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ECONOMY AND IDEOLOGY ON A TIBETAN MONASTIC ESTATE IN LADAKH: PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION, REPRODUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION

submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin-Madison in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

PALJOR TSARONG

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ECONOMY AND IDEOLOGY ON A TIBETAN MONASTIC ESTATE IN LADAKH: PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION, REPRODUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION

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PREFACE

The study uses a historical materialist approach in investigating the economics of a Tibetan religious institution (known as the Labrang) and examines the processes of economic production, reproduction and transformation. It also discusses the relationship between ideology and economy.

Research was conducted in an indigenous (non-diaspora) Tibetan cultural area of Ladakh (Jammu-Kashmir State, India), primarily at Kyilung monastery, though secondary data was also collected at Tharling monastery. Because of certain sensitive economic, political and other matters, the names of the two monasteries are pseudonyms. In most instances, I have elected not to use the actual names of persons.

The dissertation research was part of a larger joint project on the social, ecological, economic and demographic aspects of Tibetan monasticism, undertaken with Melvyn C. Goldstein, Department of Anthropology, Case Western Reserve, Cleveland, Ohio. This project was largely funded by a grant to Goldstein from the National Geographic

Society and a smaller grant which I received from the Wenner-Gren Foundation. The research period in Ladakh was for 16 months, beginning in June 1980 and ending in August 1981, though information continued to be gathered from a few informants at Delhi and Kalimpong until February 1982, while I was waiting for permission to re-enter the United States.

Fieldwork was carried out using the traditional anthropological method of participant observation. Both the village and the monastery was studied as an integrated unit.

At the village level, household structure, composition and demographic data was collected for over 200 households. Aside from observation, a few households were interviewed on their agricultural subsistence and economic activities. The bulk of the study, naturally, concentrated at the monastic level, although the economics of the labrang landed estates operated at the village level and like a large village household. Data was collected on the number of monks, their age structure, daily activities, monastic social organization, economy, rituals and politics.

The dissertation uses many records. The only monastic institutional records that I was interested in were concerned with land and the sponsorship of the Drumchod and Kabgyed rituals. Eight monks agreed to keep a daily dairy

of their activities for a period of 12 months. One of them was the keeper of the inner temples who kept a 12 month daily entry of all the rituals requested by village households and others. When I began to concentrate on the labrang economy, I had to procure the accounts personally kept by the Chakzodh (general manager, secretary) and the managers of the estate (Depa). I requested one Depa to keep a detailed 12 month record of the daily activities, the numbers of laborers hired, tools borrowed and payments made. Personal records of a number of monks were searched for and translated. Most of the monks did not keep a record of their past activities. Some, most probably did not want me to see their personal accounts.

For the purposes of comparative work, information on village household composition and demography, monastic land and taxation and the economics and politics of ritual sponsorship was collected for Tharling monastery.

When it became apparent that the structure of the "mother monastery" at Drigung was essential to understanding Kyilung and Tharling monasteries, I began a reconstruction study of Drigung. Data on the organization of Drigung Labrang and its monasteries, land and taxation, and the economics of ritual sponsorship was collected. The reconstruction was primarily based on the accounts by the Drigung Labrang Chanzoh and a number of monks who had lived

in Drigung for considerable amounts of time.

Whether to transliterate a Tibetan word or to render its phonetics, poses a dilemma. Either way, the choice always remains unsatisfactory. Since I wish to address this work more to the general social science audience than to Tibetanists, the numerous Ladakhi and Tibetan words are not transliterated, but written to my concept of the closest English pronunciation. Therefore the Tibetan word, ལྦྲང་ is not transliterated as, **bla-brang** but as, **labrang**. Sometimes, words like, ལྕགས་མཛོད་ and རྒྱས་སྐོས་ are written as **Chanzoh** and **Gyekoh** in Tibetan contexts and **Chakzodh** and **Gyeskos** in the Ladakhi contexts.

This study would not have been possible without the help and support of many people. Above all, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and respect to my beloved parents to whom I owe everything. Without their moral and financial support, this dissertation would not have been written. No less, my wife, Sara, took many odd jobs to support my education. When she later joined me in the field, she had to put up with soil latrines, no running water, no bathtub or shower, sheep, goats, donkeys and cows living under the same roof, and all the strangeness from the sweltering tropical plains of India, with her masses of people, to the sparsely populated, desert-like high altitude terrain of Ladakh. I never expected a middle class, city bred

Brazilian, who has no interest whatsoever in Ladakhi or Tibetan language, culture or religion to adapt so well to situations that must have seemed remote, odd and bizarre. Her companionship made the long and tedious fieldwork, short and enjoyable, not to mention her culinary talents that brought alive taste buds and senses long dulled by a regular and monotonous dose of potatoes, tsampa and butter tea.

In the field, I would like to thank my brother His Holiness the Drigung Kyabgon who heads the monasteries that I worked in. Because of our special relationship, I was extended all the help I needed. I would also like to thank Ven. Tokden Rimpoche and the monks of Kyilung monastery for their cooperation. I thank Melvyn Goldstein for his advice and for treating me, a mere graduate student, as a colleague. Professor Goldstein's tireless dedication to his work was a source of great inspiration. A Tibetan friend once remarked, "If we worked as hard on our religious practice as Mel Goldstein does in his work, we might very well have attained enlightenment".

I would like to thank the following persons who have been specifically involved with this dissertation. My work has been greatly improved by their critiques and suggestions. They include: Beatrice D. Miller (who is not a Dissertation Committee Member) and the members of my

Committee, Joseph W. Elder, Jonathon M. Kenoyer, Maria Lepowsky, Robert J. Miller, and Aidan W. Southall.

Particularly, I am fortunate to have written this dissertation under the guidance of Robert J. Miller and in consultation with Beatrice D. Miller. The Millers have been studying and teaching on the Tibetan culture areas, specially on Buddhism and the historical, political and economic aspects of Tibetan monasteries since their graduate school days. They generously loaned me their notes, books, articles, and dissertations on Tibetan Monasteries. Robert Miller manifested great patience when I endlessly barged into his office, unannounced, to discuss the finer points of the dissertation, while he graciously made the mental switch from post-capitalist robotics technology, space and futurology to precapitalist Tibetan monastic economy. Beatrice Miller laboriously went through an earlier draft, polishing up my English and making numerous comments.

Aidan W. Southall also read my early draft, even though he was on sabbatical leave and out of town. His interest, knowledge and current publications on the application of Marxist theories of Modes of Production to the study of Cities and States produced many beneficial comments.

Finally, three other persons deserve special mention. I want to thank John T. Hitchcock who was my advisor through

a large part of my graduate studies. I regret that his retirement prevented his participation as a committee member. When I returned from the field, two fellow graduate students, Hermine G. Desoto and Steven L. Mikesell were instrumental in instigating the dissolution of my older forms of knowledge and the building of more productive ones.

ABSTRACT

ECONOMY AND IDEOLOGY ON A TIBETAN MONASTIC ESTATE IN LADAKH: PROCESSES OF PRODUCTION, REPRODUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION

Paljor Tsarong

Under the supervision of Professor Robert J. Miller

The dissertation is a study of the political and economic aspects of a Tibetan monastic institution known as the labrang. It examines the processes of production, reproduction and transformation on a labrang agricultural estate and discusses the relationship between ideology and economy. The type of labrang under examination is seen to be a sacred charismatic institution that is socio-economically wealthy and powerful.

The study fills the need for a contemporary anthropological investigation of the social, political and economic aspects of Tibetan monasteries in an indigenous Tibetan cultural area. The research was conducted at two Drigung Kagyupa monasteries in Ladakh and also includes

reconstructive materials on Drigung Labrang in Tibet. The results of this study are the first detailed analysis of the political-economy of Tibetan monasteries and the first sustained ethnographic account on political and economic aspects.

Theoretically, the approach taken is a holistic one that adopts the Marxian model of "Modes of Production". The production relations of Drigung Labrang, with regard to its bound peasants and the Tibetan asiatic state are briefly described. A detailed analysis of production relations of Drigung Labrang is made with the Ladakh material. The precapitalist economy and taxation system of the Ladakhi kingdom, the present system of production, distribution and consumption, the social relations of production, and the organization, recruitment and compensation of labor are analyzed.

The question of maintenance and continuation of the unequal production relations is examined through the analysis of the economic sponsorship of rituals. The ideology of religious merit, religion and the sacred position of the monks are seen to be responsible for the reproduction of the relations of domination and exploitation. Ideology is linked to the overpowering social contradictions of the production process as well as the inability to control and solve nature.

Transformations on the labrang agricultural estate are the result of a complex interaction of external factors (culminating in a new economy of wage labor) and internal responses geared to reorganizing a viable institution in the face of declining tradition.

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INTRODUCTION

The political economy of Tibetan monasteries is a subject that greatly needs to be explored. We have some information on the system of land tenure and taxation in Tibet as a whole, from the works of Carrasco,[1] Goldstein,[2] and Surkhang.[3] Ortner,[4] and Paul[5] provide interesting symbolic and psychological interpretations of Tibetan society and religion. Others, e.g., Cassinelli and Ekvall,[6] Haimendorf,[7] Michael,[8] and Nakane[9] include some

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[1] Pedro Carrasco, **Land and Polity in Tibet**, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959).

[2] Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village." **Central Asiatic Journal** 15 (1), 1971): 1-27.

[3] Wangchen Gelek Surkhang, "Tax Measurement and Lag-'don Tax." **Bulletin of Tibetology** (3 (1), 1966)

[4] Sherry Ortner, **Sherpas Through Their Rituals**, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[5] Robert A. Paul, **The Tibetan Symbolic World: Psychoanalytic Explorations**, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[6] C.W. Cassinelli and Robert Ekvall, **Sakya: A Tibetan Principality**, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969).

information on economic and political aspects of monasticism. Specifically concerned with Tibetan monasteries are the works by Li An-Che, Beatrice Miller, and Robert Miller that also contain information on certain political and economic aspects of Tibetan monasteries.[10]

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[7] Christoph Von, Furer-Haimendorf, **The Sherpas of Nepal**, (London: Murray).

[8] Franz Michael, **Rule by Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and It's Role in Society and State**, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982).

[9] Chie Nakane, "A Plural Society in Sikkim: A Study of the Interrelations of Lepchas, Bhotias, and Nepalis." In **Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon**, ed. Christoph Von Furer-Haimendorf, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House).

[10] During 1938-1941, the American schooled Chinese anthropologist, Li An-Che, conducted fieldwork at Labrang Tashikyil monastery in the Amdo region of eastern Tibet (the Chinese considered it as part of Kan-su province). The results appeared in: Chie Nakane, ed., **Labrang: A Study in the Field by Li An-che**, (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, The University of Tokyo, 1982). The book contains information on: the interconnection between the monastery and the laity; the educational system; and on various deities, festivals and rituals of the monastery. In 1949 Li An-Che published an article on the same monastery but I was unable to procure a copy.

Beatrice Miller, "Lamas and Laymen." (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, 1959) combines a historical and an ethnographic account of the relations of the state and monastery and the monastery and the local setting in Bhutan, Darjeeling-Kalimpong (India), Sikkim and Tibet. Her article, "The Web of Tibetan Monasticism," **Journal of Asian Studies**, 20 (2) 1961:197-203, examines the role of Tibetan monasticism as a means of integrating various local, regional, national and international spheres into a pan-lamaist entity.

Robert Miller, **Monasteries and Culture Change in Inner Mongolia**, (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1959) is a detailed historical account of the foundation, distribution and organization of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Inner Mongolia. It details political and

Prompted by the need for a contemporary anthropological investigation in an indigenous Tibetan cultural area, I undertook fieldwork in Ladakh on the social, political and mainly economic aspects of Tibetan monasteries. The results, in the form of this dissertation, are the only detailed study on the political economy of Tibetan monasteries, and the first sustained ethnographic account on political and mainly economic aspects. I examine the production and the social relations of production on a particular religious estate, known as **Drigung Labrang** (Drigung branch of the Kagyu Order of Tibetan Buddhism) and how ideology or religion helps to reproduce these relationships. I also examine the historical, economic and individual contexts of the transformation of the religious estate.

The contents and the organization of the dissertation are determined by certain theoretical and specific empirical fieldwork situations.

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economic systems. His article, "Buddhist Monastic Economy: The Jisa Mechanism," **Comparative Studies in Society and History**, 3 (4) 1961: 427-438, provides examples from Darjeeling-Kalimpong, Sikkim and the Mongolias on monastic economy. He examines the mechanism by which gifts are translated into religious merit.

Towards an Integrated Approach:Production and Reproduction

Almost thirty years ago, C. Wright Mills wrote of the need to grasp the interaction of the local setting (institutions, individuals) and issues that transcend this local entity, in what he called the "sociological imagination".

> The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society. That is its task and its promise. To recognize this task and this promise is the mark of the classic social analyst...And it is the signal of what is best in contemporary studies of man and society...
> No social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey.[11]

Now a graduate student emerging from from his first fieldwork and writing his first monograph, I cannot claim to have any mark of a "classic social analyst". Nevertheless, it is still along these lines that I wish to make a beginning that will lead me on my own intellectual journey.

The journey begins with the exposition of the model that will assist me in contextualizing my material into a

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[11] C. Wright Mills, **The Sociological Imagination,** (New York, Oxford University Press, 1959).

comprehensive and an integrated whole. The model is based on Marxian principles of historical development or historical materialism capable of elucidating social phenomena through both time and space.[12]

Production: Mode of Production and Transformation

Philosophers like Hegel saw men and their histories as a result of a certain spirit, like God's Will, or some independent idea. His methodology **descended**, so to speak, from heaven to earth. In contrast, Marx was more interested in **ascending** from earth to heaven and was critical of such idealistic interpretations of society. He continually stressed that, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their social existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness".[13]

For Marx, the most important factor was praxis, or human activity in the real world. He stressed that humans, as biological and social animals, have certain needs that

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[12] A model, including the mode of production model, is an abstraction and a generalization from real situations. So it would be a mistake to look for specific correspondences between the ideal and the real and declare that a particular mode of production does not exist. For this reason, Marx emphasized that it is vital to look at the specific historical and empirical circumstances which generally contain more than one mode of production.

[13] Karl Marx, **Critique Of Political Economy**, (New York: International Publishers, 1970), pp. 21.

must be fulfilled. Humans must first be able to work, to produce, in order to sustain themselves and to reproduce their own kind. Therefore, subsistence activities, the processes of production, are primary. These activities are performed within a given social and physical environment.

In their subsistence or production activities, humans are confronted with certain factors. Marx refers to these factors as the **forces of production** which includes the **means of production** (soil, water, land, animals, the factory and machinery, etc.,) and the various energies of production (human labor power, water, steam, petroleum and nuclear power), as well as the knowledge and social organization associated with them.[14] As humans begin to fulfill their needs in the production process, new needs are created. Their activities give birth to unintended results, such as the division of labor and other objectified structures, which begin to shape and dominate individual lives rather than individuals having control over them.[15] The subsistence or production activities

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[14] It becomes difficult sometimes to pinpoint exactly where one's ideas on general terms like, mode of production, means and forces of production, structure and superstructure come from. But I should still mention that I have referred greatly to Umberto Melloti's, **Marx And The Third World**, (London, Macmillan, 1977) pp. 2-4.

[15] The various ideas regarding praxis or human activity, needs and the unintended results are based on, Vernon Venable, **Human Nature: The Marxian View**, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), specially Chapter 7, and also on

begin to result in inequalities, with some individuals having greater access and control over resources than others. Marx calls these hierarchical relationships the **"social relations of production"**. Historically, some of these production relations have been that of master and slave, state functionary and taxpayer, lord and serf, bourgeois and proletariat. Such relations of production form the corner stone for the separation of society into various classes[16] with conflicting interests.

The various ways, in which the forces of production and the relations of production combine, constitute the **mode of production**, such as the ancient, asiatic, feudal, and capitalist modes of production. Therefore, the mode of production is the particular form arising out of the relations of man in nature, especially, that of the material basis of production.

The relations of production form the **structure** of a

Jorge Larrain, **Marxism And Ideology**, (London, Macmillan, 1983), mainly pp. 19-20.

[16] Melotti, **Marx and the Third World**, p. 3, uses Lenin's definition of classes as, "large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of production, by the relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and their mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people, one of which can appropriate the labour of another, owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of political economy."

society, the actual base, or foundation, on which rests a **superstructure** of laws, religion, ideology, etc.[17] The

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[17] Marx has generally been understood as holding an economic determinist view. There are various reasons for this. See, for example, Michael Harrington, **The Twilight of Capitalism**, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976) p. 35-59, on reasons both within Marxism and outside of it, that have contributed to the growth of a vulgar form of Marxism.

Engels, by defending Marx's position, but still keeping to the base-superstructure formulation only managed to perpetuate the discourse along these two dichotomies. Sometimes it is Marx's own ideas that are easily misunderstood. For example, the famous passage of the preface to the **Critique**, which is popularly quoted for the mode of production/ base-superstructure concept is actually only a brief conclusion and a summary, and Marx clearly says so. No summary, no matter how good can do justice to the total text, let alone the volumes upon volumes of Marx's work.

Various passages and letters of Marx and Engels show that no economic determinism was present. Space does not allow their citation. At the same time, to say that Marx's method was dialectical is to say that structure is related to the superstructure and vice versa, and this does not say much. We must look at Marx's important idea of praxis, of definite human activity in the reality of an empirical social existence; the fact that humans must first be able to fulfill their needs through practical work, to produce in order to live and reproduce their own kind. In going about fulfilling these needs, the general unintended result is that different people end up having differential access to resources; division of labor and hierarchical social relations of production emerge. Since all this takes place in a definite empirical material existence, it should be obvious that the social relations of production are the base, the foundation, the sphere, on which rests ideas, laws, politics, etc. **This** is what Marx meant by the "economic foundation". It is not pure simple economics, but the total reality of physical and social existence.

Yet, this reality is not something given and static. It has been shaped by past human activities, both material and intellectual. Therefore, this reality must be conceived in its specific historical and empirical situation. Only then can one say whether, in a given situation, "economics" influences ideology or vice versa. Marx, as quoted by Jorge Larrain, **Marxism and Ideology**, p.195, says: "In order to examine the connection between spiritual production and

structure and superstructure of a society shape the **social economic formation**, a historically specific form of society in which there are other modes of production, but on of them is dominant. Marx often used the concepts of "mode of production" and "social economic formation" interchangeably.

The theory of the **transition** from one mode of production to another, or, more specifically, the transition from a precapitalist to a capitalist mode of production generally rests on two interrelated propositions. The first concerns the destabilization of feudal society with the growth of cities, merchant capitalism, trade, and the world market. The second focuses on the breakdown of feudal relations of production through internal contradictions, for example, the class struggle between the lords and serfs.[18]

I will briefly examine the production relations of

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material production it is above all necessary to grasp the latter itself not as a general category but in **definite historical** form. Thus, for example, different kinds of spiritual production correspond to the capitalist mode of production and to the mode of production of the Middle Ages. If material production itself is not conceived in its **specific historical** forms, it is impossible to understand what is specific in the spiritual production corresponding to it and the reciprocal influence of one on the other."

[18] The debate on these two main propositions of the transition from feudalism to capitalism between Maurice Dobb and Paul Sweezy goes back to 1950. Their views, contributions from others, and an introduction by Rodney Hilton is the subject matter of, **The Transition From Feudalism To Capitalism**, (London: Verso, 1978).

Drigung Labrang in Tibet regarding its peasant subjects and the Tibetan Asiatic State.[19] In Ladakh, I relate the Labrang economy to the historical precapitalist[20] relations of production of the Ladakhi kingdom. I detail the present socio-economic organization, production, distribution and consumption patterns of the Labrang estate. Changes on the estate will be seen to be the result of a complex web of biography (values, perceptions, leadership politics) and history (larger political and economic structures).

Reproduction: Ideology and the Reproduction of Class Relations

Concentration on production and its social relations, the mode of production and its transformation is insufficient; at least it does not complete the picture. In the **Grundrisse**, Marx criticized bourgeois economists for separating production, distribution, exchange, and consumption, and insisted on seeing all these as "members

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[19] See Appendix A. **The Segmentary State, The Asiatic Mode of Production and the Question of Serfdom in Tibet.**

[20] By precapitalist I mean the agrarian economy before the introduction of elements of capitalism (e.g.wage labor). The comparative analogy here is the Feudal Mode of Production and its transition.

of a totality".[21] In **Capital** he wrote:

> Whatever the social form of the production process, it has to be continuous, it must periodically repeat the same phases. A society can no more cease to produce than it can cease to consume. When viewed, therefore as a connected whole, and in the constant flux of its incessant renewal, every social process of production is at the same time a process of reproduction.[22]

On this matter of reproduction an important question arises. How is it possible for a class of monks (who do not produce the material products of the society) able to appropriate most of the products while enlisting others to work for them? We can immediately forget any suggestions of priestly deceit, any insinuations that the people are so gullible, ignorant, superstitious and that the whole system is false or a farce. Although there are numerous factors, from purely economic considerations to the politico-juridical coercive forces of the state, that are necessary for the reproduction of the relations of surplus extraction, my purpose here is to investigate the relations between ideology and economy, namely, how ideology contributes to reproducing the unequal relations

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[21] Karl Marx, **Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy**, Trans. with a Foreword by Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage, 1973), pp. 99.

[22] Karl Marx, **Capital: A Critique of Political Economy**, (New York: International Publishers, 1967) Volume I, pp. 566

of production.

Ideology[23] and Material Existence

According to Jorge Larrain,[24] the investigation of ideology came of age with Marx, because, for the first time, ideology was related to the realities of social existence. Larrain further adds that, all traces of idealism, of psychologism, e.g., in the writings of Machiavelli and Bacon, writers of the French Enlightment, Auguste Comte of the French Posivitist tradition, Hegel, and even Feuerbach of German idealism and historicism, have been controverted by Marx's interpretation.

In Social Anthropology, the Weberian and Durkhemian influence, e.g., their concepts that ideas, values, morals explain capitalism and suicide were the sociological inspirations from which has arisen much of the ideological preoccupation in the discipline. This emphasis on ideas (what is in the subject's head regarding beliefs about the supernatural, meanings and symbols) continues to separate the study of ideology from that of economics, politics,

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[23] From a strictly Marxist viewpoint, all ideas are not ideological. Ideology is that which arises from the contradictions in the social relations of production. However, I have used the word ideology not only in this sense but also to refer to religion and ideas in general.

[24] See Introduction,Jorge Larrain, **The Concept of Ideology**, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1979).

society and history. If it is not totally isolated, then, like Hegel, ideas are the lenses through which to interpret social reality. A ritual is separated out as a symbol and one looks for a certain social phenomena (sometimes many are found) to tag on to it. The social reality of human existence, economics, ecology, politics, technology, etc, is considered to be secondary.

In his criticism of idealism, Marx began with praxis, or human activity. The starting point is humans trying to make a living, trying to satisfy their needs in the realities of both a social and a physical environment. Therefore, the important aspects are the subsistence activities and the reproduction of other humans. Human consciousness arises out of the realities of the encounter with the material means of production. Marx says:

> consciousness can never be anything else than **conscious existence**, and the existence of men is their **actual life-process**.... men, developing their material production and their material intercourse alter, along with their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by **life** (Italics mine).[25]

Illusory representation of class relations. In the course of their material production and existence, humans

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[25] Quoted in Larrain, **The Concept of Ideology**, pp. 38. Note that my emphasis show that Marx talks about real existence and life determining consciousness; not economics, as many would have it.

enter into various relations with one another as a consequence of the division of labor. At a certain stage there develops unequal division of labor and access to products. Conflicts of interest and contradictions arise as humans enter into various relations like master and slave, lord and serf, bourgeois and proletariat. These various relations in the production system, along with their rules, overpower and control the individual. Through human praxis, i.e., in the human activities of fulfilling their needs through material production humans have created unintended objective structures which are not only independent of them but which control and even define them. Faced with the inability to solve the realities of the overpowering contradictions of production relations (a serf and lord are so by reason of birth and law), humans try to understand and solve them in their mind, thus giving rise to ideology. The attempted solution ends in the concealment of contradictions, since in reality they cannot be solved. As production relations are primarily class-oriented, ideology necessarily attempts to conceal contradictory class relations and to present the conflicts in a more acceptable form. By so doing, ideology helps to reproduce the relations of production

> As men in their reproductive practice are unable to solve these contradictions, they project them in ideological forms of consciousness. Ideology is,

therefore, a solution in the mind to contradictions which cannot be solved in practice; it is the necessary projection in consciousness of man's practical inabilities. By attempting to solve in consciousness contradictions which are not overcome in practice, ideology necessarily negates and conceals them...

As the conditions under which productive practice are always the conditions of the rule of a definite class, the ideological hiding of contradictions necessarily serves the interest of that class. Ideology is not only the result of the division of labor and of the objectivation [sic] of practice into contradictory classes; its also a condition for the functioning and reproduction of the system of class domination. It plays this role precisely by hiding the true relations between classes, by explaining away the relations of domination and subordination. Thus, social relations appear harmonious and individuals carry out their reproductive practices without disruption.[26]

The reason why ideological forms conceal and make an inverted upside-down presentation is because the very social relations on which they rest are themselves inverted. By concealing the actual social relations, ideology itself takes on an autonomous independent existence which it does not have in actuality.[27]

Through an account of the economic sponsorship of rituals, I will show that the Buddhist ideology of merit conceals the politically and legally enforced objective social structures, the contradictory class relations. This leads to a harmonious view of society which helps to

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[26] ibid., pp. 46,47.

[27] ibid., pp. 57-58.

perpetuate or reproduce the unequal relations of production.

Illusory representation of nature. Aside from powerful social structures, humans have always been confronted with other objectified structures associated with the forces of the unknown. In the case of nature, lightning, comets, eclipses, tornadoes, etc., have always managed to evoke certain awe in humans.[28] But it is the more immediate aspects of nature, like sickness and death of humans and their animal resources, crop diseases, drought, and rain for agriculture that have preoccupied agro-pastoralists like those of Ladakh and Tibet. Added to this are the other unpredictable, uncontrollable aspects of life, including probabilities and "luck" in general human activities.

Confronted with these forces that seemingly shape their whole order of existence, humans consciously came to grips with them and tried to understand them. They did this by the only way they knew, which was to project their own social lives into understanding the unknown forces. Through such social metaphor, humans looked at the natural objective world as a world of superior beings. This

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[28] In the early part of this century, Halley's comet created quite a commotion in the city of Lhasa, Tibet, with prayers and rituals held all over the place.

supernatural world was treated as an independent objective phenomena, even though humans themselves had created it. In this way the natural objective world could be explained and even controlled, since, like humans, the superior beings can hear, listen and be influenced. Using the writings of Marx and Engels on religion, and its relation to the fetishism of commodities in the capitalist mode of production, Maurice Godelier says:

> ...primitive thinking: -treats the world of things (and objective relations) as a world of people, and -treats the subjective world of mythical, religious idealities, as an objective reality, independent of man and his thinking.
>
> The basic consequences of this analogous and illusory representation of nature are twofold: firstly, religion presents itself (as science was to later) as a means and a way of knowing reality and explaining it, ...secondly, religion, because they represent these causes in human shape, i.e., as beings endowed with consciousness and with powers **superior**, yet analogous, to those of men, immediately presents itself as a means of action for influencing these ideal characters, analogous to man- characters, therefore, able to hear, to listen and understand appeals and reply them favorably.[29]

In this way, the specialized knowledge and the sacred power of the monks, who can communicate and influence these superior beings, is part and parcel of the economic sponsorship of rituals based on the appropriation of

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[29] Maurice Godelier, **Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology**, trans. Robert Brain. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 977). pp. 178,179.

surplus from landed property. This in turn means the continuation of exploitative relations of production. Hence religion helps to perpetuate and reproduce the unequal relations of production.

The Empirical Situation

The particular nature of the subject and the fieldwork situation have much to do with the contents of the dissertation. Firstly, I am concerned with a specific religious estate associated with a lama, the labrang. Moreover, the type of labrang is that of a high ranking, large and wealthy institution. The study of the *labrang* further complicates the matter as it is connected to its monasteries, yet it is separate and above it. It cannot be understood apart from the general monastic system.

Secondly, no first hand study of a religious estate was conducted in Tibet, nor is it ever possible today. So this study was conducted in another indigenous (non-diaspora) Tibetan cultural area, among the monasteries belonging to the Drigung sect in Ladakh, Northwest India. But the monasteries and their estates have always been under the administration of Drigung Labrang in Tibet. Since 1978, Drigung Labrang has established itself in Ladakh and the main material is on the economics of Drigung Labrang in Ladakh. It is therefore not feasible to comprehend Drigung

monasteries and Drigung Labrang without a background understanding of Drigung Labrang and its monasteries in Tibet. At the same time considerations of Ladakh's own historical, political and economic contexts must be understood. So both the theoretical and the specific empirical concerns have resulted in the following format.

Chapter 1 begins by describing the labrang, the particular type of religious institution and estate in question. It is seen as a sacred charismatic institution that is also economically wealthy and politically powerful. The historical evolution of the labrang and its importance as regional and state power is described. The chapter, then, briefly looks at a specific labrang, Drigung Labrang. Its sacred tradition, organization, its relations with its monasteries, the central state, and its own production relations are described.

Preparations for the study of the specifics of Drigung Labrang economy begins in Chapter 2, with the geographical and the fieldwork setting. The history of Ladakh and the nature of the state is also included. The descriptions remain brief. The next chapter provides the social setting. Namely, it lodges the labrang within the general monastic context and describes the new formation and presence of Drigung Labrang among its monasteries in Ladakh.

The production, relations of production, and consumption of the labrang agricultural estate is the subject of Chapter 4. The physical and social organization of the estate, daily and seasonal agricultural work, land use and lease, grain and cash production and consumption are discussed. In contrast to the agricultural estate economy, Chapter 5 describes the labrang's 16 month money income and expenditure. It describes the sources and fluctuations in both credit and debit areas.

Chapter 6 looks at one of the labrang's largest single item of consumption, the economic sponsorship of rituals. Two other ritual sponsorship systems are described to get a comparative view on the economics of rituals, the effect of inflation on ritual organization, and the ideology of sponsorship. Chapter 7 is on the transformations in the labrang estate. It describes how the precapitalist economy and taxation system changed in their confrontation with military invasions, wage labor associated with the military complex and the general development of the area. The politics of leadership, new values, household changes, and other reasons are seen as relevant to the reorganization of the estate.

We have had the occasion to glance at some of the contents of the final chapter, Chapter 8, in the beginning of this section. It attempts to bring the various sections

of the dissertation into a comprehensive theoretical and empirical understanding through the Marxian model of modes of production and their reproduction.

2

THE LABRANG IN THE TIBETAN CONTEXT

The main part of the dissertation addresses the economics of Drigung Labrang estate within the context of its monasteries and the village in Ladakh. This section, Part I, provides the necessary background by examining the nature of the institution called the **labrang** and its historical formation. The section also presents a general idea of the place of the labrang in Tibetan society. It does this by focusing on **a** labrang, describing its sacred tradition, its organization, its role among its monasteries, and its place in the relations of production in the Tibetan social formation. Since the particular religious tradition and labrang discussed is Drigung, this section also serves to provide the needed background to the study of Drigung Labrang and its monasteries in Ladakh.

Labrang: Concept and Historical Formation

Concept of Labrang: Sacredness, Power and Wealth

The word **labrang** is most commonly pronounced as lab-rang.[1] In its broadest and simple meaning, the term labrang should be taken to mean nothing more than what its two component words suggest. The word, **lama**, refers in theory to a highly accomplished religious person. Common phrases like, **lanamepa**, or, "no one higher than a lama" reveals such a meaning. In the hearts of the people, a lama is seen to have certain special powers. A lama need not be male nor an incarnate.[2] The word, **brang**, means a place of residence. Therefore, labrang refers to a place where a lama resides. It could be a huge palace with a large endowment in land and other assets, or a single dingy rented room in a monastery with a servant or a companion. It could be part of a monastery and its subunits. At the same time it is better to view some large labrangs as not so much part of a monastery, but rather as

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[1] **rang** is pronounced like "rung" (past tense of "ring") of the English language. Labrang is sometimes pronounced as la-drang, with **drang** articulated like "dung". Labrang is composed of two syllables, **la** (abbreviation of **lama**, and transliterated as **bla**) and **brang** (transliteration of **rang/drang**).

[2] In everyday common association, a lama is distinguished from the ordinary monk, a **drapa**, in the sense that the lama is generally considered to be a **truku** or a reincarnate.

an institution that hovers above and around the monasteries, symbolizing them and administering them at the highest levels of authority.

We need to narrow the concept of labrang. This is dependent on the very nature of the lama's house. Labrangs may be economically ranked anywhere along the poor-wealthy scale. If it is a poor labrang, lacking land or assets, then it is quite futile to speak of it as an economic institution. At the other extreme we have labrangs that are virtual rulers of local provinces with large landed estates and bound labor, great wealth not only in land but also animals, and various other assets. The ultimate socio-economic power of such labrangs has been realized especially by the Sakya but also by some sub-sects of the Kagyupa, like the Drigung, Karmapa, Taklung, and Tsalpa Labrangs (see below) in the 12th and 13th Centuries, and then much later in the Gelugpa (see below) institution of the Dalai Lamas, the Panchen Lamas, and the various Regent Lamas.

Perpetuation of the labrang through time is accomplished by two ways. One is the system of **dungyu**, or ascription on kinship basis, where either the lama's son (if lama is married), or the lama's brothers' son continues the line. Before the 14th century this was the main form of succession. It was practiced by the Drigungpas, and today

it is still in use by the Sakyas, the Shabdrung line of the Taklung Kagyupas, and by others. The second and more popular form of succession today is the process of reincarnation, as exemplified and popularized by the institution of the Dalai Lamas, and, therefore, commonly mistaken as the sole system of succession where the labrang is nothing more than a reincarnation institution.

A lama may be described as a person who has **mana**[3] Although taken from a Melanesian context, the term accurately describes the religious aura, the sacredness of the lama who is thought to be able to know all, see all, invoke the supernatural, and heal the sick. Therein lies the power of the person who is above and beyond the realm of the mundane aspects of earthly existence.

This sacredness varies from that of an ordinary lama to one who is often referred to as the **tempeh jindak**, or "the holder of the faith", the leader of an entire religious sect, and the present incumbent of a labrang which traces its lineage to the beginnings of one's world view. This

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[3] The **International Encyclopedia of the Social Science**, s.v. "Codrington R.H." by Ernest Beaglehole, defines **mana** as: "The invisible power that explains for the preliterate many of those aspects of life that transcends, what the European would now call, the natural order of the world". The definition is not without problems, but it provides sufficient meaning.

sacredness includes the celestialization[4] of the lama in terms of socio-religious ideology. Taking our study of Drigung, the heads of the sect are addressed by their followers as, **Kundu** or "Omnipresence", **Kyamgon Rimpoche**, or "Precious Lord of Refuge". In addition to these titles, the Dalai Lama is further addressed as, **Gongsa** or the "sovereign", and **Gyawa Rimpoche** or "Precious Conqueror".[5] The same can be said of the Karmapas, the Sakyas, and others. Such mana and sacred celestializations of the Dalai Lama and leaders of other religious sects lies the basis of large labrang institutions and the legitimization of power by such personages. Such a superordinate lama is a highly institutionalized charismatic[6] figure and the rallying point of entire religious sects, entire provinces. In the case of the Sakya Lama in the 13th century, and even more so the Dalai Lama (17th century to present) they further developed to

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[4] The word is used in the sense of suggesting the heavens, divinity, sacrosanct, mandate of heaven, omnipresence, omniscient, omnipotent, etc.

[5] N.C. Sinha, **Prolegomena to Lamaist Polity**, (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969), p. 28.

[6] Institutional charisma is used in the sense that the labrang institution (position, office) itself is charismatic (accorded sacredness, reverence, mana, etc.) no matter how dull the individual incumbent lama. Charisma can be depersonalized and become institutionalized. On this see Reinhard Bendix, **Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait**, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1962), pp. 308.

be the rallying point for a whole nation and its people.

It is in the dual aspect of a superordinate lama, who is at once highly sacred and socio-economically wealthy and powerful, that I discuss the concept of the labrang. In so far as the labrang embodies this dual aspect, the labrang is a religio-socio-economic and political institution centered around a lama.

Labrang: The Historical Formation[7]

By the 9th century Tibet was one of the more powerful nations in Asia. Its power extended as far east as Szechwan and Yunnan Province of China, as far west as to cause the Caliph of Baghdad to ally himself with the Chinese, as far south as the Ganges, and as far north as today's Chinese Turkestan.[8] It was also around this time that Buddhism seems to have been first established in Tibet- during the reign of Songtsen Gampo around 600 AD, and it continued to spread until its zenith during the reign of Ralpachen (815-838). However, there was a number

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[7] Unless specifically indicated, my general references to this historical section are: Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, **Tibet a Political History**, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 54-111., David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, **A Cultural History of Tibet**, (London, 1968), R.A. Stein, **Tibetan Civilization**, trans. J.E. Stapleton Driver, (London: Farber & Faber Ltd., 1972), p. 70-83, and Giuseppi Tucci, **Tibetan Painted Scrolls**, (Rome: La Libreria Dello Stato, 1949), p. 3-66.

