill his dream of becoming a doctor’

On August 1, a 20-year-old monk made a public announcement on Facebook which shocked the monastic society spanning Darjeeling and Sikkim. Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche who relinquished his title as a monk on April 14, 2016, elaborated his emotional strife in the post and wrote, "I have been restricted to fulfill my dreams and have not been allowed to take responsibility and stay in peace and I feel I am a burden to all."

In the stirring Facebook post, Jamgon indirectly spoke about what he describes as untold struggles and problems that have build up till now since the last 4-5 years. He also said, "Now I have reached a state where it's unbearable."

The Telegraph in its report **Jamgon was in charge of two monasteries of the Karma Kagyu sect in Kalimpong and Kathmandu**, and was identified as a monk when he was a nine-month-old baby. The report explains, "The Rinpoche, which means "precious teacher", is one of the four regents of the sect, which is headquartered in the Rumtek monastery in Sikkim and is led by the Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje. In the hierarchy, immediately after the Karmapa are the four Rinpoches, who function as his regents."

In the post he emphatically said that there was no coming back to the monastic life. "Please don't come looking for me now even though you know where I am nor be worried of me I will and can take care of myself. Those who believed in me still I am sorry for doing this but I had no choice. I am not a monk anymore . I just want to study and fulfill my wish even though it's hard still I will try and do it! (sic)" he wrote.

"I have chosen a different lifestyle and will study and pursue my dreams of becoming a doctor."

People on Facebook lauded the former monk's courage and determination for making a public announcement. One user commented, 'Dear Jamgon Rinpoche, follow your heart, whether you are a lay person or a monk, the important thing as Buddha said is to be compassionate to yourself and to others. The ultimate goal of a Buddha is to help others. I think you can do this even if you are not a monk. I wish you the best of luck, take good care of yourself because the world will need a compassionate doctor.'

Overwhelmed by the outpouring support and encouragement, he humbly thanked everyone in a moving note, "It has been a very difficult choice for me but seeing all your love and support touched me so much! Many of you have offered your help but all I require now is your prayers. I have left my role but never my heart towards the dharma and my teachers! Since dharma has been in my life even though I am living a different life style it has given me a different perspective of most things and helped me a lot."

The above description of the case of Jamgon Gongtrul Rinpoche is an example of what the normal world thinks like and feels like. There is rarely any child in today's era that would voluntarily say that he wants to become a monk. The availability of resources, the rapid change and progress in our society and the modernization factor has contributed to the decline in the growth of the monks and because of this the monasteries as an organization though preserved rightly has a chance of being extinct in its current form in the coming century. The monks believe that it will exist as it has been vested with responsibility of preserving the age-old tradition but in what form that is beyond imagination. The head lama comments, 'I will not be surprised if 50 years from now people will log in into a monastery.'

7.5 Life Histories

Monk by Choice and Chance

When Sonam Tashi, who is now in his late thirties was eleven years old, he was fascinated by the monks who came to his home in Bumthang, Bhutan to perform the yearly ‘Shyapten’ (religious rituals held every year for peace and prosperity) for them. He was so much interested in them that he pleaded his father to allow him to join the monastery and because he had seven siblings all together, his father agreed to his decision. With his primary schooling in Bhutan up to the fourth standard in formal public school, Tashi is now an Acharya monk who attained his degree from Sakya Institute of Higher Buddhist Studies. He currently holds a very important post in the administration of the monastery.

He recalls how he first ran into the monastery in Bhutan and how he did not miss his family even in the early days in the monastery. It was only once before he began studying his Buddhist philosophy course that he regretted getting into monkhood because he somewhere wanted to become an athlete deep inside. On being questioned, if there is anything he missed about being a common man; he smiles and says, ‘ I wished I could attend normal college because I loved the idea of college that is shown in the movies’. He denies going back to a normal life of a layman even if he got the opportunity now. Every day he wakes up early following the schedule at the monastery, prays and then goes on to complete his daily chores allotted to him. He makes it a point to talk to his family often over the phone and meets them once a year.

He has friends outside the monk circle that he rarely meets in person but is always in touch. Thanks to social networking, he has around five hundred plus friends in his Facebook account, uses What’s App and We Chat to communicate. In fact, he and myself communicated a lot through What’s App. He uses his gadgets mostly because he tells me its impossible to live without them. As he responds to my questions, he shows me a number of PDF files in his phone. They are all PDF of scriptures that he needs when performing various rituals. Sonam uses an Apple iPhone and prefers to wear slippers that are from the brand CROCS. If we study, these are very expensive brands in the market. When I asked him, why do you wear such expensive stuffs? He replied, ‘these are the few things where we can fulfill our desires....without breaking vows..’... and laughs away. He then adds, ‘these crocs are very durable.. I don’t have to buy them again and again.’ When talking about his expenses, he gets a small amount as a stipend from the monastery. However, he asks me not to

understand it as 'salary' because it is his duty that he has been doing and to receive a salary for it meant that he was not doing out of will but out of compulsion and greed. He watches movies and writes a journal. Sonam aims to continue monkhood throughout his lifetime.

