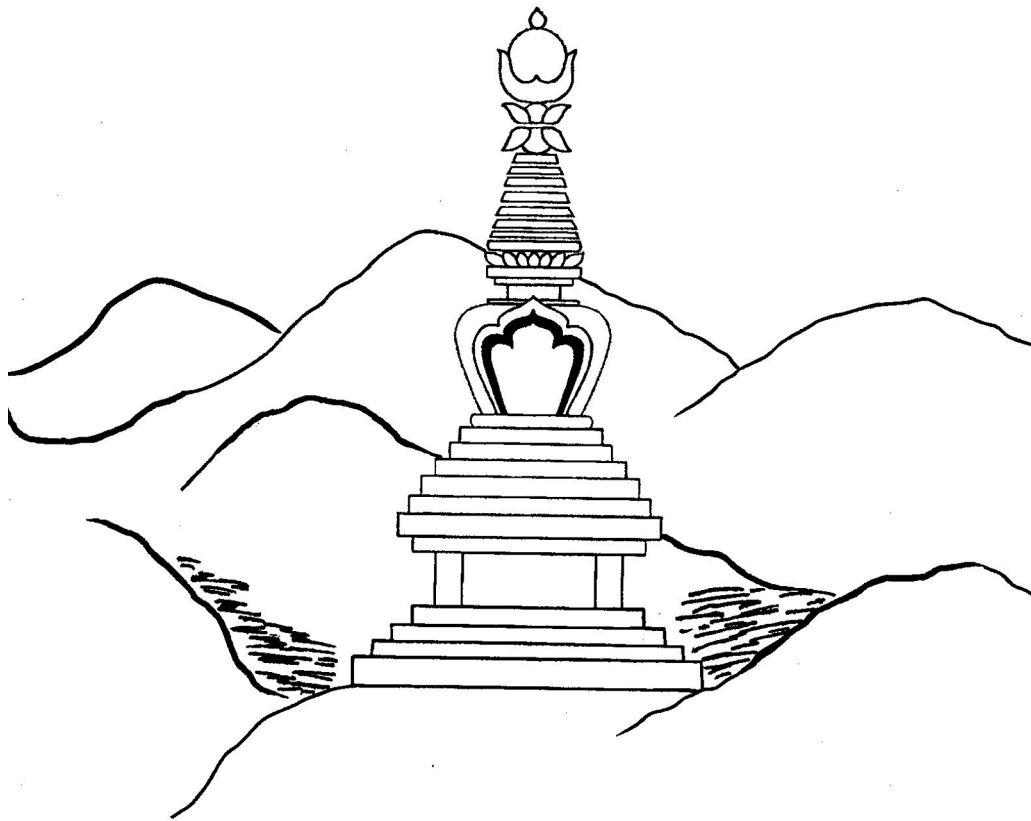


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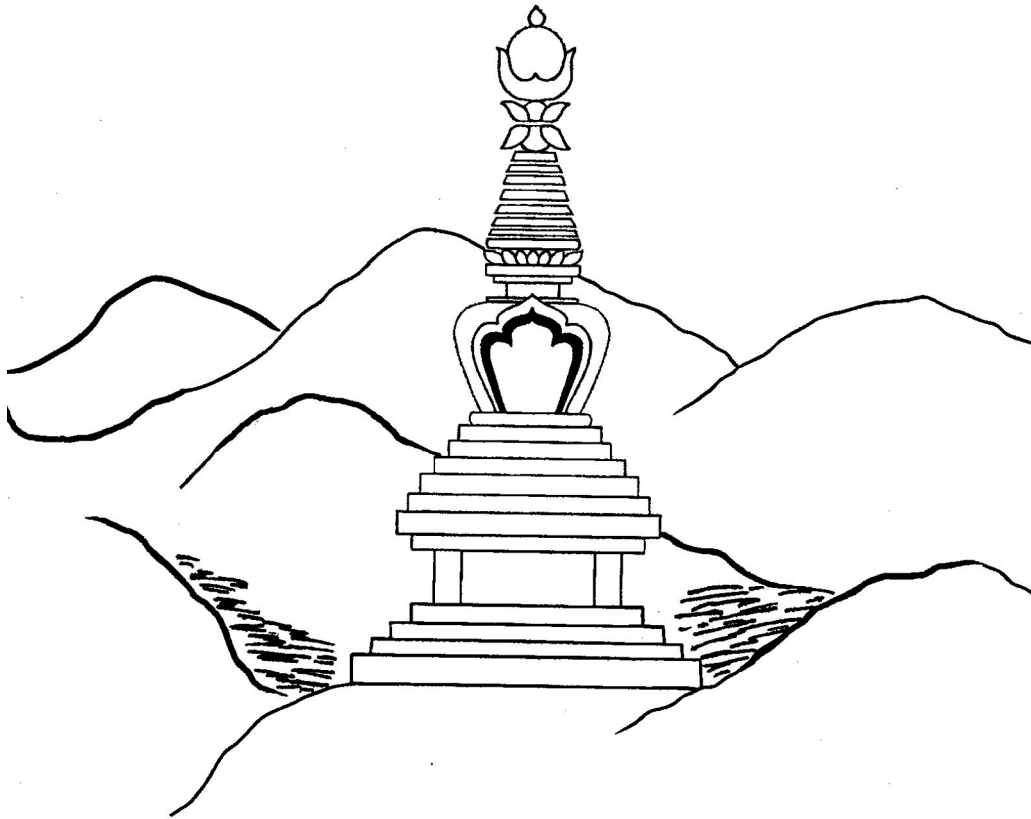
No. 2

NOVEMBER 2005

NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, SIKKIM

The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in the field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field.

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Submission guidelines. We welcome submission of articles on any subject of the history, language, art, culture and religion of the people of the Tibetan cultural area although we would particularly welcome articles focusing on Sikkim, Bhutan and the Eastern Himalayas. Articles should be in English or Tibetan, submitted by email or on CD along with a hard copy and should not exceed 5000 words in length.

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TIBETAN LAMAS IN SIKKIM

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

ANNA BALIKCI-DENJONGPA
Research Coordinator
Namgyal Institute of Tibetology

THIS ISSUE

In April 2005, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama visited Sikkim and gave rNying ma teachings and initiations in Gangtok. In the course of this visit, Tashi Densapa, director of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, presented the recent issues of the *Bulletin of Tibetology* to His Holiness. The Dalai Lama suggested that future contributions to the Bulletin could document the lives and legacies of those Tibetan lamas who came to Sikkim.

Together with Professor Franz-Karl Ehrhard, we started planning an issue along those lines and a number of scholars came forward with articles that not only documented these religious contributions but also inevitably highlighted the historical relation between Tibet and Sikkim. This issue is the first of two focusing on these religious and historical ties.