[8] Hugh E. Richardson, **A Short History of Tibet**, (New York: Dutton, 1962), p.

of Tibetan ministers who supported the indigenous religion, Bon, and who assassinated the king and placed his brother, Lang Dharma on the throne. With Lang Dharma, the persecution of Buddhism and its practitioners was so extensive that the faith virtually disappeared from Central Tibet. The assassination of Lang Dharma in 842, and the subsequent conflict for succession between his two sons paved the path for the gradual second spread of Buddhism.

Under the patronage of the Ngari Kings of Western Tibet, a spurt of interest in Buddhism resulted in a number of students who went to study in India; the most famous being, Rinchen Sangpo (958-1055), a great translator and builder of many temples. With persistent invitations and lavish gifts of gold, Atisa (982-1054), a great Indian master, was finally persuaded to come to Western Tibet. His principal disciple, Dromton (1008-64) founded the monastery of Rading in 1056. His tradition came to be known as the Kadampa, from which later evolved the Gelugpa sect, the religio-ideological basis of the formation of many labrangs including that of the Dalai Lamas and the Panchen Lamas.

The founding of other famous labrangs, which dominated the political scene much earlier than the Gelugpas, was stimulated by the works of two renowned scholars who

studied in India. One of them was Drogmi (992-1072), a student of Santipa and translator of the **Hevajra Tantra.** His disciple, Konchok Gyalpo of the Khon family, founded the monastery of Sakya in 1073, and with reforms brought about by his successor, the great Sakya Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158), the Sakya school was born. Its main organizational unit was the institution of the labrang centered around the lama, Kunga Nyingpo. Another scholar of repute, a translator and traveller, was Marpa (1012-96) who formerly was a pupil of Drogmi. Marpa is regarded as the founder of the Kagyupa School. His well known disciple, Milarepa (1040-1123) transmitted his teachings to Gampopa (1079-1153). Three of Gampopa's successors were to be the fountainheads from which arose a number of sects based on the various schools of the Kagyupa Order.

One of them, Dusum Khenpa (1110-93) was born in Kham and founded the Tsurphu monastery in Central Tibet in 1185. Here was born the sub-sect and the labrang of the Karmapas. The other was Gompa. His disciple, Lama Shang (1123-93), founded the Gungthang Monastery near Lhasa in 1175. It came to be known as the Tsalpa Kagyu, which played a significant political role in Tibet around this time. The third successor of Gampopa was Lama Phamodru Dorji Gyalpo (1110-70). Though 8 lineages arose, we will only mention those that were politically significant. The

most important of these, with which the dissertation is primarily concerned, is the Drigung Kagyu School founded by Phamodrupa's disciple, Kyopa Jigten Gompo (1143-1212). Other important actors on the Tibetan political stage were the Taklung Kagyu founded by Taklung Thangpa in 1185, and the Drugpa Kagyu founded by Ling Repa in 1180.

Though this extremely brief account treats mainly the development of various sects in Tibet during the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries, it is in fact synonymous with the rise of labrangs. The development of the various sects provided the religio-ideological basis for the formation of labrangs. It is also important to realize that the ultimate authority of the sect, the rallying point of the religious order, was the lama and his institution, the labrang.[9]

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[9] Even though here we deal with the period before the Gelugpa Sect, it should be noted that the Gelugpas present somewhat of a deviation from the majority system of the labrang as the head of the sect. The head of the Gelugpa sect may or may not be a reincarnate lama. He is chosen through the monastic system. But the Ganden Tripa, the head of the Gelugpas, once chosen assumes much power and sacredness associated with lamas of other famous labrangs. Like the lamas, he is addressed as Rimpoche, a word in everyday speech that is used as a reference to reincarnates; namely, Tri Rimpoche. Since the Gelugpas have been the ruling sect in Tibet since the 17th century, Tri Rimpoche holds a higher status than the lamas at the head of other sects. Tri Rimpoche, in fact, can assume the leadership of Tibet in the absence of the Dalai Lama or the Regent Lama.

But all this is rather academic. The concept of labrang as the ultimate authority is still relevant in the case of the Gelugpas. Tri Rimpoche is totally overshadowed

The labrang, personified by its incumbent reincarnate or hereditary lama, was the authority around which monasteries were founded and local regions organized. The labrangs gradually acquired large tracts of agricultural land and became wealthy. Some labrangs were equivalent to the military-secular powers since they were held in the same family. If not, then they were closely allied with powerful secular patrons. All this makes it difficult to say when exactly the religious aspect emerged as the dominant mode. Whatever may have been the case, the institution of the labrang, as a socio-economic and religious corporation, began developing in Tibet. The politics of the country during the specified period was that of an a-centralized nation headed by numerous religio-secular rulers who were co-existing as well as at loggerheads with each other.

As the magnitude of these inter-sectarian, inter-labrang jealousies and skirmishes grew, they awakened the dormant dream that Tibet once more could have central authority- with one of the rivals as that sole power.

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by the Dalai Lama who through the Tse Yigtsang (ecclesiastical office) is the ultimate authority in the Gelugpas monasteries including the appointment of Tri Rimpoche himself. The word ultimate is used in the sense of a person having the final say in a matter. In a monastic system there are rules and procedures for doing things. The head lama generally follows them, but can override them.

Stimulus for this yearning came from the Mongols. In 1207, under threat of invasion, a secular authority, Desi Jorga of Yarlung royal descent, and Kunga Dorji, the incumbent of Tsalpa Labrang, negotiated Tibetan submission. Then in 1240, Godan, the son of Genghiz Khan's successor, Ogadai, raided Tibet and burned down the Rating and Gya Lhakhang monasteries.

In the meantime, from among the three great labrangs, the Drigung, Sakya, and Taklung, Prince Godan chose Kunga Gyaltsen of Sakya to preach Buddhism in Mongolia, as well as to be the Tibetan representative at his court. Beginning with Kunga Gyaltsen, and his successor, Phagpa, the Sakyas received the temporal authority over Tibet, specifically the 13 regions known as the 13 Myriarchies, or **Bod Trikor-choksum** around 1255.

Seeing the advantages of Mongol patronage, the Drigung, the Karmapa, and the Tsalpa, all found patrons among the various Mongol chiefs. In 1287 Drigung challenged Sakya authority and attacked them. But Drigung was defeated and its monasteries were burned down. The Karmapas, who had had early contact with the Mongols became the rivals of the Sakya at the Mongol Court.

The power of the Sakyas lasted for about 75 years until U Province in Central Tibet came under the rule of Changchub Gyaltsen of the Phamodrupa Myriarch. He was a

member of the great Lang family. Following the family tradition, in which one son ruled the monastery and the others attended to secular matters, Changchub Gyaltsen was trained as a monk. In 1322 he became the myriarch and then governor of his family estate at Nedong. His power grew to such an extent that he attacked and occupied Sakya, and by 1360, the Phamodrupas rule over Tibet was a reality.

Helped by the political instability in China brought about by the transition from the Mongol Yuan Dynasty to the Ming, Changchub Gyaltsen despised the foreign titles given by the Mongols, and took on the Tibetan title of **Desi** as well as the title of **Gongma** to stress Tibetan independence. In the spirit of the early kings of Tibet, the administration of the government, law, justice, etc, were based on that of Songtsen Gampo. For almost 100 years the Phamodrupas reigned supreme until they were overtaken by their ministers, the Princes of Rinpung. They in turn were displaced by their ministers, the Tsang governors.

In the meantime a new monastic power, the Gelugpas, popularly known as the Yellow hats loomed on the horizon. The founder, Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), like Atisa and his Kadampa sect, stressed rules of monastic discipline. The followers came to be known as the "New Kadampas" which later evolved into the Gelugpas. Lama Tsongkhapa founded his monastery, Ganden in 1409. His disciples founded the

Drepung Monastery in 1416, and the Sera Monastery in 1419. The growing fame of Lama Tsongkhapa and his order, his invitation to the Chinese Court and support from the secular power of U Province were not in the best interest of the Tsang rulers and the Karmapa sect. Many wars ensued between these powers, and once again sectarian conflict resulted in foreign powers becoming involved.

The Gelugpas approached the Mongols. In 1578 Altan Khan invited Sonam Gyatso, bestowing on him the title of Dalai Lama. Over the years, the Dalai Lama and Gelugpa power grew, culminating in Gushri Khan's intervention and his grant to the 5th Dalai Lama of authority to rule over all Tibet in 1642. The Dalai Lama declared Lhasa the capital. The name of his labrang at Drepung monastery, Ganden Phodrang, became the official name of the Tibetan Government.[10] What started out as a pre-state institution, a labrang in a monastery, now became a state, the Government of Tibet.

This brief overview of the Tibetan political situation, in which a number of religious institutions were the main actors on the scene, mainly has focussed on the rise and role of pertinent religious sects. Unlike previous writers, I consciously have begun to introduce and to emphasize the labrang institution. I interpret this facet

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[10] Tsepon Shakabpa, **Tibet: A Political History**, p. 111.

of Tibetan history as tied to not only the growth of particular religious sects, but to the rise of one of the most fundamental and characteristic Tibetan institutions, the labrang.

I will now discuss the particular labrang this dissertation is concerned with, the Drigung Labrang.

Drigung Labrang: Sacred Tradition, Organization, Monasteries, State and Production Relations

On Drigung

Drigung is a province situated northeast of Lhasa, Tibet. Drigung also is one of the four main branches of the Kagyupa Order of Tibetan Buddhism. It traces its secular lineage to the earliest tribes of Tibet.

There are two possible origins of the word, Drigung. The first is attributed to a minister of King Songtsen Gampo, named Drisirughungthun. The area which is today called Drigung could have been the estate of this minister and so it is said that it was named after him.[11] He was also one of the ministers that was responsible for bringing the Chinese princess Wencheng to Tibet as the king's wife.[12]

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[11] Interview, August 1981: Drigung Kyamgon Chetsang Rimpoche, present head of Drigung Labrang. He is presently working on a history of the Drigungpas. His main references are the biographical and religious histories written by previous heads of the Drigung sect.

[12] Ibid.

The marriage took place about the year 640.

There is another possible meaning for the word, Drigung. In numerous **pecha**, religious texts, the word **gung** in Drigung is often spelled **khung**, which refers to a hole or depression. The word, Dri also refers to a female yak. It is said that Phamo Drupa, the teacher of Kyopa Jigten Gompo, appeared in the form of a female yak to show one of his disciples, Tokden Minyak-komring, the place where the main monastery of the Drigungpa should be built.[13] It is said that the monastery, Drigung Thi, (also known as Densa Thi, as it was the main seat of the labrang) was built by making a depression on the side of the particular hill.

Sacred Tradition and Lineage

The Drigungpas trace their lineage to one of the earliest six tribes of Tibet known as Bod Miwodhungdruk, specifically that of the Dru clan. A son of the Dru clan, named Pawo Sogye, had intercourse with a goddess (**lhamo**) resulting in a son named Kyuranamching Karpo. From him the Drigung lineage began during the time of King Ngadakreltrin and ended with Koncho Rinchen (1595-1959)and Rinzi Chodra (1595-1659).[14] After 1659 the system of reincarnate lamas began since, it is said, both Rinzi

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

Chodra and Koncho Rinchen did not have any children. Koncho Rinchen's reincarnation was Koncho Trileh Sangpo (1656-1718), the 1st Chetsang Rimpoche, and that of Rinzi Chodra was Trileh Dhondrub Chogeh (1704-1754),[15] who was known as the 1st Chungtsang Rimpoche.[16] Since then there have a number of Chetsang and Chungtsang Rimpoches. The current- 6th Drigung Kyamgon Chetsang Rimpoche Konchok Tenzing Trileh Lhundrub was born in Lhasa in 1946 and presently resides at the Drigung monasteries of Phiang and Lamayuru in Ladakh. The present Drigung Kyamgon Chungtsang Rimpoche, the 8th in line, whose name is unknown to me, was born in 1942. He is living in Lhasa, Tibet and recently visited Drigung monasteries in India.

Buddhism came to Tibet from India in the form of the scholastic traditions of the great monastic centers, with their philosophical tenets, as well as through the tantric tradition of the wild and famous wandering saints. It is to the latter that we can trace the religious tradition of the Drigung Kagyupa.

Marpa (1012-96) was a most proficient translator of Buddhist texts and the founder of the Kagyupa School of

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[15] Ibid.

[16] There is a 45 year gap since the death of Rinzi Chodra in 1659 and the 1st Chungtsang Rimpoche in 1704. This is explained by the death of one lama after two years and the absence of another for the next 43 years.

Tibetan Buddhism. His quest for knowledge took him on a few expeditions to India and Nepal where he studied for a number of years with the learned Indian master, Tilopa. It was Milarepa (1040-1123), the most popular and famous magician cum poet, song writer, who received the secret teachings from Marpa. Milarepa handed the Kagyu teachings to Gampopa (1079-1153), whence it came to be known as the Dakpo Kagyu. The Dakpo Kagyu consisted of 4 large sects, the Kagyu Cheshi. These were the Baram, Kamtsang, Phagdru, and the Tsalpa Kagyu. The Phagdru Kagyu, founded by one of Gampopa's students, Phamodru Dorji Gyalpo (1110-1170), was further subdivided into eight smaller sects, or **chung-geh**. These were the Drigung, Drukpa, Martsang, Shugseb, Taklung, Trubo, Yamsang, and Yelpa.[17] Kyopa Jigten Gompo (1143-1217), the disciple of Phagdru Dorji Gyalpo, became the founder of the religious tradition of the Drigung Kagyu.

The Labrang and the Tibetan State: Relations of Production

It was on the 15th day of the 4th month of the Water Horse year, or 1642, at Shigatse, that the Dalai Lama's Labrang at Drepung Monastery- the Ganden Phodrang- became

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[17] Interview, August 1981: Drigung Kyamgon and Drigung Khampo (abbot of the Drigungpas).

the official name of the Tibetan State.[18] Thus a labrang once again became the State, carrying with it all its former charismatic qualities. It became the rallying point, the ultimate expression of the unity of the Tibetan State. This state can best be conceptualized as a segmentary state, i.e. "one in which the range of ritual suzerainty and political sovereignty do not coincide. The former extends widely towards the periphery which is flexible and changing. The latter is confined to the central core domain"[19]. Since I am concerned with Drigung, I will restrict the discussion to the core domain within which the Dalai Lama exercised political sovereignty. This core domain, it seems to me, is an expression of the Asiatic Mode of Production.[20]

In comparison to the parcellization of sovereignty and the private appropriation of the means of production in the Feudal Mode of Production, all land in Tibet belonged to the State, personified in the labrang institution of the Dalai Lama. Its distribution is summed up in the

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[18] Shakabpa, **Tibet: A Political History**, p. 111.

[19] Aidan W. Southall, "The Segmentary State in Africa and Asia". The article is to appear in the 1988 issue of **Comparative Studies in Society and History**. For further discussion on the model's relevance for Tibet, see Appendix A, **The Segmentary State, the Asiatic Mode of Production and the Question of Serfdom in Tibet.**

[20] See Appendix A.

Tibetan phrase, **Shung-Gyer-Cho-Sum**, or State, "private" and religious lands. These three were the only means through which large scale usufructory "ownership" of land was possible. By State, I refer to the various offices of the bureaucratic apparatus. For example, Sonam Lekhung, the Agricultural Office held a number of lands. The Gyerpa, or private section was composed of State functionaries (Shungshabs), who formed a mainly endogamous class of aristocrats. Their land was held hereditarily as long as a family member registered and served the State. If they did not then the State could confiscate their land.[21] The third form of land holdings took the form of religious estates assigned to various monasteries or labrangs.[22]

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[21] Empirically, it is rather ridiculous to speak of "choice" for working for the State. Not only is tradition involved but given the primarily landed economy, who would want to give up land. It also should be noted that all State functionaries did not have land and payment was also made in kind, even to supplement those who had estates.

The power of the state is also expressed in the procedure whereby the state functionary, who receives an estate, looses his own personal identity. Upon registration for state service, the official is only recognized by the name of his estate. For example, when Dundu Namgeh, the eldest son and heir to the Tsarong house and estate, joined government service, upon the receipt of the Penjor Lhunpo estate (formerly held by Phala), he was recognized in all state matters as "Pehlun Seh" or "Son of Penjor Lhunpo".

[22] Given the fact that some of the aristocrats and labrangs held land in Tibet before the Dalai Lamas assumed power, one must be continually aware of specific historical circumstances and agreements which would allow

On a usufructory basis, each of these lands were further redistributed to a number of households at the village level. These village households were called **trepa** or taxpayers. The nature of the surplus appropriated by the landholders depended on the contractual agreements, based mainly on the specific type of fields held.[23] This is a terse outline of the general system of land and taxation from which we can proceed towards a general understanding of Drigung Labrang in regard to the Tibetan State.

Drigung Labrang had its heyday in the 13th century disputing the rulership of Tibet with the Sakyas. Sometime during the increasing centralization of Tibet under the Dalai Lamas, Drigung came under State authority. Drigung Labrang then functioned as a religious estate under the State. The size of the estate was **said to be** (possibility for problem of informant memory recall) composed of 72 **dhon.**[24] The labrang had to pay a number of taxes in kind

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for deviations from the norm.

[23] For details of the nature of landholdership, relations of landholders to peasants, and system of taxation, see M.C.Goldstein, **Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village**, and **"Serfdom and Mobility: An Examination of the Institution of "Human Lease"** in Traditional Tibet." **Journal of Asian Studies**, 30, 1971: 521-534. However, Goldstein characterizes Tibetan peasants as **serfs**. See Appendix A for my reasons on avoiding the use of the term **serfs**.

[24] I have not found any mention of the unit **dhon** in the Tibetan literature on economy and taxation. My personal and miscellaneous information based on a few

to the State. Some of these were barley, wheat, oil, and butter. The taxes were assessed on the criteria that the labrang held land in both agricultural and nomadic areas.

Drigung Labrang agricultural lands were further redistributed to a number of households. They were known as **trepa**, or taxpayers. There were also many non-landholding peasants. Both categories of peasants were known as Drigung Labrang **miser**, a class of people who were tied or bound to the labrang in terms of labor obligations. For the landholding peasant, the criterion for the assessment of taxes dependent on the very nature of the type of field that was leased. The amount and type of taxes depended on factors like, whether the field is **chuma**, irrigated or non-irrigated, the situation of the field, the yield potential, and others. Some fields

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state officials and others, shows that **dhon** is the unit of land measurement on aristocratic/state official (gyerpa) and monastic (choshi) estates, while **kang** is the unit of measure on government (shungyub) estates. 1 **dhon** is equal to 2 **kang**. For the purposes of the collection of State taxes, 1 **kang** has 80 **son** khe (1 **son khe** equals 27 lbs). Though yield could be as low as 5 fold and as high as 20, an average of 8 is used and 1/6 of the net yield is collected by the state as taxation.

Drigung Labrang therefore had 72 **dhon** X 2 = 144 **kang** of land- X 80 = 11520 **son khe**- X 8= 92160 **son khe** (gross)- minus 11520 =80640 **son khe** (net). One sixth of this net amount, 13440 **son khe** is the theoretical tax amount paid to the state. The actual tax paid would probably be less than this, as large landed estates (especially religious one) have exemption documents. These exemptions are generally related to some ritual that was performed for the state. Rituals, as we shall see in Chapter 7, entail great expences.

entailed taxes in kind or **bohma**, generally described as **lakdhon**. Others come under the category of **kangdro**, or transportation duties like providing **thawoo**, riding horses, or **khema**, beasts of burden, and **woola** or labor. The fields were further divided as to whether labor is **nangtreh**, taxes paid to Drigung Labrang or **chitreh**, those payable to the State.

Drigung Labrang also collects taxes from its various nomadic groups in the form of meat, butter, and hide. The labrang collects all taxes from the various households and it is responsible for its share of the taxes to the State. Vis a vis the State, Drigung Labrang was **Trimgorangzen**, or had rights over the administration and jurisdiction over its peasant subjects. If conflicts and crimes could not be solved at the local labrang level, then the case might be taken up at the regional State office at Medrogonga Dzong, or at the Central State Office at Lhasa, if it needed to be adjudicated at the highest level.

Drigung Labrang: Relations and Authority over Monasteries

Structure of Drigung Labrang

The organization of Drigung Labrang is centered around the two reincarnate lamas known as the Drigung Kyamgon, or Drigung Chetsang and Chungtsang Rimpoche. As religious

lamas they command equal respect and status. But in the eyes of the Tibetan State, Chetsang is accorded higher status since he holds the title of **Huthokthu**,[25] and therefore sits ahead of Chungtsang on a dais of equal height. Status and authority also depended on age. At the time of the 5th Chetsang, Chungtsang was so young that the former made all the decisions. Generally, if they are of the same age, it is expected that they will consult each other on important matters. Both lamas are considered as part of a single Drigung Labrang.

The structure of the labrang can be divided into two areas. The **Tse**, or upper section, and **Sho**, the lower. The upper area contains the rooms where the two Kyamgons reside and the area where personal attendants work. The area may be further divided on the basis of the separate rooms of the two lamas. **Simchu Sha** or the East Room is where Chetsang resides, while Chungtsang is in **Simchu Nhub**, the West Room. The two Kyamgons are frequently referred to as **Kundhu**, meaning Omnipresence, and are distinguished as **Kundhu Sha**, East Omnipresence, and **Kundhu Nhub**, West Omnipresence. The upper section also includes the personal attendants. The three of them are included by the term **so-sem-cho-sum**. This includes the **chopon**, a monk well versed in the religious texts and prayers who assists

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[25] A Manchu-Mongol title bestowed on highest lamas.

the two lamas in their personal prayers and public initiation ceremonies. The chopon also looks after all the ritual objects needed during prayers and ceremonies as well as the personal altars of the two lamas. The **sopon** serves tea and meals and takes care of the lama's personal clothes and belongings. He is also known as the **sempon**, or personal attendant. The **singha** checks on all who come to seek audiences and serves as a bodyguard. Each of the lamas have their personal sopon and singha, but they have a common chopon.

The lower section of Drigung Labrang is the main administrative center. This unit includes the four main functionaries called **kuchen**. They include the **Chanzoh**, **Dechang**, **Dronyer**, and the **Nyerpa**. The Chanzoh is the overall head and the ultimate authority in all matters in this lower section. The main work of the two Dechang is to look into all matters related to tea, butter, and barley ale (chang), whether it be their collection, regulation, or manufacturing. The task of the Dronyer is related to protocol. He receives visitors and communicates between the upper and the lower sections of the labrang, and with the State at Lhasa, or the local administrative center, Medrogonga Dzong. The Nyerpa looks after the granary, meat, and various other items like salt, sugar, spices, and many others, except those under the care of the

Dechang. These four main workers also have assistants to help them.

Other workers at the lower section are the **Ledrung**, secretary for secular matters, the **Chakdrung**, secretary for religious affairs, and the **shing-nyer** who manages the agricultural fields. There are also numerous workers in the kitchen, the fields and other areas of the labrang.

Labrang and its Monasteries

Drigung Labrang is the ultimate authority over its two main monasteries. **Drigung Thi**, also known as **Densa Thi**, is considered to be the main monastery since it was the **densa**, or seat of Kyopa Jigten Gompo, the founder of the Drigung religious order. The monastery is famous for its two meditation centers or **drubtras**. **Yarikarpa**, or **Yarigang**, is the other large monastery. The two monasteries have about 500 monks each, although only about 300 are in residence at any one time. The rest are at various other monasteries or small village temples that function as sub-monasteries under the administration of the two larger ones. Much smaller, though important, are other monasteries, like Medro Katse, Nyimachangra, Tsewa, and numerous others, scattered over Drigung Province. Most of the workers of the labrang are recruited from learned, capable, and influential monks from the various monasteries.

Each monastery has its own **dratsang**. The dratsang, literally meaning "a monks nest" is composed of all the monks of a given monastery. The members congregate for the **sohjong** or the bi-monthly examination of the observance of their vows. The dratsang is also a corporate unit with a well defined hierarchy, specific rules and norms, and possessing land,animals, and other assets. When a monk joins a particular monastery he becomes part of a dratsang, and as a member must perform certain necessary tasks. These obligations are formally labelled **dratsang leneh**.

The first task that must be performed is that of a **lakteh**, literally meaning "dexterous hands". The work consists of odd chores in the community kitchen, like transporting and serving tea and food from the kitchen to the congregational hall, fetching water, sweeping, etc. A monk must served as lakteh for a period of 6 months. There are 8 lakteh in the monastic community kitchen working under the supervision of one **jama**, the "tea-maker". From the position of lakteh, one may be promoted to that of jama. If one wishes to stay on with kitchen work, one may become lakteh or jama for the labrang at the lower section-or the kitchen- of the two head lamas. The **gehkoh** (see below) appoints the lakteh and jama for the dratsang kitchen and the labrang appoints its own. This manual work

in the kitchen is one avenue for monks who are not versed or interested in religious studies to achieve some promotion, status, and a better livelihood.

After the 6 months of lakteh work, the next and only compulsory work obligation are those of prayer memorization, learning to make religious "drawings" (tsedra), playing musical ritual instruments, and performing religious dances (cham). Although these obligations must be continued for a one year period, a student only completes them when he has passed the examinations. Those more ambitious, who have a good command of the texts and writing, who are capable and intelligent, could be chosen for higher positions in the monastery. These monks enter into the category of the **shungzinpa** who also are appointed along lines of seniority.

A shungzinpa first serves as a **chabra**, the keeper of the inner temples (lhakhang, Dhukhang). From the 3 chabras, two must be well versed in the prayers as they must perform the daily services as well as other services that are specially requested by temple-goers. The third chabra, known as **chabra nyerpa**, need not have knowledge of prayers. His task is to look after the store which contains barley grains and flour, butter, and other food-stuffs. He also looks after items like statues, religious

paintings (thangka), ritual objects, etc. A chabra must serve for a period of two years.

Only after chabra service can one be appointed to the position of **umzeh**, the prayer chant leader. One can also be appointed to the position of **gehkoh**, the disciplinarian. This position does not really require that one be versed in the texts, only that one be a capable and responsible person, and possibly, someone who has access to some wealth since he must sponsor the 5 days of **trosang**, the summer prayer-picnic. One may also be appointed to the position of **bukpa**, the keeper of all the monastery possessions like land, animals, cash, etc.

Generally, only after the completion of the above three positions can one be appointed to serve as **khempo**, the head of the dratsang, the monastic community. These four positions are each filled for a duration of one year.

Advancement to these top four positions is according to an eligible list of candidates, made by the present holders of these positions. The list is then presented to Drigung Labrang where the two lamas make the final decision.

In summary. At the core of the labrang institution is the sacred-charismatic element combined with a socio-economic and political component. At the state level, the labrang is under central authority and must pay taxes to

it. At the local level of the village and the monastery, the labrang is the center of authority for the appropriation of surplus labor[26] and the administration of the monasteries. Our example of Drigung Labrang has shown this. From such local levels, through political events, the labrang can evolve into a larger complex entity, the symbol and the reality of State power and unity. Our historical material on the Sakyas and the Dalai Lamas serve as examples.

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[26] The term **surplus labor** is used very often in the text. It refers to peasant labor that must be provided over and above that required for their household needs. Agrarian estates in Ladakh and Tibet (Europe also) contain fields planted by the monastery (demesne land) and an area leased to peasants (tenements, virgates). Labor provided by the peasant on his leased lands for subsistence is called **necessary labor**. The number of days the peasant must work on the demesne, by virtue of his subjected status is referred to as **surplus labor**. Marx saw clearly that in precapitalist societies, **surplus labor** was overtly and clearly distinguishable and visible, but in capitalist systems, it was not. Surplus was hidden behind the wage form.

3

LADAKH: PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Ecology and Population

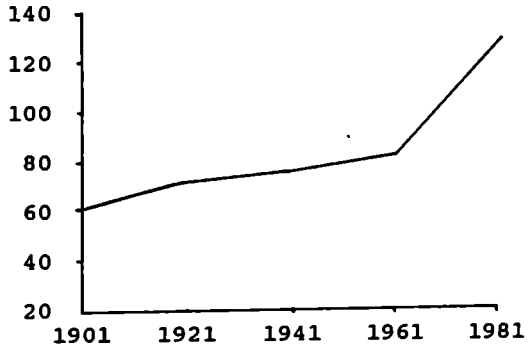
In the upper valleys of the Indus river, adjoining the regions of Western Tibet, lies an elevated area known as Ladakh. Historically, its political boundaries have constantly shifted and in 1947 Ladakh became a part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The district lies between north latitude 32 15' to 36 and east longitude 75 15' to 80 15'. To the east and north, Ladakh borders with the Chinese occupied areas of Tibet and Sinkiang, to the northwest, the disputed areas under Pakistan control, to the west, Kashmir, and to the south, the states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab.

For administrative purposes Ladakh district is divided into three areas called **tehsil**. They include Leh, Kargil, and Zanskar. The district is governed by the various offices under the Development Commissioner. The population of the district is almost equally divided between the Buddhist and the Muslims. Graph 1 shows the increase in

the population from 1901 to 1981. What is note worthy is the tremendous increase in the population between 1961 to 1981. The decadal percentile increase from 1961 to 1971 was 18.77.[1] From 1971 to 1981 the percentile increase was 30.53.[2] This reflects the decrease in the practice of polyandry, migration and probably lower mortality.

Graph 1

Ladakh Population, 1901-1981



The 1971 Census describes Ladakh as the largest district in India with an area of 95,876 sq kms.[3] This is more

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[1] Indian Government, **Census of India 1971-Series 8-Jammu and Kashmir-Ladakh District.**

[2] Indian Government, **Census of India 1981-Series 8-Jammu and Kashmir-Provisional Population Totals.** pp. 34. From this census onwards, Ladakh and Kargil form separate districts. The figure for 1971 to 1981 is for Ladakh District.

[3] This figure includes 37,555 sq. kms. claimed by India but seized by China in 1962.

than twice the size of Bhutan and not that much smaller than Nepal or the American state of Wisconsin.

In comparison to Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim and other Southern Himalayan areas, Ladakh resembles Tibet, with its high plateau, rather broad valleys, rugged, treeless and almost desert-like terrain. It is different from Tibet in the sense that it is drier and the plateau is not as large and flat. Since the monsoon does not reach this high Northwest Himalayan area, only about 200 sq. kms is arable. Agriculture is only possible through irrigation of snow-fed rivers and their tributaries.

Fieldwork Site: Environment, Population and Agriculture

On one of the tributaries of the Indus, just a few kilometers from the western end of the Leh valley lies Kyilung village, the main research area.[4] The village has an average elevation of about 3800 m, which is almost

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[4] Some data, especially on the reorganization of economic funds for ritual sponsorship (see Chapter 8) was collected from Tharling monastery. The monastery and the village are located about 90 km west of Leh on the Leh-Srinagar road. The village is situated at an altitude of about 3300 m and contains about 65 households. The monastic community has over 100 monks, though only about 10 are in residence at any one time, except during the Drumchod and Kabgyed rituals when all are present. Though the monastery does not have vast lands in the village, the monastery has lands in 14 other villages. Together the monastery has 67 acres of cultivated land and 53 acres of uncultivated land. Some of these villages, like Kanchi, are prime **samadrok** (agro-pastoralist) areas. Therefore non-market sources of meat and dairy products are more abundant than Kyiling.

identical with Leh, or Lhasa, Tibet.

Kyilung is subdivided into 5 areas called **hrangchok**. They are from north to south, Murudrok, Thaknak, Chiwang, Chuskor and Menkhang. The village has about 215 households and over 1000 people. There are two ethnic groups; an earlier population of Buddhists of Tibetan ancestry (about 70%) and a minority (30%) of Balti and Kashmiri Muslims who migrated a few centuries ago.

The Muslim population is increasing at a faster rate. The Crude Fertility Rate for all women between the ages 45-69 was 5.7 for the Buddhist and 7.2 for the Muslims, a difference of 1.5 births.[5] The Buddhists form a primarily endogamous group, while the Muslims do take Buddhist brides. Both speak the same language, Ladakhi, a Tibetan dialect.

Since the annual rainfall at Kyilung is less than 5 inches, agriculture depends exclusively on irrigation. For this reason one can picture Kyilung as a large oasis that broadens and narrows throughout its approximately 6 kms in length and an average breadth of 250 meters. Surrounding this green area is nothing but jagged rocks, barren hills and sandy desert like terrain.

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[5] Melvyn C.Goldstein, Paljor Tsarong, and Cynthia Beal. "High Altitude Hypoxia, Culture, and Human Fecundity/Fertility:A Comparative Study." **American Anthropologist**, 85 (1) 1983.

Irrigation and the short summer, with temperatures around 75 F, allow a one crop cereal agriculture. Though animals are herded at higher elevations (about 4800 m), the subsistence pattern is a poor example of the familiar Tibetan high altitude agro-pastoralism (**samadrok**), as agriculture is primary. **Nas** or **dru** (barley) is grown. There are two types , **yangma** and **shirok**.[6] The former has a shorter maturation period. It is sown at higher elevations and the flour and ale (**chang**) produced from it is considered superior. Four varieties of wheat are identified; **drokchen**, shaped differently from the others, **droksur**, higher yielding and has a shorter growth period, and **droril**, also considered high yielding. Two types of peas/beans called **naktran** (black beans) and **randril** are grown. The vegetables grown are potatoes, turnips, mustards, and a number of others that are grown for consumption as well as for sale.

The Monastery and its Residents

We saw that Drigung was one of the main powers in Tibet during the 11th and 12th centuries. Their influence spread

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[6] I neglected collecting the cereal and peas/bean varieties. Therefore, I am not able to identify their botanical nomenclature.

over many regions including Western Tibet and Ladakh.[7] But it was not until the 16th century, during the rule of the Ladakhi king Tashi Namgya, that the Drigung "lama" Dema Kunga Drakpa came to Ladakh and built Kyilung monastery.[8]

The king alienated either state or royal lands for the monastery. The households that were bound to those estates now came under the monastery. From then onwards, we may speak of the relations of production, the monastery and the monks as a class having "ownership" of the means of production that appropriated surplus labor from a class of peasant producers.

Sometime after Dema Kunga Drakpa's arrival, there were four main Drigung monasteries in Ladakh, Kyilung, Shang, Sharchukhul, and Tharling, with each having a landed estate. Today, Shang is under Kyilung. Kyilung monastery has lands primarily in the villages of Drigar, Ngala, Nyemo, Taru and Umla. It also has some land in the Leh-

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[7] For an account of the spread of Drigung influence in Western Tibet and Ladakh see Luciano Petech " The 'Bri-gun-pa Sect in Western Tibet and Ladakh" in Louis Ligeti edited, **Proceedings of the Csomo De Koros Memorial Symposium**. Budapest, 1978.

[8] Oral historical accounts claim that Dema Kunga Drakpa built Kyilung monastery during the rule of king Jamyang Namgyal. But chronological considerations by Petech, ibid., make this impossible. Local tradition also claims that Drigung monasteries received grants of land because Dema Kunga Drakpa cured the ailing king. It is also said the Kyilung monastery used to be administered through Gyangdrak monastery in the Mt. Kailash region.

Chushod area. Most of the lay households in the primary villages and a few in the Leh-Chushod area are followers of the Drigung sect.

Recruitment, Economy and Activities[9]

During the fieldwork period, Kyilung monastery had 34 permanent resident monks.[10] Table 1 presents their age distribution. It shows a skewing towards the older ages with 59% of the monks being 40 years of age or older and 74% 30+ years of age. To a large extent, this bias towards "older" monks reflects the introduction of wage labor and new social values that work against the traditional monastic life and make it difficult for the monastery to recruit and retain young monks (see Chapter 7).

Monks are recruited only from Kyilung and its associated villages, although the majority [56% (N=19)] are from Kyilung. As in Tibet, Ladakhis previously seem to have recruited monks through a tax placed on households.[11]

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[9] For a detailed account see: Melvyn C. Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong, "Tibetan Buddhist Monasticism: Social, Psychological and Cultural Implications."**The Tibet Journal**, 10 (1) 1985: 14-31.

[10] The issue of permanent residency is important since there are some monasteries that have over 100 monks, but only 10% or less are permanent residents.

[11] It was probably at the request of Choje Dema Kunga Drakpa, the Drigung "lama" and founder of Kyilung monastery that King Tashi Namgyal instated the **tsuntral**, or monk tax.

Table 1

Age Distribution of Kyilung Monks, 1981

Age	Number	Percent
70+	3	9
60-69	2	6
50-59	8	23
40-49	7	21
30-39	5	15
20-29	4	12
15-19	1	3
10-14	2	6
< 10	2	6
Total	34	100%

Today, at Kyilung, recruitment rests mainly on family decisions. The decisions are based on a number of overlapping factors.

Parents feel that it is a meritorious act of religious devotion to make their son(s) a monk. Some families with 3 or more sons might decide to send a son or sons to the monastery in order to reduce the potential discord among brothers living with one wife.[12] Some poorer families feel that sending a son to the monastery will give that son a better livelihood, while easing the economic burden

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On this see, A.H. Francke, **Antiquities of Indian Tibet**, Volume 2, reprint ed., (New Delhi: S.Chand and Co.(Pvt) Ltd., 1972), p. 104.

[12] Fraternal polyandry is still the preferred marital form in Ladakh, although, in more "developed" areas, many established unions are breaking up and the young prefer monogamy. See also Chapter 7.

on themselves. Some families make their son a monk if there is already a resident, relative monk. At least 21 (62%) of the monks were related, usually in an "uncle-nephew" relationship. Sometimes, parents believe that their ill child will have better health if he is made a monk.