Ninety-three and Running...

When I first met Ajhyo²⁵ Pande, I saw him as an old monk with a worn out bag always taking short steps to walk and it seemed to me that he was running because of the odd jumps he made in between his walks. I told him that I was studying the monastic community and I wanted to know his story, his life pattern. He smiled and said, ‘first write down ... ninety three and running’. He then explained to me that he was ninety-three years old and could run and walk easily without the help of a stick. Ajhyo Pande was 23 years old when he came to Sikkim from Tibet along with a couple of other monks. He belonged to the Tshomo area. In 1964, Ajhyo came to Kalimpong in search of his step-brother about whom he had got some information. He then reunited with his brother and started living in the Zangdong Pheri Monastery. When he turned sixty, his brother asked him to come back home. Ajhyo is a very renowned monk and goes to different places for different rituals. He has a team of three more young monks who help him in performing different rites. His earnings come from the donations given by the laity when he performs rituals and prayers for them. Ajhyo has an old phone, the numbers can hardly be seen due to age and consumption. He only knows how to receive calls. Ajhyo proudly boasts that he has never been admitted to the hospital once in his lifetime and the reason he gives me is because of chanting the Guru Rinpoche’s mantra everyday.

²⁵ Tibetan for grandfather

Across Boundaries

Mignar Gyalden, is a 50 year old monks and has been ordained at the age of sixteen while he was in Tibet. He came to India in 1998 as a refugee. He is the youngest among the three siblings. He says he joined the monastic life after his parents forced him to do so; else he was never interested in it. He had studied up to the sixth standard of formal education and then stopped. Now he has completed his Acharya degree and is a teacher of Buddhist philosophy at the monastery. He likes to read life stories of people. Earlier to this, he was in the Sakya Institute of Higher Studies, from where he was transferred. He yearns for his family in Tibet and says that if ever he gets a chance he will go back to Tibet. He dreams of a free Tibet like any other refugee. He says his mobile is his best friend and very precious to him because it helps him in being in touch with friends and families. On asking, if he would quit monkhood ever in his life he completely denies. He says now he loves this life. It is so peaceful. He talks about his love and says that it is okay to sometimes think about her. Though he really doesn't know where she is right now, after being ordained as a monk he never talked to her but he still has the image of her. He recalls that she had cried a lot when he told her about his ordaining. Many tease him and call his a puppy love story but he says that the first and the last time he felt that way. He consoles himself by saying that there is nothing above and in front of God.

The Love For Red

Kunga Tempa is twenty-three years old, the fourth of the nine siblings from Nepal attending the Shedra school at the monastery. With earphones on, Kunga sat beside me and turned off his music. I looked over and he was listening to a nepali contemporary song. He loves music, especially Nepali music. It reminds him of his country, the people and the life. He recalls the day he was chosen for the monastic journey. He was a nine year old playing in the fields with other kids when his mom called out. He ran towards her and she said, ‘they are recruiting lamas, do you want to go? They will give you the red dress.’ He said, ‘I thought for a second and I said yes. This was because my mother played a strong color card because she knows that’s my favourite color and then she told me its better than home because there I would get my food on time.’ He talks about the lack of food and resources at home with teary eyes. He says, most of the reasons why the parents send their kids to monastery is due to poverty. However, he enjoys his life at the monastery right now. He says, that whenever he goes home during vacations he wears all fashionable clothes. He tells me he loves online shopping because its so convenient. He also knows how to speak in French because his sponsor is a French woman.

The Naughty One

Out of the four siblings, Tenzin Tsultrim who is now twenty years old was always the naughtiest one. He was eleven years old when he first joined the monastery. He says, when the people from the monastery came to get new recruitments his mother and father decided that he should go. He was extremely naughty and so his parents found respite in this solution. It is believed in Himalayan areas of Nepal that if a son is extremely naughty he should be sent to the monastery. It is a sign. More over, all of his friends were also going, he happily agreed. He says the first few weeks, he cried and cried. He kept staring at the sky and even the sky looked different. He recalls how he felt so different after looking into the mirror with a shaved head. He knew then that life was going to change and it has he says in many ways. He feels lucky to have been a part of this community because he received wisdom and knowledge, food and shelter and a better living condition than home. He says that whenever he visits his home, that is usually once in two years he has a sudden urge to not go back to the monastery but he feels, 'indebted to the monastery' for the last 9 years of his life. He has his own thoughts and ideas as he tells me 'people expect monks to be different, they don't like it when we have fun but we are all humans after all'. He says, 'when in the monastery, we can not earn much money and support family because there are no earnings; if I was a normal man I could have earned so much to at least buy myself a camera.' He later told me that he wanted to become a photographer. He showed me a couple of pictures in his phone and it seemed that he definitely had the talent. On asking if he would continue on the monkhood journey, he was reluctant and kept silent. Then after some time he said, 'May be, not'.