The great majority of rNying ma monasteries in Sikkim belong to lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med's lineage of sMin grol gling. Commonly referred to as lHa btsun Chen po, he is considered to have been the chief lama present at the coronation of the first Sikkimese king in the 1640s and has since been revered as the Patron Saint of Sikkim. Consequently, little is known about the contributions of the other two Tibetan lamas present at the first coronation: mNga' bdag Phun tshogs rig 'dzin (1592-1656) and Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin chen po. The first two articles in this issue partially address this lacuna by respectively looking into the life of mNga' bdag Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, the history of his lineage, and his little known though prominent role in the early history of the Sikkimese kingdom.

In the first article, *The mNga' bdag family and the tradition of Rig 'dzin zhig po gling pa (1524-1583) in Sikkim*, Franz-Karl Ehrhard presents an overview of the mNga' bdag lineage, the mNga' bdag family's activities in Tibet and Sikkim, and how the findings of the treasure discoverer Rig 'dzin Zhig po gling pa were introduced in Sikkim. The article recounts mNga' bdag Phun tshogs rig 'dzin's journey from the domain of the kings of gTsang in gZhis ka rtse to the south in order to re-open the hidden land and his role in the installation of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as the Buddhist

ruler of the country. mNga' bdag Phun tshogs rig 'dzin then went on to build three monasteries in Sikkim, the best known being Tashiding at the very centre of the hidden land.