Economically, individual monks obtain their subsistence needs from various sources. From the Labrang estate each adult monk receives a field/s, known as **pho-shing**, or "salary field", which is tilled either by their families or their patrons. Monks also receive food and money gifts when they perform village household rituals and during rituals at the monastery. Proceeds from the auctioning of deceased layman's goods, the surplus from ritual sponsorship fund, and for some, the selling of items to tourists are other sources of income.

The stereotypical view of Tibetan monks recalls an image of an isolated and contemplative individual. The activities of Kyilung monks, shown in Table 2, is a far cry from this conventional view. The table is self explanatory, except, maybe for the category, "Other Monastery Rites". It refers to visits and participation in rituals, religious festivals and sermons at other monasteries and places.

The table supports the observation that the life of

Kyilung monks is anything but isolated and relaxed. Combining village rites and monastery work and rites, monk #1 spent 73% (255 days), monk #2 spent 68% (247days) and

Table 2

Proportion and Number of Days Spent in Different Activities for Three Kyilung Monks: August 1980 to August 1981.

Monk	Village Rites	Shopping in Leh	Remain in Room	Monastery Rites and Work	Other Monastery's Rites	Other
#1	58% (201)	4% (15)	15% (54)	15% (54)	6% (20)	2% (10)
#2	53% (192)	4% (14)	24% (89)	15% (55)	4% (14)	0% (1)
#3*	61% (203)	1% (3)	14% (48)	12% (39)	12% (41)	0% (0)

* Monk 3's diary was kept for only 11 months

monk #3 spent 73% (203 days)[13] engaged in the performance of such activities.

These activity data tell only a part of the story since monks also have a variety of other monastic jobs and duties. These are discussed within the context of the next chapter.

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[13] Monk #3 would have had even higher totals, but he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal and India for over a month.

Historical Background[14]

What was the political situation during the time when Ladakh operated as a Tibetan Kingdom, and specially, what was the nature of the State, land and the taxation system which will give us a better understanding of the precapitalist economy of religious estates? What were the causes of the collapse of this State and what were the later developments which formed the context within which we must discuss the transformation of our religious estate, the labrang? These questions are the concerns of this section.

The Tibetanization of Ladakh

Kharosthi inscriptions around Khalatse indicate that the lower regions of Ladakh formed a part of the Kushana empire in the first and second century. The country was inhabited by an Indo-Iranian race, known as the Dardis.

I mentioned in Chapter 1 that Tibet was one of the more powerful nations in Asia. Ladakh did not escape it's influence, and by 635 the country was under Tibetan

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[14] The two main sources used in the historical account on the formation and collapse of the Ladakhi State are: C.L. Datta, **Ladakh and the Western Himalayan Politics: 1819-1884.**(New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1972) and Luciano Petech, **Kingdom of Ladakh: C.950-1842 A.D.** (Rome: Instituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1977).

suzerainty with a Tibetan representative and administration. When the Tibetan monarchy collapsed around 842, an interesting situation emerged. Ladakh, though free from Tibet politically, became even more Tibetanized as the country came to be ruled by the descendants of the Tibetan royalty, who migrated towards Ladakh.

The last Tibetan king, Lang Dharma, was assassinated in 842 and the State based on royal monarchies disintegrated. Lang Dharma had a son by the name of Odsung (843-905). One of Odsung's grandson, Kyide Nyimagon migrated to Western Tibet and married a member of the Dro family, one of Tibet's highest noble households. Two of their sons ruled Guge and Purang. The eldest, Palkigon, ruled Ladakh around 930, though the chronology is very fuzzy around this time. With Palkigon Ladakh's first dynasty began and a number of kings followed until the time of Lodrochogden (c.1435-1460). His deposition by his grand nephew, Lachen Baghan (reigned circa 1460-1585) resulted in the rule of a second dynasty which lasted until the last active king Tsepal Namgyal (r.c. 1802-1840).

This approximately 900 years of political history can be summarized as the waxing and waning of the Ladakhi kingdom as it invaded neighboring States, and was in turn, for the greater part, invaded by others, until the kingdom finally succumbed to the onslaught of the Dogras.

At the time of King Lhachen Utpala (c. 1080-1110) Ladakh held sway over Western Tibet and most of Baltistan. By the beginning of the 15th century, Islamisation of Kashmir had already occurred and the holy wars against infidels continued. Sultan Zain-ul Abidin (1420-1470) invaded Ladakh and the kingdom came under Kashmiri suzerainty, which lasted until the death of the sultan in 1470. Ladakh's independence did not last long as the Mongols under the Sultan of Kashgar and his commander, Mirza Haider, invaded the kingdom in 1532. Ladakh around this time seem to be divided as there were said to be two rulers, Ladakh Jughdan and Tashigon.

After spending the winter in Kashmir, Mirza Haider returned to Ladakh in the summer of 1533 and proceeded to invade Tibet. He reached as far as 8 days march from Lhasa, but the harsh enviroment and ill health among his men forced him to return to Ladakh. He stayed there until he left for Badakhshan in 1536. After invading Kashmir once more and consolidating his power there, Mirza Haider re-invaded Ladakh. By 1548 he ruled over both Baltistan and Ladakh, but when he died in 1551, Ladakh regained her independence. Kashmiri raids continued, one in 1553 and another in 1562, but they were not significant.

With the decline of Kashmiri power, Ladakh under King Tsewang Namgyal (r.c. 1575-1595) invaded and controlled

areas in Western Tibet like Guge, Mustang (now in Nepal), and Purang, as well as areas like Jumla and Kulu in the South, and Baltistan in the west. This situation was not to last very long, for when the king died, many outlying areas became independent of Ladakh. When king Jamyang Namgyal (r.c. 1595 1616) tried to regain control of these areas he provoked the Balti ruler Ali Mir Khan who invaded Ladakh and ransacked monasteries and either burned or threw most of the religious texts into the rivers. Peace was concluded with the marriage of the Khan's daughter to Jamyang Namgyal.

Under their son, Senghe Namgyal (r.c. 1616-1642) Ladakh began its greatest expansion, and even during part of his son, Dhedhen Namgyal's rule (1642-1694) the kingdom had control over both its Upper and Lower regions, Western Tibet and the southern areas of Lahul, Spiti, Upper Kinnaur, and Zanskar.

In 1681 war broke out between Ladakh and Tibet as each was said to be persecuting the other's religious sect. Ladakh also supported Bhutan, its fellow Red Hat sect (Drukpa Kagyu) in that country's feud with the Yellow Hat (Gelugpa) Tibetan State. The Tibetans advanced through most of Ladakh. The Ladakhis dug in at Basgo fortress until the Mughuls from Kashmir with the assistance of Balti and pricipalities of Lower Ladakh pushed the

Tibetans back. When the peace treaty was concluded, Ladakh lost all its territories in Western Tibet including those previously occupied by Senghe Namgyal. More over, the request for Mughul assistance ended up in Mughul control over Ladakh. Regarding this historical period, Petech remarks, " Its [Ladakh] role as a Himalayan power of some importance was finished once and for all. Later history offers merely local interest".[15] So when we get to the last king, Tsepal Namgyal, on the eve of the Dogra invasion in the early 1830's, the kingdom was already in a state of disintegration.

The Ladakhi State: Land, Labor and Taxation

What was the nature of the state and the precapitalist economy of land, labor and taxation during this approximately 900 years when Ladakh was a Tibetan Kingdom? The discussion of this question will substantially contribute to the main aim of this dissertation, the analysis of the relations of production on Drigung Labrang estate.

Monarch and State

Since the Ladakhi kings were the direct descendants of the kings of Tibet, it would not be wrong to assume that

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[15] Luciano Petech, **Kingdom of Ladakh**, pp.80.

the Ladakhi State resembled more the Tibetan state from the 7th to the 9th century, than the state under the Dalai Lamas. In comparison to the Tibetan asiatic state under the Dalai Lamas, the Ladakhi state maybe characterized as "semi-asiatic", as the material is not convincing enough to characterize it as fully asiatic.[16]

Ladakh was ruled by a lay king and not the clergy like Tibet. The bureaucratic lay and monk officials, examination systems and promotions of Tibet did not exist in Ladakh. Alexander Cunningham, one of the two main sources says that the main office of the Prime Minister was "almost hereditary" and restricted only to the few **kahlons** ("prime ministers") who were also rulers of local provinces. The other source, Petech, indicates that the Kahlon title was hereditary but the office was not "automatically so".[17]

In comparison to the feudal mode of production,[18] Ladakh was much more centralized. Under the king were the two main offices, that of the Prime Minister and the Treasury Department. The elders of the various districts that were

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[16] See Appendix A on the asiatic mode of production.

[17] Alexander Cunningham, **Ladak: Physical, Statistical, and Historical** (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co., 1854)., pp.258., and Petech, **Kingdom of Ladakh**, pp.156.

[18] See Appendix A, on the differences between the Feudal and the Asiatic Mode of Production.

responsible for justice, had to be in attendance at the kings court. Cases that could not be solved locally, were adjudicated at the central court (**shakshang**). All district tax collectors and accountants reported directly to the treasury department. Some state officials were granted usufructory estates (**barlig**).[19] Cunningham says that various officials were paid a salary in money and he speaks of "presents and fees" paid annually to the state by government officials.[20] Considering the centralization aspect, the yearly basis of the fees, and the familiarity with the institutionalization of obligations in the Tibetan cultural area, I would tend to say that these fees were taxes paid to the state rather than some feudatory tribute.

Along with this centralization, there also existed the procedure of selecting the main administrative positions from a hereditary class of nobles (**kahlon**, **lonpo**) who were also said to be rulers of their own local areas. This was different from Tibet under the Dalai Lamas, where state officials were not local rulers and bureaucratic aspects had greater precedence than hereditary characteristics.

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[19] See Carassco, **Land and Polity in Tibet**, pp. 173-5, and Petech, **Kingdom of Ladakh**, pp. 156.

[20] Cunningham, **Ladak**, pp. 271-272.

Land and Taxation

Though the Ladakhi state levied taxes on transportation and commercial activity, I confine the discussion to the system of land tenure, labor appropriation, and taxation.

All lands of the country ultimately belonged to the King. Like their predecessors, the kings of Tibet, they were sacred figures. The kings were known as **chos-gyal chenpo**, or "Great king ruling according to the law". They represented the unity of the four elements of **chab si**, political authority, **nga-thang**, majesty, and **ou-mo**, magical power.[21]

From Cunningham's material, we can conclude that there were three types of land holdership. The first, were lands that belonged to the public domain of the king, or state. Secondly, there were lands alienated to the various monasteries, and finally, land that belonged personally to the king, the queen, and the royal family.

As far as the peasants are concerned, Cunningham's statement that taxes were "levied on dwellings and not on lands..."[22] needs clarification. It is inconceivable, in a primarily landed economy, for land not to be the basis of

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[21] Petech, **Kingdom of Ladakh**, pp. 153-4 and especially pages 199-200 of Guiseppe Tucci, "The Sacral Character of the Kings of Ancient Tibet." **East and West**, 6, 1955, 197-205.

[22] Cunningham, **Ladak**, pp. 268

taxation. What he was probably trying to say was that the household was the unit of taxation, and that of course depends on how much land was held. There were said to be three household sizes for taxation. The "full-sized" (khangchen), the "half-house" (khang-phet), and the "quarter-house" (phet-dhi-phet).[23] These peasant households were attached to the three types of land holders and had to provide surplus labor on these estates.

Under the state were 18,000 households. The monasteries had 4000 households, and the royal family estates, 2000 households.[24] Taxes were paid in both kind and money. Cunningham states that the poor peasants who could not pay in kind or money had to pay through labor. He calls this labor, "Kanggro" and "Lagdon".[25] On the basis of the Tibetan data, this, however, is a misinterpretation. **Lakdon** refers to payments in kind and money, and **kangdro** refers to corvee labor; the provision either of **woo-la** (human labor), **ta-woo** (riding animals), and **khey-ma**

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[23] ibid. pp. 268. Ladakhis call the main house **khangchen**. If parents or younger brothers move to a smaller house, that house is known as **khangbu**.

[24] ibid; pp. 269-70

[25] ibid. pp.269. **Kanggro** is Cunningham's transliteration. It is pronounced **kangdro**.

(beasts of burden).[26] So both lakdon and kangdro are paid by the taxable household unit. In fact, only the wealthier peasants could provide animals for riding or carrying packs.

The Collapse of the Ladakhi State and Recent Changes

The British, the Dogras and the Sikhs were three competing powers in the Western Himalayas. Their rivalry in the Tibeto-Ladakhi shawl wool (pashmina) trade brought about the demise of the Ladakhi Kingdom. Under Independent India, the Indo-Pakistan and the Sino-Indian border conflicts ushered in a new economy of military and civilian development projects that changed the structure of Ladakhi society.

Three Rival Powers and the Wool Trade

Around 1800, the Sikhs under Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a power to be reckoned with in the Punjab. The Kangra hills were annexed after they pushed the Gorkhas (Nepalese) back to their territory. By 1819 Kashmir was conquered and Ladakh being a tributary of Kashmir, became a "vassal" of Ranjit Singh.

The second power was the Dogras. The Dogra Prince, Gulab

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[26] See Goldstein, **Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village** and Surkhang, **Tax Measurement and the Lag-'don Tax.**

Singh served under Ranjit Singh as a "feudatory". Along with his most able officer, Zorawar Singh, he was a great power in Punjab, second only to the Maharaja himself. With control over the Jammu hills and Kistwar, their territory became adjacent to Ladakh.

The British were the third power on the scene. The East India Company, founded in 1599, began as a trading company but gradually came to acquire territories in India. The British defeat of the Gorkhas of Nepal in 1816 and their possession of the Simla hills brought their dominions close to Ladakh. They saw the area as important for hill stations, trade in the pashmina shawl wool and as a strategic deterrent to the rise of powers in the important Northwest Frontier.

Trade in the pashmina wool was a bone of contention for the three rival powers. The outcome of the 1684 Tibeto-Ladakhi-Mughul War, in terms of trade in the shawl wool, was that Tibet agreed to supply all the wool to Ladakh, and that the Ladakhis would in turn supply it to Kashmir. Though the British had interest in the shawl wool much earlier, it was William Moorcraft, an employee of the Company, who disguised as a pilgrim reached Western Tibet and managed to buy some quantity of wool. Soon after 1815, the development of Rampur as a trading center, and the repairing of trails in Kinnaur, set the scene for the

diversion of wool to these areas under British control. Moorcraft later stayed in Ladakh for two years and in 1821 privately arranged for British protection of Ladakh and a trade agreement. But the British Indian Government rejected it for other geo-political reasons.

Both Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his vassal, the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh, were interested in the wool trade. The Maharaja was not only realizing a good income from the Kashmiri shawl trade, but also encouraged manufacturers at Amritsar. The Dogras were also receiving some wool directly from Ladakh into areas under their control. But they were unsatisfied with that arrangement and in 1834 Zorowar Singh invaded Ladakh.

Starting from Kistwar and then crossing over the Maryumla, the Dogras entered the southwestern Ladakhi province of Purig. Although the Ladakhis put up a stiff resistance, the Dogras penetrated further inward until in 1835, at Lamayuru, the Ladakhis sent a letter of conciliation. At Leh a settlement was reached and Ladakh paying tribute and war indemnity, came under the rule of the Dogras. Although insurrections and revolts broke out, they were quickly subdued and Ladakh remained under the Dogras.

Using Ladakh as his base, Zorowar Singh brought Baltistan under his control by 1840. The following year he

began his unfortunate conquest of Tibetan territories. After capturing Rudok, Gartok, Tsaparang, and Tholing, he was killed and defeated by the Tibetans who recaptured those areas and also entered Ladakh. With the Tibetan presence, Ladakh was to make a final attempt at independence, but to no avail. The Dogras regrouped and entered Ladakh. The Tibetans were defeated and the peace treaty signed between the two, reestablished the old trading relations between Ladakh and Tibet. This ensured that the shawl wool would continue to flow from Tibet to Ladakh. Ladakh remained under the Dogras and through them in 1846, became a part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir of Maharaja Gulab Singh, a British protectorate. In 1947 Ladakh became a part of the Jammu and Kashmir State of India and continues to do so today.

The Post-1947 Period

The post-colonial consolidation of nationalism in India resulted in the 1947 separation and independence of India and Pakistan. Maharaja Gulab Singh continued not making any decisions as to which side he was going to join. The invasion of Kashmir towards the end of 1947 by Muslim tribes of Pakistan and the Hindu Maharaja's appeal for assistance from India, culminated in the Indo-Pakistan war which spilled-off into Ladakh.

In China, by 1949, the Communists had triumped over the

Koumintang. The following year China invaded Tibet. In March 1959, the Tibetan uprising against the Chinese occupation resulted in the quelling of the revolt and the flight of the Dalai Lama to India. The Chinese invasion, for the first time, brought in force, Chinese and Indian troops face to face in Ladakh and all along the border. Conflicting claims resulted in the Sino-Indian border war of October, 1962.

By this time, Ladakh had become fully militarized. Air strips and roads for military supplies were constructed. Ladakis were recruited into the army. With militarization came the civilian development projects of the Jammu-Kashmir state. These projects included, state education, medical facilities, posts and telegraphs, electrification, animal husbandry, tourism, commerce, banking, housing and a host of others that are part and parcel of most development policies. Both the military and civilian works, brought a new economic alternative, large scale wage labor and money, the likes of which the Ladakhis had never witnessed before. Along with the new economy came the related social forms; laws, politics (secularism and democracy) and the values and sentiments of modern India. Together they shook the very foundation of traditional Ladakhi life.

4

DRIGUNG LABRANG AND THE MONASTIC SETTING IN LADAKH

Certain management aspects of the labrang estate and the economics of rituals are implemented through the monastic work obligation system and authority structure. At the same time the labrang is the ultimate authority over the monastic section. In this way, as well as in others, the labrang and the general monastic system are so intertwined, that the understanding of the labrang economy must necessarily mean the elaboration of the monastic system. First, I will describe the relation of the labrang to the monastery in regard to the authority structure and the compulsory work obligations. I then describe the formation and organization of Drigung Labrang in Ladakh.

The Labrang and the Monastery

To many observers, a monastery seems to act as one large community. However, sometimes they do, and at times they do not. Therefore, it is crucial to grasp the segmentary nature of monastic organization. At all Drigung

monasteries, including Kyilung, one may speak of two main institutions, the **labrang** and the **dratsang**.

The Labrang

We have already discussed in Chapter 2, the labrang institution. In Ladakh, Drigung Labrang is represented through a person called the **choje**. Choje, the name given to the lama, is delegated to look after all the Drigung monasteries in Ladakh. The duration of the appointment varies and there have been a number of chojes appointed. Some of them include the Balok, Chuku, Nyethak, Rongdo, and Tokden houses (**tsang**). The present Choje, the 10th incarnate of the Tokden lineage, was officially appointed in 1957, and he has since administered the Drigung monasteries in Ladakh. The Choje administered through a 3 month residence at each of the four main monasteries. At each of the monasteries, an institution called the **depa labrang** allocated part of its produce for his support. However, this system of part time residence was discontinued by the present Choje, who now resides mainly at Leh and Kyilung.

Until the arrival of the head of the sect, Drigung Kyabgon, in 1978, the Choje overall authority for all the Drigung monasteries in Ladakh. Some of his duties included the allocation of vacant quarters, mediating disputes, presiding over major ceremonies, appointing monastic

positions, and making the final decision on all matters of importance. Generally, he is a reincarnate lama, who, as representative of Drigung Labrang, symbolizes its authority and is the link to the central monastery and the religious tradition and heritage of the Drigungpas.

Dratsang and the System of Work Obligations

The **dratsang** (see Chapter 2) is the monastic community which includes all the monks who are members of a particular monastery.[1] Aside from the labrang, or the Choje, the dratsang is responsible for the total organization and functioning of the monastery. This is realized through a system of **work obligations.**

By work obligations, I refer to certain tasks that **must** be performed by virtue of being a member of the dratsang. These obligations are formally called **dratsang leneh**, or more commonly, **gompeh tral**, monastery tax or obligations. These are implemented through a process often referred to as **tsir** or **mingtsam**, a process whereby a monk is chosen to perform a certain task when it is his turn, according to the name list kept by the **gyeskos**. There is a certain hierarchy in the work obligations with some that have to be performed before others; but, it is a loose one. The

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[1] This is true of Kyilung, but in larger monasteries there are a number of **dratsang** that are parts of a monastery.

monks who have completed the obligations are known as **thondrel** or the graduated ones, and those that have not, **shondrel**, or younger or junior ones. Those that have completed the highest obligations, like that of the four heads of the dratsang are also referred to as **surpa**, or the "side-one". For example, the monk that has fulfilled the **lhobhon** position is known as **lhobhon surpa**. These positions will be discussed later.

For organizational purposes, we may divide the work obligations into three broad categories which sometimes overlap each other: a) the various work positions that must be fulfilled; b) the task of sponsoring religious rituals or celebrations; and c) the playing of various musical instruments for ritual and the performances of ritual dances.

The greatest number of work obligations are those posts that must be fulfilled by almost all monks. A monk must work as **jama**, the tea maker as well as server for the **mangja**, tea served for the prayer congregation. This position known as **chotrima chungwa** has to be filled for a period of 1 year. Aside from the making and partial (since novice monks and laymen help) serving of tea, he is also responsible for all items like pots, kettles, cups, etc; that are in the community kitchen. A jama is kept busy almost everyday of the month. A 10 month record kept from

September 1980 to June 1981 show that there were on the average a monthly total of 27.7 days on which mangja was provided.[2] The jama is also responsible for recruiting labor for gathering thorns and small tree branches which serve as fuel. The **shungnyer** (see below) provides him with tea for this occasion. The jama also receives Rs.3 from each person or institution that is providing the mangja. Over the 10 month period this worked out to Rs.831 or 277 mangja that each paid Rs.3.

The **komnyer** is another post that must be filled for a term of 3 years. The komnyer is the keeper of the inner temples or **dukhang**. Some of his tasks include: **solka**, the offering of morning and evening prayers of invocation of the deities, opening the temples for the local people- and mainly for the tourists today; sweeping and cleaning the temple halls and preparing it for ritual celebrations; loaning death ritual objects to village households; and looking after and being accountable for all objects, whether they be religious paintings, images, silk and brocade materials, carpets, tables, and a host of other things.

There are two komnyer at Kyilung who must, and generally do, stay at the monastery. This is not an easy thing to do

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[2] Tea is mainly provided by the laity requesting rituals, and also for the regular monastic rituals.

since most of the monks annually spend about 75% of their time for the performance of village household rituals (see Chapter 3). These rituals are economically rewarding, and the two komnyer are deprived of this specific activity and income. However, they are compensated in other ways. From the tourist entrance fee to the monastery temples, the komnyer gets 20% with the balance going to the dratsang. With each komnyer receiving 10%, the amount came to Rs.2,900 for 1981. They also receive 24 khal (240 kg) of barley flour annually.[3] This is needed for the making of dough figures and offerings (**torma**) used for the daily rituals. Today, the new cash economy and greater wealth of the laity, have so increased the contribution of barley flour when villagers visit the temples, that the 24 khal of barley are surplus and the komnyer are free to sell or do what ever they want with it. Now defunct, but in existence a little over a decade ago was the position of assistant to the komnyer, known as the **chabril**. The person was chosen and economically supported by the Depa Labrang estate.

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[3] **Khal** is the unit of measurement for weights and area. One khal has 20 tre. Different types and varieties of grain have different weights, but 1 khal of wheat or barley grain weighs approximately 10 kilograms. Land is measured by the amount of seed that can be sown in a given area. 1 khal approximates 1 **kanal**. A kanal has 20 **marla**. 1 marla measures 16.5 ft X 16.5 ft. Therefore 1 khal equals 272.25 X 20 = 5445 sq.ft, or one eighth (0.125) of an acre.

Aside from the main monastery, a Kyilung monk must serve as komnyer in locations where the village householders are followers of the Drigung sect. The position is known as **chog-komnyer** and it is held for a period of 3 years. In contrast to the komnyer at the main monastery, the chog-komnyer task concerns the ritual requirements of the various household units. If there is a temple or a small monastery in the village the chog-komnyer will perform the necessary rituals. They also look after the dratsang fields that are located in a few villages. A 10 month record kept for one chog-komnyer serving at Drigar-Khema-Kyungru shows that he spent 21 days of the month in the performance of village household rituals. There are chog-komnyer in a number of places. Close to Kyilung are the households in Leh and Chushod which are few in number. Further north east are the villages of Drigar, Khema and Kyungru. West of Kyilung are the areas of Nyema, Taru, and Umla.

At the top of the loose hierarchical structure of work obligations are the four heads of the dratsang. Together, they are known as the **ou-chos-shi**. In the absence of the Choje, or in matters that do not require his consultation, these four monks run the monastery.

The **Lhobhon** represents the highest authority in the dratsang and presides over functions and rituals in the

absence of the Choje. His main task is to oversee the **sobjong** (It is concerned with the practice of **vinaya** or monkhood vows. The occasion is similar to a confession where one's conscience is examined in light of the rules and vows of being a monk). Another task of the Lhobhon is to preside over death ceremonies, to bestow the **phowa**, or the ritual of the "transmigration of the soul".

The **umzath** leads the congregational prayer. He sets the voice tone of the prayer and, in certain instances, chooses an appropriate prayer for an occasion. It is to him that the sponsor of a prayer must make his request.

The **gyeskos** supposedly is the holder of the **chayik** and his responsible for maintaining the monastic discipline. He is expected to make sure that the monks congregate in prayer on time, and that they dress and behave accordingly. But the erosion of authoritarian ways and the small number of monks make his role more symbolic than actual.

The **Dhodhampa** operates as the treasurer of the dratsang, accounting for all assets, be they cash, grains or animals. He is also responsible for organizing and coordinating the labor force and procuring the materials needed for repairs to wooded or grass enclosures or improvements to the monastery building. The four monastic officials described above, serve for a period of 3 years.

Aside from their specific tasks, they consult each other on more important matters. Ideally, these four positions require educated, intelligent, and capable monks. But with the reduced number of monks, most monks serve in these positions except for that of the Lhobhon, who is chosen with some sense of discrimination.

Another category of work obligation is the playing of ritual musical instruments and the dance performance. The invocation and appeasement of deities, and their acting out in dances (**cham**), require offerings and the performance of music. The musical instruments include **dhung**, **gyaling**, **rakdhung** (various wind instruments) and **nga** (drums). All monks are required to learn and play each instruments for a period of 3 years. All monks are required to learn and perform the annual mask dances.

A monk who is well acquainted with the dances, is a good performer, and is rather well built (in stature) is chosen as the **Champon**, the dance leader. Finally, there is the task of the cymbal player, known as the **Ugenma**. He must be able to read the complicated steps of many dances. All monks may not be able to fill these positions.

Our final category of work obligations concerns the **sponsorship and economic management of rituals**. We may divide these rituals into those that are individually sponsored, and those that are done institutionally. These

divisions are quite arbitrary since some rituals include elements of both. Some of the descriptions that follow will be brief since their subject matter is covered in Chapter 6.

During the course of a Kyilung monk's life he must sponsor certain religious ceremonies. The sponsorship of the rituals is called "the giving of a **tongho**" which literally means "that which must be given". It entails either financing, and/or managing, a certain ritual, which is mainly concerned with feeding the monks during the course of the ceremony. Ideologically speaking, the sponsor is said to receive merit, although the monks don't think about that seriously since they **have to** sponsor as part of their gompeh tral- monastic tax or obligation.

A Kyilung monk must give individually 3 tongho, in other words, sponsor 3 ritual celebrations. For example, if he undertakes responsibility for 2 **kabgyed** ceremonies, then he must sponsor 1 **sobjong**, or vice versa. We have already described the sobjong as the bi-monthly congregation of monks who examine their conscience in light of their vows. The **sobjongpa**, the one who sponsors the ritual, provides tea and some barley flour for the congregation on the 15th and 30th day of every month. Out of the 24 annual gatherings or **tsog**, there is one, whenever the sobjongpa chooses, in which extra food and tea are served. Most of

the funds for this occasion are procured by soliciting alms.

Another individually sponsored ritual celebration from funds received through alms is the **gombo torgya**. It is part of the main celebration at Kyilung called **tsidrub**. At all Drigung monasteries, it is celebrated as the **kabgyed**. As in the sobjong, but in much greater quantities and over a longer time, the sponsoring monk provides all necessary items for the ritual, as well as providing food and tea for 7 days. Details of this celebration is found in Chapter 6.

There are three main rituals that are **institutionally sponsored**. That is, the **martsa**, or fund, comes not from the individual monk, but from the products of a field or from the interest on a loan. The work, therefore, could consist of organizing the production of the land, the grinding of grain, collecting loans, and selling grain to buy necessary goods from market in order to provide all that is required for the ritual; most of fund goes to feeding the monks.

The **Drumchod nyerpa**, is a monk who serves as the storekeeper or manager of the Drumchod celebration, a ritual in honor of the diety, **Dechok**. He works with two lay **nyerpa** or storekeepers, and the three together sponsor the ritual. The funds are derived from the interest

accumulated from loans made in perpetuity to 33 village households. The details of this celebration are also described in Chapter Six.

The task of the **shungnyer** is to sponsor the spring (**chikeh kurim**) and fall (**tonkeh kurim**) purification rites, as well as the **kyabgon duchen**, a prayer offering in honor of the head of the sect. He also provides tea during the kabgyed, and for the sobjong, both of which we have already described. The shungnyer also sponsors the **bobsang**, the 3 day summer picnic in which the whole village participates.

Finally, there is the position of the **depa**, the two monks who manage the landed estate called the Depa Labrang. Although this unit can be said to be part of the labrang, it is also part of the dratsang since it is part of the work obligations of the monks. The main responsibility of the two depa is to manage the agricultural estate whose produce is used for sponsoring the kabgyed ceremony and providing the allowance for the Drigung representative, the Choje. The arrangement of fields for the monks, repairing the monastic buildings, and numerous other tasks mark the work of the depa. The in-depth description and analysis of the Depa Labrang estate constitute the following chapter.

Drigung Labrang[4] in Ladakh

Formation of the Labrang

When the Tibetans revolted against the Chinese occupation in March 1959, the two heads of the Drigung sect were at Drigung. Within about a year's time the monasteries were destroyed and the sect's almost 800 year tradition came to a standstill. Drigung Kyabgon Chetsang Rimpoche, one of the two head lamas, was only twelve years old then and he was permitted to attend school at Lhasa. After the Cultural Revolution in 1966, he worked as a peasant in a commune. In 1974 he managed to cross over the border into Nepal. After a year with relatives and followers in India, he came to the United States to spend some time with his parents. In 1978 he returned to India to take up actively his role as the head of the Drigung sect after a lapse of almost twenty years. Kyabgon had never visited Ladakh, but it was there that the Drigung tradition was now the strongest. Although there were a number of Tibetan refugee followers and institutions in India and an indigenous tradition at Limi and Lachi on the Tibeto-Nepalese frontier, it was at Ladakh that Drigung Kyabgon temporarily set up his labrang.

An old faithful administrator who had served as Dronyer

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[4] I refer to the Depa Labrang as Drigung Labrang estate as it had become part of Drigung Labrang in 1978.

(see page 44) of Drigung Labrang in Tibet was granted leave from his position as **nangsi-drungchi**, "Home Secretary" to the Dalai Lama's Exile Government. He went back to serve his Drigung lama as Chakzodh, or overall manager of the labrang. The brother of the Drigung Khempo (abbot) who knew both English and Tibetan, became the Chakzodh's secretary. Two monks from Ladakh were chosen to be Kyabgon's personal attendants. Two other monks were appointed to manage the labrang's fields at Kyilung. Another Ladakhi monk, who had served Drigung Labrang for 30 years in Tibet, looked after the labrang's storehouse at Tharling monastery. Yet another was selected as the cook. This is how the labrang formed, and although its composition was unique, it followed the general pattern established in Tibet.

Labrang Organization

Since Drigung Labrang organization is smaller and more informal than in Tibet, there is no formal division of the labrang into the upper and the lower sections as was the case in Tibet (see Chapter 2).[5] Yet, in a way, it still exists.

The "upper section" includes the lama and his attendants. The two personal attendants perform all the

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[5] The upper and lower sections refer not to any social hierarchy but to geographical space.

services of a chopon, simpon, and singha (see page 44). The other section of the labrang is dominated by the Chakzodh. Next to the lama he has the most important voice in labrang matters. Since the lama, in Tibetan culture, is thought of idealistically as "other worldly" (a far cry from reality) the chakzodh is there to administer all the "worldly" possessions of the religious corporation. The present chakzodh is a Tibetan and he resides in Ladakh mostly during the months of June to October. The rest of the year he works on other labrang matters at his home in the Tibetan refugee settlement in Karnataka, South India.

Briefly, some of the tasks of the Chakzodh are: to manage the various accounts of grains, animals, land and cash; to buy stores from various parts of India, including Leh; to collect cash offerings during public ceremonies or audiences with the lama; to lend or borrow money; and to manage the labrang's business undertakings, such as the hotel at Tharling. Non-economic tasks include numerous administrative decisions, and performing ceremonial roles like offering scarves during religious dances. The Chakzodh's assistant helps him in these tasks, but his main function has actually been to manage the labrang's tourist hotel business and to serve as the chakzodhs vehicle to the outside world through interpretation and correspondence in English. The assistant is also a

Tibetan. When he is not in Ladakh from October to May he is at home near Darjeeling, West Bengal.

Under the chakzodh there is a **nyerpa** or storekeeper who is directly in charge of the labrang kitchen. There is one kitchen at Tharling and another at Kyilung. There are also two storerooms (nyertsang) at each of the two monasteries. Whenever Drigung Kyabgon changes residence for some length of time, the nyerpa also moves. The cook works under the nyerpa and so does the **chulen**, the person who helps carry wood and other fuels and fetches water. Some of the items constantly stocked in the storeroom include; dried or fresh meat, barley and wheat grain and flour, fresh or dried cheese, salt, spices, sugar, tea, powdered or condensed milk, oil, apricots, kerosene and a host of other items needed for the kitchen.

Two other nyerpa manage the **choshi** or the agricultural landed estate of the labrang. This is the main subject of the dissertation and its description follows in the next chapter. At this juncture, it is important to note that the general pattern and structure of Drigung Labrang in Ladakh is the same as it was in Tibet. Within that pattern, each manifests its own uniqueness in terms of scale and size as well as variances attributed to different historical, political and economic contexts.

5

DRIGUNG LABRANG: ECONOMICS OF THE AGRARIAN ESTATE

At this point we can begin to look at the specific economics of the labrang estate. I shall describe the social organization of production, daily and seasonal work, land organization, use, and lease, and examine the specific production and consumption figures.

Work and Production on the Labrang Estate

The preceding chapter described how Drigung Labrang was formed and organized. We mentioned how two monks were appointed as nyerpa to look after the labrang's agricultural sector. The estate is physically represented by a large house situated just below the northwest side of the monastery. It houses the two nyerpa, other workers, and animals, fodder and grains. The working of the estate is comparable to that of a large village household. The main difference lies in the distribution and consumption processes, which are geared to the reproduction of certain monastic functions.

Organization and Compensation of Labor

The management of agricultural production is alloted to the two nyerpa who are appointed by the chakzodh. The expected period of their appointment is two years, although it is a product of negotiations. When the nyerpa begin their term, they make an inventory of all the items present with the outgoing managers. Throughout the term of their appointment they keep a record of all production and consumption figures, as they have to account for everything. Unlike the two depa (see Chapter 4) who were appointed by the dratsang, the two nyerpa are not entitled to keep any surplus after the replacement of the fund, nor are they expected to replace any losses. For their work, each is provided with a field. In 1980-81 each had a field measuring, 16 Khals, or, about 2 acres. At the same time they have the freedom to manage the accounts in whatever fashion they wish. They can for example have a yak slaughtered and consumed as long as it is replaced when their term ends.

Aside from the nyerpa, two women are hired to work for the labrang. Their work consists of cooking and doing the kitchen chores. Every morning they clean the stables and spread the dung out on top of the roof to dry. They take the cows out to the communal pastures. Yangchen, who works

longer, is provided with 3 meals daily, tea and barley flour throughout the day if she likes, a set of clothes per year which includes a hat and a pair of shoes and an annual cash amount of Rs.1200. Kunzes, who works less often, receives the same food and clothing allowances but half the cash amount.

Meme Tsering, a 65 year old monk (wears lay clothing and is not part of the monastery) from Drigung, Tibet, also works there even though Drigung Kyabgon told him to retire and the labrang would take care of him. He herds the estate's sheep and goats, taking them every morning to the high grazing areas and returning before dark. He separates the kids from the ewes who are left behind and feeds them twice a day. While up on the above 15,000 feet slopes he watches out for predators, especially wolves, and collects dung. For his services he gets a place to live, daily meals, a set of clothes and cash payment of Rs.500.

The above details the main workers on the estate and their essential tasks. As is the case in Tibetan cultural areas, the division of labor is not a strict one. The herder, the two monk nyerpa and the two women all sit together around the kitchen hearth and help make tea, peel potatoes, cut vegetables, and make the fire for their meals. The nyerpa, though they are monks, assist in cleaning the animal shed, putting dung out to dry, feeding

the animals, fetching them from the pastures, sweeping the compound, ploughing the field and planting vegetables.

