

Lamaist Laity and Sangha
in West Bengal, India

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Buddhism came to Tibet more than a millenium after the Sermon in the Deer Park and centuries after Nagarjuna had expounded the "Doctrine of the Void." In its historical development in Tibet, Buddhism acquired certain distinctive characteristics. Sharing with other Mahayana traditions the great stress on the Bodhisattva career, it concentrated not on the role of the Arhat and the individual quest for Nirvana, but on the transmission and fulfillment of the doctrine whereby "all can become Buddha." Tibet's Bodhisattvas do not abandon their task after a few lives, but are believed to continue by incarnation through the generations. They manifest themselves as the *sprul sku*, known to the West as "reincarnations," or "Living Buddhas," and as the true Lama (bLa-ma).

Thus, despite the confusion and controversies that have arisen from too broad a use of the term "Lama," there is still justification for the use of the terms "Lamaism" for the Tibetan interpretations of Buddhism and "Lamaist" to designate those who adhere to these interpretations. Certainly, for the purposes of this paper, which will discuss the situation of these kinds of Buddhists in India, the general term "Lamaism" seems to offer far fewer possibilities for utter chaos than if it were to be sprinkled with "Tibetan-Tibetan Buddhists," "Sherpa-Tibetan Buddhists," and so on. Furthermore, such a designation should indicate that, although the scene is set within the present-day political boundaries of India, the Sangha and laity under examination do not represent a continuity of Indian Buddhist development since the early days of Buddhism in Bengal, nor the "return" to Buddhism sparked by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in India in the 1950's. Rather, they constitute a relatively recent, that is, nineteenth century, "introduction" of Lamaism as a result of the political and economic developments in northern India in the

past century and a half, during which India's borders expanded to include Lamaists within it.

To properly interpret the more recent relationships between Lamaist laity and their Sangha some reference to the relations that obtained between them in Tibet is in order. For more than three hundred years the Lamaist Sangha, or the monastic body, was an all-pervasive factor in Tibetan life. Prior to the developments of the last decades, the members of the Tibetan Sangha individually and corporately were the effective controlling elements in secular as well as ecclesiastical and doctrinal affairs. There is no need to recount here the broad scope of political, economic, and other authority vested in representatives of the monastic community. Suffice it to say that even in ordinarily secular fields such as commerce and trade, international relations, and domestic government, the Sangha's representatives held final authority. By contrast, no secular authorities could successfully hope to dominate Tibetan monastic matters, except for the periods of Manchu and Communist Chinese control. This overwhelmingly powerful secular and ecclesiastical authority is the classic picture of Lamaism and its lay-Sangha relationships that have become so familiar to both Western and Oriental scholars. It is a picture in which the multiple secular as well as religious roles of the Sangha have thoroughly colored and, to some extent, distorted the more familiar Buddhist ties between the laity and the monkhood.

For some purposes of analysis, however, we are fortunate in being able to examine Lamaist lay-Sangha relations in an area where the Sangha totally lacks these nonecclesiastical powers. I will focus this essay on the lay-Sangha relations obtaining in the Darjeeling municipality, Darjeeling District of West Bengal, with minor references to other parts of the district and adjoining areas and to some developments in Calcutta. Only for contrast or clarification will the classic picture be mentioned. The data on which this paper is based were obtained primarily before the upheaval in Tibet in 1959 and the mass influx of refugees into northern India.*

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The British annexed the Darjeeling District region west of the Tista River in the course of their dealings with the little kingdom of Sikkim. Annexation occurred in stages, from the 1830's to the 1860's. However, from the time that the British first began negotiating to acquire possession of the district, the nature of the population and its cultural orientations sharply contrasted with what had preceded British occupation. The former Sikkimese hinterland was radically transformed. Almost from the first, summer residences for government officials and for other European and Indian ruling families established Darjeeling as a highly Westernized community. Later the sparse Sikkimese population was further overwhelmed as the British brought in large numbers of Nepalese to clear the lands, to work the newly created tea and cinchona plantations, and, after 1857, to provide the British with a politically safe army.