In the second article, *The 'Tibetan' formation of Sikkim: Religion, politics and the construction of a coronation myth*, Saul Mullard discusses the coronation of the first Sikkimese Chogyal and presents the biographies of lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med and mNga' bdag Phun tshogs rig 'dzin, two of the three lamas present at the coronation at Yoksam. The author then takes a closer look at the respective roles and activities of the two lamas in the early years of the Namgyal dynasty. Contrary to accepted local history, it is suggested that the first coronation actually took place in 1646 instead of the accepted date of 1642, and that mNga' bdag Phun tshogs rig 'dzin was the most prominent lama in Sikkim at the time, the mNga' bdag lineage enjoying state-led religious patronage in the seventeenth century. The article concludes with a brief study of the competing position of the two major rNying ma pa lineages in Sikkim, the declining fortunes of the mNga' bdag lineage following the events of the Bhutanese invasion of c.1700 and the final ascendancy of the sMin grol gling branch thanks to the efforts of the third Chogyal Phyag rdor rnam rgyal and 'Jigs med dpa' bo, the third incarnation of lHa btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med.

In line with His Holiness the Dalai Lama's suggestion, Professor Franz-Karl Ehrhard thought that this issue of the Bulletin should also address those lamas who made contribution to the establishment of Buddhism in Sikkim in more recent years. The third article *A short biography of four Tibetan lamas and their activities in Sikkim* by Tsultsem Gyatso Acharya presents the lives and activities of four lamas who resided or continue to reside in Sikkim today: the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje (1924-1981), the 4th Dodrup Chen Thubten Thinley Palzangpo (b.1927), Serdup Dungzin Paljor Lhundup Dorje (1917-1980), and the 10th Rigzin Yolmo Tingkyey Gonjang Tulku, Orgyen Jigme Thinley Kunkhyab (b.1961).

It is hoped that this article will be of particular interest to local Sikkimese and students who wish to gain a better understanding of the lives and contributions of these Rinpoches and their monasteries that are in many ways much part of our lives in Gangtok.

This issue is completed by a book review of Kurt Meyer and Pamela Deuel Meyer's *In the Shadow of the Himalayas: Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim: A Photographic Record by John Claude White 1883-1908* and an obituary of Dr Rigzin Ngodup Dokhangpa (1943-2005), Research Officer, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology.

NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AT THE NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY

Photo exhibition: the Namgyal Dynasty of Sikkim

In July 2006, the Chief Minister of Sikkim Pawan Chamling opened the institute's second exhibition of historic photographs. As stated in a local newspaper "Although the Namgyal dynasty gave Sikkim 12 kings and ruled for 333 years (from 1642 to 1975), the years following the Merger witnessed an almost conscious attempt to deny them their place in Sikkim's history" (Now! 20 July 2006). This exhibition has taken a modest first step in restoring their place in history by presenting 65 photographs carefully documenting the lives, families and successive residences of the recent kings: Sidkeong Namgyal (1819-1874), Thutob Namgyal (1860-1914), Sidkeong Tulku (1879-1914), Tashi Namgyal (1893-1963), and Palden Thondup Namgyal (1923-1982).

The exhibition is part of the institute's long-term project to locate, digitise and document historic photographs of Sikkim from both Sikkim and abroad. The photographs were collected and the exhibition was constructed by Tenzin C. Tashi and Dr Anna Balikci-Denjongpa, and will remain open until the summer of 2007. An illustrated book on the history of the Namgyal dynasty is in the works.