Other workers at the estate can best be described as permanent "temporary" workers. The chores of **merespa**, who makes the fire, and a **chulen**, who fetches water are tasks that are performed by one person. He makes the fire for occasions when **chang**, or barley ale is made mainly for hired laborers, or when food and tea are served when the labrang sponsors a ritual. He can eat at the labrang whenever he is there and he is also provided with an annual set of clothes and a cash payment of Rs. 600.

The estate also hires a **chuma**, a person to water the fields especially during the planting and growing season. For her work she has the use of a field, 8 khal in size. A Jhangpa, a nomad from the Tibetan border area guards the labrang's **bak**, or wooded land. He is provided with 22 kg of barley flour, 0.5 kg of tea, and 1.25 kg of butter monthly. Although not directly related to work on the estate, the labrang hires a person to sweep the monastic compound. He/she is provided with a field measuring 4 Khal (1 acre). The labrang also pays two musicians, a **dama** (drum) and a **sona** (a reed instrument) player who are needed for various occasions. Together they are paid 12 khal (120 kg) of **dru** or **nas** (barley grain) and some barley flour. Once in a while persons from households which had

to provide surplus labor for the estate during precapitalist times would come to help.[1]

In addition to staffing the estate at Kyilung, the nyerpa appoints a specific person, depending on the amount of land, to look after the labrang's holdings in other villages. For their services they are provided with a field.

Daily and Seasonal Work

To facilitate the account of the daily and seasonal work on the labrang estate, a 9 month dairy was kept. Here I will provide a sample table of only 1 month's activities. The rest of the 8 months forms Appendix B.

Daily Activities

Throughout the year there are certain activities that are part of the daily routine. The following account describes what I mean by "usual" activity and it will be described briefly since they have been touched upon above.

The labrang workers rise rather early (approximately 6:30 a.m.) and have their usual tea and **jharul**, a semi-liquid paste of butter tea and barley flour. The merespa/chulen carries in a 5 gallon can of water around 8 a.m., and two or three more during the course of the day.

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[1] For details, see Chapter 8, under "Shifting Patterns of Labor Relations".

At about this time the labrang herdsman packs his daily food supply and takes the sheep and goat flock on to the higher pastures. By around 8:30 a.m. the other workers finish their meal of **kholak**, barley dough and curried potatoes. Tea is available for them through most of the day. After the meal, the cows, donkeys, horses, and other livestock are fed and the cows are taken to graze on the common pastures of the village. At the labrang the stables are cleaned and the dung spread out on the shed roof to dry. The workers have their afternoon meal about 2 p.m. Near dusk, the cows, sheep and goats are brought back into the labrang. The workers spend the evening in the kitchen, where, after the meal, they retire about 10.p.m.

These activities briefly describe what I mean by "usual" activities in Table 3 and Appendix B. The above descriptions are inadequate. It is far better to look at the specific daily and the season activities. However, as space does not permit me to elaborate them fully, I include below, as an example, the activities for only one month. The rest, as stated, is in Appendix B.

Table 3

Labrang Estate Daily Work: May 1981

Date	Description	No Labor Hired	Tools Hired	Mode of Payment
1	Shopping at Leh			

2	Transported seeds to Umla. Made room preparations for State officials who would sanction the building of 1 water tap for monastery			
3	Prepared food for monks doing purification ritual at estate			Meal for 35 monks
4	Went to hire labor & plough animals for next day. Brought seeds from storeroom.	2		meal
5-6	Ploughed fields	15	5 dzo 3 ploughs 3 sacks 1 hoe	food & ale
7	"	12	2 dzo, 1 plough	"
8	Walls of vegetable fields repaired. Prepared room for labrang guests			
9	Bought butter, vegetables & spices at Leh.			
10	Labrang guests arrive. Completion of vegetable wall repair.			
11	"			
12	Ploughed some fields.	2		food & ale
13	Planted potatoes		3 spades	
14	Irrigation channels repaired.	19		food & ale, + Rs.150
15	Cleaned fields of stones/debris			
16	Repaired ploughs	4		food & ale
17	Clean fields. See 15.			
18	Usual			
19	Prayer flags hung near river	1		meals
20	Fields watered	7	8 spades	"
21	"	"	"	"
22	Arranged grains to be sent from Taru.			
23	Brought manure to fields	3	2 donkey 6 sacks	
24	Grain arrives from Taru			Rs.20 fare
25	Repaired irrigation channels			
26	Labor hired for next day			
27	Ploughed fields	35	14 dzo 6 plough	food ale
28	"	18	4 dzo	"

		2 plough	
29 Fields watered	3		
30 Vegetable fields prepared for planting			
31 Irrigation channels made	35	29 wooden rakes	food & ale

The above table describes the specific daily activities for the month of May 1981. It includes the date and description of the activity, the number of laborers hired, the type and amount of tools borrowed, and the type and amount of compensation for the hired workers. Where no figures are given, they stand for, zero.

Seasonal Activities

As in many peasant societies, **winter** (November-March) is a time of reduced activity. Much of the time is spent in the regular chores described previously except for the ceremonial occasions like the New Year and other lesser occasions detailed in Appendix B. The labrang, prior to 1979, would have had busier winters as the main ceremony, the Kabgyed used to take place during winter (see Chapter 7).

When the Sakar, or, in short, the planting ceremony, takes place in **spring** (April-May), one gets the feeling that the busy agricultural work is at hand. In 1981, the ceremony took place on March 26. Before the actual ploughing and planting season begins, the irrigation

ditches and the walls surrounding the fields are reconditioned, stones and other debris are removed from the fields, manure from both the labrang and the monastery's soil-lavatory is taken to the fields and the fields are watered. A practice session of ploughing takes place in order to make sure that all equipment is functional. If any is not, the village blacksmith is called in. Finally, seeds are taken to some of the labrang's land in other villages. Ploughing for 1981 began on May 5. Many of these activities, including ploughing continue throughout the month as estate landholdership is vast.

By June 3, 1981 the plough animals (dzo, in our case) were let loose on the 16,000 feet high pastures for the duration of the summer season (June-August). Ploughing is over and most of the agricultural work for June and July is concerned with small scale irrigation and the watering of the fields. Aside from the agricultural work, the labrang is responsible for sponsoring a part of the largest festival, the Kabgyed or Tsidrub (see Chapter 7). The festival begins towards the latter part of June and continues into the first week of July. The specific work related to it includes the arrangement for labor, borrowing tables, carpets and other items, buying, cooking, and serving food for the monk congregation,

entertaining the labrang guests, and a host of other duties.

On August 11, 1981 the Hrup-lha ceremony took place. For this event a minute area is harvested and offerings made to the deities. The occasion signals that the harvesting time is near. Unfortunately, I left the field on August 24, 1981, a few days before even the grass and the peas were harvested. This concludes the brief description of the daily and seasonal activities.

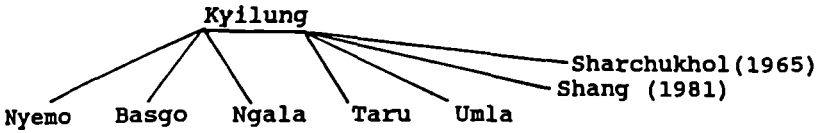
Estate Production and Consumption

Physical Organization

The Diagram 1, below, shows that the Labrang estate at Kyilung not only has lands in its own village but also in

Diagram 1

Labrang Estate at Kyilung and Associated Villages



the villages of Nyemo, Basgo, Taru, Umla and Ngala. It also indicates that Kyilung received from the labrang at Sharchukhul (see Chapter 8) and Shang (see below) monasteries, annual tributes in grain and animal products

up until the dates indicated.

Land Use and Lease

The estate, with lands at Kyilung and the five other areas, must make some choices about how it is going to manage its lands. If it wants to produce as much as possible then it should plant as many fields as possible. But with limited available labor, it must to lease out a substantial amount. The system of leasing lands is called **bogma**, and there are three types.

The first is called **phetma**, which translates into "half-half". This system is illustrated by an example in which the labrang leases land measuring 5 khal. The labrang provides the 5 khal of seed. Assuming the yield is 25 khal, at harvest time,the estate takes the 5 khal it provided and the remaining 20 are divided equally. Thus, the rent charged for the loan of 5 khal of land and 5 khal of seeds is 50% of the harvest. The second type is known as **gyurkhal** which translates as "amount of return". Some other places in Ladakh use a three-fold yield return, at Kyilung only the two-fold (called **nyisgyur**) is in use. For example, the labrang leases 5 khal. The lessee provides the seeds and at harvesting time he returns 10 khal to the estate. Anything above this amount, he retains. Assuming an average yield of 5 times, the labrang receives 100% return on its rent, or 50% of the net

produce. The lessee provides both the seed and labor. The above two types of leases are not permanent and their duration rests on specific agreements between the two parties.

The third system of land lease is called **shes**. This is land that has been leased out on a permanent basis. The amount returned depends on the size of the **shesthen**. Shesthen is the amount paid to the "owner" when requesting lease. If a large sum of money is paid then the yearly return can be made smaller. This leasing system has led to quite widespread individual money making at the expense of the institution. The individuals managing the labrang have the right to lease lands. They accept a negotiated sum of money which goes into their pocket. What the estate gets as an annual lease payment is a paltry sum. This has been true for the monastery in general. Over time, with inflation, the cash amount has not even been worth collecting. In this way many monastic lands can be said to have been lost forever even though the monastery has holdership over it.

Labrang Production: 1980

Production for 1980 can be said to have begun on October 14 when the two nyerpa started their terms as managers of the landed estate. On that day an inventory of the estates

matsa, or fund was made with the outgoing managers.[2]

Production Fund

Most institutions of a monastery, especially those that are concerned with ritual sponsorship have a fund. This fund generally includes a number of items like animals, grains, cash, and other assets that serve as the working "capital" necessary for beginning the production process.

Besides land (discussed below), the labrang estate fund included: 1 Yak, 2 dzo (cross between yak and cow), 7 cows, 6 bulls, 5 donkeys (4 males, 1 female), 2 horses, 24 goats (8 three year olds, 16 females), 2002 khal and 15 tre of wheat grain, 700 khal of barley grain, Rs.600 in cash, 6.5 kg of butter, 6 baga (?) of tea (good quality, brand Surathi).

Production Year
1980

The 1980 production figures are based on the account of the *nyerpa* who managed the estate from October 14, 1979 to November 6, 1980.[3] As mentioned, the estate at Kyilung

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[2] A fund is like capital in a popular sense. I say popular because in Marxist terminology capital is not a thing but a social relationship.

[3] Since I left the field before harvest in August 1981 I was not able to get the completed figures for the 1981 production cycle. For this reason I am providing data from the 1980 planting season which was already in progress when I arrived in June 1980. On the other hand, since I had not begun to concentrate on the labrang estate

included lands in five other villages. I will describe the agricultural production for Kyilung and then relate it to the other areas for an overall view.

The labrang included a **demesne** area, or land that was planted by the estate and a **tenement** area, or fields that were leased on a variety of agreements.

Labrang Demesne Lands

At Kyilung, the labrang planted a number of fields and used two systems of lease. These were of the permanent type, called **shes**, and the temporary one, called **gyurkhal**.

The table below shows the various types of crops grown on fields that are planted by the labrang. They include, two varieties of barley, wheat, and peas. The table also shows the quantity of seeds sown and the amount of return. Crop yield is expressed both in khal and in percentages. All in all, the estate planted 200 khal of various grains and harvested 871 khal, for a yield of 671 khal or a little over four and a half fold.

Table 4

Crop Production on Labrang Demesne Lands

Crops	Seed-sown	Yield		Net Amount
		Khal/Tre	Percentage	Khal/Tre
Peas	62	227/15	3.66	165/15
Barley	41	210/5	5.1	169/5

during 1980, the specific economic details that I provide in this section are from November 1980 to August 1981.

(sowa)				
Wheat	27	127/5	4.7	100/5
Barley	31	153	4.9	122
Sumbor	39	152/15	3.9	113/15
Total	200	871	4.6 Average	671

Labrang Tenements

The estate not only plants its own land but a large share is leased out. Table 5 below shows the lands that have been leased. There are nine villages where lands have been leased out. I have no figures for village 7, Ngala. Village 10, Shang, provides 40 Khal of barley grain to Kyilung . This is not really a lease payment but a tribute to Kyilung for the yearly sponsorship of a one day ritual for the appeasement of a Drolma, a female deity. Under the heading of types of leases, G stands for gyurkhal, or the two-fold system; S for shes, or the permanent type. There are only two types of agricultural goods sold for cash. These are cow dung (for fuel) and grass (fodder), although grains are also sold. The estate's total land rent as of November 6, 1980 reveals a production of 649 khal and 12 tre of grains, and Rs.2773.5 from the sale of agricultural commodities. The various totals for each village and for each type of crop are provided in the table.

The labrang keeps a detail account of each land rented. An account is kept of each village. It includes the type

Table 5

Labrang Land Lease and Cash Sale

No	Village	Lease Type	Cash	Barley	Barley Type 1	Barley Sowa	Wheat	Total Khal
1	Kyilung	G	Cow-Dung 230	35	0	0	109	144
2	Taru	G	Grass 700	31	106	0	0	137
3	Nyemo	G	Grass 1800	0	0	0	88	88
4	Umla	G	0	56/15	0	0	0	56/15
5	Kyilung	S	4.5	13/10	0	3/10	88/5	105/5
6	Taru	S	8	18/10	14/10	0	0	33
7	Ngala	No figures as of November 6, 1980						
8	Nyemo	S	31	0	0	0	38/12	38/12
9	Umla	S	0	7	0	0	0	7
10	Shang	NA	0	40	0	0	0	40
Total			2773.5	201/15	120/10	3/10	323/17	649/12

of lease, the name of the renters, number of fields rented, and the interest received. Space does not allow their reproduction here, nor do such details seem necessary for the purposes of the dissertation. But, as an illustration, I will provide one example from our main village, Kyilung.

Table 6, below, shows the details of Kyilung, Village No.1 of Table 5. It presents land that have been rented on the system called nyisgyur, or two-fold. Two village sub-areas of Kyilung are indicated. The number and names of the renters, the number of fields rented, the area of the field in khal, and the amount and type of interest

Table 6

Kyilung: Land Rent on the Two-fold System

No	Village Sub-area	Renters Name	No. Fields	Khal	Barley	Wheat
1	Thaknak Yokma	Dorji	2	11	0	22
2	"	Dolkar	2	3	0	6
3	"	Nyerchen Rigzin	2	6	0	12
4	"	Nyerok Chusil	2	5	0	10
5	"	Tokpa Buti	1	4	0	8
6	Chiwang	Lakshe Yeshe	1	4	8	0
7	"	Menkhang Bakshing	1	5	0	10
8	"	Menkhang Angdus	1	4	0	8
9	"	Zagor Rigzin	?	1/10	0	3
10	"	Tarkan Norphel	?	15	0	30
11	"	?	?	13/10	27	0
Total				72	35	109

collected in grain are shown. All in all, the labrang rented 72 khal of land and received 35 khal of barley and 109 khal of wheat, for a total of 144 khal in interest. In terms of percentages, if we multiply 72 khal by the average yield of 5 (for barley and wheat) we get a sum of 360 khal produced by all the renters. Since they provide the seed we subtract 72, leaving us with 288 khal. Out of this the monastery gets 144, which is 2 times 72, the loan amount. This comes to a 100% return rate, a most

successful rate of surplus generation and exploitation.[4] Also the renters provide all the labor, as well as the customary presentation of a scarf and some money for the rental request.

Estate Cash Production and Consumption

In Table 5, we glimpsed an aspect of cash income. The labrang has a very limited amount of items that can be sold. On the other hand, with the growth of the market economy, the labrang's consumption rate has so increased that it is heavily dependent on the purchase of commodities from the market. We will examine both the labrang's cash income and expenditure.

Cash Production

The labrang estate is solely an agricultural production unit. Much of the products are used in the reproduction of itself and certain functions of the monastery. Therefore the various ways to generate cash and the amount is rather limited. Table 7 shows the cash income of the estate from

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[4] I do not use the word exploitation in any derogatory or negative sense. It is especially important to emphasize this in studies of the Tibetan Buddhist areas, where religion is not only the main focus but also highly regarded. Rather, exploitation has a positive connotation for social scientists because we deal with situations where societal complexity and evolutionary development rests largely on the control and surplus extraction by a group of non-producers from the direct producers.

November 1980 to August 1981. As I left the field before harvest, much of the potential cash income from the sale

Table 7

Labrang Estate Cash Income:
Nov. 1980 to Aug. 1981

Date M D Y	Grass	Animal Products	Agriculture	Other
11-15-80	1550			
12-5-80	500			
1-22-81	195			
1-23-81		400		
1-28-81				10
3-2-81			1500	
3-19-81	1050			
4-2-81				845
4-3-81		70		
6-6-81			5	
6-8-81	400			
6-17-81		25		
6-27-81				9
8-1-81	36			
8-2-81			60	
8-10-81			21	
8-13-81	74			
Total	3805	495	1586	864

of grass and grains is not included. So the table is not complete. One should also keep in mind certain variations that can occur over the years. Nevertheless since agricultural production is rather stable and limited in variation, this 10-month record gives a fairly accurate description. The table is divided into six sections. The sections include the date of the transaction and the types of products sold, like grass, agricultural, and others. The largest source of cash income, Rs. 3805, comes from

the sale of grass. Most is harvested from the large area of uncultivated, though irrigated, land set aside specifically for that purpose. Grass is also harvested along the numerous fields, which is one reason why the lands are not intensively cultivated. The grass sold in November and December 1980, and in March 1981, were bought wholesale by a contractor at Leh who comes from Taru, one of the villages that follow the Drigung tradition. The Rs.195 of 1-22-81 came from the sale of grass at Ngala, another of the villages where the estate has land. The transactions on 6-8-81 for Rs. 400 and Rs. 74 on 8-13-81 concern grass sold to Muslim families at Kyilung.[5] The sale of Rs.36 was to a Buddhist family. Grass sales account for one of the largest sources of income. The cash amount from the sale of grass came only from grass sold during the 10-month period. The actual figure, which must include bundles that would be sold during the post-fieldwork period, is much higher.

If we look at the other sources of income specific to the table, we find that they can vary from year to year. The Rs.1500 transaction came from the sale of barley

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[5] The Buddhist generally refer to the Muslims as **chipa**, which means, outsider, as opposed to a **nangpa**, an insider or Buddhist. As later inhabitants or immigrants to Kyilung, Muslim families overall have less land and therefore, not enough fodder.

grain. However, this grain was not from the estate lands, but was presented to Drigung Kyabgon when he visited Kyurpochen (in the **sham**, or lower area of Ladakh, corresponding to the western area of Ladakh, close to the Pakistani border) in August, 1980. The Rs. 5, 60, and 21, under agricultural products, were from the sale of potatoes, a product which is mostly consumed rather than sold. In the column for animals is Rs.400 for the sale of a cow, Rs.70 for the sale of meat from a cow that had died from a combination of disease and gestation complications. Rs.25 accounted for the sale of cow-dung. In the category of other, are Rs. 10 for a condolence gesture to the family of a deceased monk, Rs.845 from the sale of 5 wooden beams, and Rs. 9 for the sale of a small empty wooden butter crate.

Cash and Some Grain Expenditure

Though I am concerned with cash expenditure, a clearer picture cannot be formed without the inclusion of certain payments in kind. The account itself which is mainly concerned with currency transactions, also includes those expenditure in grain that are mainly concerned with agricultural labor. It does not include the yearly grain obligations to the monastic sector and the estate's own consumption, although, they are indirectly mentioned below. I begin this section with analysis of the specific

accounts in terms of three general categories of expenditure. I include only one example from the 10-month expenditure account in order to give some sense of detail. The specifics of the rest of the 9-months form Appendix C. Secondly, by means of two graphs, I show the fluctuations in the cash and grain outflow and try to analyze them.

I divide the cash expenditure, which also includes the above mentioned grain consumption, into three general categories. The first deals with disbursements in terms of labor compensation. One may further subdivide this into payment for workers who are permanently part of the estate, and those who are hired as the need arises. We have already discussed the former. The estate hires temporary laborers for ploughing the fields, cutting and hauling trees, harvesting and transporting grass and agricultural products, bringing manure from various areas to the fields, clearing fields, and numerous other tasks that require more hands than the available permanent workers (see Table 3, and Appendix B for details). Payment is generally made in the form of meals, tea and barley ale.

The second category concerns the purchase of commodities from the market. I subdivide this into two parts. One is the purchase of commodities for the labrang, which includes the estate and the higher labrang organization

above it. Some of the items purchased are those needed for the hearth, like salt, sugar, wheat, cooking oil, spices, matches, and others. When Drigung Kyabgon and his entourage reside at the monastery, the duration being a rather short one in 1980 and 1981, vegetables, fresh meat, transportation and other extraneous purchases are made. The second sub-division mainly includes those goods the estate buys for fulfilling its obligation to sponsor the largest religious ceremony, the Kabgyed. Aside from food, ritual requirements include, pieces of cloth, blood, intestines, oil, etc.

The third form of expenditure is for the obligations the labrang has towards the monastery and the village. Aside from the ritual sponsorship obligation, the estate provides (in grains) the salary of the **ghara**, the village blacksmith, the keeper of the inner temples, and the person who sweeps the monastic compound. Money is paid to the New Year dancers at the monastery. At the village level, the estate manager greets (with a scarf and money) marriage parties, the many sub-village archery cum picnic sessions, the New Year horse race, and other occasions.

The three categories just described present us with certain elaborations on the cash and grain expended by the labrang. To get a feel for some specific data, I produce the expense account for the month of April, 1981, which is

mainly self explanatory. As stated before, the specifics of the other 9 months comprise Appendix C. Table 8, below, shows the cash and grain expenditure for April, 1981. It shows the date of the transaction, its description, the amount and type of expenses, and the cash and grain totals.

Table 8

Labrang Estate Cash and Some Grain Expenditures: April 1981

Date	Description	Amount	
		Cash	Grain
1	Hired labor to fix collapsed store-room. Provided barley ale.	40	0.75
2	Same work as 1	20	
3	"	60	
4	Labor hired to repair irrigation channels. Ale provided.		1.50
5	1980 salary (wheat) to Keeper of Inner Temples.		12.00
7	Bought 5 soap bars	8	
8	Purchased red pepper, curry powder, biscuits.	6 12	
10	Purchased incense, 6 bean threads, 4 packets of noodles	39	
11	Paid for 1980 fertilizer (chemical).	899	
12	Bought 8kg of tea	32	
13	Drigung Kyabgon leaves Kyilung.Hired taxi to airport	80	
14	Purchased curry powder	2	
15	Hired labor for ploughing. Ale given.		3.00
Total		1152	17.25

With the above categories of expenditure in mind, I now present a summary of the 10-month cash and grain disbursements by means of two graphs and discuss the major

outlays. For details, the reader again will have to consult Appendix C.

Cash Expenditure
The 10 Month Chart

According to Graph 2 below, the main expense for November, Rs.690, was for the installation of large glass windows at the estate house for Sara (my wife) and myself (the brother to the Drigung Kyabgon).[6] In December, there were no noteworthy expenses. In January, Rs.1190 was spent on butter and Rs. 199 for the estate workers clothes. There were no significant expenses for February. In March, Rs. 1132 was the main expenditure for labor to cut trees from the estate's woodland, to transport it, and to stack them at the estate house. Rs. 900 for a worker's salary, Rs.169 for bringing roofing stones (yambak) for the monastery, Rs. 185 for a sack of wheat flour, and Rs.105 for a bag of salt were the other significant expenses. April's disbursements has been detailed in Table 8. May's outlay consisted of Rs.717 for 27.5 kg of butter, and

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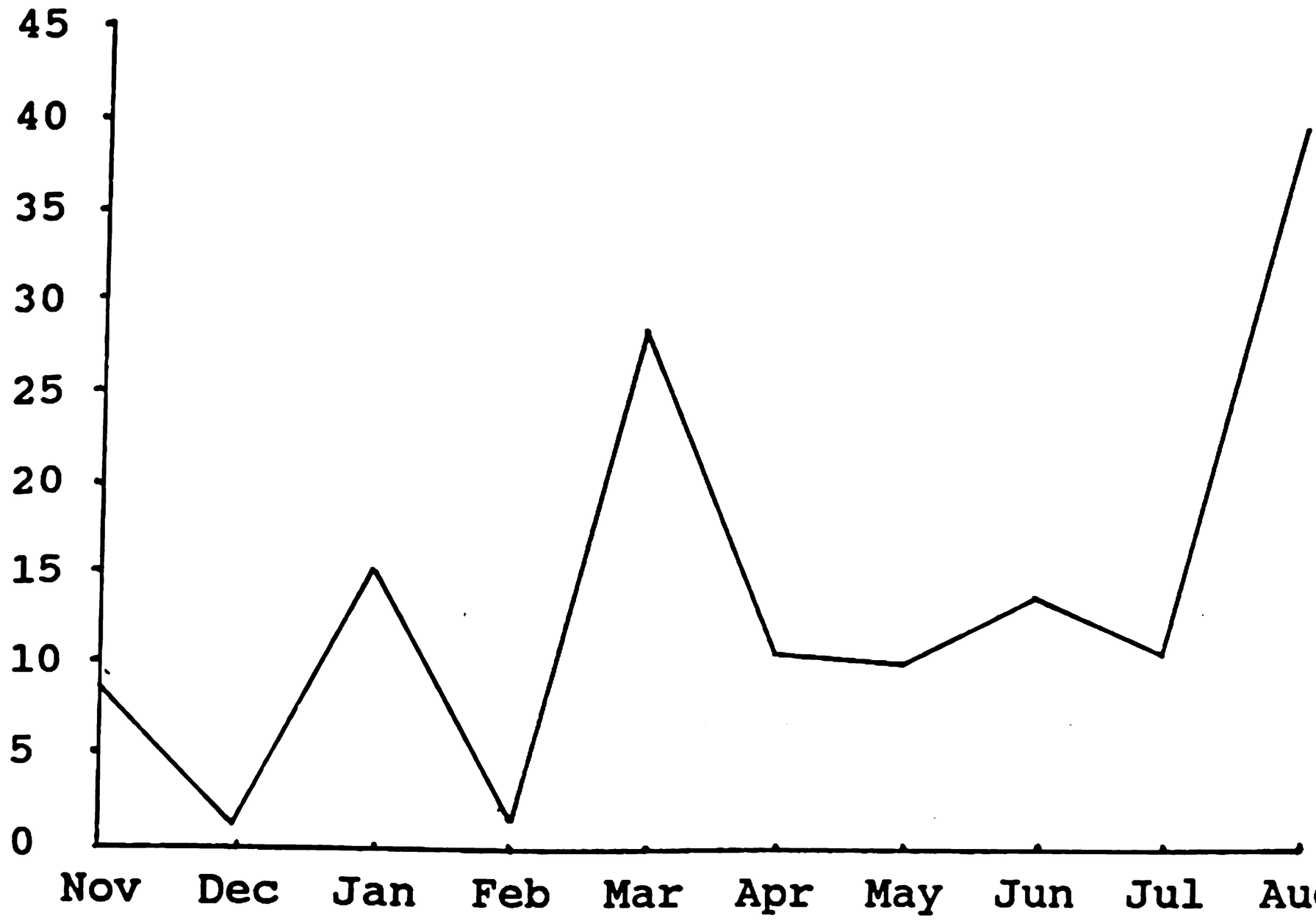
[6] Before my wife arrived at Kyilung, I stayed at the monastery. Even though women guests have resided in the monastic compound, I insisted to my brother that I move down to the estate house, as that would be the culturally appropriate behavior. Since my brother and his Chanzoe felt that the dilapidated building which housed the estate workers and the various animals was not good enough for us to reside in, they had one room totally renovated. The greenhouse effect of the huge windows kept us comfortable and happy, though it cost the labrang quite a bit.

Graph 2

Estate Cash Expenditure: Nov.1980-Aug.1981



Rs.120 for kerosene fuel. Butter, amounting to 26 kg was again the main expense for June, along with Rs.230 for oil (for lamp offerings), Rs.257 for rice and wheat flour, and Rs.94 for a large flag for the main pole (dharchen) at the monastery. Twenty six kilograms of butter once again heads the list for July's expenses, followed by Rs.130 for transportation for Drigung Kyabgon, and Rs.40 for a barley roasting fee. August's primary expenses were Rs.2600 for a loan repayment to the keeper of the inner temples (komnyer), Rs.1000 for a grass cutting contract, and Rs.255 in oil for lamp offerings.

The 10-month graph shows no clear cut pattern for

monthly variations. Many of the expenses could have occurred at any other time of the month. For example, "worker's salary" could have been provided in a different month than March. The same holds true for the purchase of salt, rice, butter, wheat, oil, repayment of loans, etc. Items are purchase when needed, and loans, specially intra-monastic ones, paid whenever possible. At the same time, some pattern does seem to emerge in terms of agricultural production and the labrang's economic sponsorship of ritual. For example, the estate always cuts trees for fuel in spring. Fertilizer is bought mostly around planting season. Grass is always cut about the beginning of harvest. The expenses in May, June, and July, like butter, lamp-oil, flag, rice, and wheat flour, reflect the costs incurred for the yearly Kabgyed ritual, and, to some extent, the post-ritual depletion of some of these items. The transportation fee for the Drigung Kyabgon was for his attendance at the ceremony. There are numerous other expenses like worker's shoes and pants, uncommon provisions like eggs, lemon juice, vegetables, and others (see June 29 through July in the Appendix C) which are associated with the Kabgyed ceremony held towards the latter part of June through the middle of July.

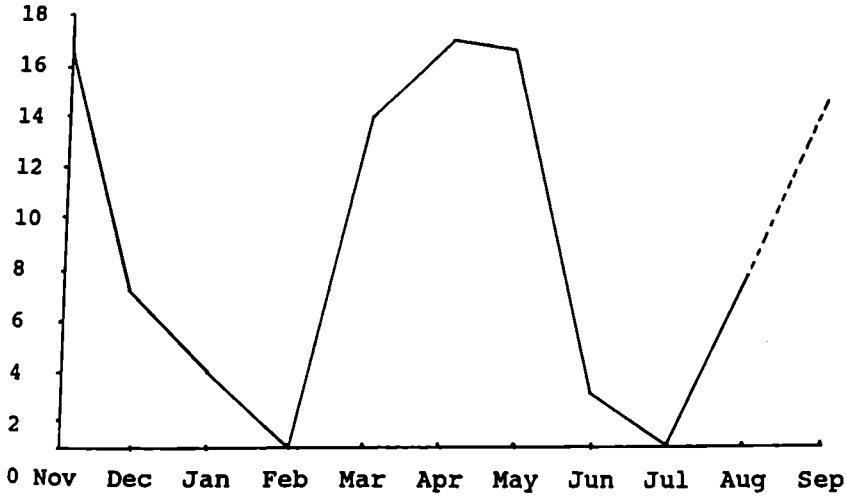
Grain Expenditure
The 10-month Pattern

In comparison to the cash expenditure, Graph 3, on grain expenditure shows a somewhat clearer pattern of demand for temporary agricultural labor, but, with modifications in terms of the labrang's obligatory grain payments to the monastic and the village co-spheres. This was previously referred to as the first and the third categories of cash-grain expenditure. The graph establishes the labrang estate's grain expenditure from November 1980 to August 1981.

When the two nyerpas began their term at the estate in November 1980, they entertained with food and drinks a

Graph 3

Estate Grain Expenditure:
Nov.1980 to Aug. 1981



number of villagers. The specific purpose was to establish better relations in order to facilitate future requests for labor.[7] On that November 24th day, 10 khal of barley grain was consumed as ale. Other notable payments included 3 khal of ale to workers who brought soil to the labrang's latrines, and 2 khal of barley grain for the blacksmith's salary. Winter is a time of agricultural inactivity, and the month's reflect this. The expenditures in December were non-agricultural. The 5.5 khal of barley grains was fermented to produce ale for the various New Year festivities for the laity, and 1.5 khal of ale was consumed by hired workers who were making preparations for a ritual at the estate house.

By early March, soil was still being brought from the fields to the latrines. On the 6th day of the month, 1.5 khal of ale was consumed by laborers for this purpose. March is also a time to cut, transport, and pile the tree branches used for fuel. Aside from money and meals, the hired workers were provided 5.5 khal of ale and 3.25 khal of barley flour. Towards the end of the month, preparations for agriculture took place when manure was transported to the fields. Three khal of ale were consumed by the hired hands for this purpose. By April 4.5 khal of

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[7] This is an excellent instance of the breakdown of precapitalist system of taxation and labor obligations, so that the estate today has to request for labor.

ale was expended for the work of repairing irrigation ditches and the start of ploughing. But the bulk of the disbursements, 12 khal of barley flour went to the salary of the keeper of the inner temples at the monastery. A sum of 0.75 khal of ale was provided for workers hired to repair the collapsed wall of the estate's storeroom.

May is the most intense month of agricultural activity. Irrigation ditches are repaired and all the ploughing, planting, and irrigation of fields takes place during this month. Nine khal of ale was provided. In that same month, 5 khal of wheat was paid as salary to the person who takes care of the estate lands in the village of Nyemo, and 3 khal of ale was consumed by those who helped hang prayer flags by the riverside. By June the heavy agricultural work is over for irrigating fields and other minor work that can be accomplished without hiring outside labor. There was a 4.8 khal of wheat made into ale. Another 3 khal of ale was made for future labor that would be required during the upcoming ritual sponsorship. In July there were no grain expenditure, although we may note that the ale previously made was insufficient and Rs.15 worth was bought.

By August, the harvesting season is at hand. The village blacksmith received 0.75 khal of ale for his work in making a new water propelled grain grinder. Another 0.75

of ale was consumed for the Hruplha ceremony, an occasion marking the beginning of harvest. The only non-agricultural production related labor expense was 3 khal of ale for the rather belated **bopsang**, or, the summer picnic. Since I left the field before most of the harvesting work, the graph shows by dotted lines the expected increase in grain expenditure towards the end of August and September.

6

DRIGUNG LABRANG: THE ECONOMICS OF THE MAIN INSTITUTION

The preceding chapter recounted many specific instances of connections between the agricultural estate of the labrang and the labrang in general. Thus, the Chakzodh appoints the two nyerpa to manage the estate and they must account to him. In other words, all surplus proceeds of the estate ultimately belongs to the general labrang. Further, grain presented to the lama is at times collected and sold by the estate, and the estate provides transportation, food and other expenses for Drigung Kyabgon and his entourage when they are at Kyilung. The Chakzodh, moreover, provides the two nyerpa money needed for the operation of the estate. It is therefore necessary to look at the economics of the general labrang, the non-estate, non-land based part. Together, the land and the non-land based economy form an integrated whole, though

today the latter is a much more important source.[1] I will refer to this non-land based economy as, "the General Account".

Underlying the income and expenditure of the **General Account** are reasons pertaining to sacredness and status. Unlike "ordinary" lamas and their labrangs, labrangs like Drigung, that have combined in them sacredness and socio-economic power (as discussed in Chapter 2), have greater number of invitations to monasteries and requests for teachings. Ritual performances by such lamas are considered more efficacious. Therefore, prestations of money and gifts (land, animal, grain, etc,) are more numerous and larger in quantity. Religious merit gained in giving to such lamas are felt to be greater. Also, the sponsor (distinctly visible from the rest) gains prestige and status during the public rituals and teachings.

Money and gifts received by the labrang are reinvested in loans and business for greater accumulation. On the other hand, large labrangs naturally result in large organizations and travelling entourages. Because of the wealth and status of these large labrangs, they are always expected to be generous in giving. These factors result in

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1 It should be noted that the strength and accumulation of the money form is a direct result of the capitalist economy in India today. It was not an important aspect throughout most of the history of Ladakh, where landed economy predominated.

greater expenses.

The General Account

General Account refers to the economic activities of Drigung Labrang including everything **except** its landed estate. In other words, it encompasses the income of the lama, the expenditure of the lama, his attendants, the Chakzodh, the Chakzodh's assistant, the labrang kitchen and the labrang in general, but excludes the agricultural estate. The organization of the labrang has already been discussed in Chapter 4. This exposition on the general account is based on the ledgers kept by the Chagzodh, and, to some extent, the Labrang Nyerpa's account at Tharling monastery where Drigung Kyabgon resided most of the time. The lama sometimes also keeps a personal account with an amount even the Chakzodh does not know.

Income

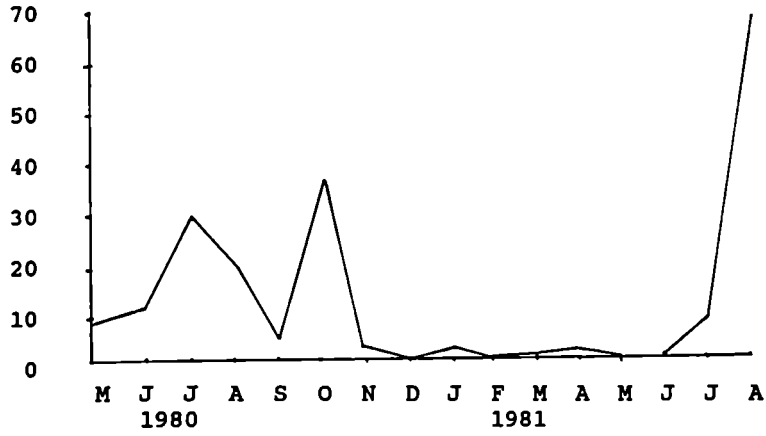
Graph 4 below, shows the income of Drigung Labrang from May 1980 to August 1981. The earnings are shown in cash, i.e. money presented to the lama or earned through business transactions, or, through the conversion of gift items like jewelry, grain, butter, animals, clothing, etc., into cash.