To encourage these developments, the British reorganized the system of land ownership. All lands were government owned, to be rented out or given in permanent settlement for certain specific purposes that did not include the purpose of founding or supporting Lamaist monasteries or temples. Furthermore, the reorganization quite effectively deprived the existent monasteries of the landed estates that Sikkim had settled upon them. Otherwise, except for removing the Darjeeling monastery (now Bhutia Busti gompa) from the crest of Observatory Hill so that its activities would not disturb the Anglican congregation's Sunday services, British policy was primarily one of passive toleration. This meant minimal active interference with, and less support for, the Lamaist system. Thus, for the most part, the British were content to have Sikkim continue its supervision over most of the monasteries, despite a rising aversion of the Darjeeling laity to such an arrangement. Early in the twentieth century the British did go so far as to grant a Rs. 30 (about \$10.00 then) monthly grant to the monastic school at Ghoom, the only dGe-lugs-pa (yellow, or orthodox, sect) monastery in the area. However, this act was designed for its effect on Anglo-Tibetan relations, not for its aid to the local Lamaists.

Despite the absence of active interference, the location of the monasteries and temples in the area of political India (thus, they were subject first to British and then to Indian governmental policy) guaranteed that they would lack the degree of independence and self-sufficiency that they enjoyed in Sikkim itself.

Thus, in no instance west of the Tista River did a monastery occupy the position of landlord or estate holder. Instead, the Lamaist adherents might find it necessary to acquire a suitable plot of land by leasing property from a Hindu or other landlord. Some donor or donors would have to assume the responsibility for meeting the terms of the lease, or the monastery could conceivably be seized. Furthermore, Lamaist monasteries and temples were not automatically exempted from taxation. Since Indian independence, there are only two grounds on which they can obtain tax-exempt status. Either the monastery or temple has to qualify as a public place of worship or it has to plead extreme hardship. The latter grounds further preclude the possibility of the monastery or temple holding any lands capable of producing support. The former grounds also encompass the monasteries and temples, such as that of Sakyong, and others east of the Tista. These monasteries were able to retain their landholdings because this territory was acquired from Bhutan at a later date, when British land policy had changed. However, the exemption from tax is applicable only to the actual monastery compound. In these instances the possible rental value of the buildings is assessed. The land occupied by the buildings is also assessed if it is classified as arable. There is also a proliferation of other taxes or cesses, for water, electricity, holding, conservancy, and so forth. All assessments are made on an annual basis. As long as the monastery remains "public," the assessments is waived in toto.

However, in order to qualify for such status, management of the "public place of worship" has to be vested in a group of trustees registered with the government as the "public's representatives." These trustees have to give the government an annual account of the monastery's financial and administrative affairs. As the representatives of the public, the trustees have to be selected by the lay adherents, not by the clergy. Clerical representation has to be minimal. The trustees have individual terms of office and serve for fixed periods. In other words, the financial and administrative affairs of each monastery or temple must be in the hands of a "lay managing committee" or else the monastery is legally viewed as a "private enterprise." As such it is subject to taxation and scrutiny as a source of private income. This safeguarding of the "public's" interest has been of major concern to the independent Indian government.

Furthermore, fulfilling the qualifications of a public institu-

tion produces not only the negative good of tax-exemption. It also offers the positive attraction of possible subsidies as schools or as "monuments to ancient tradition" or as "cultural heritages." Thus, today every monastery and most of the small temples in the district have their lay managing committees.

There are other areas in which British passivity and Indian activity have drastically altered Lamaist lay-Sangha relations. In both Tibet and Bhutan, and perhaps implicitly in Sikkim, the ranks of the Sangha were constantly replenished by the institution of the *lama khral*. This was actually a form of labor tax, whereby one son from each taxable family (the definition of which varied from place to place) was drafted into the monastic order. Under the British, unless the monastery, such as the one in Sakyong, had claims on tenants who worked its land, it had no legal means to enforce the *khral*. Under the Indians the concept itself is illegal, whether or not tenantry is involved.

Thus the monasteries in the district lack land, lack political power, and lack control, even over their own financial matters. To this inventory of "lacks" or diminutions from the "classic" situation must be added the effect of the institution's being the religious expression of a very small minority group in a secular or quasi-secular state. In Tibet and Bhutan, even in those instances where the monastery lacked wealth and political authority, it still offered great secular attractions as a channel for potential social mobility. In the Westernized urban milieu of Darjeeling the channels for education, for economic and social advancement, for political influence, and for status in general are far more extensive outside the realm of the Sangha. In fact, one's chances for social mobility are diminished rather than enhanced by the time spent within monastery walls.

Not only has the position of the monastic community been drastically circumscribed by the inhibiting regulations of a non-Lamaist government; it has also been altered by the peculiarities of the Lamaist laity in the area.