The Gamer

Nawang Tshopel is a lively monk. He is twenty-five years old and joined the monastery when he was thirteen. He joined the monastery because his father was also a monk and he was just obeying his father's order. He has two more siblings. It seems like Nawang is famous among his friends and is also called 'the king of online games'. There are claims from his mates that there is never a game that he loses. He is so lively that he makes people laugh. He is a very happy go lucky kind of person. If he would dress up in lay man clothes, his attitude would not seem like a monk at all. While his other monk mates are calm and composed, he is always chewing something and in conversations. May be this is how he gained my attention too and moreover he is not shy at all. I told, 'tell me about yourself, I will write on you and let me tell you I will not reveal your identity as a part of my ethical guidelines'. He replied to this with a hearty laugh and assured me that he wouldn't be in a conversation with me if he was scared of telling people about himself. Nawang tells me that, 'everything is good in the monastery but boring'. He complains of how low he feels when he sees the picture and posts of his friends enjoying on social media. He says he is not interested in falling in love but about marriage he cannot comment. This is because even his father left the monastery after a certain age and married and settled down. He hopes to do the same. He says, 'I don't think I will continue for long, my dreams and aspirations are being shut down as of now. I want to do so many things.' On being asked what are those things he said, 'I want to wear nice fashionable clothes and hang around with my friends first that is with no judgment.'

MODERN BUT MONK

Chultrim Dorjee, 44 years old has been a monk since the last 28 years. Soon after he finished his secondary schooling in Bhutan, he started his journey of monasticism and came to Kalimpong. He rarely visits his hometown, as he feels contented in the monastery. He has quit his family life and lives meditating, praying and imparting education to his junior monks. On being asked about his interests, he says ‘apart from monkhood.. It is gadgets.’ He clearly explains that the monks earn some amount from performing rituals and from sponsors but they have nothing to spend on as the monastery meets all their basic needs. So, that’s why he can save the money to buy nice gadgets. The most important one these days according to him is an upgraded phone. He is of the view that monks have to cope up with the changing time in terms of modernity. It is not possible to live without Internet and gadgets in this modern world. It is okay to be a monk and be modern technologically. There is nothing wrong in having knowledge about the usage of mobile phones and computers; its okay to be modern in that sense but one should not leave monkhood for other guilty pleasures. He says, ‘if we are to literally follow all the vows, we cannot watch television or even sleep at a height that is more than our arms length. It is not possible to go word by word with the monastic guidelines in today’s time, we have to adjust.’

CHAPTER 8

INFERENCE AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

8.1 From Layman to Monks

The study of the lifestyle and life pattern of the monks living in the monastery revealed many interesting facts. Both observations and statistics suggest that the monks are mostly recruited very young, the study revealed that most of the monks were enrolled when they were less than ten years old. A total of 63.33% monks were enrolled when they were ten years old and younger. There has been no history of monks being enrolled after the age of thirty-one in both the monasteries. While monastery houses many monks, 23.33 % are below ten years old, another 15.33% are aged between eleven to twenty years old. Another 23.33 % fall into the category of 23.33 %. A meager percentile of 10%, 13.33% and 14.00% monks belonged to the age category of 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60 years of age. There was only one monk who was above 60 years old. He was aged 75. The youngest monk was 7 years old. The study revealed that as the age category ascended, the number of monks descended. This brings about an understanding that the number of monks decline as the age increases. This may be due to two reasons. Firstly due to their migration to other monasteries and secondly, it may be due to defection or renouncing monkhood. The first reason can be very argumentative in the sense that if there is a migration of monks from monasteries to monasteries in time and space, then it would be obvious that the monastery would have monks in exchange of the monks they send. The second reason may be given significance as it may be so that the monks decide to leave the monasteries due to various reasons or may decide to renounce monkhood once they reach a certain maturity and level of understanding things that comes with age since the monks when enrolled are very young and may not be aware of their decisions and actions. The study also revealed that a large proportion of the total number of monks that amounts to sixty percent were born in Nepal (mostly from the remote places), thirty percent of the monks are born in India and are from the states of West Bengal (21.33%) and Sikkim (8.66%). A few of them are from Bhutan and belong to approximately 6.66% of the total number. The remaining 3.33% are refugee Tibetans born in Tibet. On further investigation it was brought to my understanding that the monasteries make a team of monks that go on in search for new recruitments every year to the remote areas of Nepal, Bhutan,