The graph shows the extremes of high and low points. The high points (those above Rs.10,000) coincide with periods

when the lama is available to the people. This can take the form of public religious ceremonies, or, ceremonies combined with travel and invitations to various occasions

Graph 4

Drigung Labrang Cash Income from
May 1980 to August 1981



and households. For example, in May 1980, the Drigung Kyabgon was invited to a festival at Tso Pema in the northwestern Himalayan foothills, where a Drigung lama had his monasteries. There he presided over public ceremonies and bestowed blessings, at the same time receiving their offerings. The occasion also coincided with the Dalai Lama's visit to the area and so the crowd was larger than usual.

When a **khawang** or a public teaching-cum-initiation takes place, a specific wealthy individual or institution requests a particular ceremony by presenting a scarf and gift(s) which usually takes the form of money. This is one source of income. By far the major source is from the money offerings when the ceremony attenders queue-up to receive blessings.

The months of June and July 1980 were also times when Drigung Kyabgon presided over ceremonies. In June he was the guest at Hemis monastery for three days in commemoration of their special 1980 summer festival (which was also attended by the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, a good indication of the size and popularity of the occasion). He did not give a teaching but streams of people came to receive blessings, while offering scarves and money. The month of July was the time of the Drigung Kabgyed, the sect's largest religious celebration which took place at Kyilung. Now at his own monastery, a sponsor requested him to perform a long-life initiation ceremony. Once again, as the celebration included the colorful religious mask-dances (cham), hundreds of people came and sought his blessings. In this month he was also invited to a number of summer picnic cum archery sessions of the various sub-areas of Kyilung village.

Towards the end of September through October and the

early part of November, Drigung Kyabgon was invited to the Kyurpochen and Da-Hanu areas in Ladakh, a restricted zone[2] close to the borders of Pakistan. A large section of the Dardic population in these areas are followers of the Drigung sect. At these places he gave numerous teachings and also visited a number of households. Almost a year later a similar invitation was extended by the followers of the Drigung sect in the Lalok and Changthang areas of Ladakh near and on the Tibetan frontiers. This was in August 1981. The occasion marked the elaboration of the Kabgyed ceremony at the Drigung monastery of Sharchukhul as well as Kyabgon's first visit to those areas. He gave numerous teachings, presided over the three day Kabgyed ceremony, and visited a number of areas and households. Economically, it was a good month. The various prestations resulted in an accumulation of over Rs.70,000.

An anomaly in the graph to the general rule of higher income during public ceremony occurred in August. In that month, more than Rs.20,000 came mainly from the labrang's tourist hotel business.

The low points in the graph are explained by the fact that Drigung Kyabgon went into meditation at Tharling

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[2] India's border conflict with China and Pakistan have resulted in a number of restricted zones near the borders. Travel into these areas is possible only with special permits.

monastery towards the end of November 1980 until the beginning of April 1981. The Rs.2000 for January 1981 was not from Ladakh. It was a gift to the labrang presented through the Chagzodh at Mysore, South India. The zero earnings of May and June 1981 coincides with the Kyabgon's travels in India.

Certain details of the correlation between higher income and the lama's visit to a particular area are provided in Table 9. The table is self explanatory and shows some of the details of the economics of Kyabgon's

Table 9

Labrang Income: August 1981.

Date	Description	Amount
	Drangtse military camp khawang*	35.0
4	Kargyam Village khawang	909.0
7	Chushul " "	2198.0
10	Phobrang " "	923.0
13	Draruk " "	707.0
15	Dhrubuk " "	669.0
17	Zingrul " "	155.0
18	Sold following items (offerings):	
1	woman's dress	165.0
	1 shawl	90.0
	2 hats	70.0
	1 linen material	50.0
	1 pair of shoes	15.0
	1 silver charm box	315.0
	turquoise	2200.0
	1 pair of nomad's shoe	15.0
	1 bridle	170.0
	1 woman's dress	150.0
	1 woman's dress	125.0
	1 sash	5.0
	1 woolen pair of pants	45.0
	1 women's dress	150.0
	Large number of scarves (khatak)	875.0

No		
Date	Interest from a land lease	100.0
"	Grass sold at Nyemo	100.0
"	Grass sold at Leh	100.0
26	Cow dung sold to Komnyer	230.0
27	1980 barley grains sold	2245.0
No		
Date	Loan from a family at Sharchukhul	20000.0
Total		32,811.0

visit to the Lalok and the Changthang areas of Ladakh. The Table shows the date, the place, and the description of the source of money. Items listed for August 18, 1980 are offerings presented to the lama which were sold for cash. The table also lists a Sharchukhul village family's loan, which was made free of interest to be payable whenever, and, five transactions of the labrang estate.[3]

Expenditure

Graph 5, shows the labrang expenditure from May 1980 to August 1981. As in the income graph there are great fluctuations.

Invitations to various places and the performance of public ceremonies correlate with periods of high income. Likewise, generally those periods are also ones of greater expense. When a lama visits another religious institution,

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[3] It should be pointed out that the total economic activity for the month is incomplete as I left the field before butter and other items were sold. However, I was able to get the total of the month when my brother visited my home at Kalimpong in February 1982.

Graph 5

Labrang Expenditure: May 1980
to August 1981.

custom does not allow him to leave without providing tea for the monk congregation. This is known as mangja or public tea. Tea, or if one wants to be more generous, a light meal, is always accompanied by the distribution of money (geh). The visit is also a time when there are requests for donations, generally for the building of a stupa, a monastery, a temple, etc. The ideological reasons presented regarding the provision of food, tea, and money are those pertaining to the question of accumulation of merit. But there are socio-political ones.

The higher the status of the lama, the wealthier his labrang, the greater are the expectations in terms of quality and quantity of gifts. So it is not only difficult to refuse to give donations, but there is also a social pressure to bestow them lavishly, even at the risk of

overspending. In the case of Drigung Labrang, there was an additional reason. Drigung Kyabgon actively took on his responsibilities as head of the sect only in 1978. Throughout their more than twenty years in exile in India without their religious head, the lesser lamas of the Drigung faith had been divided. A schism, more or less, had developed among them. Kyabgon's visit to each of their various institutions taking the others with him, and his lavishly prestations were the first step towards breaking the isolation and establishing an atmosphere of reciprocity, thus, hopefully, leading towards a more united Drigung establishment. As each lama visited the other's institution, customs of prestations and social status began a chain of interaction. I should also add that generous prestations from Drigung Labrang to other religious sects were partly given with the idea of enhancing the status of Drigung monasteries in those visited areas.

These reasons mainly explain the large expenses of May 1980 when Kyabgon visited monasteries in the Tso Pema area in the northwestern Himalayan foothills. To a Drigung monastery, for the provision of tea, lamp offerings, distribution of money to the monks, and a gift to the dratsang, a sum of Rs.1200 was provided. Rs.10,000 was expended towards the building of a new monastery. For a

Drigung run monastery at Bylakuppe, South India, tea and cash distribution to the monk congregation amounted to Rs.517. Rs.20,000 in donations were presented towards building the monastery. Although March 1980 is not covered in the fieldwork period and is therefore not included in the graph, the last half of the month provides excellent examples on the subject matter.

Table 10 below, shows the date, the description and amount of Drigung Labrang's prestations to other religious sects. In the months of March and May 1980 alone, a sum of Rs.42,917 was spent on prestations at various religious institutions.

Another source of expenditure is travelling. The distances covered are enormous. They range from trans-Himalayan Ladhaki mountain passes crossed on jeeps and horseback, to jet and train journeys to New Delhi, Darjeeling, West Bengal, Bylakuppe, South India, and numerous other places in the country. More important economically, it is not so much the distance, but whether the visit was invitational or not. In Ladakh it has always been invitational, so all expenses were borne by the sponsors. In other parts of India, the labrang paid all its expenses. Generally speaking, the larger the labrang the greater the size of the accompanying entourage, and, therefore, the greater the expense.

Table 10

Drigung Labrang Prestations to Various Tibetan monasteries in South India, March 1980

Date	Description	Amount
15	Sera Monastery, **mangja**(tea for monk congregation) & **chome** (butter lamp offerings)	472.0
	Geh (cash distribution for monks)	4945.0
	Tekchenling Dratsang, mangja,chome	109.0
	Geh	840.
	Donation to meditation group	200.0
16	Nyingma Monastery, mangja, chome	260.0
	Geh	915,0
17	Tashilhunpo Monastery, mangja, chome	114.0
	Geh	355.0
18	Sakya Monastery, mangja, chome	120.0
	Geh	690.0
19	Dzong Monastery, mangja, chome	117.0
	Geh	275.0
20	Gyurmey Dratsang, mangja, chome	212.0
	Geh	1320.0
	Ugenling Dratsang, mangja, chome	80.0
	Geh	180.0
Total		11205.0

It is the combination of travelling and visits to religious institutions that explains the large expenditure in May 1980. In that month, Drigung Kyabgon travelled to Tso Pema in the Himachal Pradesh area, and to Bylakuppe, South India. These factors also account for some of the expenses in June when **mangja** and **geh** were presented to the monks at Hemis Monastery where Kyabgon was a guest at their festival. Travelling also explains the expenses incurred from April to July 1981 when Kyabgon and his entourage travelled to Delhi, Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

Just as the winter months resulted in a low income because the lama was in meditation, these same months were also the time of least expense. Most of the expenses during these months were directly concerned with food and other costs incurred by the labrang kitchen.

In conclusion, there is a general pattern in which the more the lama is in touch with the people, in terms of invitations to households and various other places, execution of religious teachings and visits to religious institutions, the greater the income as well as the expense. This is a very general pattern that accounts for some of the high and low points in the graph, but it cannot explain them fully because the accounts are for the labrang in general, and are not confined to how the lama acquires and spends money. So the labrang's other activities are reflected in the graphs. For example, the income graph shows Rs.20,000 earned by the labrang's tourist hotel business in the month of August 1980. In the expenditure graph, most of the July 1980 expenses was incurred primarily by the hotel, and secondly, by the stocking up of winter supplies as the roads are closed during winter. The latter was also a factor in the August 1980 expenses, although most of it went for the payment of a loan. In September 1980, Rs.5,000 was spent for the purchase of an animal enclosure wire fence. In October,

another loan was paid and some of the labrang workers received their salaries. These are the anomalies in the broad general pattern of how a lama and his institution earn and spend money.

7

LABRANG AND THE SPONSORSHIP OF RITUALS

It is only when one takes an integrated approach and looks not only at economic production, but also at distribution and consumption, that one begins to see the meaning and purpose in the whole production process. In this section, I look at one of the labrang estate's largest single item of economic consumption, the sponsorship of rituals, in order to examine the relationship between ideology and economy. The theoretical discussion regarding these two factors is in the Introduction and the Conclusion. Below is the specific empirical description of certain elements of ritual sponsorship with special emphasis on the labrang's sponsorship of the Kabgyed ceremony. I also discuss one other ritual sponsorship at Kyilung, the Drumchod, as well as the main system of sponsorship in Drigung, Tibet, in order to have a comparative and more comprehensive view of the sponsorship of rituals and the relations between

ideology and economy.

Elements of Ritual Sponsorship

We can begin by describing the two words, ritual and sponsorship. In this case, **ritual** consists of a congregation of monks invoking-through prayers, offerings, and other means, a deity or deities so that the sponsor may achieve his aims. These aims generally are to receive overall welfare like good health, prosperity, and happiness, though there are other reasons. The word **sponsorship** refers to the organization and funding of materials for the ritual. This consists of the manner of allocation of agricultural surplus, individual alms seeking, provision of items needed for the ritual, and the feeding of monks. The particular individual directly involved in the sponsorship is said to accumulate merit which is needed for a better rebirth.

Ritual, or religious ceremony, is commonly referred to as a **dhuchen**, or a large occasion. A **tsog**, the gathering of monks in the prayer hall (**tsogkhang**) takes place during a dhuchen. But not all tsog can be said to be a large occasion. The specified routine monthly gatherings are referred to as **gyuntsog**. These are short gatherings, lasting only an hour or two. The larger gatherings which last anywhere from a day to 20 days are called **tsogchen**. As indicated by the word, they are marked by more monk

attendance, the religious importance of the occasion, and a larger fund for the **tongho**. Tongho refers to food, tea and other items provided by the sponsor.

At Kyilung monastery, except for the 2 **sobjong** (see page 88) and the **gustor** (Labrang sponsored ritual on the 29th of every month), there are no fixed monthly gatherings. In Tharling there are 9 routine gatherings every month and the attendance is voluntary except for those who are obligated to perform the rituals. In comparison, there were 27 routine gatherings monthly in Drigung, Tibet, and attendance was compulsory.

Rituals are sponsored individually, institutionally, or through a combination of both (the subject was briefly discussed under the topic of monastic work obligations in Chapter 4).

Labrang Sponsorship of the Kabgyed Ceremony

Though the emphasis here is on the labrang estate and the sponsorship of rituals, the economic burden of the Kabgyed sponsorship is shared. It is partly funded by an individual monk, as part of his compulsory monastic work obligations, and partly by the labrang institution. For the sake of a coherent picture, I will describe it as a whole.

Kabgyed refers to eight teachings or proclamations, though, in fact, there are nine deities who are appeased.

This religious ceremony is the largest one at Kyilung. When Ladakh was under Dogra power, the Kabgyed ceremony at Kyilung took on certain political significance. It was popularly known as **Tsidrub**, a long-life ceremony offered in the name of the king of Jammu. Even today this is the more common name. But whether one is referring to Drigung (Tibet), Tharling monastery, or Kyilung, it is the same Kabgyed ceremony. The Kyilung ceremony is held for 10 days, with 7 days of prayer gatherings, and 3 of cham, or religious dances.

In preparation for the final days of the Tsidrub ceremony (which ends in 3 days of cham), **chamjang**, or religious dance practice, takes place a month prior to the beginning of the actual prayer gatherings. The practice period is 10 days. The practice sessions are conducted in a very relaxed atmosphere. Nobody really tells anyone, or guides them into, the dance steps and turns. Almost all the monks know their routine and they gather to perform together. If someone does not know some parts of the routine he can learn through imitation since many who know are performing. A typical practice day begins at the sound of the conch shell (**dhung**) about 9:30 A.M. The monks gradually begin to trickle into the **chamra** (dance courtyard). Even after an hour, all the monks have not yet entered the courtyard. So they sit around drinking tea.

Some are absent and others are practicing on their own. This goes on for two days. On the 3rd day there is more absentees since some are washing their clothes, while others had decided that the summer sun was too hot for dancing. Therefore, all the practice began after 4 P.M. Most of the time was spent sitting around and talking. Some were not present at all.[1]

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[1] One reason for this not-so-enthusiastic performance is that with very few monks in the monastery everybody has to perform the dances yearly, so they all know their routine very well. In comparison, many young monks in Drigung (Tibet) had to perform the dances as part of the monastic work obligations and so they had to be taught. But as in the familiar Tibetan case, reproduction of traditional practices continues even in different circumstances.

The other reason is that before 1979,the Kabgyed ceremony used to take place during the winter months. The main reason given for this change is that it was the first visit of the head of the sect to Ladakh. It was also the time that the new gigantic wall tapestry (thangka) was ready for the celebration of the 800 Anniversary of the establishment of the Drigung sect. Another reason may have something to do with tourism in the summer months and the possibility of charging entrance fees like some monasteries in Ladakh.

We also cannot ignore the fact, with a little over 30 monks at Kyilung it was becoming increasingly difficult to meet the schedule of the busy winter ceremonies. In the 12th month there is the ceremony of the **Dosmochen** at Leh which the Kyilung monks had to attend if it was their turn. In earlier days participation was compulsory as part of **gyalpo tral**, or payment of taxes to the king. Over the years it was agreed that the four monasteries concerned, Hemis, Kyilung, Spituk, and Triksay would take turns performing the Dosmochen ceremony. Besides the Dosmochen there was the Kabgyed ceremony and the **Drakpo Torgha**. All these ceremonies kept the monks busy since the monks, unlike those in Tibet, must provide for themselves. This means a small number of monks going to the villages everyday trying to fulfill the ritual needs of the increasing number of households. The change

The 10 days of Chamjang is the first event of the Kabgyed. Both the labrang and the Tsidrubpa (individual monk sponsor) begin their funding of the ceremony by providing their best tea continuously throughout the practice period.

A few days before the tsog, (prayer gathering), on the 5th day of the 1st month, **tsedra** making begins. In general, Tsedra are various kinds of religious or ritual drawings which also include the colored decorations of butter used for the tormas, or figures made from dough. This is the type of tsedra with which we are specifically concerned. Usually, tsedra making is not for the **thonrig**, or those who have completed the monastic work obligations. It is for the **shondrel**, the younger monks who still have work obligations to perform. There are some monks who do not know how to make tsedra. They must request someone else to make it for them while providing them food and tea.

The 13th day of this month is **torshang**, or the day when the **torma** are made. Torma are conical shaped dough effigies representing deities. Some monks are at the upper tsokhang making the Kabgyed Torma, while others are in the

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of the Kabgyed ceremony from winter to summer was a welcome one. Since all Kabgyed ceremonies before 1979 were held in winter, my description follows that, and not the new summer schedule.

lower one making the Gompo Torma. The individual monk sponsor, known by various terms as, **Tsidrubpa**, **Tsidrub Lama**, or **Tonghopa** is the one who, as part of the monastic work obligations, provides the tongho (food, tea, other provisions) for those monks who have gathered for the Gombo Torgya. The Labrang provides the tongho for those gathered for the Kabgyed Torgya. For the torshang, which occurs on the 13th morning, the **Shungnyer** (see Chapter 3) provides 4 mangja, or tea for the congregation, tsampa (barley flour) measuring 1kg for each monk, with **tazan** (accorded shares).[2] Four and a half (4.5) kilograms are alloted for mangja and torma making. The Shungnyer must also provide the paints for the mandala.

On this same day, the Tsidrubpa gives **kholak** (barley dough),[3] with **shibdren** or **kyurim**, a dish of vegetables, meat and potatoes. He must provide the best quality tea, specified by the Indian name brand, **surathi**, and it must weigh 3 nyaks (0.5 kg). The Labrang gives the Shungnyer, salt, baking soda (**bhultok**), and tsampa (roasted barley

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[2] All monks do not get equal shares of food or money distribution. The general monk body is accorded 1 share, the 4 heads of the monastery, 2 shares. The Choje, or Drigung Labrang representative receives 3 shares, and Drigung Kyabgon gets 5. This is true also of Tibet, where the Dalai Lama is accorded the highest share.

[3] Kholak is known as pa in Tibetan and it is the staple food of the Tibetan cultural areas. It is roasted barley flour generally mixed with tea by each individual in his own bowl to form a dough.

flour) to make kholak. These are used by the Shungnyer when he gives his part of the tongho.

For the Gompo Torgya, the following torma are made; Mamo also referred to as Lama, Gombo, Yidam, Khandro, and Achhi. The Tsidrubpa must provide the necessary amount of barley flour and butter needed for the torma.

At the Upper Tsogkhang the Kabgyed Torgya is being performed. The following tormas are made and the labrang provides the specified amount of butter needed in making them:

1) Mamo or Lama, 3 nyak (0.5 kg) of butter
2) Yidam, 3 nyak
3) Khandro, 3 nyak,
4) Dhedhun, 1.5 nyak
5) Choskyong 1.5 Nyak
6) Achhi, 3 nyak (0.18 lb)
7) Tsezaghad, 0.5 nyak
8) Mechen, 5 nyak (1.8 lbs)
9) Tsekyung 2.5 nyak
10) Khadhoth, 2 nyak (0.72 lb)
11) Dhedhun, 2 nyak,
12) Ngakhung, 2.5 nyak with wheat flour measuring 1 Ser Dre (0.5 kg) of the smaller measuring unit called, **Norbuma chungwa**
13) Zalang, 0.5 nyak
14) Skangdren and Torbhul, 3 nyak.

Altogether, the Labrang must provide barley flour (sowa type), amounting to 2 Khal and 10 tre (25 kg), and 33 nyak or 5 kg of butter. The labrang must also provide the items required for the Kabgyed ceremony. These include blue, green, orange, red, and yellow powder paints, gold paper, incense, wheat grain (sowa type) for offerings, dried mustard, **tse** and **sokma** (two types of grass), blood, intestines, goat skin, saffron, black peas, 5 colored cloths and strings, 3 yards of white

cloth, small umbrellas for the tormas, oil for lamps sufficient for 24 hours and others.

In the evening of the 13th, the **drelzin** takes place. Drelzin is the occasion that occurs the day before tsog (prayer gathering) in which monks occupy their seats in the congregation hall. The drelzin was necessary in Tibet where there were hundreds of monks and subsequent confusion in getting everybody seated in their appropriate places. At Kyilung, the occasion is simply customary since there are so few monks and everybody knows his own place. During the drelzin, the labrang provides 1 **mangja**, **bakjham** (porridge-like, made from wheat), and 2 ser tre (1 kg) of tsampa, of the type, **yoches** (bean-barley mixture) with **tazan** or designated shares (see note 2).

From the 14th day, the 7 days of ritual appeasement begin for both the ceremonies, the Gompo and the Kabgyed. The amount and the nature of the food and beverages are provided below. The labrang provides for the Kabgyed, and the Tsidrubpa for the Gompo.

On the 1st day (the 14th of the 1st month) the estate serves 2 mangja, 1 jham (porridge-like, made from barley). The Tsidrubpa hosts 1 mangja, 1 kholak, and 2 meals each day to the Chabril, Lhobhon, and the Umzath (see Chapter 3). Both provide a plate with tsampa which

the monks place in their tea cups. The tsampa forms a dough which that cleanses their butter-covered wooden tea cups. On the 15th day of the month, the labrang gives 2 mangja, 1 **trikja** (tea named for the place where the torma is placed; there is no **skarka**, or weighing of the butter, but the tea **must** be unusually strong and rich in butter), and 1 **jharul** (barley tea paste).[4] The Tsidrubpa provides 2 mangjha.

On the 16th of the month, the estate serves 2 mangjha, and 1 **dhokjha** (tea in the name of a **specha**, or text), and the Tsidrubpa provides 2 mangjha and 1 jharul. The following day the labrang furnishes 2 mangjha, and the Tsidrupa, 2 mangjha and 1 jharul.

On the 18th, the labrang estate serves 2 mangjha, 1 **baktsol** (cooked wheat dough), 1 **drejam** (porridge-like, made from rice), 1 **solja** (tea in honor of a deity), and the Tsidrubpa provides 2 mangja, and 1 bakjham. The next day the estate gives 1 mangjha, and the 13 **chunpas**[5] (see page 168) who work for the labrang and carry the torma

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[4] Jharul is made by pouring plenty of tea in a bowl of barley flour to form a paste. The bowl may contain butter, or **thu** (ready mixture of dried cheese, butter, and sugar), or dried cheese. This is the usual regimen in most Tibetan cultural areas and in Central Tibet it is known as **jamdhu**.

[5] Chunpas are taxpayers that are attached to the labrang estate for the provision of surplus labor. See also page 163.

are furnished 1 **zama** (large earthen-ware) of chang (ale), 1 **tsampa khador** (large plate of barley flour), and another smaller plate of tsampa.

On the last day of tsog, the labrang serves 1 mangjha and 4 khal (40 kg) of tsampa. The Tsidrubpa must provide 3 khals (30 kg) of tsampa. The 7 khal (70 kg) of tsampa are combined and distributed among all the monks. In earlier days the two sponsors could save on the tsampa since only those present were entitled to a share.

The ceremony ends in three days of public display of cham, or religious dances. A day before the cham, the **chamtsi** takes place. On this event, each monk is assigned his costumes and each item is checked on the inventory list. The first day of cham is performed without any costumes.[6] The next day at around 3 a.m. the **baksol**, or the invocation of the masks begins. Just before sunrise the first mask dance is performed, and it

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[6] It is the continuation of the tradition in Drigung where, on this first day, novice monks who had to perform the dances are put to the test. Since they do not wear masks they can be recognized by the champon (dance leader) and reprimanded with a slap on the head or across the face. But for those who are familiar with the routine, this is the day to put on their best robes, brocade vests, and tassels, and show how well they perform. In Kyilung, the latter is more true since the monks who perform every year know their routine very well. Moreover, traditional authoritative structures have more or less broken down. The harsh reprimands instituted in Tibet are not practiced at Kyilung.

continues through the day and the following one. During the baksol, the Tsidrubpa provides the tea. The labrang is frantically busy as it is responsible for making all the arrangements for the numerous guests who have arrived. The heads of other monasteries, the Indian military, the Police, and politicians are present and are hosted to an enormous lunch. All guests staying at the monastery are catered to by the labrang, which partly accounts for the phenomenal expenses the labrang must meet.

During the whole ceremony, the Tsidrupa uses about two sheep. The estate's activities consume more. On the evening of the last day, the Tsidrubpa provides a meal to the 2 Labrang Depas, the 4 heads of the Dratsang, the Champon (dance leader), the Chamjuk (the last dancer who has a more elaborate routine), and the players of two musical instruments, the dhung and gyaling. Until electricity was introduced in the 1970's, the Tsidrubpa had to provide enough oil to light lamps for the evening meal.

Note that the items provided at the tsog are specified in detail and their exact quantities stated. For example, each mangjha or tea must contain 2 pow (500 grams) of butter and 0.5 nyak of tea. Before there was a well defined market economy, the two items must be

weighed in front of the assembly of monks. Today, with tea and butter sold in packages of specific weights, the items are no longer weighed. Besides the mangja, the exact type of barley flour is specified; whether it is sowa, sumbor, or yoches and their measurements clearly defined by indicating which measurement container (ser tre, norbuma chewa or norbuma chungwa) is used.

The Tsidrubpa provides the tongho. A monk becomes a Tsidrubpa when his turn arrives according to the **mingtho** (name chart). Providing the tongho is part of the work obligation that the monk must perform as a member of the monastic community. For the provisions there are 60 khal of barley grain as **martsa**, or fund. The greatest share of the fund is provided by the Tsidrubpa through **so-nyom**, or alms, which is formally sanctioned through alms seeking documents.

The Tsidrubpa knows more than a year in advance that it will be his turn to sponsor part of the Kabgyed ceremony. In the days before motorized transportation it was quite a difficult affair, entailing months on horse back or trekking, covering areas from **Sham** to the **Rong** (lower and Upper Ladakh), Nubra and Changthang. Also, since there wasn't much cash available, most of the contributions were in kind, like grains, a goat or a sheep, which were sold in order to buy the items

necessary for the ceremony. If it were a poor year for crops and animals, the sponsor could end up with a loss since he has to provide for the ceremony. Either he manages by taking loans or by relying heavily on his family.

However, wage labor associated with the Indian military complex and civilian development have had a marked effect on the economics of sponsorship. Motorized transportation has greatly shortened the time and increased the efficiency of alms seeking. Donations are more generous because households have become wealthier. Today, Tsidrubpas think of making a profit, as they are able to accumulate a fund greater than the needs of the tongho. They make about Rs.1000 to Rs.2000, depending on how hard they work to cover various geographical areas. These days if the Tsidrubpa covers only the neighboring areas of Kyilung, he can collect enough funds. As one monk remarked, "The Tsidrub and the Sobjong are what makes a monk well off". Of course this wealth is only temporary.

As for the labrang, its source of sponsorship is its landed estate. The following chapter examines the problems this primarily precapitalist institution faces in a growing money economy.

The preceding description of one type of ritual

sponsorship offers a limited view of the interrelationship between ritual and economy. To present a broader and a more comprehensive picture, I describe below two other forms of ritual sponsorship, the **Drumchod** in Kyilung, and the **Chiso Chanzoe** in Drigung, Tibet. Aside from their illustrating various types of economic sponsorship of rituals, they also reveal the importance of the role of the lama or the labrang. They reflect too, how aspects of ritual organization are altered by elements of a new mode of production.

The Economics of the Drumchod Ritual

The ritual ceremony was instituted about 60 years ago by the incumbent lama of Tokdhen Tsang, which is the name of the labrang. He was also the Choje (see Chapter 46), the Drigung Labrang representative appointed to administer the Drigung monasteries in Ladakh. The ritual marks the occasion of the appeasement of the deity, Dechok.

The ceremony lasts for 12 days, beginning on the 4th day of the 4th month of the Ladakhi year. The 1st day is known as Salchok. The 4 heads of the monastery, the 2 Komnyer and 4 other monks, appointed by the Gyeskos, attend. On this day, the **kyilkor** (mandala) making begins amidst prayer offerings. The Drumchodpa (sponsor) must provide the attenders:

1) 3 mangjha containing 1.5 pow (375 grams) of butter
2) 1 khal 5 tre (12.5 kg) of barley flour
3) 5 tre (2.5 kg) of wheat flour for the bakjam
4) 10 tre (5 kg) of yoches for zenzang (a large ball shaped cooked dough).

He also must provide the Komnyer:

1) 2 khal and 10tre (25 kg) of barley flour (**chotsam**) for torma making
2) 2.5 pow (625 grams) of butter for **chogyen** or butter decorations for the torma
3) 1 khal 10 tre (15 kg) of wheat grains for alter offerings (**chodru**).

On the 5th and 6th days, 4 monks color the mandala.

The Drumchodpa furnishes:

1) 3 mangja using 2.5 pow (625 grams) of butter
2) 10 tre (5 kg) of barley flour for kholak
3) 10 tre of yoches for **zenzang**.
4) 10 tre of wheat flour for bakjam.

On the 7th day, known as **Tagon**, the 10 monks display (**sham**) the mandala and the prayer offering begins. The sponsor provides the 10 monks:

1) 3 mangja using 1.5 pow (375 grams) of butter
2) 1 khal (10 kg) barley flour for kholak
3) 0.5 khal of wheat flour for bakjam
4) 0.5 khal of yoches for zenzang.

In the evening the monks of the sub-monasteries of Kyilung, Shang and Shara arrive. From the 8th to the 15th all the monks, about 60 in number, hold the prayer gatherings. The congregation is in session all day with 5 recesses. Each day the Drumchodpa provides:

1) 3 mangjha using 6 pow (1.5 kg) of butter
2) 1.5 pow (375 grams) of tea
3) 3 khal and 10tre (35 kg) of barley flour
4) 2 khal (20 kg) of wheat flour
5) 2 khal of yoches.

Only tea with 1 tre (0.5 kg) of barley flour is served during the early morning and the late evening session. The later morning and the afternoon session contain the more substantial meal of kholak, jam and zenzang. In earlier days, the Drumchodpa provided Rs.8 for food for the Choje. If he were absent from the ceremony, the monks would receive Rs.8 worth of tea or some other substitute.

The Drumchodpa is also expected to give Rs.3 and 4 anna[7] and 1 khal (10 kg) of barley grain to the two lay nyerpas, or fellow sponsors. The specific sum of food and beverages must be provided although the actual quality and quantity of provisions above the stated sum depends upon the ability and the wishes of the sponsor.

Like the Kabgyed, the sponsor may be referred to as the Tonghopa. He is also known as the Drumchodpa or Drumchod Nyerpa. As in the Kabgyed, the monk sponsor must provide the tongho as part of the monastic work obligation system. Unlike the Kabgyed, there are three village households (each sending one member) sponsors whose appointments in turn are overseen by the village headman. The manner in which the fund is organized is also different.

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[7] In the pre-decimal Indian monetary system, 1 Rupee equaled 16 Annas.

The Drumchod Fund: Organization and Effects of Inflation

The incumbent lama of Tokden Labrang, the Drigung representative and head of its monasteries, began the fund raising for the Drumchod ceremony some 60 years ago. He accumulated 464 khal (4640 kg) of barley grain which was loaned, in perpetuity, to 33 peasant households at an annual interest rate of 25% . The average household loan amounted to 14 Khal (140 Kg). Table 11 below, shows the 33 households to which the Drumchod loan was made. I have substituted numbers for the names of the households. The total loan amount is given in khal and it amounts to 464. The interest is also stated in khal and it amounts to 116 Khal (1160 kg), which is an interest rate of 25% per year.

Table 11

Thirty Three (33) Peasant Household Loans of Barley Grain for the Sponsorship of the Drumchod Ritual.

Name	Loan	Interest	Name	Loan	Interest	Name	Loan	Int.
1	8	2	12	16	4	23	8	2
2	8	2	13	8	2	24	16	4
3	8	2	14	16	4	25	16	4
4	32	8	15	16	4	26	16	4
5	16	4	16	8	2	27	12	3
6	28	7	17	16	4	28	16	4

7	16	4	18	16	4	29	16	4
8	20	5	19	16	4	30	16	4
9	8	2	20	12	3	31	8	2
10	16	4	21	16	4	32	4	1
11	16	4	22	8	2	33	12	3

The monk sponsor acts primarily as the supervisor while the 3 lay ones do most of the work. They collect the interest from the various households. About half the grain is sold at the market, and the cash is used to buy items required for the ceremony. The other half of the grain is almost totally ground into flour, and used mainly as food and for making torma. The lay sponsors also do most of the kitchen work and make arrangements for the firewood.

In 1968 it was Konchok C's turn to sponsor the Drumchod. He collected the 116 Khal (1160 kgs) of grain and sold about a half. With the money, he bought the necessary items which when not measured in kilograms is stated in Rupees. The items and their amounts are:

1) 24 Kg of butter
2) 4 Kg of tea
3) 4 Kg cooking oil
4) 4 Kg of lamp oil
5) 4 Kg of dried apricots (phating)
6) 1 Kg of raisins
7) 7 Kg of salt
8) 2 Kg of dal(yellow split peas)
11) 20 Kg of Rice
12) 1 Kg of molasses
13) 1 Kg of onions
14) Rs.3 of Mandala paints
15) Rs.1 Baking Soda
16) Rs.0.5 of Matches
17) Rs.5 of Saffron
18) Rs.2 of Incense

9) 3 Kg of Cheese
10) 3 Kg of sugar
19) Rs.5 of spices
20) Rs.2 of Noodles

The total cost of all these items amounted to, Rs.346.12. Konchok C spent all the money to provide sufficient meals with nothing out of the ordinary provided. Thirteen years later, in May 1981, it was Konchok S's turn to sponsor the Drumchod. He already was complaining about some problems in collecting the interest. Some families wanted to pay in wheat, which fetches a lower price at the market, while a few were even reluctant to pay at all. The sponsors used 66 khal and sold the rest at the market. They received Rs.1031.5 which was not sufficient to cover the cost of the commodities bought, so the 4 sponsors each had to pay Rs.25 out of their own pockets.

Though the market was quite well established in 1968, by 1981 inflation and the erosion of the precapitalist economy and values (see Chapter 8) had set in. Even though the market price of grain had increased, it was not sufficient to keep pace with the increased price of commodities expensively transported from the plains. For example, the 24 Kg of butter bought for the 1968 Drumchod would have cost Rs.13.5 per kg in 1981, which amounts to Rs.324. The cost of this one item alone is almost as much as the total expenditure of 1968 which

came to Rs.346.12.

Inflation is quite understandable in the case of Ladakh, but it also had great consequences for the organization of ritual sponsorship in Drigung, Tibet (the country which had the reputation, though misplaced, of an isolated landlocked state). In Drigung also, the role of the labrang in ritual sponsorship was more directly involved, not only because Drigung Labrang was physically present but because it had an active role.

The Chiso Chanzoe System of Ritual Sponsorship in Drigung, Tibet.

In the word **chiso**, **chi** stands for **chipa**, which means communal, and **so** refers to nurturance. The chiso system contrasts with the ritual sponsorship in which the fund is collected individually through alms seeking. Chiso refers to a type of institutionally sponsored ritual fund consisting of land, grains, animals and other assets and is generally the main form of sponsorship in some monasteries. Drigung had two large monasteries, Drigung Thil and Yarigang (see Chapter 2). The system that I describe pertains to that which existed at the latter.

Yarigang previously had the same system as Thil, where the tongho was managed and provided by a nyerpa. The tongho was provided primarily through alms and the

nyerpa was known as lama, like Kabgye Lama, Banza Lama, Mani Lama, etc, after the name of the ritual. It is said that inflation, and false sponsors carrying false alms-seeking documents with forged seals, were the cause of the change to the institutionally sponsored chiso system in the Fire-dragon year(?). The change was carried out under the supervision of a representative from the **Tse-Yigtsang**, the ecclesiastic affairs section of the Central Government. The matter proceeded at a slow pace as the representative was said to be prone to "bribery" (a normal state of affairs among officials) and only sped up the work when he was well provided. Not only was land reorganized, but Drigung Labrang also sold many of its prized cups and other treasures to raise funds for the new chiso system.