In Tibet, Bhutan, and Sikkim the monastery's lay community has been relatively homogeneous. The community has had a relatively stable historical and geographic continuity. The laity's ties with the local Sangha have also been relatively stable for a long period of time. The relations between the lay community and the Sangha had been shaped largely by political, economic, and social factors over which the individual members of the lay community had little control. In these "Lamaist

States" the monastic order had been either the source or the tool of the ruling group. As such it had been actively involved in welding individual communities into the broader cultural units. At the same time it had contributed to the jealous retention of regional or "national" distinctions, which frequently were associated with the predominance of a particular sect of Lamaism.

On the Indian side of the border all this is different. Here is a general Lamaist community, composed of representatives of many widely different groups. In effect, Darjeeling represents a cross-section of the total Lamaist population. There are the people from Sola and Khumbu in Nepal, who now are known collectively as Sherpa. According to tradition they had migrated from eastern Tibet, possibly during the sixteenth century. Since then they had been living under Hindu-Nepali control until they began to migrate as a trickle, then a stream, into the district. There are also Yorlmo, a people who trace their origins to the Ngari-Khorsum region of western Tibet. They had been under Hindu-Nepali influence for so long that they were being absorbed into the Nepali caste system. There are also the Amdowa from northeastern Tibet, the Khamba from the southeastern Khams region, and Ladakhis, as well as people from the central provinces of Tibet. There are Lepcha, originally a simple slash-and-burn horticultural people; Sikkimese, who are a mixed Tibetan and Lepcha group; and Dukpa, as the people of Bhutan are called. Not only is the Lamaist community heterogeneous with regard to ethnic background, but this heterogeneity is further enhanced by the fact that some members of each group probably had come to the District generations ago, while others came more recently and some are still coming. Thus the community is composed of grand old families that have lived in Darjeeling for generations and of individual "greenhorn" immigrants. With very few exceptions, almost entirely limited to the Yorlmo of Alubari and the Dukpa of Sakyong, they have not continued in their old pastoral or agricultural patterns of living. The vast majority left their herds, their fields, their families, and their homes behind—most of the anchors to their traditional ways of life. In their new environment they became coolies, porters, servants, laborers, shopkeepers, and entrepreneurs. In conformity with the basically European standards of Darjeeling, the men have cropped their hair and adopted Western dress.

In short, no matter when they came, or from where, they have been precipitated into a primarily urban situation and have

become dependent upon a wage economy. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the population of the District is Nepalese. To exist in this milieu, all but the most recent arrivals have adopted Nepali as their *lingua franca*.

In their homelands the relations between the lay and monastic communities had been fixed at least as much by ancient political, economic, and social customs as by the laity's present or past religious sentiments. All these former props, however, could not continue in an area where the Sangha not only lacked the sponsorship or protection of the state, but was also stripped of its privileged position as landlord and as the gateway to the secular "better life." Therefore it comes as no surprise to discover that the majority of the present-day monastic population consists of individuals who have come to India as monks, having undergone their initiation and training in Sikkim, Tibet, or Bhutan. The proportion of monks who had served their novitiate in India as offspring of India-domiciled parents has never been large and is probably still declining. The only exceptions to this are to be found among the offspring of the noncelibate clergy, such as at the rNying-ma-pa Alubari and Sikkimese monasteries. In short, in most instances the district's lay community remains largely unrepresented in the ecclesiastical realm.

While the rigors of monastic discipline fail to attract an adequate supply of new members of the Sangha, the existence of the Sangha, as expressed in the monasteries and temples, is a necessity for the lay community. It, as the physical expression of the Buddhist triad, must provide the laity with the religious experiences that assure them of better "lives-to-come." The fact that the majority of the monks must be imported does not diminish the community's vital concern that the institution shall survive. The district laity's minimal role as a source of personnel for the Sangha is countered by the greatly expanded scope that the laity enjoys in managing monastic business. Most striking in this regard, of course, is the role of lay managing committees, already mentioned.