Sikkim and the Himalayan region of West Bengal. Monks who were part of such teams (usually are monks who run the administration) revealed that off late it has been very difficult to source new recruits, as rarely parents are interested in sending their sons. The only children who come along mostly are ones who belong to really low-income families. More than fifty percent of the monks that are approximately fifty five percent of the sample size come from families surviving on agriculture for their living. They cultivate seasonal vegetables and paddy either in their own land, which is very few, or mostly as tenant laborers. Another huge margin of approximately twenty seven percent of the monks have parents who work as daily wage laborers who work as masons, carpenters and porters and around thirteen percent come from the family of monks. This data is enough to conclude that poor economic conditions of families are one of the important reasons why the children are said to have joined the monastery. Even though the statistics of the study revealed that 79% of the monks chose the monastic life voluntarily, 25% was due to economic reason, 18% opted for it because it was a family tradition and a minimal of 3% said it was due to other reasons; the choice of voluntary might be understood as saying 'yes' to parents voluntary decision of sending the children for monastic life. This is because in most cases the study revealed incidents of the monks as children playing in the fields or doing their chores when their parents asked if they would like to go along with the older monks. Also, these monks I think are too young at the time of recruitment to decide voluntarily on a completely different way of life. The study also revealed that almost 99% of the monks had a large family with many siblings. There was only one monk who had no sibling. We can conclude from this, that usually parents with an only child never send him to the monastery. It is only the ones with many children that send on or two kids to the monastery.

8.2 Amalgamation of Modernity in Tradition

In order to understand the lifestyle of the monks, numerous factors were studied. The education system, the linguistic ability, their food habits, ownership and usage of technical gadgets, consumerism and Internet usage and their participation in recent trends of social networking and health were thoroughly studied in this research. The study revealed that the monasteries though have a strong policy of teaching traditional religious education to the monks along with ritual education, they do not in any terms compromise on modern formal

education. The two schools that are Sopen and Shedra provide the required education at the fullest while balancing the traditional knowledge and modern subjects together. The education system that starts from Pre School to the Master's level are designed in such a way that it educates the monk in formal education while at the same time they are trained and educated to perform various religious rituals. In terms of education, the monk's lifestyle is no less than that of any boarder student residing in a residential school except for the fact that the monks have no choice in choosing another ambition than to become a learned monk and the normal students have a myriad of dreams that they have the opportunity to fulfill. The monks were able to speak in as many as five languages including English. All of the monks are fluent in Tibetan and can read and write in Tibetan. Eighty eight percent of the monks can converse, write and read in English. Ninety three percent of the monks can speak in Nepali but only thirteen percent can also read and write. All the monks can speak in Hindi but only thirteen percent can read and write. The result for Hindi and Nepali reading and writing lot is similar because of the usage of the same alphabets. Two of the monks could also speak, read and write in French. They have learnt it on their own and with the help of the books their French sponsors sent them. This data helps us to realize that monastery goes hand in hand with modernity as well. While they use Tibetan as a language of everyday conversation, eighty percent of the monks can read, write and speak in English. The knowledge of the English language itself is a sign of moving forward and the use of Tibetan in everyday conversations is a strong sign of preserving ones tradition and culture. The choice of one's food habits reflects a lot on ones lifestyle. The outcome of the study revealed that 40% of the monks preferred Indian food. 28.66% opted for American food. 18% of the monks chose Italian while the rest 13.33 % did not prefer anything else. This clearly reflects that the monks have acquired the taste of international cuisines and certainly prefer them over one another. The study of any generation is incomplete without understanding the kind of gadget that is used by the people. For the study of the monastic lifestyle it is imperative to understand if the monks use any modern gadgets at all. The study reflected that 66.66 % of the monks have mobile phones only, 10% have laptops, tablets and mobile phones and 26.66% do not own any gadgets and are mostly children. It was revealed in the survey that out of the 110 monks who own gadgets, all of them use the Internet. 77.27% of the monks agreed to use them for studying, surfing, social networking, online shopping and gaming and 22.72 % of the monks said that they used it only for social networking and surfing things on Google. The monastic life is known for its departure from the common world. However, this statement will fail its true sense with the following data. 65.33 % of the monks have