It is said that the new chiso had funds in land measuring about 160 son khe.[8] The average yield was around six times. There were also about 2500 khe of grains, 150 yaks, 10 dzo, and about 100 sheep and goats. There were approximately 13 households who held land from the chiso and provided surplus labor on the chiso fields. These laborers were not sufficient and kinsmen

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[8] It is difficult to estimate the acreage since the inner **kang** measurement is different from the **kang** used by the state (with which I am familiar) for the purposes of taxation. See Chapter 2.

helped. Labor was also hired and paid in money. Tea, tsampa, or thukpa (porridge-like) was provided during **shojha** or morning tea. A more substantial meal was given during the late morning rest, about 9 a.m., called **tsathing. Nyingung jha** or afternoon tea was much lighter than the **gongjha** or evening tea and meal, around 5 p.m. **Kabchang** or barley ale was provided to more important workers like the plougher.[9]

Except for the 6 days of **Drubcho** ritual, for which Drigung Labrang provides the tongho, the Chiso Chanzoe (manager, sponsor) must provide for all monastic rituals for a period of 4 years. As sponsors, there are 4 monk households involved, 2 labrang and 2 **shaktsang.**[10] A list of these affluent "monkholds" are presented to Drigung Labrang by the dratsang and the two **kyamgons** make the final selection.

Wealthy "monkholds" are chosen because even with the "capital", the successful working of the fund

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[9] Estate holders were not obligated to provide sustenance in exchange for labor. The treatment of laborers depended on the specific type of labor, the landholder, availability of labor and the specific historical period and region concerned.

[10] We know that the labrang is a institution based on a lama. A shaktsang is based on monks. They are generally wealthy monks whose quarters and assets are shared and continued through time by their kin monk disciples. These monks are wealthy because they come from more affluent village households.

depends on the general wealth that could compensate even for a poor harvest. These monkholds have their relations to the village, in affluent families and patrons, land, animals, friends, dependent households and hired labor. They have access to enough agricultural implements, plough animals and labor for land and animals in the nomadic areas. Even if it were a poor year for crops and animals they have enough assets, or can easily get loans, to continue the sponsorship. KS was a member of a shaktsang who went on to become the Chiso Chanzoe in 1932. He described the sponsorship as one of great economic responsibility and said that he had never heard of a chiso that had any surplus.

The burden of sponsorship grew heavier as inflation set in. The Anglo-Japanese clashes closed the Burma road. Tibet turned down the American request for the shipment of arms but agreed to allow non-military supplies. The Americans sought another supply route for the Korean War. This sudden spurt in trade, along with the existing trade increases in the 1940's and the Chinese invasion and occupation in the 1950's, sent the price of commodities skyrocketing over a number of years. For example, in 1940 the price of 1 baga (about 3 kg) of tea was 15 sang, and by 1958 it was over 50 sang, an increase of over 400 percent. 1 khe of butter rose

from 5 sang in 1940 to 55 sang by 1956. The increasing price of commodities brought about changes in the chiso sponsorship system.

Theoretically, the system of 4 chiso remained. However, in practice, there were some monkholds that could not fulfill their share of the sponsorship and so Drigung Labrang requested others to share the responsibility. What, in fact, existed was a system of sponsorship that varied with the sponsor's ability and means. In other words, one labrang might be wealthy enough to sponsor its part, another only half, yet another only a quarter, and so on. By the late 1950's there were even as many as 16 monkholds involved in the chiso sponsorship.

An important question now needs to be asked. How and why did such a system manage to exist, given the amount of work and economic burden encountered by the sponsors? As is the case regarding many aspects of Tibet, one might assume that the reasons were purely religious ones, but the concept of accumulating merit was hardly in the minds of informants who were Chiso Chanzoe in Drigung.

One reason may be described as **ritual hegemony.**[11]

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[11] The concept of **hegemony**, as elaborated by Antonio Gramsci, **Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci**, ed. & trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey

There is a certain amount of coercion, in the sense that Drigung Labrang makes the final selection and requests various monkholds to become the chiso. The situation becomes nerve wrecking as awkwardness and difficulty grow with the thought of having to refuse a request from their highest sacred and secular power.[12]

Another reason revolves around the various long term benefits that the sponsor receives from going through the ordeal. These may be described as social status and privilege. Becoming a Chiso Chanzoe by

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Nowell Smith, (New York: International Publishers, 1971), has not been part of the discussion of ideology in the dissertation. Briefly, hegemony may be contrasted with the direct domination and coercive force of the state. It is concerned with ideas, values, worldview (the anthropologist's culture) and social relations and institutions of **civil society** (though, in actuality, state and civil society can no more be separated than can economics from ideology). These ideas and institutions form the fabric of society, an integrating mechanism, a guide for action. It is through these forms that the majority give consent to the elite, thus resulting in a form of domination. Gramsci believed that if the proletarians are to be successful, they need to harness such consent. In other words, integrate or use "culture".

In the Tibetan cultural areas, the laity have enormous faith and respect for the religious person, for religious ideas and institutions. But, the laity are also subjected and dependent tenants of the religious sphere, who pay exorbitant rents and accept high-interest-carrying loans in perpetuity. Those aspects of dependency and exploitation, regulated more by consent (through dominant values, ideas) than direct state force is hegemony. Consent through religious ideas and values is what I mean by ritual hegemony.

[12] See Chapter 2 on the aspects of labrang power and sacredness.

sponsoring rituals is a passport to social standing in the monastic community. Both the Chiso Chanzoe and his family, or patrons, gain much respect and prestige in the eyes of both the monastery and the village. Once he becomes a Chiso Chanzoe, he is free from all the work obligations in the monastery. He wears a red scarf and holds one of the highest and most respectable positions and sits high up in the seating order. He is entitled to be absent from the otherwise compulsory daily prayer gatherings. All food and money distributed during the prayer congregations are brought to his quarters. He also receives a double share of the food-money distribution, compared to an ordinary monk's single share. Finally, he is entitled to freedom of movement, to go and come whenever he likes. For example, KS came from a well to do trading family and became Chiso Chanzoe in 1932 at the age of 12. This allowed him to go trading with his father, which he did until he was 16. Thereafter, he continued to trade on his own all over Tibet and also in Kalimpong (India) until he received the post of secretary of Drigung Labrang at the young age of twenty two.

8

TRANSFORMATIONS ON THE LABRANG ESTATE

From all the preceding chapters, it would have be impossible not to notice that many changes have occurred in the labrang economy. Here, I wish to examine how changes in the labrang institution are shaped not only by the society's own antecedent historical forces but also by that of the actual practice and personal lives of the individuals and of the families as they encounter and respond to dominant forces of neighboring societies and of the world at large.

The Historical Context of Change

The historical section discussed the Tibetanization of Ladakh and the precapitalist system of agrarian economy and taxation in the semi-asiatic Ladakhi state. The rivalry between the British, the Dogra and the Sikhs in politics and the wool trade ultimately brought about the demise of the Ladakhi kingdom in 1846. In 1947, Ladakh

became a part of the Jammu and Kashmir state of India.

The post-independence period witnessed the Indo-Pakistan border war, the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950 and the Tibetan uprising and the flight of the Dalai Lama in 1959. For the first time in history, Indian and Chinese troops, in force, faced each other in Ladakh and al along the border. This resulted in the Sino-Indian border war in 1962.

By then, Ladakh had become fully militarized. Recruitment of soldiers, road building and related activities associated with the creation of a large military complex, brought in large scale wage labor. Additional wage labor was created through the general development of Ladakh under state supervision and also through the tax free policy to encourage Indian entrepreneurs, and the beginning of tourist trade in 1976. All this resulted in a abundance of money, the likes of which the Ladakhis had never witnessed in the lives. Against this background, the question of the transition of the labrang estate in discussed.

Drigung Labrang Estate: Organization in Historical Perspective

So far I have been talking about Drigung Labrang landed estate, but before Drigung Kyabgon came to Ladakh in 1978

it was known as the Depa Labrang (henceforth DPL).[1] Briefly, the DPL is that part of a Drigung monastery in Ladakh which holds and administers the largest numbers of agricultural fields, some animals, wooded and grass lots, and other assets. The two monks, today called Nyerpas of the Drigung Labrang, were called Depas. They were the temporary managers who looked after the DPL institution. Although the monks did not quite know what to make of it, I suggest that the use of the word, labrang, in Depa Labrang clearly refers to Drigung Labrang in Tibet.[2]

An examination of the manner of establishment of the DPL and its role suggests that it clearly functioned as the manifest felt presence of Drigung Labrang of Tibet. For

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[1] The word, **depa**, can refer to a king, chief, leader, etc.

[2] We know that Choje Kunga Drakpa built Kyilung monastery and other Drigung monasteries in the sixteenth century. Either during that time, or sometime thereafter, the system of sending representatives from Drigung to look after the Ladakh monasteries developed. There has not been any established line of either reincarnate or hereditary Drigung lamas in Ladakh. Those that have spent a considerable time in Ladakh, like the Tokden lineage, were part of the thirty lamas of Drigung known as, Drigung Bolap Sumchu, who had their own labrangs (residence and landed property) in Drigung, Tibet. Their presence in Ladakh was the result of their appointment as Choje, the representative of Drigung Labrang. For this reason, there could not have been a labrang other than with reference to Drigung Labrang. Even though the monks in charge of the estate today are called depa, and although the representative is known as Choje, there possible was a time when he was also referred to as the Depa. But no matter, we are still concerned with Drigung Labrang, the central authority.

example, at each of the four main monasteries in Ladakh, a DPL was created in order to provide for the representative who was expected to stay at each of the four monasteries respectively for a period of three months. At Kyilung, the Depa Labrang provided fields for the monks and sponsored the largest religious festival. It also performed other duties, to be described later. However, it was its provisioning role for the representative, the highest authority over the Drigung monasteries in Ladakh, which was its most outstanding attribute.

In the absence of any records, it is difficult to say what was the structure of the DPL hundreds of years ago. But from what information I have, it is most likely that sometime in the 16th century, when Choje Dema Kunga Drakpa built Kyilung monastery, the DPL came into being. There were DPL's in the three other monasteries of Sharchukhul, Shang, and Tharling. It also seems likely that since Kyilung was situated in the **Shung** (main or central) area of Ladakh, close to the capital, Leh, it was also considered to be the **Ma-gon** or "mother monastery". Although other monasteries ran their own affairs and were independent, the DPL at Kyilung received-as an annual "tribute" from the DPL at Sharchukhul-a number of goods (see below). From the Shang DPL, it received 40 khal (400 kg) of barley grain. From Tharling, Kyilung DPL received

nothing. Only the monastery-as-a-whole got eight monks to join them in the yearly mask dance during the Kabgyed ceremony. At the time of writing, it has now been 22 years for Sharchukhul, 14 for Tharling and 7 for Shang since they discontinued their tribute to Kyilung.

From the DPL's likely formation in the 16th century to 1978, the two monks who managed it were appointed by the Choje, with or without consultation with the dratsang. As previously mentioned, in 1978 Drigung Kyabgon came to Ladakh, where he temporarily set up his labrang. The choje and the monastery offered the DPL lands to him and he accepted on a temporary basis. When I arrived at Kyilung and during the course of my fieldwork, the DPL lands were under Drigung Labrang. The two depas were referred to as nyerpas. They were appointed by the labrang, not by the Choje or the dratsang as was the case previously.

Though changes in the administrative center have influenced the working of the estate, its general system of agricultural production and processes of distribution have not changed. In fact after Drigung Labrang entered the Ladakhi scene in 1978, we had an interesting situation resembling that of Drigung, Tibet in the existence of a large labrang institution wherein the lama, his organization, his assets (land, animals, etc.), his sect's monasteries, along with the village and its people, were

all interacting within the same social and natural environment. Of course, the politico-juridical aspects of precapitalist labor obligations is not present. Yet the obligations are present, though never as effectively, through what one may call ritual hegemony.[3]

Shifting Patterns of Estate Labor Relations

The Precapitalist Economy

The manner in which religious estates operated in precapitalist Ladakh was similar to the general Tibetan system. Chapter 3 described the organization of the Ladakhi state and its relation to land and taxation. In precapitalist times, the total village area of Kyilung was divided into two sections. These were the areas that belonged to the king, and those that were granted to the monastery. It seems most likely, from looking at today's household names like Lonchen (minister), Chirpon (stable-master) and others, that lands were granted to various persons for services they performed for the king. Presumably, these land holders leased out their property to a few families, who worked and provided services for them. This would be similar to granting estates to **shungshabs**, literally, **government servants** or state officials in Tibet. But in Ladakh it operated on a much

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[3] On hegemony, see Chapter 7, footnote 9.

smaller scale. It is doubtful whether there was more than one family in Kyilung which had what could be called an agricultural estate. Compared with Tibet there were only a handful of lay estates. The households that were bound to the lands that ultimately belonged to the king were, according to today's informants, called **gyalpo tralpa** or the king's taxpayers. Those bound to the monastic estates were called **gompeh tralpa** or monastery taxpayers.

Specifically, those who worked for the DPL were called **chunpas**. Though the word has a certain allusion to "people who watered or irrigated the field," its exact meaning still remains to be pin-pointed. In precapitalist times, there were said to be 13 chunpas or households who performed surplus labor, although more than twenty household names can be accounted for today. Among the 13 households, an alternating system existed in which 4 households worked for the DPL for a period of three years. From the 4 households only one member each had to come and work, as well as live in the DPL house which is situated in the village.

Since the precapitalist economy was based on land, the DPL was the focal point around which a large part of the village economy revolved. Aside from the chunpas, there were many other households which leased land and from which the DPL could always rely on for a source of labor.

Since the estate was and still is the largest landholder, there were many who came to request not only land leases, but also work positions, and loans of grain and money. In this patron-client like relationship, the estate was never short of a labor force. With the institutionalization of surplus labor, the ready availability of other forms of labor because of economic compulsion and ritual hegemony, the control of land and accumulation of agricultural exchange products, and the high interest rates charged (25% on grain and money and 50% of the net produce on land rents), ensured that the precapitalist estate was a thriving economic institution.

The New Economy and Changing Labor Relations

In Chapter 3 and in the beginning of this chapter, I recounted how the Ladakhi kingdom collapsed. The end of the kingdom marked the beginning of the end of the precapitalist relations of production, since the central enforcement power no longer existed. Yet most of the original production relations continued under the new Indian rulers. Exactly what elements disappeared or remained is difficult to say as there has not been any study done on the subject matter. But the critical factors that brought about substantial changes in the relations of production are those from 1950 onwards, especially the 1960's and the 1970's; events described in Chapter 3.

In this new economy, characterized by **elements** of capitalism, of wage labor, money and market economy, the estate was no longer the source of subsistence for many. Naturally, the importance of landed economy declined. With inflation, the importance of interest from land leases decreased. Loans were hardly ever taken as cash was available through the sale of labor. Personal records of a monk during his 3 year term as **shungnyer** (see page 89) shows that in 1968 there were 16 people who took 81 khal (810 kg) of barley grain as loan. In 1969, 3 loans were made totalling 23 khal (230 kg) and in 1970, 5 loans amounted to 15 khal (150 kg). Though the record's time span is too short to provide an accurate picture, it was the only available record to substantiate in any way the decline in loans. Even in the absence of records, we know from those who worked as **depa** that similar loan declines were true for the estate. This meant a further reduction in surplus labor. Fewer felt an obligation to work because of loans. Since 1969 the 4 **chunpas** had not been coming to work on a regular basis. Instead they came to work about 5 or 6 days in a month, continuing to do so until 1978. This was the general situation when I began my research in June 1980.

Because of the unreliable labor supply, which was needed daily by the labrang, part wage labor was introduced in

1979. Although sooner or later it had to occur, payment in cash was specifically brought about when the DPL was handed over to Drigung Labrang. The two depas who personally managed the Depa now became estate managers of Drigung Labrang. This, by and large, eliminated any personal responsibilities and possible economic gains for them as the estate was part of a institution. With the labrang there to absorb any losses, the two managed the estate in the most convenient way by introducing wage labor. At the same time labor was also paid in kind, land-use and clothes (see Chapter 5), indicating the estate's operation in the reality of two modes of production.

Part of the problem of labor lay in the fissioning of the unit of taxation, that is, the household, which was fraternal polyandrous. This had two direct bearings on the labor supply of the estate. The first was the breakdown of many of the **chunpa** households which performed surplus labor. Today there are about 22 chunpa households. The complications of dividing the work-in a more-or-less broken down system of one member from 4 households providing labor for 3 years-when some are working all day elsewhere, while others are absent from the village are enormous. Second, the ability of other households to provide labor was diminished because the households themselves had lost members. The original household

members must now work harder, and those who had separated became wage earners, and thus time was limited for both to provide labor for the estate.

The break-up of the labor-supplying household was not an automatic response to the new economic opportunities. Fraternal polyandry may well be the main system of marriage in the Tibetan cultural area. In Ladakh too, it is the preferential form.[4] In this system two or more brothers share a wife and live as one household along with their sons and their wife and children. It is a system that had developed given the need to preserve the limited amount of arable land, as divisions over generations would result in not possessing any viable land. Divisions were also quite impossible as the state and estate-holders held the **household** responsible for surplus labor and other taxes which were facilitated by the communal pooling of labor. At the same time, living together provided security and a better standard of living given the predominance of precapitalist economy and the availability of members if the household wanted to engage in trade.

On the other hand, communal existence had its own internal contradictions. It curtailed individuality because communal needs were primary. This restriction had

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[4] For a discussion of polyandry in Ladakh and Tibet see Petros, Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, **A Study of Polyandry** (The Hague: Mouton, 1963).

the greatest effect on the younger brothers, who had to bow to seniority in Tibet, and seniority and absolute primogenitary inheritance in Ladakh. The younger brothers lived a psychologically deprived and socially servile existence (this does not mean that they walked with bowed heads and in a state of depression). Problems of sexual access could be a problem with three or more brothers. In many cases there was a large gap in the age between the younger brother(s) and the wife. But there wasn't much choice for the younger brothers. To leave the household meant to have no land in a landed economy, to have no funds for trading, and therefore, to live in poverty. Individualism and poverty were no match for restriction, prosperity and cultural norms of communal existence and deference to elders.[5]

But in the new economy of wage labor the younger brothers can now afford their own wives and family, and live without the contradictions of the polyandrous unit. The new economy does not come alone, but ushers in its own complex social forms. The secularism and democratic ideals of India, adopted from its colonial master have legally

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[5] Problems of age differences between spouses, younger brother's choice between poverty and security, and the decrease in polyandry with greater economic alternatives has been briefly discussed by Melvyn C. Goldstein, "Fraternal Polyandry and Fertility in a High Himalayan Valley in Northwest Nepal" **Human Ecology** 4: 223-233.

abolished polyandry and promulgated equal inheritance for all persons. It is said that the youngest daughter can demand an equal share of property, something that would totally amuse the Ladakhis.[6] As usual, such legal measures have not replaced the cultural stipulations in most of Ladakh, although younger brothers have been known to use the courts for adjudication of landed inheritance in more urban settings. The young today frown upon polyandry as something negative from the past and believe in love marriages. They frequent the cinema hall where they are showered with the secularized propaganda of Hindi films, with their constant themes of anti-caste, anti-class and anti-arranged marriages packaged with plenty of serenades and James Bond action.

The Buddhist Association and certain speakers on Radio Leh, realizing that polyandry restricts population growth, have also expressed anti-polyandry sentiments for political reasons. Ladakh is a part of the Indian democracy with a one man-one vote. It is also ethnically

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[6] Although it is believed that all children can inherit property, the Kashmir Maharaja's 1943 "The Ladakh Buddhist Succession to Property Act" in **Jammu and Kashmir Laws**, Vol.4 (Jammu: Ranbir Govt. Press, 1973), p. 933-34., states that all **sons** may inherit equal shares. Regarding polyandry, "The Buddhists' Polyandrous Marriages Prohibition Act" in **Jammu and Kashmir Laws**, Vol.3 (Srinagar: Govt. Press, 1972), p. 878-881; was instituted in 1941.

divided between the Buddhist and the Muslims. Politically, the Buddhists are challenged, not by a one man-one wife system, but by a one man-two wives system. The polygynous Muslims have greatly increased their population and they have encroached on Buddhist lands, at the same time as they have increased their voting and political powers. The complex interaction of all these various factors have resulted in the breakup of the village household which was the main source of labor for the labrang estate.

The Labrang Estate: Further Erosions

Aside from the problems of labor there are other reasons, not altogether unrelated, that have transformed the estate from a prestigious and prosperous institution to one that is less profitable, less viable and almost a burden.

Reduction in the Estate Production Fund

The breakdown of the precapitalist taxation and transportation system, the new economy, and the personal politics of the representative (to be elaborated later), have resulted in the collapse of the tributary system that the estate at Kyilung traditionally enjoyed from the Depa Labrang at Sharchukhul monastery, situated in the semi-nomadic area near Changthang. What this means is that the total production fund of the estate once was much larger

than today.

In the 5th month of the Ladakhi calendar, one depa from Kyilung goes to Sharchukhul to check and make the accounts. He stays there for a whole month, during which the Sharchukhul Depa provides lodging and food. In the 9th month, he returns to Sharchukhul to collect 25 sheep and goats, 40 khal (400 kg) of salt, and plenty of butter and wool. The goods are transported through the corvee labor system to Sakti, where another taxpayer delivers the goods to Kyilung. Besides the other goods, the discontinuation of the tributary relations has culminated primarily in a reduction in the number of animals. Around 1955 the estate had 100 sheep and goats, six dzo (cross between yak and cow) and a good number of donkeys and cows. Compare this with the reduced numbers in today's production fund (page 106).

Animals were important not only for the general labrang consumption of meat, but also for the monk community- especially during the many days of ritual sponsorship. The blood and entrails of 13 female goats were also needed for yearly rituals, as well as goat skins for the labrang workers to wear, and the use of animals for ploughing and transportation. The cessation of the tributary goods has not only meant reduction in the number of animals, but it has contributed its share to the increasing dependency on

the outside market for substitute goods.

Responses to the New Economy

Most people welcomed the new economy and this positive response has added to the increasing problems on the estate. Except for the landholders, the general population welcomed the cash economy. Many who were dispossessed of any landed property, and who had lived so long in deprivation, embraced the change. There was an undercurrent of suppressed feelings of getting even, and a message that-even if they did not have any land or had only meager amounts-today they could work and earn money and live a decent life, and not depend on the landholders. This also translated to the fact-given the lack of any State coercion, why should they work for these landholders?

Individually, that is, personally speaking, the monks have also been very content with the change. They speak about the easy availability of foodstuffs, clothing, and all manner of consumer goods; of riding in a bus rather than walking for hours to the main market center, Leh. Their positive attitude to the new society obviously means that they cannot very well deny the same for others. Yet it has been the other's ready adoption of the new economy that has been a major reason for the decline in the estate

economy and monastery in general. With the decline in the estate, the monks have had a rather negative attitude towards it. Every monk, by virtue of his membership in the community, must serve as **depa** of the labrang estate for a period of 3 years. With the problems of getting labor and the impoverishment of the estate through increasing cash expenditures, no one looked forward to the day when it would be his turn to manage the estate. With the saturation of money among the village households and the break-up of the polyandrous units into numerous smaller ones, there has been increased demand for household rituals. This has resulted in a new source of income for the monks and their devoting about 75% of their activities to performing these rituals (see Chapter 3). This, and other additional sources of income, have meant that the previously important fields, which the monks held from the labrang as a **phoshing** or "salary field" has now turned out to be less important for their sustenance. This translates into the decreasing importance of the labrang for them personally, and an additional factor shaping their negative image of the estate.

The monks complain about the problems of hiring people to work. They say that the laborers criticize them no matter how hard they try. They say that the workers complain about how bad the barley ale (chang) is and how

inadequate the food is, even though it is not. One monk said that it was better to "fold one's ears" which meant, not to listen to the bickering. Another spoke of the effort and diplomacy that is constantly needed today to persuade the workers into coming to do chores for the estate. Today, the monks see the management of the estate as hard work for them at a time when they are immersed in a lavish economy and a more comfortable lifestyle in contrast to the limited economy and generally rugged life of the bygone era.

When I enquired about their thoughts on the possible reorganization of the estate at Tharling monastery, they were quick to point out that, as long as it still resulted in managing it, the work was too difficult. They were enthusiastic about the system adopted by another monastery in the Leh area. That monastery had sold all its grains and animals and put the money in the bank. All the lands were leased out, and all they had to do was to collect the interest. They felt that this was the best thing to do, and naturally, it also entailed the least work. It did not occur to them to question the lessons learned previously, where inflation had made cash reserves and interest collection in cash unworthy. Their attitude was an important factor that continued to threaten the viability of the estate.

Increasing Dependency on Market Goods

The dominance of the market economy and the positive responses to the new economy have created new consumer habits. Though the Ladakhis can be totally self sufficient, this is not the case today. Clothes, stove, fuel, cooking utensils, as well as other non-essential goods are bought on the market. Accompanying this dependency, based on the fact that it is easier to buy than make them, there is also the pressure to acquire the habits of the dominant Indian culture. To give an example of food, today it is considered better to offer rice than the more nutritious barley flour, sweet tea rather than butter tea, and the army ration, Triple X rum, rather than barley ale. Even the mode of cooking has changed with the use of curry spices.

For the labrang estate, the new consumerism has given rise to the large expenses incurred in the acquisition of products from the market. It has also generated a growing demand by the workers to be paid in cash so that they can buy market goods. This is significant since the estate is primarily a precapitalist landed economic institution, unable to generate substantial monetary revenue. Whatever it does generate is mostly cancelled out by the great expenditure on goods from the market, increased payment in cash for estate labor and for most services in the larger

society. Taking a hypothetical example, in 1980, the labrang estate received 671 Khal from the fields it planted, and 640 Khal and 12 Tre from the rental of land. In cash, with 1 Khal costing Rs.20, this amounts to Rs. 26,412. Adding an estimated Rs.8000 from the sale of other products (mainly fodder), there is a total production of Rs.34,412. For consumption, the estate used 492 Khal and 15 Tre (peas 16, barley (type sowa) 23/15, wheat 133, barley (type sumbor) 173, barley 147) or Rs. 9,855. All other cash expenditure amounted to Rs. 21,150, for a total of Rs.31,005. Subtracting this from the total production leaves a net income of only Rs.3,400. Even if the figures were to increase a couple of thousand rupees, it is still an insignificant sum in light of the large expenditure and income of the main labrang unit (see Chapter 6). It is extremely important to realize that **the estate income becomes insignificant** for only **one reason**-its operation in a market and cash economy. In its previous precapitalist economy, the more than 1,311 Khal (14.4 tons) produced in 1980 is indicative of a large landed estate. Yet the estate in precapitalist times was much larger. As the dominant and focal economic unit of the village, with its 25% interest in grains and some loans, 50% share of the net produce of rental lands, the numerous fields under cultivation through compulsory labor obligations, the

estate was a thriving economy. But today its viability is threatened.

At this moment there are important factors regarding the politics of leadership in the era of the new economy that are essential to understanding the transformation of the estate.

The Politics of Leadership in the Era of the New Economy

An important reason for changes in the estate was to curb the authority of the Choje, the Drigung Labrang representative (see Chapter 4), whose actions were in opposition to the institutional needs of the monastery.

The Representative: Economic Gain and the Abuse of Authority

Short of imputing psychological personality characteristics to the representative, there are two other contexts within which the misuse of power occurred. Firstly, with the obliteration of Drigung monasteries in Tibet by the Chinese, there was no higher authority above the representative among Drigung monasteries in Ladakh. For almost twenty years, the representative had a free hand to do whatever he pleased. Secondly, the new economy contributed to the large influx of money brought about through personal profiteering, corruption and general misuse of power.

The representative was always a lama who was part of Drigung monasteries in Tibet. His term was for 3 years, although he could agree to stay on longer. Historically, then, this lama **never** possessed any property in Ladakh. The various Depa Labrang estates were there mainly to support him during his term in Ladakh. However, over the years the present representative began a gradual accumulation of land. On the extinction of a family, some land was handed over to the monastery. Since it was presented through the representative, he kept it for himself. Moreover, he took a substantial area from the communal land belonging to the monastery for grass (fodder), a wooded lot, and some empty lands. Gradually he acquired more arable land.

In addition to land, he used his authority to accumulate money. Over the years he had the opportunity to lease a number of monastery lands on the basis of the permanent system (in this system the amount the lessee paid depended on the agreement). As the lands were communal, the proceeds would go to the monastery. The individual lessor could profit by making the lease and the amount of interest conditional upon how much money was given to him.[7] The larger the sum of money presented, the lesser

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[7] In the Tibetan cultural area a presentation of scarf and money is made to lamas when seeking audience. It is also presented to anyone when one wants to request for

the interest return could be arranged. The money went into the personal pocket of the lessor and the monastery received only the paltry interest return. This system was effectively used by the representative, and fields leased on this system-with the interest payable in cash-generally resulted in the virtual loss of those fields when inflation grew and the interest became unworthy of collection.

Another way the representative misused his authority was to appoint older monks, others he did not like, and those well off to tasks in the monastery that were difficult. Almost everyone was well aware that he could get out of such a position if he requested leave by the customary offering of a scarf and some money, the latter amounting to much as a few thousand rupees. This affair had come into the open once at a meeting at Tharling monastery when the representative had appointed a monk, Konchok, to the difficult position of working as depa of the labrang estate at Tharling. Konchok used to be a servant of the representative and had been so close to him that he had even gone on a nighttime arson raid, on the residence of the representative's political opponent. Now the relationship had turned sour. At the meeting Konchok stood up and said that, since the representative had previously

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something. This could easily take the form of "bribery".

set similar precedents, he now would like to offer Rs.4,000 and request leave of the position as depa. Caught off guard and quite astonished the representative made an abrupt nonsensical remark that he would like to pay Rs.10,000 and take leave of his own position.

He had also made money through the sale of monastery items, like paintings and statues, which were much sought after by art dealers and their go-betweens.

Declining Support for the Representative

There were a number of incidents and factors which contributed to the overall picture of the representative as a less than honorable person and to the growth of discontent with him. These factors were critical to the monk's decision and actions that ran counter to the authority and personal interests of the representative. Instead, the monks supported the actions of Drigung Kyabgon which were geared to the furtherance of monastic institutional objectives.

Shortly after the representative arrived from Tibet, in 1960, his servant approached the two depas who managed the estate at Kyilung, requesting that a number of horses be boarded. They replied that it was customary to board only three. This incident sowed the seeds of the problem of inventory between the outgoing managers and the incoming ones, the latter, in this instance, being the

representative himself. Ultimately, the ill feelings ended with the two depas being removed from the monastic community. This automatically alienated their supporters, friends and kin in the monastery and the village. The matter was settled only after the two monks were accepted back into the monastery. However, the divisions and the ill feelings only laid dormant and were to rise up during subsequent incident.

The monastic disciplinarian, the **gyeskos**, reprimanded a younger monk for not attending the prayer congregation (tsog) and remaining instead in his quarters. He grasped a stick and began beating the young monk. This would have been perfectly acceptable in Tibet or earlier in Ladakh, but with the withering away of authoritarian ways, the young monk retaliated. A scuffle ensued. A few monks joined in and one of them pulled a knife on the gyeskos. Although the immediate incident ended without any injuries, the monks later formed two sides-one supporting the gyeskos and the other, the young monk. To a large extent, the split was based on earlier divisions between the supporters of the two depas who now took the side of the young monk, or of the representative. Saying that the monastery was no good, the young monk supporters wanted to leave the monastic community and began building a new monastery adjacent to the existing one. The monks kin and

friends also got involved in the conflict and the village itself became split on the basis of the two sides. Time had healed the wounds, and when I was there, there was only one monastery, although enough scars were left to recall the incident that had happened almost a decade ago.

Incidently, the representative managed the estate for seven years rather than the usual three. At the end of his term, the more than 2000 Khal, which was part of the original production fund was accounted for, but the 8 units comprising 1 khal were measured with a smaller measuring unit called norbuma chungwa rather than the normal large one, the norbuma chewa. The substantial difference further reduced the production fund and contributed its share towards the weakening of the estate economy.

Previously, I noted the discontinuations in the system of the estate collecting tributary goods from Sharchukhul monastery, and the system of sending eight monks from Tharling monastery to Kyilung during the Ḳabgyed ceremony. The cessation of goods had added to the decline of the estate economy, but the two discontinuations affected the monk's pride, image, and claim of Kyilung being the Magon or "mother monastery" of all Drigung monasteries in Ladakh. Now they were left without any solid basis to substantiate their claim. As the discontinuations were

sanctioned by the representative, it was another point to add to their growing list of grievances against the representative.

All the above reasons, and more, to be discussed later, have helped shape the monk's perception of the representative as a bit more than an ordinary lama, a mere mortal, so to speak. One should recall here the analogy of the magnificence of a civilization that now survives but only as a shadow of its former splendor. To elaborate, when the representative came to Ladakh after his appointment in 1957, he was not only the representative of the famous and wealthy Drigung Labrang, but he was a young reincarnate, well learned for his age. His predecessor was a relative of the Ladakhi royal family, and his labrang was well known and quite well off in Drigung, Tibet. He was also a Ladakhi which made the people in Kyilung proud. He was one of the two most important religious and political figures in Ladakh.

As the years passed, he did not fare well politically (state and national politics). He switched from the Congress Party to the Janata, and back to the Congress depending on money and the perceived advantages of the immediate moment. He did not have a political conviction or program, but was used-like other lamas- by the state and national political parties, because they knew well

that lamas held a key to the voter's conscience.

It is difficult to say whether any of the above reasons were critical to the gradual loss of his political influence; it only matters here that he did lose it. His latest political involvement, which took place towards the end of my fieldwork in 1981, was to lead a demonstration for greater autonomy for Ladakh. The demonstration ended at the District Commissioner's Office (henceforth DCO). The representative and some monks, joined by others, began throwing stones at the District Superintendent of Police (hereafter DSP) and his officers, who were guarding the DCO. The representative's stone hit the DSP, whereupon his officers used their truncheons on the representative. Part of the DCO was burned down. Although the representative had been used by another lama, he was put on the spot because, when enquiries began, it looked as if the other lama had nothing to do with the incident since he was said to have been in meditation for quite sometime.

The decline in the representative's image, power and status in the larger society, together with his corrupt actions at the monastery were the reasons for his tarnished image among the monks and the people at Kyilung. This blighted image further diminished when he became involved with a woman (he is now married-with children-but has not disrobed). Not only was this against Drigung

regulations but he was also a reincarnate lama who had taken the **gelong** vows; the higher of two vows monks generally take. With his family he resides mainly in Leh in his residence built on monastic land which used to be the "salary-field" of another monk. Part of the residential compound is rented out. He has another residence at Kyilung which is also built on monastic land. This was the first time that a Drigung representative married and resided outside of the monastic compound. His entry into the world of earthly existence was, no doubt, a reason for the accumulation of wealth at the expense of the monastery.

Despite their discontent, there was little the monks could do except murmur. The representative still controlled the monastery, their appointment to positions, allocation of their quarters, and many other aspects of their lives. At the same time, he had taught and initiated many monks and one does not hold ill thoughts or rebel against one's own lama. Being a lama, he was a sacred person and they were just plain monks. There were no other Drigung lamas because none were recognized, which is a mystical way of saying that he did not make any. As one monk put it, "In the old days the representatives never had any land of their own, not even the size of your tape recorder. Now the **dratsang** cannot say please give back the

lands. We cannot say anything because we are outmatched, as it is a meeting between sky and earth". In other words, his status was too high to dare even mention such a matter. But a new situation, (the establishment of Drigung Labrang in Ladakh) was to arise which would change all that.

Drigung Kyabgon and the Reorganization of the Estate

As he spent more time in Ladakh, Drigung Kyabgon became totally familiar with the situation of the representative. Theoretically, there was no need for a representative, now that Drigung Kyabgon was personally in Ladakh. There was a joke among some of the representative's political colleagues, who are used to various postings, that since Kyabgon had arrived, the representative might get a posting at a Drigung monastery in South India. Kyabgon primarily wanted the representative to stay on because he had plans to build and reside in his own center in another part of India. Besides the representative was a Ladakhi, and there were no other Ladakhi lamas to replace him. He also had controlled the monks and monasteries for almost twenty years. In contrast Kyabgon was a Tibetan, he had never before been in Ladakh, having just arrived. Initially he was not sure of his own base of support, nor of that of the representative. Further, he felt that he

would have better control over the latter if he were part of the monastery, rather than replacing him or allowing him to resign. The representative's power was curtailed later through the reorganisation of the estate and the establishment of communal control. This will be elaborated upon later. For now, I shall look at the difficulties in the sponsorship of rituals, their effect on the recruitment of monks, and Kyabgon's personal reasons for reorganization, for they all are integral to understanding the changes on labrang estate. The material here is taken not only from Kyilung, but also from Tharling monastery where I collected some comparative data.

Problems of Ritual Sponsorship and the Reorganisation of the Estate at Tharling Monastery

The problem of the sponsorship of rituals affect both the individual sponsorship and the institutional one. Institutionally, the fund for ritual sponsorship, which came from the landed estates, was established in precapitalist times when commodities were cheap. This capital has remained constant while inflation has skyrocketed. Thus, during the 1930's, one could buy a whole sheep or goat for about 2 Rupees, whereas today, one kilo of mutton costs Rs.30. The new economy of wage labor and the other elements of capitalism have affected the precapitalist surplus labor on the estates. Now hardly

anyone takes loans from the monasteries. There is also the fact that historically, one of the estate's main roles primarily was to support the representative. In precapitalist times, travel was by horseback. Even within Ladakh trips took much time and a journey to Tibet required 2 to 3 months. The representative always had servants accompanying him. He and his entourage, as well as their horses, had to be supported while in Ladakh. All this had to be provided by the Depa Labrang estate. Today, the representative has his private jeep and there are buses and taxis available. No trip need be made to Tibet. Moreover, the representative now has his own private labrang. Thus, there really is no need for the Depa Labrang to support him.