The lay managing committees help to unite the diverse lay communities into a general Lamaist laity. Since these committees must have dealings with the government and with the public, members of the committees are generally chosen on the basis of substance as well as of merit. To be a member of one such committee is itself an indication that the individual is

recognized as possessing both these qualities. To be a member of several or all of these committees is evidence that one possesses those qualities in undeniable abundance. Thus, for example, in the 1950's Ging, Bhutia Busti, and Ghoom monasteries represented three different sects, namely, rNying-ma-pa, bKa-rgyud-pa and dGe-lugs-pa. They also represented different national ties, namely, Sikkimese and Tibetan. Yet many of the same names occurred in each monastery's lay managing committee. RNying-ma-pa Sikkimese, Sherpa, and Yorlmo sat on the board of the Tibet-affiliated dGe-lugs-pa monastery at Ghoom, along with bKa-rgyud-pa Sikkimese and dGe-lugs-pa Tibetans. DGe-lugs-pa Tibetans and rNying-ma-pa Sikkimese, Sherpa, and Yorlmo participated in the *combined* lay managing committee of the rNying-ma-pa monastery at Ging and the bKa-rgyud-pa monastery at Bhutia Busti. Exclusion of potential members from the committee was not based on community or on sect, but on personal factors such as animosity or distrust.

The power to select members and the extent of the authority of these lay committees varied considerably. It seems to have been correlated with the feelings of solidarity between the monks and the lay community. Officially, at Ghoom the selection of the lay managing committee members was supposed to be the prerogative of the monks. Clerical representatives participated actively in the committee meetings. On the other hand, in the case of Ging and Bhutia Busti, selection was a function of a lay "membership," and the clergy had no voice. In the latter situation the lay committee's functions extended even into areas that might normally be considered matters for clerical jurisdiction. The president of the lay committee had the authority to receive and to decide upon the applications of any new monks who sought to enroll at the monasteries. The committee apportioned the posts and duties that supplied sources of income for the holder. It appointed the head monk and other monastery officials and fixed the rates to be charged for all ceremonies. It could forbid the monks to seek extra contributions or to complain through any other channels. It even determined which monks were to handle the arrangements for observances, and it had enforced a written agreement from the head monk that he would abide by the committee's decisions.

Apparently in some instances these lay managing committees might even have had the authority to determine what sect affiliations were to be continued or instituted. Thus, the min-

utes of Bhutia Busti's lay managing committee reveal a raising of the question and a decision to continue the monastery's adherence to the bKa-rgyud-pa sect. In the case of a newly organized monastery in Calcutta in 1954, some lay members actively sought eventual dGe-lugs-pa affiliation, while others thought in terms of either Sikkimese rNying-ma-pa or bKa-rgyud-pa connections.

The lay managing committees had the functions which made them the effective governing body of the monastery. The whole area of "collecting and disbursing" had been removed completely from clerical jurisdiction and decision. The committee decided whom to approach for contributions and how to expend the funds that came into the monastery, even including the question of the salaries for the "stipendary monks." It also determined what the monks themselves were to contribute to the monastery's general fund when they officiated at particular monastic "concessions." The lay committee governed the disposition of properties bequeathed to the monastery or purchased on its behalf. An example of this authority is found in a general rule made by Ghoom Monastery's managing committee, which stipulates that certain buildings donated to the monastery should be used as quarters for "celibate monks only." It even decided which particular celibate monks were to receive permission to occupy this property.

In some instances members of the lay committee sat as *panchayat* to settle disputes that arose between various members of the clergy, even when these disputes may have had doctrinal bases. Thus, for example, in Ghoom's sister monastery at Kalimpong, disputes between Tibetan monks and monks raised in the district reached such a pitch a few years ago that open battle broke out between the two factions. Only the direct intercession of the Dalai Lama sufficed to produce an uneasy truce. In Ghoom this role was filled by the managing committee. The same factional disagreements and some of the same Tibetan personnel were involved. However, here, before the matter reached the same stage, the committee "convinced" the Tibetan elements to retire gracefully with a sizable contribution as a gesture of community regret at their departure. By contrast, in Tibet and in Sikkim there had been innumerable instances of lay disputes being referred to the monastic community for settlement. In other instances rival monasteries had even instigated such lay disputes. Monastic disputes had been brought before ecclesi-

astical hierarchs in most instances, or had been resolved by the ruler. Compare this with the district situation, where it has been the organized laity that has mediated, or instigated, monastic disputes.