Facebook/Instagram profiles. The other 52% do not have such profiles over the Internet. On being asked for reasons, many did not have such devices specially the children and the few other said they did not have any interest in it. However the majority of monks having a social network profile prove that they are not detached with the common world or have taken departure. Their mere presence in the virtual world with observation and acknowledgements of various activities via likes, comments and reactions prove their virtual presence and participation. The monks also have savings in the banks. The study revealed that only 41.33 % out of the total of 150 monks have access to personal banking and ATM cards. However, none of the monks have taken loan or insured any life or property. What a person does in order to recreate himself from the monotony of life reflects a lot on their lifestyle. The monks mostly like to watch movies during leisure. 30.66% of the monks watch movies and majority watches Hollywood movies. 13.33 % of the monks like to do all the activities. 22.66% like to listen to music while 16.66 % likes to play and read. The Internet use was not added as a leisure activity since I do not consider it to be so, the reason for this being that we are nowadays always on the internet 24*7. The world today is full of substance abuse and consumption of unwanted items in the name of addiction while everyone being aware of the negative impact in terms of health. However, the monastic community is known for its departure from the consumption of all these substances. The study revealed that none of the monks interviewed consumed alcohol or tobacco but twenty three percent of the total monks agreed to consume Pan Masala and Gutkas. They do not consider it to be wrong morally but are well aware of the negative health impacts. The research aimed to understand the personal perspective of the monks when it came to their lifestyle in order to have a fair insight towards the future of monasticism. The outcome of the research reflected that the monks do not directly agree to have regretted in their decisions but somehow some of the monk's yearnings for a different ambition and following ones dream, missing little things about a layman's life like going to college, dressing up and being skeptical with continuation of monkhood can help us conclude that not all are satisfied or content with the decisions that was made at a very young age. Although most of the monks seem to be satisfied and very content with their life and deny to go back to normal life even if given a chance, there are some who would not want to continue it further. The acquaintance of the monks with technology has brought them together in the same space with the layman. The traditional departure of the monks from the social life hits a completely opposite direction here because since the monks are very active in the virtual world via the use of technology, they cannot refrain from social activities online. Hence, the idea of being 'socially aloof' fails here. The monks are great profiting

consumers because they seem to invest a lot in high fashion brands when it comes to shoes and slippers. These items being the only ones where they have a monopoly of choices, they tend to turn brand and fashion conscious. This in turn ends up in the monks purchasing expensive fashionable goods in most of the cases. Now, the concept of attachment and greed comes in. While the monastic guidelines that preach a departure from the world indicate of no wants or desires, thus meaning that ‘one should not want luxuries, because luxuries means being greedy and wanting more. The monks ‘wanting and desiring’ for fashionable expensive items also go in complete contrast. The theory versus reality is completely different. Monks are humans and no matter how hard they try, they will have wants and desires. To expect the monks to not ‘want’ anything is something out of this world. The study also revealed that the doctrine of being honest and theft has also somehow broken its walls and we may find some cracks. For example, a small monk was crying during the survey and I went over to attend him. On asking for the reasons, he said that someone had stolen his packet of chips. Many monks also agreed that that they had also not spoken the truth at many instances.

8.3 Structural Framework of Monasticism and the Organization

The entire research has revealed that when it comes to the structure of the organization, the monastery is still headed by its highest religious figure that is generally the reincarnated monks. The sacred legacy of reincarnation is still followed strictly and the entire hierarchy of the monastic organization is based on the sacred legacy of reincarnation. As the earlier tradition of the family lineage of monks faded day by day in the pre-modern era and is quite rare in modern times, the life pattern of lamas has seen a vivid change. Unlike earlier times when monks were born into families, nowadays the laymen are to be recruited in order to join the monastery. The recruitment of the monks begins as a task of focusing on a certain geographical territory (rural and remote areas) of the Himalayan region. The choice is purposive because of the spread of religion in the Himalayan belt and also due to socio-economic conditions that exist in these regions that may compel families to send their wards for a monastic journey. This brings us to a very stern conclusion that even though the monks may have ‘voluntarily’ agreed to this choice but it is somehow backed up by economic reasons that compel them to voluntary opt for a monastic life. The parents of the wards being sent have to go through formalities that generally seek a short biography of their lives and sign the no objection form before giving away their wards. Once the children and youth are brought to the monasteries, they are given a room, books and basic items including uniforms.