Similar problems attend the individual sponsorship of rituals. The burden of sponsorship is even heavier than at Kyilung, because there are more rituals individually sponsored. For any ritual, there always is great pressure to provide more than adequately. When the monk needs help, he has nobody to turn to except his family and kin. They do not want everybody talking about the inadequate sponsorship their monk son gave. This puts greater financial burden on the family and is one of the main reasons why many do not want to send their sons into the monastery. At the same time, a son in the army or road

construction translate to Rs.600 a month, an asset rather than a burden. There are fewer monks recruited into the monasteries these days. Since the ritual sponsorship is performed in turns, no sooner has he served then it is time for the monks to go through the whole burden of sponsorship again.

The continuing non-viability of the estates and the burden of sponsorship with its effect on recruitment, were some reasons why the Labrang Depa estate and the Chiso Depa estate (the monastic community estate) were merged. Thus, they would jointly bear the burden of sponsorship, thereby alleviating the heavy responsibility of the monks. Critical to this change was the fact that Kyabgon wanted the modifications. Moreover he did not like the idea of monks spending most of their time in their villages performing household rituals. He wanted each senior monk to look after a novice and felt that this would not be a burden, since the ritual sponsorship was now institutionalized. The monks agreed to keep novices. However, because I left the field I cannot ascertain how successful this had been, though I remain more a pessimist than an optimist.

The reorganization was not a simple matter. About that same time, the representative wanted to manage the Depa Labrang because it was more profitable than the estate at

Kyilung (mainly thanks to the greater number of animals). This clearly indicated that he did not want any changes. Meanwhile, Kyabgon wanted the monks to decide for themselves at a meeting. The representative was confident that none of the monks would say anything against him in public and this was true. But, as the meeting wore on, what he did not expect was that Kyabgon would make the monks vote through a secret ballot!

When the votes were in, 80% wanted the two estates joined as one to take responsibility for the sponsorship of rituals. The 20% who opposed the change were mostly elder monks, who had already completed their share of sponsorship and feared that they would be asked to contribute their share of the work in this new reform. They were quite correct to think so.

It was agreed that each **khamtsen**[8] of Tharling would be responsible in turn for managing the economics of the rituals. But when the time actually arrived for the khamtsen to take responsibility they could not come up with the 4 monks to serve as managers of the estates. Some of the senior monks, who had already completed their sponsorship obligations did not want to work. Others had previously paid money to the representative so that they

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[8] A sub-unit of a dratsang consisting of monks that came from the same geographical area, village or region.

would be exempt from the work obligations. Some monks were too old, others too young, and some khamtsen were too small. So the khamtsen proposal died out. It was later decided that the most suitable four monks would be chosen and once chosen, they either worked or got thrown out of the monk community.

The Reorganization of the Labrang Estate at Kyilung

I was fortunate to be able to study the virtually intact age-old Depa Labrang estate which operated from 1979 to 1981 as Drigung Labrang. I was fortunate because three months after I left the old system was dismantled and reorganized. I had another stroke of luck when Kyabgon visited home in Kalimpong and brought along as one of his attendants a friend of mine (some like to say "informant") who had taught me much about all aspects of the monastery. He informed me about the changes.

When I was at Kyilung, there were subtle communications from the monks and from the monastic patrons at Kyilung and in the Leh area. These subtle communications must be interpreted as strong ones given the cultural impropriety and awkwardness of direct communications with such a high lama as Kyabgon, the head of their sect. There was also the difficult political situation with the representative who did not want any changes. The various communications

and feelings, were of the order that something should be done; that the way the **shung** (main or central part of the monastery) was operating was not quite right. With the reorganization already having taken place at Tharling, there was a definite feeling on the part of Kyabgon that he should do something. But I did not expect the changes to come so soon.

There were three meetings to discuss the estate reorganisation. At the first meeting, Kyabgon spoke of how he had accepted the estate on a temporary basis, when it was presented to him by the representative and the monks at the time he arrived in Ladakh in 1978. He spoke of the increasing non-viability of the estate and the hardship for the monks managing it. He told them that he wanted more monks in the monastery, that the laity should contribute towards this end, and that the monks should keep novices. He said that he did not want to keep the estate for himself but instead wanted it to be used for the sponsorship of rituals. This would alleviate the burden of individual monk sponsorship and create incentives for the recruitment of novices. The meeting was attended by all the monks, the representative, the village headman, and prominent lay patrons of Kyilung and Leh areas. A second meeting took place in which an inventory was made of all the items of the estate. The final meeting

was on the execution of the reorganization plan.

To elaborate, since Kyabgon did not want to keep the estate, a new organization was formed which was based on rather western lines of organization. A committee was formed with Kyabgon as president, and the representative as vice-president. There were two secretaries, one lay and one monk. Other members included the 4 heads of the monastic community, two prominent monks, and two wealthy lay patrons. Any implementation would require the various signatories. This had the effect of nullifying the total authority previously enjoyed by the representative (the organization at Tharling had had the same effect on the representative). Now the monks and the monastery were quite safe from his manipulations. At the same time, prominent lay members were brought into direct participation in monastic affairs. It was hoped that this would increase the support for the monasteries in case someday the state government confiscated the religious estates for land redistribution in democratic India. My personal view is that with greater transformation in social and ideological forms, it will be the laity who will be actively involved in wresting land away from the monasteries. After the inventory at the second meeting, the production fund (see Chapter 5) of the estate was sold. The animals brought in Rs.13,000, and the various

grains, over Rs.40,000. The money was put in the bank under the name of Drigung Kyabgon and two members. Most of the land was leased out on the two-fold system, at an interest rate of 50% of the net crop produce (see Chapter 5). The allocation of land leases were made through a lottery system so that land would not concentrate in the hands of the prominent households. It was arranged that the lessee would plant barley for one year and wheat for another. Barley was the staple food and it fetched a better price, while wheat, though consumed less, yielded more grass for sale of fodder. Since everybody insisted that it was inconceivable that Kyabgon should remain without anything, about 70 Khal (8.75 acres) of agricultural land at Taru (near Kyilung), a large wooded lot, and most of the grass lot was set aside for Drigung Labrang. A monk would be appointed to manage these assets and he also would be provided with a field.

The previous responsibilities of the estate for the sponsorship of rituals would be taken over by the committee, though with modifications. In regard to the affairs of the monastery, it was agreed by all that 22 young boys would become novices.[9] I was told that 10 have already entered the monastery.

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[9] If the 22 boys do become monks, this would mean a 63% increase in the monk population at Kyilung monastery.

The burden of the **kongsha tongbo**,[10] the expenses involved in the ritual sponsorship when young boys become independent adults, was abolished. Now, at age 15, they need only provide tea for the monk congregation and they will be entitled to their own quarters and their own agricultural field.

In this way, faced with the problems of the successful reproduction of the primarily precapitalist landed estates in an era dominated by **elements** of a capitalist mode of production, the estates were reorganized to relieve the monks of the burden of sponsorship of rituals, thereby creating an atmosphere for new recruitment and the reproduction of certain values that have withered over the years.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has been a study of the political and mainly economic aspects of a Tibetan monastic institution. It examined the processes of production, reproduction and transformation on one type of a religious institution known as the **labrang** and discussed the relationship between ideology and economy.

The Labrang

Large labrangs, with which I am mainly concerned, are institutions or corporations that are centered around a lama, having sacred charismatic qualities and economic wealth and political power. The labrang institution is a dominant feature that permeates societies of the Tibetan cultural area, whether it be at the level of the village, monastery, provinces or the nation.

Historically, since the collapse of the Tibetan monarchy in the 9th century, various monastic powers centered around a labrang have competed for the leadership of the Tibetan polity. The defeat of Drigung in 1287 paved the

way for the Sakyas, who ruled Tibet for about 75 years. They were followed by the Phamodrupas in the 14th century, the Karmapas and the Tsang rulers in the latter part of the 15th century. Finally, in 1642, the Dalai lama ruled Tibet. His labrang, Ganden Phodrang, became the official name of the Tibetan government and the focus around which a centralized Asiatic state and bureaucracy gradually emerged. Other previously competing monastic powers now lived under this state and paid taxes to it. One such monastic power was Drigung Labrang.

Drigung Labrang: Production Relations and Change on the Estate.

The literature on Tibetan society and religion has always been overburdened with religious philosophy or ideas. I believe that it is impossible to comprehend the role of Tibetan Buddhism in society without a proper understanding of the social relations of production. Marx was very much correct when he remarked that "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their social existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness".

Humans must fulfill their biological and social needs. This means that they have to produce in order to survive and to reproduce themselves. For this reason, subsistence activities are primary. As humans fulfill their production

needs, new needs arise. In the process of fulfilling their needs, unintended results, like the division of labor and unequal access to resources emerge. These structures gradually come to dominate the individual who now finds his position strictly defined.

Much of human history has been shaped by such dominant structures of the production process, like that of master and slave, state and peasant taxpayer, lord and serf, bourgeois and proletariat. Monasteries and labrangs in the Tibetan cultural areas are part and parcel of such structures. In fact, they are the dominant structures (state, estate holder), the owners of the means of production, on whose lands live a large number of dependent peasants who provide surplus labor. For this reason, the dissertation has concentrated on the production relations and economics of Drigung Labrang and how the system has changed over time.

The previous chapters showed that Drigung, with the labrang as its ruler, was one of the 13 virtually independent Tibetan religious powers during the 13th century. Unfortunately, there are no studies to help us understand the production relations at that time. However, I briefly described the production relations during the first half of this century with regard to the labrang's attached peasants and the Asiatic state above. Again, lack

of data has not permitted me to go any further. Therefore, the bulk of the dissertation analyzed a similar- yet other-phase of Drigung Labrang; that of its religious estate in the social economic formation of Ladakh mainly from around 1960-1981. There were actually two modes of production operating at the same time.

In regard to the precapitalist economy, I described the religious estate in relation to the semi-asiatic kingdom and its system of taxation, which continues even today though in very rudimentary forms. I examined the system of production, the amount of land held by the estate, the way it was physically organized, the kind and quantity of crops planted, the system of land lease and the loan interest. I looked at how much was produced, how much money was earned, at the same time describing the consumption and expenditure patterns. Attention to the organization of production included how the labrang administered the estate, recruited estate managers from the monastic community and how surplus labor was organized, recruited and compensated.

Concerning change on the labrang estate, the Marxist debate on whether market forces external to feudalism or internal contradictions (e.g. class conflict) within feudalism were responsible for the collapse of feudal society is relevant, though not complete. The historical

section noted the conquest of Ladakh by the kings of Jammu. That event, which later led to the incorporation of Ladakh as part of Jammu and Kashmir, must be regarded as the starting point of the end of the kingdom and its precapitalist land and taxation system. Religious estates in Ladakh had been a part of this economy.

However, the prime cause of the transformational aspects of what was once a primarily precapitalist estate, was the introduction and development of the forces of production belonging to a different mode of production. These forces were some elements of capitalism of greater India, primarily that of wage labor resulting mainly from the creation of a huge military complex, which in turn, rested on the Indo-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir, the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950 and the ensuing Sino-Indian border war in 1962. Aside from the historical section, Chapter 8, on estate reorganization and change, contained the details.

Chapter 8 also chronicled the internal responses of certain people to the new economy. The contradictions within the precapitalist relations grew. Those who did not even have usufructory land were now able to earn money and not depend on the estate. Further contradictions, such as the inequality in residential units, arose as younger brothers founded new residential units based on wage

labor, thereby undermining the estate's main labor supplying unit, as households were the main unit of precapitalist taxation. The abundant supply of money brought corruption to the main authority and a breakdown of certain traditional ways of the monastery. This, and the need to restore authority by the head of the sect, led to further changes in the estate organization. These factors and many more, such as newer values, politics, perceptions, and the web of internal subjectivity and external objective economic structures, preoccupied the chapter on estate transformation.

Ideology, Religion and the Reproduction of the Relations of Production

Human existence and activity (praxis) in the material, physical and social contexts, of which production is the core, is not only an essential element in the analysis of monastic and labrang structures, but it is also the foundation on which ideology arises.

We saw how human production needs led to the division of labor and other objectified social structures that dominated individuals. In Ladakh and Tibet, the social position of monastic and secular estate holders and their peasants were legally defined and fixed for life. Since humans must live in such dominating contradictions of the production process, they reflect on the contradictions and

try to understand them. They try to solve the contradictions in their minds. The attempted solution only ends up in concealing the contradictions since, in reality (in practice), they cannot be solved. As production is class-based, the concealment serves the interest of the dominant class. By hiding the real or true relations of domination and surplus appropriation and by presenting these relations in an acceptable and harmonious fashion, ideology helps to reproduce and perpetuate the social relations of domination and subordination.

In the realities of production relations at Kyilung, there is a class of monks who appropriate the surplus from a class of direct producers. This group controls most of the land in the village and collects anywhere from 50 to 25% interest on land leases and loans. Tremendous amounts of food and other ritual expenses are expended by the monks on the festivities. In Ladakh and in Tibet, the unequal access to resources between the non-producing monks and the peasants was legally defined and politically enforced. The objectified structures of contradiction in the production relations towered over the individuals, defining their very position and life, and leaving them powerless to do anything about it.

The attempt to understand the contradictions, to come to terms with them consciously, since it is not possible in

practice leads to a different view of reality. The peasants see the relations between the monks and the laity as fulfilling the needs of each other in an equal exchange. To have monks and a monastery, is considered lucky and meritorious. To support monks is a moral duty. By supporting them, the people become the patrons and receive merit, the accumulation of which, leads them further on the road to better rebirths. By contributing to a ritual fund or by sponsoring a ritual, individuals perform a meritorious act.[1]

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[1]. For an account of the Buddhist's concept of merit and its relation to the economic sponsorship of rituals in the Tibetan cultural area, see: Robert J. Miller, **Buddhist Monastic Economy: The Jisa Mechanism**

It should be pointed out that there is a dearth of Buddhist philosophical ideas in the dissertation. This is so, not because I feel that normative textual considerations are unimportant, but mainly because of both theoretical and certain empirical contentions.

Theoretically, ideology is seen as arising from the realities of human practice, and, therefore, the latter is the object of focus. Empirically, the tenets of Buddhist philosophy are primarily studied by monks. Even among the monks, only a handful understand them. At Kyilung monastery, from a population of 35 monks only 2 have a good command of the texts and philosophy, and many cannot even read them. This is true also of Tibet. For example, given that Sera monastery housed 6000 monks, there were, annually, less that 25 monks who received the highest degree. This is less than half a percent. Assuming that this cannot serve as a measuring stick of knowledge and even if we were to look for other generous interpretations, we cannot escape the fact that only a small minority are adept with the texts and their philosophy.

If we consider the total village context (both lay and monks) assumed by the dissertation, the percentage would be even lower. So what little Buddhist tenets are contained in the dissertation comes from what the people

But if we look at the Drigung monasteries in Tibet and Ladakh, it is not so much that people support the monastery as that the monastery-with the State's help-legally appropriates land and peasant labor. I have already demonstrated how this was done. Thus, the Kabgyed and Drumchod rituals in Ladakh and the Chiso Chantso system in Drigung have lands or loans set aside as funds. The monks at Kyilung sponsor the ritual not so much because of merit as because of the necessary division of labor; namely, the compulsory work obligations that every monk **must** perform. In Drigung, a monk became the Chiso Chantso not because of merit, but because it enabled him to be exempt from the monastic work obligations, from monastic residence, and, further, because it bestowed social prestige on the monk and his village household, and accorded high status and privileges to him.[2]

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understand them to be. At the same time, it must be admitted that my concentration on collecting economic materials has resulted in the under-development of certain religious ideas.

[2] Two things need to be said. Firstly, I am not saying that a certain consciousness of merit does not exist. It must exist; how can it not when it pervades the culture? But it is through much ethnographic familiarity that one can make judgments as to what elements predominate. Secondly, neither am I saying that the concept of merit arose from the social contradictions of Ladakhi or Tibetan society. The concept belongs to Buddhism. It existed before any of the social relations that I have described. Whether the concept arose as a result of the conflicts and contradictions as Buddhism became popularized and encountered hierarchical systems,

The inability to solve the contradictions of production relations is accompanied with the inability to control aspects of nature like drought, hail, rain and crop diseases on agricultural lands, death and sickness of humans and their animal resources. The attempt to comprehend these unknown forces and the desire to control them leads to the use of the social metaphor, the projection of human social lives into understanding the natural world. This natural world is seen to be inhabited and controlled by superior beings, who, like humans, can be heard, spoken to and be influenced.

But ordinary individuals are not able to communicate with these beings or deities. Only a specialized group of people can, such as the monks who are able to communicate, influence, and seek the deities' intervention, through their knowledge of the sacred formulas, the reading of the proper texts, and the performance of correct rituals. During the rituals, these imagined superior beings are appeased. On the Tibetan altars of worship they take on

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like that of King Ashoka in 250 B.C., is another matter. What I am saying is that the idea of merit, once it existed in the society became the lense through which social relations were viewed, thus filtering out the contradictions and making social realities more harmonious. If Buddhism was never introduced into Ladakh or Tibet, and the same contradictory class relations between a priestly class and lay producers existed, instead of merit, there would be another ideology to conceal the real contradictions.

material, corporeal representation in the form of tormas, or dough effigies. Like humans who must be provided money, food, and presents for favors, the deities are offered food, water, barley ale, music and incense. In some rituals, like the Kabgyed, various masks representing the deities are invoked and then given a human body when the monks put on these masks for the ritual dance. The good and evil forces clash in a symbolic public display culminating in the triumph of the former.

The view of monks as part of the sacred, able to influence these superior beings through ritual performances, further enlightens us on the social realities to which it is related; the production relations. The ideological form has its counterpart in the economics of how rituals are sponsored, who (monastery, labrang) and what fund will sponsor them, how much land should be set aside for the ritual fund, who will work on the land, which ritual should be sponsored by loans, how much interest should be charged, how many days and how much food and money should be provided, the monks, how much butter should be used for the dough effigies, and a host of other questions related to the economics of rituals.[3]

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[3] In Chapter 3, I mentioned that the monks at Kyilung spend about 75% of their daily activities in the performance of household rituals. This is economically

These questions have been specifically answered in the section on ritual sponsorship and generally answered by the most of the other material. The answers have shown that, ultimately, the whole system rests on the unequal relations of production. At the same time, these ideological forms just described play their role in the reproduction of these unequal social relations of production.[4]

In short, my dissertation has been an account of the production relations of a particular religious institution and how religion or ideology reproduces these exploitative relations. At the same time the interaction between the external forces, economy, and internal lives are examined to show the changing production relations on the religious estate. There is also a suggestion that similar production

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very important for the monks individually. But more than this, it shows the tremendous number of rituals performed, in the name of those superior beings, for the monthly purification of the household, for bringing good health for family members and animals, good harvest, good luck, wealth, etc. This sacred position of the monks further legitimizes their standing in the society, which is to be both at the center and above it.

[4] It seems difficult for the concept of reproduction not to be charged with the sin of functionalism; ideology functions to reproduce and maintain the relations of production, the status quo. But, for Marx, since social relations of production, of contradiction, were historical in nature, ideology is therefore necessarily historical. It will basically change as the mode of production changes, though there will always be hang-overs from previous modes.

relations existed throughout much of Tibetan history and influenced state formations during various times.

The tremendous allocation of economic resources for ritual purposes is at the core of the economic studies in the Tibetan cultural area. This is true of the economics of the lay and monk households, the monastic institution and the state system. As far as the Tibetan state is concerned, the stubbornness to which the monastic power and their supporters clung to this age-old stable ritual-economic system and resisted and thwarted any changes, was the main internal cause of the fall of the Tibetan state. But that is another subject.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

THE SEGMENTARY STATE, THE ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION AND THE QUESTION OF SERFDOM IN TIBET

I argue here that Tibet can best be understood as a segmentary state, with the core domain manifesting features of the Asiatic Mode of Production (henceforth AMP). The characteristics of this mode are highlighted through a comparison with the Feudal Mode of Production (hereafter FMP). I also argue that because of the very differences between the AMP and the FMP, the nature of peasant subjection and surplus generation is different. Therefore, I feel it is inappropriate to use the term "serf" to characterize peasant subjection in Tibet.

Tibet as a Segmentary State

Though there will always be scholars who are more interested in studying a society on its own terms, the use of models of the state has been helpful for understanding a society in a comparative framework. However, Eurocentric thinking characterized non-western societies as resembling Europe and therefore, "feudal". Societies which did not resemble the European state (during periods when Europe had strong centralized states, with well defined boundaries and political sovereignty) were often regarded as some kind of "tribal" entity or "stateless".[1] The Segmentary state model permits the discussion of the general theories of state forms while recognizing the

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[1] Richard G. Fox, **Realm and Region in Traditional India**, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1974) pp. xi.

cultural peculiarities of the society in question.

In Chapter 2, we saw that the segmentary state was "...one in which the range of ritual suzerainty and political sovereignty do not coincide. The former extends widely towards the periphery which is flexible and changing. The latter is confined to the central core."[2] What this means for Tibet during the period in question, i.e., from about the 18th century to 1959, is that- there is a core domain under Central Lhasa political sovereignty and a flexible periphery (specially certain areas in Kham and Amdo) ruled by local "kings" (gyalpo, ponkha).[3] These regional areas had their own forms of administration and the central core did not exercise effective political power.[4] These regions considered themselves to be part of the Dalai Lama's realm since they recognized his ritual

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[2] Aidan Southall, **The Segmentary State in Africa and Asia**. This definition of the segmentary state is a better and a simplified version than Southall's earlier one in **Alur Society: A Study in Processes and Types of Domination** (Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1956). Southall's model has been successfully applied for the Cholas of South India by Burton Stein, "The Segmentary State in South Indian History" in Richard G. Fox (ed) **Realm and Region in Traditional India**. pp.3-51., and for the Rajputs of Northern India by Richard Fox, **Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule: State-Hinterland Relations in Preindustrial India**, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

[3] It seems possible to apply the segmentary state model to other periods in Tibetan history. For example, during which periods and to what extent can we speak of Bhutan, Ladakh, Sikkim, Guge, Purang and similar areas as being part of the Central Tibetan domain in terms of ritual
suzerainty? What about the period before the Dalai Lamas? When Sakya had authority over Tibet in the 13th an 14th century, what did the state core domain consist of? It seems that other powerful labrangs like Drigung, Karmapa, Taklung, Tsalpa and their secular counterparts were virtually "independent" though they recognized the superiorty of the Sakyas whose patrons were the Mongols who ruled China.

[4] Space does not permit a historical digression to determine which specific areas and at what periods this flexible periphery can be discussed within the political sovereignty-ritual hegemony continuum.

superiority. This ritual power has both religious and political economic elements, as discussed under the labrang concept in Chapter 2.

Since I am more concerned with the production relations of Drigung Labrang in the first part of this century, i.e., the area within the effective political jurisdiction of the Dalai Lamas, I will restrict the discussion to this core domain of the Tibetan segmentary state. This central sphere can best be understood as a variant of the AMP.

The Asiatic Mode of Production in Tibet

Many writers on Tibet, too numerous to mention, have described Tibet as a feudal society. In 1959, Pedro Carrasco wrote that while the feudal type has certain contributions to make to Tibetan society, Tibet can best be described as a form of Wittfogel's Oriental Society.[5] Of all the scholars, Carrasco, in my view has come closest to accurately describing Tibet in terms of a certain type of society.[6] Today, his work has been virtually ignored and writings since then (see below) have centered around the question of servitude, freedom and mobility in Tibetan society.[7] Though it would be apt at this stage, to

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1 Pedro Carraso, in **Land and Polity in Tibet**, (1959): pp. 208., did not detail the theory of Oriental society or AMP. Much of the newer discussions on the AMP appeared only after the 1960's.

Regarding Karl A. Wittfogel, **Oriental Society: A Comparative Study of Total Power**, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), it should be mentioned that his concentration on hydraulics does not give due credit to certain other factors of the AMP. Likewise, his emphasis on the monstrosity of total despotic power carries the political implication that West equals freedom and the East (Soviet Union) total domination.

6 It should be stated here that I do not see irrigation playing any major role in the formation of the state. See also, footnote

2 An exception is the work of Franz Michael, **Rule By Incarnation**, pp.24, who also discusses the broader issue of societal types. He feels that Max Weber's rational bureaucracy fits Tibet. In fairness to Weber one should keep in mind that his ideal types did not necessarily correspond to empirical reality. Nevertheless, the notion of rational bureaucracy seems too general. The

describe the Tibetan social formation, I will not do so and I refer the reader to Chapter 2 of the text.

The AMP is a controversial subject in Marxism.[8]

Weberian characteristics of bureaucracy fits the Tibetan, the capitalist, the socialist, and even the university system. The six characteristics cited by Michael are: "an organization serving functional goals through specialized functionaries; a hierarchical structure with a clear chain of command; a division of labor among officials; detailed rules understood and applied by all members of the bureaucracy and the public; a selection of personnel on the basis of competence; service by official functionaries as life-long vocation".

3 Part of the problem, generally shared with the material on other precapitalist formations lies in the underdevelopment of the concept since Marx's main concern was with the capitalist mode. The AMP has also been prone to various interpretations that have made the concept less coherent. The concept also suffers from the fact that Marx's inportant argument was only published in 1939-41 at Moscow, under the title, **Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Okonomie**. According to E.J. Hobsbawm, ed. **Karl Marx: Precapitalist Economic Formations**, (New York: International Publishers, 1964): 9, this manuscript, in Western Europe, was published in German in 1953 and Italian in 1956.

The AMP is controvertial also because it is an anomaly in the orthodox unilinial scheme of Marxian evolution. But Melloti, **Marx and the Third World** has clearly shown that Marx's view is multilinear in which the AMP is not to be fused with the Feudal Mode of Production. The AMP has also been used to serve all kinds of political ends. Wittfogel's theory of Oriental Despotism is an example. For the political aspects of the AMP in the Soviet Union, see Stephen Dunn, **The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production** (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982). The above references and more, Anne Bailey and Josep Llobera **The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science and Politics** (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), Maurice Godelier "The Concept of the 'Asiatic Mode of Production' and Marxist Models of Social Evolution" In David Seddon (ed) **Relations of Production: Marxist Approches to Economic Anthropology** (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1978), Lawrence Krader, **The Asiatic Mode of Production: Sources, Development and Critique in the Writings of Karl Marx** (The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, Assen) and others, while aware of the AMP's controversial nature, demonstrate that the

Nevertheless there are basic features of the model that are theoretically sound and empirically useful.

In the **Grundrisse**, Marx states that in the AMP, there is at the level of appearances, a ritual, supernatural and political-economic head, which expresses the total unity of the various self sufficient communities and collects the surplus- while, in reality, the real foundation is communal property.[9] Unfortunately, all authors on Tibet have concentrated at the top state level and we hardly know anything about the nature of communal property.[10] So the existing material also forces me to focus on this state level. The specific characteristics of this state level in Tibet (the centralized bureaucratic[11] aspects of the AMP) are highlighted through a comparison with the FMP.

A Comparison of the Asiatic and the Feudal Modes of Production

The Feudal Mode of Production

There was a sharp contradiction in the FMP. On the one hand, there was at the ideological and juridical level, an overlord or monarch, who in theory was supposedly the

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concept is very much alive.

[9] **Grundrisse**, pp. 472-473.

[10] Considering that the main economy was based on agricultural and nomadic produce of self sufficient communities, it seems obvious that these communities had an important voice in the political-economy of the state. It appears that the absence of private property in land was related to the fact that land was communal property. The state also granted rights to peasants to take their "lord" to court. It appears that "lords" could not unilaterally increase taxes or herds without consulting village representatives. In many cases, grazing areas seem to be communally owned. Some peasant families seem to have hereditarily held certain political-economic functions, e.g., tax collection, at the local district-village level. New research on the state (a view from below) is necessary before we can make any conclusions about the exact nature of communal property.

[11] In so far as it is contrasted with the FMP.

ruler over all the lands. This overlord would have a vassal, the vassal could have his own vassal and so on down the line. Land was therefore held in principle from the superior lord as a fief, in return for an individual pledge of homage, allegiance, fealty and military service. But in reality, these various layers of dependency and subinfeudation resulted in practically independent lords who **privately** had control over their land.

In such a decentralized polity, characterized by the separation of powers the monarch had no automatic power and so a permanent, well defined bureaucratic setup was not possible.

> The "summit" of the chain was in certain important respects its weakest link. In principle, the highest superordinate level of the feudal hierarchy... was different not in kind, but in degree, from the subordinate levels of lordship... The monarch,... was a feudal suzerain of his vassals, to whom be was bound by reciprocal ties of fealty, not a supreme sovereign set above his subjects.... He would have no direct political access to the population as a whole, for jurisdiction over it would be mediatized through innumerable layers of subinfeudation. He would, in effect be master only on his own estates, otherwise to a great extent a ceremonial figurehead....
>
> For the pure feudal hierarchy, as we have seen, excluded any "executive" at all, in the modern sense of a permanent administrative apparatus of the State for the enforcement of law: the parcellization of sovereignty rendered one unnecessary and impossible.[12]

What Anderson calls the "parcellization of sovereignty" in the FMP was also responsible for the independence of the towns, that had their own government and were free from the landed feudal power. Such independent centers served against the interests of the predominant agrarian economy, for in the towns, the serfs and villeins found safety and a livelihood. Above all, the independence of the burghers brought about a new class of merchantilists that would later come to undermine the whole FMP. Therefore the FMP contained the seeds of its own destruction, the independent centers of power, like the towns, acting in contradiction and opposition to the

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4 Perry Anderson, **Passages From Antiquity to Feudalism**, (London: Verso, 1974) p. 151.

agrarian economy.

The decentralized polity with independent powers also produced a division of class rule in the FMP, which took the form of the separation of church and secular powers. As Anderson says, much better than I could ever summarize:

> Such a political system necessarily precluded any extensive bureaucracy, and functionally divided class rule in a novel fashion. For on the one hand, the parcellization of sovereignty ... led to the constitution of a separate ideological order all together. The church, which in Late Antiquity had always been directly integrated into the... state, and subordinated to it, now became an eminently autonomous institution within the feudal polity.... Because of the dispersal of coercion inherent in emergent Western feudalism, the Church could defend its own corporate interests, if necessary, from a territorial redoubt and by armed force.[13]

To summarize, The FMP was characterized by independent centers of power(church, landed nobility, towns) that resulted in private control of resources and weak central authority with no permanent bureaucratic apparatus. The contradictions between these powers led to the transformation of the whole mode of production.

The Asiatic Mode of Production

By comparison, the AMP contained just the opposite features. There were no independent centers of power. The church, the aristocrats and towns were all part of and subservient to the state. This meant state centralization and control of resources. Without the contradictions of the FMP, the AMP never transformed from within. It came from the outside.

State Ownership of the Means of Production

The ownership of the means of production in the FMP is different from the AMP and therefore, the nature of exploitation is not the same. The parcellization of sovereignty in the FMP resulted in property that was

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[13] ibid., pp. 152.

"privately controlled".[14] By contrast, the AMP is characterized by the state ownership of the means of production. Both Godelier and Melotti well expresses Marx's thoughts:

> It seems to us that the fundamental difference lies in the nature of the exploitation of the peasants and their state of dependence in each case. In the Asiatic mode of production, the State is owner of the land, in as much as it personifies all the communities, and the exploitation of the peasants is collective.... By contrast, in the feudal mode of production, the peasants are individually dependent on their lord who owns their land as well as his estate.[15] In Asiatic society the State owned ... the land.Under feudalism,... the land belonged to the barons, following the systems fundamental precept of **nulle terre sans seigneur**.... In the Asiatic mode,... the State alone is directly entitled to the surplus product taken from the producers as tax, which in this case is the same thing as ground rent. The members of the major exploiting classes get their share of it only through the State [through state sanction]. Under the feudal system,... the feudal lord is a direct exploiter, appropriating rent in the form of goods and services independently of the State.[16]

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[14] ibid., pp. 147.

[15] Maurice Godelier, "The Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production...": 229.

[16] Melotti, **Marx and the Third World**, pp. 67. An important aspect regarding ground-rent needs elaboration. In **Capital**, Vol. 3: 634, Marx warned against, "confusing the various forms of rent pertaining to different stages of development of the social production process". He continues by saying, that whether one is referring to serfdom and the FMP, the AMP, or the Ancient Mode of Production, the common element is that they are all economics based on landed property. Therefore, he states that it "... makes it possible for the differences to escape detection". In the FMP, where land is privately held, then, the property is worked by the tenant-serf for rent. "Should the direct producers not be confronted by a private landowner, but rather, as in Asia, under direct subordination to a state which stands over them as their

I have already described in Chapter 2, the system of state ownership of land in Tibet and how elites received estates through the state.

Effective State Power and Bureaucracy

We saw that the FMP produced a weak center of power, more imaginary than real. The monarch had no effective power over his subjects, no command over the general population, and therefore, he did not possess a permanent bureaucratic apparatus. Decentralization resulted in local responsibility for defence, taxes, justice, and in many cases, the lords even elected the monarch from among their kind.[17]

In comparison, the state in the AMP had effective power over the population and it is for this reason that it was possible to undertake large projects like the Great Wall in China, the pyramids of Egypt and Mexico, the Taj Mahal in India, the Potala Palace in Tibet and other monuments in various Asiatic States. The state organized a standing army, collected taxes and had a permanent bureaucracy. The individual personifying the state, unlike the feudal monarch, is all powerful.

> The Asiatic despot, by contrast, is from the beginnings the ultimate repository of all power- not just political, but economic, religious, and military as well. He is the apex of the bureaucratic hierarchy that oversees the workings of the State machine ... Or, in Marx's words, he is "the patriarchal authority, the only **moral** link embracing the vast machinery of the state"[18] (Italics mine).

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landlord and simultaneously as sovereign, then **rent and taxes coincide**, or rather, there exists no tax which differs from this form of ground rent" (Italics mine) (**Capital**, Vol.3: pp. 791).

17 ibid, pp.68

18 ibid.

Tibet had a centralized state.[19] What is interesting is that the "despot", the "patriarchal authority", the person who represented the state, evolved from a religious, monastic tradition. I am here referring to the institution, the labrang, and the person of the Dalai Lama, who was given the temporal authority to rule over Tibet in 1642 (see Chapter 2).[20]

The combination of 3 elements, the monastic bureaucracy (with the lama as paramount authority), administrative legacies from the time of King Songtsen Gambo (with some later modifications) and Chinese (Manchu) titles and administrative procedures (when Tibet became a Chinese "protectorate" from the 18th century to 1911)[21] characterized the Tibetan state bureaucracy.[22] As far as Chinese administration is concerned, it is probably the example, par excellence, of the AMP.

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[19] I define the state in the AMP as centralized in so far as it regularly uses its authority and administration in the collection of surplus in the form of taxes, and on matters related to this. Whether the state does or does not interfere or control other regional activities is not a test of statehood or centralization.

[20] We have seen how Drigung Labrang consisted of the **Tse** (upper, peak, top, etc.) and the **sho** (lower) sections. The former was composed of the lama and is immediate personnel, the latter, the lay administrators. This labrang/monastic usage was carried over in the organization of the Tibetan government. Persons and offices more immediately surrounding the Dalai Lama, the monk officials, were known as **tse-drung**, the lay officials, the **sho-drung**. The main treasury at the **Tsuklakhang**, the Central Cathedral, where most of the state bureaucracy were located, was known as the **lekhung** (office) of the **Labrang Chantso**, the "steward" of the labrang. The labrang in question was obviously in reference to the Dalai Lama.

[21] Luciano Petech, **China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century: History of the Establishment of Chinese Protectorate in Tibet**, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1950).

[22] When this bureaucracy became crystallized towards the middle of the 18th century, it virtually remained the same until the flight of the Dalai Lama in March 1959.

The 3 elements comprising the centralized bureaucracy in Tibet, therefore, excludes Wittfogel's irrigation hypothesis.

State Control and Problems of Social Transformation

The internal contradictions within a mode of production is one of the main reasons for the transformation of a society. The FMP exhibited such overt contradictions. The existence of independent powers resulted in separate economies, manufacture and agriculture. Within the agrarian economy, church and secular forces formed antagonistic classes, resulting in some of the endemic wars of the feudal era. The rise of the manufacturing mercantile class in the towns was to ultimately bring about the demise of the FMP.

The AMP, by contrast is not characterized by such contradictory independent powers, since all were under the control of the state. Marx was clearly aware of this when he wrote, "...Asian history is a kind of undifferentiated unity of town and country... the Middle Ages (Germanic period) starts with the countryside as the locus of history, whose further development then proceeds through the opposition of town and country...".[23] "The antagonism of town and country can only exist as a result of private property".[24] Such differences has important implications for the dynamism of the FMP and the relative stagnation of the AMP. In one of Marx's characteristics of the AMP, the "self sustaining" community, marked by the "combination of manufacture and agriculture"[25] lies the reason why "The Asiatic form necessarily survives longest and most stubbornly".[26]

In Tibet, the towns, the secular and religious powers were all part of the state. When trade grew throughout the first half of the 20th century, there was no development of a separate economy or a class of traders. Wealthy trading families like Pandatsang, Sandutsang and others, married or desired to marry into the status quo, the aristocratic class.