Organized lay involvement with the affairs of the Sangha may take other forms as well. These other forms are more apt to pertain specifically to a particular monastery. Usually the involvement with the affairs of the monastery on the part of these organizations will be only a part of their total role, a reflection of the position of the monastery as a "community enterprise." In some cases, the formal organization is composed of all the people who comprise a particular community, so that there is little distinction between the ethnic group and the monastery's organized lay community. An example of this is found among the Yorlmo. The Yorlmo form one of the smallest Lamaist groups in the Darjeeling area. They consist of about two hundred families in Darjeeling and outlying groups in other areas of the district. They are one of the few Lamaist communities that have continued agricultural activities, although they, too, are caught up in the urban patterns of Darjeeling. About fifty years ago a well-to-do Yorlmo leased land from Alubari's landlord, the Maharaja of Burdwan. He donated the plot as a site for a Yorlmo monastery. The continuing upkeep of the monastery is a function—perhaps the main function—of an organization known as the Yorlmo Sogchi (*tshogs-grig*), or Committee of the Whole. Both monks and laity belong. The Yorlmo from the other areas are also members. Thus the monastery at Alubari is truly a "community project," with the entire community formally organized and empowered to take charge of the monastery's secular well-being.

A variation of this occurs in Calcutta, where a mixed community of Sikkimese, resident Tibetan, and Sherpa Lamaists constitute the Himalayan Buddhist Association, which initiated the drive for a monastery. Calcutta's Himalayan Buddhist Gompa, as it is called, is a community project basically similar to the Yorlmo Alubari Gompa, except that the community differs because of its composite nature. In Calcutta the component elements of the heterogeneous community were each too small and too poor to function separately. The Association and the monastery serve all elements in forming a distinct community within the milieu of Calcutta.

Sometimes these formal lay organizations are initiated for

a specific purpose and then disband after having met the particular crisis. In Sakyong, the Dukpa community at one time had been organized into an all-inclusive organization. This organization rescued the Sakyong monastery when it was in danger of having its lands auctioned off to pay for the debts incurred by a dissolute head monk. Eventually, after having designated a lay managing committee that was responsible for the monastery's secular management, the association dissolved. In each of these instances and in numerous others the organized lay community voluntarily has assumed the task of founding or supporting a local monastery.

These voluntary associations usually have other functions on behalf of their members. They also act as mutual-aid societies, community councils, disciplinary bodies, and more-or-less-official representatives of their membership vis-à-vis the rest of the population in the area. Their role in relation to the monastery reflects the fact that the Sangha is an integral symbol not only of their religion, but also of the community's identity.

Despite the variations to be found in the extent and nature of community support for the various monasteries, the relationship between the laity and the monastery gives the laity effective control and, in some cases, outright ownership of the monastery. Whether this control is expressed in the form of a membership organization—such as in the Yorlmo, Dukpa, and Calcutta examples—or as lay managing committees, the monasteries are expressly regarded as belonging to the community, rather than as the community belonging to them. This difference in attitude can be seen most clearly in the power vested in the lay managing committees, the community's or the "public's" representatives.

Certainly the foregoing presents sharp distinctions between the "classic" Tibetan pattern of community-monastery relations and those found on the Indian side of the border. In no secular sphere can the India-based monastery claim the community or its members as its clients or subordinates. Rather, the situation is reversed and the monastery itself is completely subordinate, in the secular realm, to the community upon which it must depend for support and protection. The Sangha looks to the lay community as mediator and protector, roles more usually assigned to the monastic order. Only in the ecclesiastical or spiritual realm does the lay community assume its familiar dependent or subordinate position.

Even here, however, the altered relationship in the secular sphere of activity leaves its mark on the local laity. For example, the diminishing supply of local novices means that the opportunities for religious training and indoctrination have been curtailed. For the bulk of the laity this is even more true. Parents take their children with them when they make offerings or participate in observances at the monastery. Growing up in a predominantly Nepali-speaking milieu, many of the children and young people cannot follow or understand much, if any, of the intoned chants. Barriers to communication are further imposed by the fact that at least some members of the clergy are relative newcomers to the area and cannot explain or expound in Nepali. Miscellaneous adults explain the significance of the rituals and the reasons for respecting the monks. Frequently, but not necessarily, these adults are members of the Sangha. However, in any event, they are acting less in their monkly capacities and more in the role of parental surrogates and informed elders.