However, they are not ordained as soon as they start living in the monastery. Once the Rinpoche arrives, he does the ordination and then they can be called monks. The monks will again take various vows and that will increase their level within the monastery. After completion of the shedra or higher secondary school, the monks can continue with the Acharya and loppon degree. Then, it is their choice whether they want to become a teacher or just remain a normal monk. Most monks are sent to other monasteries to teach or work in various posts in the monastery. There is no such thing as formal retirement from the monastery or monkhood. Some monks choose to continue living in the monastery forever but this case is very rare. After reaching the old age, monks are taken by their relatives or families and in some cases even by devotees to live in their homes. The monks can choose to step out of the monastery and still continue to practice monkhood without breaking the vows. However, it was seen that most young monks who left the monastery stopped practicing monkhood and those who did had their vows broken because they had married and settled down and were using monasticism as a profession where they performed rituals at various household and collected some amount as fees or charges. However, till date a monk has never quoted a fixed amount of money or charges. Such instances have never been discussed by anyone.

8.4 Then and Now

In a world that is constantly changing, the domino effect of which is inevitable; the Midas touch has not spared the monastic organization and the monastic order including the lifestyle of the monks. The growing cultural and religious dynamism should be understood and explored with a wide view and not so rigid ideas. The researcher should not limit oneself to certain boundaries as set up by theories and stick to the ideas of 'permanent and constant' if one seeks to find the answers or gain more knowledge in this regard. In the beginning of the thesis, I have mentioned of loosely dividing my key findings to three dimensions. Let me conclude the thesis in the same manner, the physical aspect of the monks in the changing time seems to have undergone little or no change at all. The shaved heads and robes are still the same except we may find them adorning a pair of expensive fashionable shoes in some cases. However, this in no means should be considered as an aberration because shoes and slippers are very much important in our lives. The monks like earlier times reside in the monasteries, the architecture of which still follow traditional patterns except the structures are built using the best of technology. Trained professionals who have learnt the traditional arts passed on from generations do the arts and craft within the monastery. Unlike earlier times, due to rapid urbanization, nowadays monasteries are not only constructed in the highest elevations of human settlement but also in the middle of the town owing to its proximity and proper transportation. The lifestyle of the monks living in monasteries today as compared to the lifestyle of the monks in the traditional times that is prior to 1959 has changed a lot. The impact of rapidly growing technology, globalization and modernization has had a huge impact on the lifestyle of the monks. The theory and doctrines of the monks that claim a departure from the social life and aloofness in order to live a hermit like life does not go hand in hand with reality and practice. The fact that Tibetan Buddhism is pragmatic has come to be proven in this instance. The monks use of technology and participation in the virtual world, reliability on new techniques of education, opting for consumer goods, choosing modern recreation activities like watching movies of war, romance or science, choosing international cuisines and having the knowledge of many different languages are not considered to be aberration by the monks themselves. They support their choice of lifestyle by saying that one needs to 'move forward'. When we observe their lifestyle traits, we find not many differences in their lifestyle as compared to layman except for the fact that their physical appearance and style of residence is different. Their uniform, shaved head and common residence with

certain rules are some facts that differentiate them from layman. Having talked about the differences now let us come to the similarities, like old monastic institutions the monasteries even today are an example of proper disciplined organization. The theory of being aloof is being practiced thoroughly in terms of physical presence as the monks reside in the company of just monks and no layman, thus creating and instilling a uniform level of religious values and thoughts. The every day conversations in the Tibetan language are a stern example of maintenance of culture. The monks still follow the old texts and the old rituals. The education system though inclusive of the modern type, does not in any way compromise with the traditional knowledge. The main focus is on ritual education where the monks learn all the required knowledge for the rituals. The claims that the monks are away from the social world can be denied since the monks are important in every Tibetan household. There is no household that does not give monks the superior position. Every social activity or happenings begins or ends with the presence of a monk. Be it buying a vehicle, or bringing home a new wife; there is nothing that commences or ends without the presence of a monk. The monk's act as priests and the rituals they perform as supposed to purify all sins. The monastery act as a binding lot for all Tibetans and the Tibetans consider the monastery their most holy place and as a shoulder to lean on in times of despair. The interdependence of monasticism and Tibetan society is the highlight of the results. Their dependence on each other for their existence is note worthy. They coexist in interaction with each other. The role of the monks and monasteries cannot be ignored in terms of preserving and maintain the tradition. The very essence of Tibetan Buddhism lies in the monks and the monastic life. When the Tibetans set up their life in exile in India in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama faced a lot of challenges. One the most immediate and important challenge was preserving Tibet's culture in a foreign land as it had been fully attacked in its own homeland. After completing the work of resettling the refugees and establishing a separate school system combining best tradition education and western system, he focused on preserving the Tibet's culture. He called on all the monks and nuns who had fled to India and with their help started building smaller replicas of all the great Tibetan monasteries and nunneries with traditional training. So, the monasteries are the centers of preservation, maintenance and continuity of culture and tradition. The ritual classes, the prayers, traditional unchanged uniforms and shaved heads, the art of sculpting, painting and weaving traditional items, use of age old instruments, disciplined lifestyles, vows of chastity and celibacy are all stern examples of preservation, maintenance and continuity of tradition. However, our society exists on the concept of social change. This change is multi dimensional and has a domino effect. The change in one paradigm, bring