When the 13th Dalai Lama and a hand full of forward thinking aristocrats wanted to modernize Tibet in the 1920's and 30's, the monks and conservative secular powers became alarmed. The Dalai Lama was unable to take that

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[23] Quoted in Hobsbawm, **Precapitalist Economic Formations**: pp. 77-78.

[24] ibid., pp. 127.

[25] ibid., pp. 70

[26] ibid., pp. 83.

crucial step to militarize and modernize Tibet, for he was caught between both the modernizing and conservative elements. Being the repository of all powers, secular and religious, conservative and radical, outright contradiction, conflict and war was impossible. The emerging ideas of modernization were dropped and they faded into the background. Change was to come only from without, in the form of a Chinese military invasion, colonization and the imposition of a Marxist bureaucratic collectivist state.

The Question of Serfdom in Tibet

The issue of fixed hereditary status and its ensuing lack of freedom and mobility in the FMP has been one of the main arguments on which the bourgeois revolution was founded. Questions of freedom, democracy, as opposed to totalitarian control has since dominated western thinking. Among Western social scientists, the issue of serfdom and mobility in Tibet has been about the only topic where there has been some controversy.

Melvyn Goldstein was probably the first author to be critical of the Tibetan social system. In two important articles he described Tibetan society as characterized by serfdom.[27] Since the publication of those articles, Aziz,[28] Dargyay,[29] Michael[30] and Miller[31] have all felt that the use of the term "serfs" was not appropriate for

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[27] Melvyn C. Goldstein, **Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village** and "Serfdom and Mobility: An Examination of the Institution of "Human Lease" in Traditional Tibet." **Journal of Asian Studies**, 30, 1971:521-534.

[28] Barbara N. Aziz, **Tibetan Frontier Families**, (New Delhi: Vikas, 1978).

[29] Eva K. Dargyay, **Tibetan Village Communities** (Warminster, Wilts, England: Aris and Phillips, 1982).

[30] Franz Michael, **Rule By Incarnation.**

[31] Beatrice D. Miller, **in press**, "Social and Physical Mobility in Traditional Tibet." **Proceedings of the Csoma de Koros Bicentennial Symposium**, Vizograd, Hungary, 1984

Tibet. Recently, Goldstein[32] refuted the non-serf perspectives of the above authors. We have yet to see the publication of Goldstein's article and the possible responses. For this reason, as well the differences in my approach and considerations of space, I will not review the argument. Rather, I will give my reasons as to why I feel that the description of the Tibetan peasants as serfs distorts the nature of peasant subjection.

The Necessary Unity of Infrastructure and Superstructure in the Analysis of Serfdom

Anyone who has studied the Feudal and Asiatic modes of production will be struck by the similarities in the mode of appropriation of labor in the agrarian economy. Both are based on a landed economy in which a stable and a reliable source of human labor is essential. This naturally results in the strict control of the peasants. But there are gross differences.

In order to take cognizance of my argument on the non-existence of serfdom in Tibet it is important to emphasize the theoretical approach that I take throughout the dissertation. This methodology is the study of the social system in its totality. This means that a mode of production includes the gross economic level (the production process) and the interrelated wider politico-juridical and ideological components. In this dissertation, I refer to it as production and reproduction. Far to many Marxists, misunderstanding Marx, have emphasized the economistic production process by concentrating on how surplus materials are pumped out from the direct producers (the bound peasant population) by the immediate overlord. In the FMP, one form in which this is done is through serfdom. It is then easy to abstract this economic level and see how it is similar to the production level of a different society, while totally ignoring the wider aspects of the social system of which it is an integral part. The place of the individual, or a class of individuals, like serfs, can only be understood within the total framework of the society.

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[32] Melvyn C. Goldstein sent me a draft of an article entitled, "Reexamining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: Tax Appendages and Other Landless Serfs." It was to appear in **The Tibet Journal**. Since he is presently in Tibet I am unable to determine what changes he had made for publication.

Decentralization, Private Property and Personal Subjection

In our comparison of the FMP and the AMP, we saw how in the AMP, for example, Tibet, there existed centralization and state appropriation of the means of production, with elites receiving their share of the surplus through state sanction. The FMP was characterized by decentralized independent powers which resulted in the private jurisdiction and private appropriation of the means of production; the landed estates being private property. Decentralization and lack of central authority resulted in endemic warfare and violence. Only in such a society did men pledge to help and protect each other. The lowest rung of the society, the serfs gave themselves up for protection and hence, they **belonged** to a master and was at the mercy of his command. It was for this reason that the serf was also referred to in France as "homme de corps", which meant that the seigneur was the **lord of the serf's body**. According to Marc Bloch:

> The bond uniting the serf to his seigneur was strictly hereditary. It was attached to the man from the moment of birth until his death. It was so indissoluble, from master to subject, that anciently, when a seigneur gave or sold a serf, he often began by freeing him. The momentarily liberated individual then, in a formal ceremony, placed himself under the servitude of the new master. This strict bond... was represented by the physical being, hence the widespread synonym for serf: homme de corps, man of the body.... In a picturesque commentary on this term an abbot of Vezelay, claiming that a certain Andre du Marais was his serf, commented in 1166: "he is mine from the soles of his feet to the top of his head." The serfs in turn expected from their seigneurs that most precious commodity in a troubled society: protection.[33]

It was this personal physical subjection, independent of the attachment to estates for the provision of labor, that marked the servile character. "Around 1200..., chevage, prohibition of formarriage and finally mainmorte were the

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[33] Marc Bloch, **Slavery and Serfdom in the Middle Ages**, trans. William R. Beer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 58-59.

only burdens indicative of serfdom." (Italics mine)[34]

The chevage was an annual sum of silver money that was paid by the serfs to their seigneur. It was placed on the serf's head before payment to symbolize his/her (henceforth he/him) subordination. It could also be paid in kind or labor.[35]

In terms of marriage, strict law prohibited exogamous unions. Serfs must marry serfs, and spouses must also have the same lord, except in the case of the rare and very costly permission.[36] Strict endogamy resulted in widespread consanguineous unions and since this was a sin, emancipation of the serf was one solution.[37] Sometimes serfs had to pay a wedding fee and at times the lord could "force boys and girls to marry according to his wish".[38]

Mainmorte was a kind of an inheritance fee. When the serf died, his right to pass on his personal property was also considered to have "died" with him.[39] Since the serf belonged to the lord the lord imposed his rights to the serf's property. There were many variations in inheritance. In some areas the serf's descendants could inherit the property if they lived with him. In other areas the lord had the right only to the serfs movable property. If the serf left no heirs that lived with him, then the lord had the right to most of his property.[40] Depending upon region and time, the serfs did not have a right to a will or it was recognized only with the permission of the lord.[41]

This extreme subjection of one individual by another had inherited certain elements of slavery. Both were known by the same term "servus" "servitus" which became "serfs" in French.[42] Like slaves, serfs were prohibited from joining

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[34] ibid.

[35] ibid., pp.37.

[36] ibid., pp.39.

[37] ibid., pp.40.

[38] ibid., pp. 38-39.

[39] ibid., pp.41.

[40] ibid., pp.41-42.

[41] ibid., pp.43-44.

[42] ibid., pp. 30.

the church and like slaves, their lord could also set them free (manumission, emancipation). The serf was looked on as an inferior and a vile person who could not testify against any free man.

> The serf was not only a subject who depended on a more powerful man, he seemed tarnished by a "stain" that made him contemptible: **servitutis dedecus**. His name was an insult whose incorrect use drew down severe punishment from the courts. Throughout France serfs could not testify- at least in the lay courts-when the litigants were free men.[43]

The idea of personally being attached to the lord rather than land and labor was further defined in criminal litigations.

> ... the tie between a **man and man** was almost unanimously accorded a sort of primacy. It was considered that the serf who committed a crime... ought not to have any other judge than the **lord of his body**- regardless both of the lords normal judicial powers and the domicile of the accused. In short, **bondage to the soil** was in no sense characteristic of the serf; **his distinguishing feature**, on the contrary, was that he was so **strictly depended on another human being** that where ever he went this tie followed him and clung to his descendants.(Italics mine)[44]

Change in the Nature of Serfdom

Between the 9th and the 13th centuries and more closer to the latter period, great transformations in the broader political and economic and other super-structural aspects of the FMP took place. This was to have tremendous implications for the nature of serfdom.

The older juridical system of written laws were disappearing. Since most of the men that sat in court could not read, judgments were passed without reference to

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[43] ibid., pp. 65.

[44] Marc Bloch, **Feudal Society**, trans. L.A. Manyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 264.

texts.[45] In such a system classifications of free and serf became jumbled. Those who were descendants of free men were looked upon as serfs. Though most serfs retained their status, the break down of ties of personal dependence resulted in a new emerging serfdom based on land and taxation.[46] The serf began to resemble more the free tenant (villein or hote), which also meant that the serf status could be lost with the abandonment of tenure.[47] In England, around this same period (13th century), villein (free tenants) came to be looked upon as serfs. Payments indicative of true serfdom, like formarriage (merchet in England), and mainmorte (heriot) were forced upon them.[48]

Other changes at the wider elements of the society, the growth of towns and the spread of jurisdictional power brought about a change in the appropriation of surplus. Many have come to see surplus labor on the demesne as the main form of rent in the FMP. It would probably come as a surprise to learn that the provision of labor on the demesne "... was not an overriding economic necessity to the lords..."[49] and that the " ... the general history of European feudalism shows quite clearly that labor rent was not an essential element in the feudal relations of production...".[50] Therefore serfdom cannot be altogether equated with labor services, as some historians have done.[51]

The bulk of the surplus, in the form of rent, was

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[45] Marc Bloch, **Slavery and Serfdom**, p. 76, 79, 151-161.

[46] ibid., p. 85.

[47] ibid. See also pp.75, **Feudal Society**, p. 279. In the FMP, abandonment of tenure was not uncommon given assarting (cultivation of new land), independent centers of power (towns protecting agricultural serfs, lords protecting other lord's serfs) and the lack of juridical sanctions (Bloch, **Slavery and Serfdom**, p. 77) against the abandonment of tenure by tenants.

[48] Rodney H. Hilton, **The Decline of Serfdom in Medieval England**. 2nd ed.(London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 19.

[49] ibid., p. 20.

[50] Rodney H. Hilton, **The Transition**, p. 15.

[51] Hilton, **Decline of Serfdom**, p. 20.

collected on the basis that the seigneurs could force the population under their jurisdiction to do numerous tasks and exact payment for them. These tasks had nothing to do with the tenants provision of labor or other taxes based on the labor contracts of land tenureship, but were demanded as a subjects duty.[52] In addition to demanding arbitrary labor, profits generated from jurisdiction " ... included not only court fines but the profit from various monopolies, such as the right to force the inhabitants, free or serf, of the area of jurisdiction, tenants or not, to grind corn at the lord's mill, bake in his oven or press grapes in his wine press."[53]

As jurisdictional power grew and the burden on the peasants increased, serfs also began to dwindle. Around the 13th century, large scale emancipation reduced the number of serfs.[54] With the growing need for cash on the part of the lord, many bought their freedom.[55] With the confusion in law between the 9th and the 13th century, some found themselves free through the disuse of the serf category.[56] As serfdom became less dependent on personal bondage than on tenure holdership, the abandonment of land resulted in freedom.[57] All of these various reasons brought about a situation where "... the term "serf" was disappearing so that few peasants so called were left by the middle of the 12th century."[58]

Conclusion

We frequently use words like decentralization, or, for that matter, centralization, without actually being aware of their many implications. In the FMP, decentralization meant independent powers, private property, warfare and violence. Only in such a society can we understand the extreme subjection of one individual by another.

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[52] ibid., p. 13, **The Transition**, p. 17.

[53] Hilton, **The Transition**, p. 17.

[54] Bloch, **Feudal Society**, p. 279.

[55] Hilton, **The Transition**, p. 17.

[56] Bloch, **Feudal Society**, p. 279.

[57] ibid. See also note 35.

[58] Hilton, **The Transition**, p. 17.

We saw that the serf was looked on as a vile and inferior person. He was someone who had to pay a fee to overtly symbolize his servility, to marry only serfs of the same seigneur, to pay a wedding fee, to loose his rights over his own personal property, to be banned from joining the church and testifying against free men and someone who was considered free only after emancipation. The provision of surplus labor on the lord's demesne was not a unique characteristic of the serf, as there was a large population of free tenants who could do that. In fact, labor on agricultural estates was not an essential part of surplus generation in the FMP.

By the 13th century, a number of changes at the broader social level resulted in the emphasis on serfdom based on land. At the same time, serfs became free through emancipation, desuetude and land abandonment, while free peasants came to be treated as serfs. Soon there were few peasants left that could be called serfs.

I think it should be quite obvious from the materials in Chapter One that the Tibetan social formation was very different from the FMP; that the term "serf", with all its implications described above, distorts the nature of subjection and surplus generation in Tibet. In Tibet, subjection was based on taxes that had to be paid by the peasant or nomad to their immediate authority (Village Corporation, Religious Institution or State Functionary), who in turn had to pay taxes to the State. If we concentrate on the agrarian economy, the peasants were bound to the estates only in terms of rent and labor. Even in the case of marriage permissions, free movement of peasants without land, or house servants, the criteria of labor and rights over it were the only considerations.[59]

It was a very simple, rigid, and unchanging type of subjection, unlike the more complicated and dynamic aspects of serfdom and surplus generation in the FMP. Ultimately, the two forms of subjection are the reflection of the differences in the asiatic and the feudal modes of production.

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[59] Regarding household servants, it is also true that estate managers recruited bright and capable persons. Service at the lord's residence at Lhasa was considered honorable. Aside from opportunities for travel, trading and a better livelihood, servants had much influence in household matters. However, this was not true of all servants, for example, the kitchen helper, water fetcher, stable attendant, etc. We find similar instances of service at religious institutions, like Drigung Labrang.

APPENDIX B

DAILY ACTIVITIES ON THE LABRANG AGRICULTURAL ESTATE: NOVEMBER 1980 TO AUGUST 1981

November, 1980

Date	Description	No. Labor Hired	"Tools" Hired	Mode of Payment
8	Brought potato and radish inside before winter	2	5 sacks	3 meals
9-11	Usual work/[1]			
12	Brought soil from fields to latrine and stables	8	25 sacks, 20 animals(donkeys & cows)	Ale, 3 meals
13-14	Usual work			
15	2 tree trunks cut for fuel	2	2 axes	3 meals
16-17	Usual work			
18	Entertained friends, relatives, others- to facilitate future labor requests	4	2 ale earthen wares, 7 carpets, 6 tables, 3 barley flour containers, 2 pots.	Tea,ale meal for 50 people
19	Borrowed Rs.1000 from Komnyer. Returned items loaned on the 18th.	4		2 meals
20	Painted room for Tsarongs, made Khabseh (deep fried "bread") for New Years			

[1] See page 99.

				235
21	Losar (New Year)	3		3 meals, tea for 3 monks

December 1980

1	70 butter lamps for Gandeh-ngamcho [Tsong-kapa (head of Gelugpa) memorial. Ritual.	4		2 meals
2	Preparations for kurim (ritual for well-being of Labrang)	5	2 carpets, 2 tables, musi-cal instruments	3 meals for 5 monks
3-4	Kurim	5		"
5	Returned loaned items.	4		
6	New Year preparations. Had cow slaughtered.	4	Carpets and tables	2 meals
7	Tongzen ritual. Monks at Labrang house	3		Meal for 38. 2 khabseh for monks
8	Monks and some laity entertained			1 meal & ale
9	Preparation for New Year's horse race	4	4 bridle & saddles	3 meal
10	Horse race	6	Carpets, tab-les, 1 ale earthenware	"
11-12	Usual work			
13-14	New Year's food preparation	15		Meal for 15. Ale for drummers
15	Prepared room for author & spouse			
16	Sowed 4 shirts			
17-29	Usual work			
30	Trees cut for fuel	3	3 axes	3 meals & ale
31	Usual work			

January 1981

1	Went with author to request Army truck to carry firewood to lab-		1 truck	

	rang at Lamayuru		
2-11	Usual work		
12	Stitched clothes		
13	Provided mangja(tea) at Monastery on the death of Kyungga Rimpoche, Kyabgon's yogic teacher		Tea for all monks present
14-20	Usual work		
21	Borrowed Rs.600 from Komnyer		
22-28	Usual work		
29	Requested labor to cut thornbushes for future mangja		
30	Cut thornbushes	5	3 meals
31	Brought thornbushes to monastery	5	"

February 1981

1-2	Usual work		
3	Brought remaining thornbushes to monastery	4	3 meals
4-6	Usual work		
7	Went shopping to Leh		
8-9	Usual work		
10	Went with other monks to perform ritual in village household		
11	Not keeping well. Visited village doctor		
12-18	Usual work		
19	Tanned goat skin. To be used as part payment for Labrang worker		
20	Went shopping to Leh		
21-22	Usual work		
23	Contacted army to carry yambak (flat roofing slate stones) to monastery		
24-25	Performed village household rituals		
26	Usual work		
27	Got more thornbushes for mangja	2	
28	Usual work		

March 1981

1-2	Village household ritual			
3	Repaired & cleaned granary (destroyed by rats) at Taru village.	2		
4-6	Usual work			
7	Brought soil from fields to latrines and stables	12	25 sacks, 17 animals (donkeys & cows)	
8	Usual work			
9	Piled dried woods with help of two monks	2		
10-11	Usual work			
12-14	Cut trees for fuel at riverside wooded lot	4	4 axes	3 meals, ale, Rs. 14 each per day
15-16	Piled trees on roadside	12	2 trucks	Rs.850
	Brought trees to Labrang			meal & ale for workers
17	Cut & pile trees	4	2 axes	
18	Check condition of stored radish. Labworkers paid			Rs.900
19	Collected fodder money from Leh			Rs.1500
20-21	Usual work			
22	Arranged labor for manure collection Cleaned stables	7	4 sacks 1 hoe	3 meals ale
23	Granary wall collapsed. Repair started	17	1 hoe, 1 saw 1 spade	Meals & ale
24	Repaired granary			
25	Cleaned latrine & stables	15	25 spades, 3 hoe & 9 plates	Meals & ale
26	As above. Also Saka, planting ritual	18	Baskets, spades	"
27	Collected potatoes from one village household	7	3 sacks	

28	Went shopping at Leh			
29	Cleaned Labrang	2		
30	Both nyerpas went to perform household rituals			2 meals
31	Usual work			

April 1981

1-4	Further repairs on granary. One person paid Rs.40/2 days. Another-Rs.60/3 days	4	1 clay-layer, 1 clay-shaper, 1 saw	Rs.100
5	Paid Komnyer's yearly salary. Gathered animals for veterinarian shots.			100 kg wheat grain
6-9	Usual			
10	Repaired irrigation ditches. H.H. & party arrives from lamayuru. Kitchen work at monastery.	3		1 meal 15 kg of ale
11	Kitchen work. Bought fertilizer(chemical)			Rs.894
12	Kitchen work. Went to Leh to arrange for taxi.			
13	H.H & party leaves for Delhi. Went to airport.			
14-15	Cleaned fields of stones & debris	4		
16	Arranged labor and animals for next day			
17	Took manure to fields	14	Donkeys, 23 sacks, 1 spade	3 meals ale
18	See 14-15	4		
19-20	Irrigated fields	4	4 spades, 1 hoe	2 meals
21-22	See 14-15			
23	Chikeh Kurim (Spring Purification rites). Took firewood to monastic kitchen			For 30 monks- 30 kg tsampa 1 meal
24	Practice ploughing	1		"
25	Ploughed vegetable field	1		
26	Planted potatoes	2	4 sacks	

27	Took seeds to Nyemo			
28	Repaired ploughing equipment	1		Black-smith's meal
29	Practice ploughing			
30	Usual work			

May 1981 (see Chapter 5)

June 1981

1	Usual work			
2	Shopping at Leh. 1 Labrang worker sick			Lamp oil Rs.230, Tea Rs.16 Medi-cine Rs.5
3	Dzo sent to high summer pastures			
4	Planted vegetables	1		
5	Lhobhon performs puri-fication ritual. Provided tea, tsampa, molasses,butter,katak			
6	Sub-village (Tsakma) summer picnic-archery Contributed money for making tent. Brought onion seeds from Leh.			Rs.15 Rs.14
7	Picnic (see 6). Sold Rs.2 saffron to Dratsang			
8	Watered vegetables in containers	2	3 cans	
9	Water shortage. Meeting to discuss irrigation problems		2 cans	
10	Watered vegetable gardens	3	2 plastic bottles	2 meals ale & 5 Kg bar-ley for ritual
11.	Bumskor (monks tour village household reading scriptures) Provisions for monks, Mon (musicians), tralpa and others.			
12	Put grass clods on sides of irrigation			

	channels. Went to see fields at Thaknak (lower village area) which were drying up			
13	See 12 (grass clods)			
14-15	See 9			
16	Usual work			
17	See 9			
18	Tried to get water-unsuccessful			
19	Only barley fields got water	10	6 spades	3 meals
20	Wheat fields watered.	4	1 spade	"
21	Water-making (rain or sun to melt snow) ritual at monastery Contributed Rs.20 for ritual. Bought Rs.684 of butter at Leh.			
22	Same ritual of 21, held at northern interior of village			
23-24	Irrigated fields			
25	Usual work. Bought medicine for ill labrang worker			Rs.5
26	Irrigated fields. Kabgyed ritual upcoming-arranged labor.			
27	Kabgyed cleaning, bought 2 brooms. Got firewood ready	3		Broom Rs.6. meals
28	Borrows tables, carpets, many other items Bought Labrang worker pants and shoes			Rs.75
29	Kabgyed Drelzin (see Chapter 7) and other preparations. 2 chunpas (corvee laborers) come to work.			
30	Kabgyed prayer congregation begins. Bought vegetables. See Chapter 7 for Labrang work and sponsorship during Kabgyed ritual.	4		meals

July 1981

2	Get monastery rooms ready for guests. 1st day of **cham** (ritual dance). Bought vegetables (Rs.29)			meals for 50 monks. 10 workers. Tsampa & ale
3-4	Cham. Out of 13 chunpas (see 28) 8 came.	18		
5-6	Returned loaned items.	7		
7	Weeded vegetable field			
8	Irrigated fields	4		
9-10	"			
11	Irrigated trees at night			
12	Sold grass			Rs.400
13	Washed & dried barley grains before roasting Accompanied Labrang guests to high pastures	2	2 tarpaulins	
14-15	Roasted barley grains	2	roasting pan	meals
16-17	Ground grains	2		meals
18	Irrigated fields			
19	H.H. arriving with 2 guests. Went to Leh.			
20	H.H. & guests arrive at monastery. Irrigated fields			
21	Kitchen duties for H.H.	1		meal
22	See 21. Watered vegetafields.			
23	See 21. Labrang guests leave.			
24-25	Usual work			
26	H.H. leaves for Changthang			
27-28	Mounds made for potatoes	4	2 spades 1 hoe	
29	Irrigated trees at night			
30	Went to high summer pastures to check animals .			
31	Usual work			

August 1981

1	Ground barley flour	1	
2	Made new chuskor (water powered grinding mill) Went 3 times to check	4	

	water diversion on planted grass enclosure			
3	Dyed nambu (woolen material. Mill making completed. Had drums made	3		2 tarpaulines
4	Visited households with author in north & central village to recheck demographic data. Completed drum making.			
5	In fields with Patawari (land surveyor). Irrigated fields.			
6	With Patawari. Reskined drums. Irrigated fields.	4		Rs.50 to Patawari
7	With Patawari. Lunch with author at headman's house.			
8	With Patawari.			
9	See 4. Data of south village. See 8. Checked monastery rooms for rainfall damage.			
10	Usual work			
11	Hrupla (harvest ceremony). Arranged labor for next day.	3		
12	Hrupla.	3		Rs.10
13	Repaired irrigation channels	12		Tsampa & ale
14	Sun-dried vegetables			
15	Brought soil to stables			

APPENDIX C

CASH AND SOME GRAIN EXPENDITURE ON THE LABRANG AGRICULTURAL ESTATE: NOVEMBER 1980 TO AUGUST 1981

November 1980

Date	Description	Amount Cash (Rupee)	Amount Grain (Khal)
7	Bus Fare to Leh	2.50	
8	1 Dozen matches	2.00	
9	Rat poison for granary	2.50	
13	Returned barley grain to keeper of inner temples		1.0
14	Packets of soap	10.0	
15	Blacksmith yearly salary (barley)		2.0
16	**Sang.** Person helps smoke Juniper (pine variety) for ritual		0.5
17	**Chang** (ale) for workers bringing soil from fields to latrines		3.0
23	Bought red paint	6.0	
	Two-way bus fare to Leh	5.0	
	Pray flags	20.0	
	String	6.0	
	Red paint	28.0	
	Incense	7.0	
	Nails	2.0	
	Window glass and curtains for labrang guests (my wife and myself)	410.0	
	More window glasses	280.0	
24	Ale for entertaining villagers		10.0
25	10 packets of bean threads	27.0	
	Garam masala (curry spices)	2.0	
	Black pepper	6.0	
	4 shirts for labrang workers	58.0	
	Bought ale for 1 person from Wanla	2.0	

	to carry wood to labrang kitchen at Lamayuru, where Kyabgon is residing		
	Two-way bus fare to Leh	5.0	
Total		881.0	16.5

December 1980

1	Made ale for workers making preparations for labrang purification rites		1.5
	Bought sweets & apricots for ritual	12.50	
8	Ale for New Year's celebration		5.5
10	To New Year's horse race organizer	5.0	
11	Horse race ceremony contributions	14.0	
12	3 mantles for petromax (lamp)	3.0	
13	"Gift" for New Year dancers at monastery	10.0	
14	" " " " at village	10.0	
15	Dozen matches	2.0	
	Made tap on tin containing water	18.0	
17	Leh bus fare for 3 persons	7.50	
	Ate at restaurant	8.0	
	Good Wishes for a marriage	10.0	
Total		105.00	7.0

January 1981

1	Transported grains (given to Kyabin Lower Ladakh) from Leh. Excess baggage on bus.	1.0	
	Bought spices	7.0	
	2 soaps	5.0	
	4 hats & socks for workers, paint	93.0	
8	4 soap, 1 laundry detergent	15.0	
	Dozen matches	2.0	
13	1 cow sick. Oracle consulted (*)	10.0	0.5
	Dresses made for workers	56.0	
15	Extra food for labrang workers	5.0	
17	1 steel spoon	7.0	
	Red chili peppers	2.0	
19	Made ale for workers who will later cut & transport thorns to monastery		3.75
21	Tea (4 kg)	32.0	
	Butter (2 crates)	1190.0	
	Bus & coolie charge, 1 calendar	11.40	
	2 envelopes	.70	

22	Bus fare to Sakti	13.40	
28	Medicine for ill worker	5.0	
30	Goat skin (worn) for labrang worker	40.0	
31	17 match boxes, 5 soaps	15.0	
Total		1510.50	4.25

(*) 0.5 khal=(0.25 of barley grain + 0.25 of barley flour. The oracle was also given 0.5 kg of butter.

February 1981

7	12 cups, Leh bus fare, cold medicine	39.0	
8	Wood burner for Kyabgon	40.0	
19	Goat skin for worker. Tanning fee	10.0	
20	Leh bus fare	5.0	
	Paint for Kabgyed ceremony butter-dough offerings(torma-tsedra)	25.0	
	Cloth material for saddle	44.0	
23	Arranged for army truck. Bus fare	5.0	
	Spices	8.0	
	Visitor to lunch. Red paint	9.50	
Total		185.50	

March 1981

7	Hired-laborers brought soil from field to latrines		1.5
	4 soap, dozen matches, 1 vaseline	14.0	
12	Labor for tree (firewood) cutting	280.0	
	Medicine for ill worker	5.0	
	2 trucks for hauling trees	850.0	
	Ale for workers loading trees		2.5
	2 packets of bean threads, 1kg dal (yellow split peas), 9 breads	16.0	
	1 sack wheat flour	185.0	
	Bus fare (Leh)- to hire trucks	2.0	
	Ale for workers		3.0
17	Bought vegetable seeds	4.0	
18	For workers piling trees (*)		3.25
19	1 bottle of pickle	5.30	
20	Prepared ale for workers who will transport latrine soil to fields		0.75
	Sugar	30.0	
21	Advanced worker salary	900.0	
	Soil transport (see 20, above)		0.75

22	Flour strainer		
	See 20	5.0	
23	"		0.75
25	Bought dal (yellow split peas)	15.0	0.75
26	Incense	3.0	
27	Hired labor brought **yambak** (flat roofing stones for monastery)	169.0	
28	Lamp oil	210.0	
	Malted ale		0.75
	Sack of salt	105.0	
	Strings for Kabgyed ritual	4.0	
	Leh coolie & bus fare	7.0	
	1 barrel for ale fermentation	45.0	
Total		2858.30	14.0

(*) 3.25 khal= barley flour. Also provided 0.75 Kg butter.

April 1981
(see Chapter 5)

May 1981

1	Bed-bug medicine	5.0	
2	0.5 Kg butter, 3 Kg dal	26.0	
	Prepared ale for workers who will plough fields		4.5
3	6 soaps, 1 Kg butter	36.0	
7	Prepared ale (see 2)		1.5
9	Spices, tea strainer, incense, baking soda, broom	29.0	
10	27.5 Kg butter	717.0	
11	15 gallons kerosene (stove use)	120.0	
	Chili peppers	3.0	
14	Food (dal, sugar) for irrigation channel repairers	24.0	
			3.0
15	Made ale (see 2)		
	2 kg of butter to temple keeper		
17	Labor for hanging prayer flags/ale	9.0	3.0
24	Grain from Taru. Bus fare	20.0	
	Salary (wheat) for labrang field watcher at Nyemo		5.0
26	10 packets of bean thread	35.0	
Total		1024.0	17.0

June 1981

2	1 tin of lamp oil for temple keeper	230.0	
	2 kg tea	16.0	
	Vegetable seeds	10.0	
	Rice, wheat flour, bus fare, oil	257.0	
6	Good wishes (tashi-delek) to Tsakma (sub-village) new tent party	15.0	
8	Saffron for ritual	2.0	
9	Onions, cauliflower	12.0	
15	Vegetables, 1 kg sugar	12.0	
	Flag for main pole	94.0	
20	Vegetables	10.0	
22	Made ale for Kabgyed workers		3.0
	Rain ceremony contribution	25.0	
23	Soap, matches, laundry detergent	26.0	
	Medicine for ill worker	5.0	
24	Butter 26 kg	686.40	
	2 brooms	3.0	
29	1 pair shoes for labrang worker	50.0	
Total		1456.65	3.0

July 1981

1	Pair of pants for labrang worker	25.0	
2	1 kg tomato	8.0	
3	Vegetables	29.0	
4	Bought ale for **chunpas** (monastic tax-payers) working during Kabgyed ritual	15.0	
	1 kg **dalda** (vegetable shortening)	18.0	
	2 lemon squash	20.0	
19	Butter 26 kg	665.0	
20	Kyabgon arrives- taxi fare	130.0	
	2 kg onion	8.0	
	1 **khatak ashi** (good quality ceremonial scarf	8.0	
	2 kg tomato	11.0	
	1 window glass	16.0	
	Green pepper	9.0	
	1 kg onion	3.0	
	24 eggs	14.0	
	Cucumber	3.0	
	Turnips	3.0	
	1 other vegetable	1.0	
	Rice 2 kg	10.0	
	1 ordinary **khatak** (see above)	1.0	
	3 kg tea	20.0	
	Leh bus fare for 2	5.0	

21	2 kg potato		
	Salt	6.0	
22	Vim (powdered chlorine cleaner)	2.0	
23	Fee for roasting barley	5.0	
25	12 eggs	40.0	
26	2 kg onions	7.0	
	1 meter white cloth (ritual purposes)	6.0	
31	1 kg tea	5.0	
	Spices, 4 varieties	20.0	
	Black **nambu** (woolen material) dye	8.0	
	Leh bus fare, 2-way	16.0	
	2 keys	5.0	
	2 kg onions	2.0	
		8.0	
Total		1152.0	

August 1981

1	1 kg sugar	10.0	
3	Ale for blacksmith making water mill		0.75
4	Matches, 4 soaps, ale yeast, 2 batteries	30.0	
6	Patawari (land surveyor) "fee"	50.0	
	Vaccination for animals	43.25	
7	12 eggs for Patawari	8.0	
	Onions	4.0	
10	Paid loan from temple keeper	2600.0	
	Apricots	5.0	
	Prayer flags, 5 colors	10.0	
12	**Hruplha** (harvest ceremony)		0.75
13	Medicine for 1 ill labrang **depa** (nyerpa or manager).	5.0	
15	Made ale for grass cutters		2.5
	Lamp oil	255.0	
	1 plastic container	10.0	
	4 strings	30.0	
	Leh bus fare, 2-way	4.5	
18	Kyabgon arrives from Changthang area-		
	Bought 1 kg tomato, 12 eggs	16.0	
	Bobsang (summer picnic) ale		3.0
24	Grass cutting contract	1000.0	
Total		4090.75	7.0

APPENDIX D

THE ECONOMICS OF THE KONGSHA TONGHO: CEREMONY MARKING NOVICE MONK'S ATTAINMENT OF ADULT STATUS

When a boy first enters the monastic order, his parents must provide tea for the monk congregation (**mangjha**). By the time the novice monk is in his teens, he must go to Tibet, preferably, to Drigung, where his receives his monastic training. Only after his stay in Tibet is he entitled to go through the Kongsha ceremony. The giving of **tongho** (prestations, food & beverages) for this ceremony marks the boy's entry into the order as a full fledged adult monk, entitled to his own quarters and some land (**pho-shing** or "salary field").

During this ceremony, the monks, relatives and friends congratulate the novice monk with scarves and money, now that he is **"gho thon dhe"**, or, capable of looking after himself. Until now, the novice had been under the care of his teacher (usually an uncle) and in training in Tibet.[1]

The **first day** of the ceremony is known as **chojang** or **tongchod**. All the monks gather at the novice's teacher's quarters where the young monk provides tea and a morning meal of **kholak** (roasted barley flour dough) and **kyurim**, (vegetable, meat and potato dish). On this day, the novice provides a number of items for rituals that he hands over to the **komnyer**. They include:

[1] After the Tibetan revolt against Chinese occupation in March 1959 and the subsequent destruction of Drigung monasteries, the monks were trained in Ladakh. They are now expected to know how to perform the village household rites, which means to know some reading and writing, play ritual instruments, and learn how to make ritual objects for offerings.

1. Barley flour (3 khal or 16.5 kg)
2. Barley grain (3 khal or 30 kg)
3. Butter 2 kg for torma (see **Conclusion**) decorations
4. 13 khataks (ceremonial scarfs)
5. 0.5 meter of white cloth on which the tormas, vase, mandala, bell and vajra and 5 deities are placed.
6. 0.5 meter of white cloth to cover the **Umzath's** (see Chapter 4) bell, vajra and damaru (hand held drum).
7. Saffron, incense, and lamps (two types: **lamachopa** and **tongsumchochu**) enough to last 24 hours.

On this **first day**, all the monks go to the lower **dukhang** (temple, congregation hall) where they make the tormas. The novice monk serves **mangjha** (tea) and 2 **taki khambir** (a round bread). If there is excess barley flour for making tormas, the komnyer gives a handful to all present.

The **second day** is the main occasion of the Kongsha celebrations. There is an all day prayer congregation during which the novice makes a formal entry. He is dressed in his finest robes and escorted by a small procession consisting of one labrang depa, his teacher, relatives and one Mon drummer. The young monk prostrates before the images and puts a scarf over them. The monks then congratulate him with scarves and money.

In the evening, the novice and the procession enters a nearby house where the laity have gathered. The young monk gets the privilege of sitting at the head and he is showered with congratulatory remarks, scarves, money and tea. His close relatives give him clothes and other items. The laity drink **chang** (ale or beer), converse and dance till midnight. At this gathering, the novice provides:

1. The ale
2. 150 kg of barley grain (for ale?)
3. Barley flour, apricots and **dhonkir** (Ladakhi bread).
4. About Rs.15 to the Mon drummer as a **lamjuk** (thank-you gesture).

During the all day prayer congregation, the young monk provides:

1. 7 **mangjha** or tea[2]
2. 1 morning meal of **shibra** (barley dough) and **kyurim** (see above)
3. **Bakjam** (porridge-like, made from wheat)
4. **Zenzang** (boiled barley flour)
5. 3 **dhonkir** (above), water-soaked apricots, **phemar** (barley dough made with butter)
6. 1.65 kg of barley flour. 0.55 kg are distributed to all monks that are present and 1.1 kg are distributed to all the monks.

On the third and **final** day of the Kongsha celebrations, the novice thanks the monks and the laity for attending the ceremony and for congratulating and providing him with gifts. He shows his appreciation by inviting the monks and his relatives to his teacher's quarters where he serves them tea and food. The rest of the villagers are at a nearby house where the young monk provides the same food and tea, plus ale.

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[2] Whenever there is **mangjha**, the monks receive a handful of barley flour.

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