Religious and social history of Sikkimese monasteries

This project was initiated in the summer of 2006 when its multi-disciplinary team went on a reconnaissance tour of western Sikkimese monasteries and initiated field research at Tashiding.

The primary focus of the project is to gather historical information on Sikkimese monasteries, to study the development of the social and religious environment surrounding both the monasteries themselves and their location as a focus for social life. The project is designed to chart the development of such religious and social institutions over the course of history and assess the changes that have taken place from the early seventeenth century up to the present day. The detailed study will concentrate on approximately 12 to 15 monasteries supplemented by a complete list of all Sikkimese monasteries with information regarding the location, year of foundation, religious school/lineage and estates of each institution.

Linguistic Survey of Sikkim

From October 2006, under the leadership of Dr Mark Turin, the institute has been collaborating with the Department of Human Resource Development (HRD), the former Department of Education, to carry out the first phase of a modern linguistic survey of Sikkim.

After a month-long visit by Dr Turin in November 2005, during which the project proposal was refined and submitted to the HRD, it became clear that the most substantial component of this research project would be visiting every Secondary and Senior Secondary School in Sikkim where all students in Classes VIII and above would complete a survey on language use, multilingualism and their competence in different tongues. To date, over 5000 completed questionnaires have been returned and the results are being entered into a database. Once complete, this data set will be returned to the Department of Human Resource Development as a resource for curriculum planning and teacher training.

Dr Turin is working with two assistants affiliated to the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, and the project will continue through 2007. Alongside structured surveys in schools, the research team are also assessing language use in public policy and administration, and disaggregating census data from the 2001 Indian Census. The findings will be published in the *Bulletin*.

Sikkim Ritual Video Archive

This visual anthropology project aims to produce a documented video record of Sikkim's vanishing indigenous and Buddhist cultures. Its primary purpose is to record and preserve the meaning and proper performance of Sikkim's rituals within their social and economic context.

The project's second film, *Cham in the Lepcha Village of Lingthem* (2006) has just been completed. These religious dances were beautifully filmed by Dawa Tsering Lepcha in his own village monastery in the Lepcha reserve of Dzongu. In the course of this three day village event, the deities who emerge in the period between death and rebirth make their rhythmic appearances followed by the Lord of Death who judges one's good and bad deeds in the after life.

The project's first film, *Tingvong: A Lepcha Village in Sikkim* (2005) was screened at several ethnographic film festivals around the world. Among these were the Film Festival of the Royal

Anthropological Institute in Oxford, the Bilan du Film Ethnographique in Paris, and Beeld voor Beeld and the Himalayan Film Festival both in Amsterdam. The film won a price at the North-East Documentary Film Festival in Shillong.

The film illustrates the changes that the Lepcha of the Dzongu reserve, North Sikkim, have undergone in recent decades. From the 1940s, the Lepcha of Tingvong village gradually abandoned hunting, gathering and the slash and burn cultivation of dry rice. The introduction of irrigated paddy and the cardamom cash crop not only brought the Lepcha within Sikkim's market economy but helped create a surplus which could be invested in religion among other things. In the 1940s, the Lepcha of Tingvong embraced Buddhism and all its associated complex rituals but they did so without abandoning their strong shamanic traditions. Today, both ritual practices exist side-by-side in the village.

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Back issues of the *Bulletin of Tibetology* published between 1964 and 2004 can now be freely viewed and downloaded in PDF format through the website of the institute <http://www.tibetology.net/> or directly from the Digital Himalaya project website <http://www.digitalthimalaya.com/collections/journals/bot/>

The contents of recent issues can be viewed on the institute's website and hard copies may be ordered directly from the institute by contacting the Publication Sales In-charge at nitsikkim@yahoo.co.in

In conclusion, I would like to thank all those who, in various way, contributed in putting this issue together: Khenpo Lha Tsering, Nangzey Dorjee, Tashi Tsering, Sonam Thinlay, Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Mark Turin, Saul Mullard and Tsewang Paljor.

*Gangtok
October 2006*