about a change is so many others too. As we all know, that our society is structurally functional and each structure has its own function and the change in the structure or roles will create disequilibrium. The effects of modernization and globalization can be seen in all religious organizations and monastery is no different. The change is inevitable when it comes to lifestyle because technology has left no stone unturned, instead if we decide to ignore and stop moving forward along with the technological progress, we will stop to be extant. However, this has not been able to change the structure and function of the monastery in anyway. The structural changes are rare and functional changes are nil as there is no substitute for religious roles performed by the monks but we cannot ignore the replacement of religious gadgets in place of religious items also use of gadgets for faster and wider broadcast and spread of teachings across the world. The use of PDF files instead of old scriptures on traditional paper, online lunar calendars instead of handbook of dates, recorded hymns and mantras are examples of the changes occurred due to modernization. Live broadcasts and meets online for various puja rituals for those who cannot attend in person are also instances of effects of technology. Again, the question of renunciation from the social world props up because this makes the monks socially very active. The monks time and again have expressed that they do not consider it as an aberration. However, the monks expressed that one of the major and only problem they face is the judgment of the common man because of their adaptations to the technological world and their choice in the few things they have monopoly over. This was clearly visible while talking to the laymen about their idea of monks where they wanted a monk to just refrain from doing anything that is common to layman and would make them less of a monk. The layman believes that they have a stake in how the monks behave and ultimately their lifestyle. The way a monk lives his life, especially the monks that come to their households to perform rituals are considered to points of important observations because they believe that rituals and prayers performed by them will not be effective when monks of low character and low ethical discipline perform them. This will receive in less merits and blessings being earned by the family who's for whom the rituals are being performed. The reputation of the monks is extremely important in the Tibetan Buddhist society. This is why common man ask monks to limit themselves to outside world and trends in order to refrain from being attracted to immoral behavior and otherworldly but indirectly resulting or highly capable of resulting in unsuitable and negative activities that might not agree with the monastic guidelines.

The common mans idea that a monk should be nothing but religious is a cause of great concern for the monks who have been trouble by criticisms lately. The social media has been

filled with circulated videos and pictures of monks, where the comments section is filled with judgments. One such image is of monks buying expensive shoes, this picture had a comment saying, 'this is what I meant by it is rare to find a monk in its true sense because everyone is now filled with desires and taken away by fashion and technology'. The monks feel that they are emotionally and mentally hurt and sometimes feel that they are not being able to do justice to their roles somehow. The monks explain that renunciation in modern times should not be synonymous to the ideas of a hermit life, living in caves barefoot. The fact that monasteries are being constructed amidst bustling towns with ninety percent concretization all around requires adaptation to normal life. The use of modern means and technology and adapting to a modern lifestyle becomes irremissible. The construction of a globalized religion and sponsorship of many monks by foreigners is an example of how small and together the whole world has come to become. In such cases, if one doesn't adapt to technology one cannot participate in the activities of daily life. The monasteries continue to play their traditional and spiritual roles in providing common man hope in times of despair, an assurance of faith and belief and being the binding force of all Tibetan Buddhists and their society. The monks and monastery continue to instill a sense of discipline and a message of peace. Their roles in the preservation of culture in a changing time that too in a country of exile are worth commending. The monks agree that the institution of monastery and the lifestyle of the monks are slowly and gradually changing coping up with the trend that comes up at that point of time and they are scared to even talk about the future of monasteries. The professional aspect of becoming a monk may overshadow the religious aspect. In coming times. The monks living in the monastery share a feeling of interconnectedness and interrelationship and display a strong feeling of unity and affection developed due to a longer period of residential sharing. Contrary to earlier times, the monastery has a strong educative role as it includes not only religious but also modern education. The organizational pattern of the monastic order is simple and very much free from confusion. The hierarchy of the monks is well maintained and respect is provided in terms of the hierarchy. The monasteries and the monks share a relationship of interdependence and adaptation with the secular community, playing the roles as suited for themselves for the proper functioning of the society. Unlike earlier times, the monastery as an institution has no administrative roles to play in the social life of a common man but definitely play religious and social roles and no function or important experiences of life goes by without the presence of a monk for the Tibetan Buddhist community. The notion of subordination and super ordination in between the monks and the layman can be explained as the layman consider the monks to be superordinate as

they go on to consult them for all the decisions they make in life and seek their blessings and prayers whereas the monks consider the layman to be superordinate because they tend to rely on the common man for different kind of support and service. Basically, there is a relationship of reciprocity between the two. The monks and the monasteries play an important role in the social life of the common Buddhist people. The moral values and ethics are strongly maintained within the boundaries of the monastery. The discipline is well maintained even though it may not be like ones found in earlier times.

I, would like to conclude by saying that despite the changes in lifestyle and adaptation to various phenomenon that arise according to time and situations and the rise of new monastic institutions may be cede after sometime due to lack of people opting for a monastic lifestyle, however monastery as a retainer of cultural history and preserver of tradition will never cease to exist. It may change its form or may be smaller in number or in sizes housing as little as ten monks but the continuity of tradition and preserving the monastic tradition will and should not cease. This is because if things occur that way, the Tibetan society created in exile will slowly vanish away and the Tibetans are aware enough to realize that after having lost everything in their own homeland and even though they still dream of going back to their ancestral homeland, the idea of a 'Free Tibet' will always be kept alive with continuity of culture and tradition and the highlight of which is Tibetan Monasticism.

8.5 Suggestions for further research:

As mentioned earlier by many scholars (Jansen 2018, Ellingson 1990, Mullin 2008) to name a few), there has been a lack of research when it comes to documentation on monastic organization and monastic life in details, more studies can be conducted in recent times focusing on the monastic life. As this research was conducted in only large Tibetan Buddhist monasteries situated inside Kalimpong town, a wider research inclusive all of the Buddhist monasteries irrespective of sects and size can be studied and surveyed and a comparative analysis could be generated. As during the research, there were mentions of monks dropping out or running away. A research could be done on these monks who have lived the monastic life for a period of time and chosen to live a secular life later on.

Annexure 1**Questionnaire and Interview Schedule****INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

NAME:

ORIGIN:

AGE:

GENDER:

1. Age of joining the monastery:

0-5 years	
6-10 years	
11-15years	
16- 20 years	
21 years and above	

2. Whether only son or daughter:

Yes:

No

If NO, how many siblings do you have?

One	
Two	
Three	
Four and more	

3. Why did you join the monastery?

Voluntary reasons	
Family Tradition	
Parents pressure	
Others (please specify)	

4. Educational Qualifications:

Primary Schooling	
Secondary	
Higher Secondary	
Graduation and above	

5. What is your passion?

6. What would you think you might have become if you were not a monk?

7. Do you have friends outside your social group?

If yes, how did you meet them? Specify.

8. Do you miss your family?

9. Is there anything that you miss about being a layman? Explain.

10. Would you like to go back and lead a normal life if given a chance?

11. Are you allowed to marry? Do you wish to get married?

12. Have you ever had mutual affections for any person ever?

13. Have you ever for once felt like you should not have chosen this life?

14. Do you shop often ?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, what do you shop for? (choose one or more)

Basic items	Clothes	Bags and shoes
Gadgets	Others (specify)	

15. Do you own technical gadgets?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, tick the gadgets you own below:

i. Phone ii. Tablet iii. Laptop iv. All

16. What do you use internet for?

SURFING	Education
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Online Shopping	gaming
All of the above	

Do you use technology when it comes to religious works? EXPLAIN.

17. Do you have social networking profiles?

Yes	No
-----	----

18. What do you do during leaisure?

Read	Watch movies	Play games
Listen to music	All of the above	

19. Are there any rules/restrictions with regards to this from the authority of the monastery? If yes, please explain.

20. what is your favourite food apart from Tibetan cuisine?

American	Indian
Italian	None

21. Do you have personal sponsors?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes,

Local/native	Foreigners
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22. How do you manage your expenses?

Self	Sponsors
Monastery/organizations	Family

If self, how do you earn your money?

.....

23. Do you have a personal bank account?

24. Do you have an ATM?

Yes	No
-----	----

25. Do you use Internet banking?

Yes	No
-----	----

26. Have you taken any loan yet?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes,

Type

Home	Personal	Car
Goods	Gold	Two wheeler

27. Do you have any insurance policies?

Yes	no
-----	----

If yes, type

life	vehicle
home	phone

28. How long do you plan to continue monkhood?

29. What are the changes that have come in monasticism since earlier times? Do you think it is positive or negative? Explain

30. What do you think about the future of monasticism?

31. What kind of relationship/bond do you maintain with the layman?

32. How does the layman treat you when encountered?

33. Has any one ever questioned you or commented on being less monastic in this modern era?

Annexure 2

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Annexure 3**Images**

At the last day of the survey with Lama Sonam (Director, Sakhya Monastery)



Lama Tsultrim (Teacher), Zangdogpelri Monastery.



An audience with His Holiness the 42nd SAKHYA TRIZIN RINPOCHE