There have been some very telling commentaries on this minimal indoctrination by the monasteries in the district. One informant confided that he instructed his children, before they went abroad for higher schooling, to read Waddell and Bell's books on Tibetan religion so that they would be adequately prepared to answer questions about their religion. The Calcutta Association once desired to import Bhutia Busti's *'cham* (masked dance ritual) for a "benefit" performance and had to be coldly informed that the *'cham* was a religious ceremony, not just a spectacle. The Calcutta performance would have had to take place at sometime other than the traditional date, because the monks were needed in Darjeeling during the proper period. The Calcutta suggestion was comparable to some newly established cathedral requesting the performance of a Christmas High Mass in July in order to raise funds. Yet the incongruity did not seem to have been recognized by the lay committee that had made the request.

With all the limitations and restrictions incurred by the Sangha's position in India, the question inevitably arises, is Lamaism in India moribund? Stripped of the multiple facets that made Lamaism dominant in Tibet, can Tibetan Buddhism compete against the much more powerful pressures and attractions of Hinduism and Christianity to which its own potential

adherents are constantly subjected? For that matter, can Buddhism of any sect, dependent as it is upon the presence of a Sangha, survive in situations where there is a political authority that is indifferent, if not actively hostile, toward Buddhism? Does lay support of the Sangha require the impetus of active political approval? Or must one at least assume that the Sangha can only depend upon the support and alms of a *majority* population, because such support and such alms have been instilled by tradition and backed by mass consensus? Despite its apparent disabilities, the Lamaist Sangha-lay picture in the Darjeeling District provides some surprising answers to the above questions.

The laity that instructed their children to read Western evaluations and discussions of their own doctrines had themselves felt the full weight of British-supported Christian missionary attempts. Schooled in Catholic and Anglican parochial institutions, reading and hearing about the "demonolatry" and "depravity" of their particular schools of Buddhism, twitted by fellow Buddhists—with *metta*, of course—about the alleged corruption and venality and generally unworthy behavior of their monks, the laity has not only been actively supporting the monasteries that it had more or less inherited from the past, it has also been continually establishing new monasteries and temples.

In the reports of Catholic and other missionaries one can see glowing accounts of the numbers of Hindu-Nepalese who have been converted despite the barriers imposed by the caste concept of pollution. By contrast, converting a single Lamaist is compared, in their records, to attempting to climb Mt. Kanchenjunga. The only successful conversions had occurred among minor children who had been taken into the various missions because they had been "abandoned," or were adjudged to be by the missionaries, and among Lepcha villages that had fallen under foreign control during the first period of British expansion into the area, that is, before Lamaism had been solidly established among them. Even conversion in youth seems to be unreliable. One of Darjeeling's most active Lamaist lay supporters in the 1950's had shed his Christianity long before he lost his sobriquet of "Je-su" Pemba.

Groups that had begun to adopt some of the Hindu caste characteristics of their Nepalese rulers have been progressively "de-Hinduized" in the Darjeeling District. While Alubari monastery-lay communities have remained basically Yorlmo,

some Yorlmo have begun to participate in the other lay managing committees. Sherpa who have lived in Darjeeling have returned to their Nepalese homeland, and some have successfully eliminated there the beginnings of caste ritual practices and pollution/purification concepts.

After the Tibetan Uprising of March 10, 1959, the situation of the monasteries in the Darjeeling District, like that of monasteries in Sikkim, Bhutan, and other parts of northern India, changed radically. Not only did His Holiness the Dalai Lama and much of the dGe-lugs-pa hierarchy come down into India; many major incarnates, hierarchs, and other highly learned and highly venerated monks of all the sects also found their way across the border. The district's laity, as well as the lay refugees who took up residence there, had the unprecedented experience of having in their midst the almost legendary "greats" of their faith. Old gompas such as Bhutia Busti experienced a renaissance with the influx of newly acquired monks from Tibet. In fact, in the early 1960's the presence of the revered Karmapa Rimpoche, hierarch of the Ka-rma bKa-rgyud-pa Sect, currently established at Rumtek, Sikkim, transformed Bhutia Busti into a bustling teaching monastery, a role it had not known for generations, if ever before. The Lama Kalu Rimpoche, of the 'Brug-pa bKa-rgyud-pa school, while residing at previously somnolent Sonada, below Darjeeling, had attracted a sizable number of a new class of Sangha members—Western youths, some "hippies" and others presumably fully absorbed in the doctrine. Countless other Rimpoches and Geshes have taken up temporary or more-or-less-permanent residence in the district. Clusters of monks and lay devotees have joined them there. New gompas have sprung up to accommodate and honor some of these. In other instances temporary quarters, such as shops and houses, have been rented. The refugees have also provided young, newly ordained monks who assure the district of an enlarged Sangha for at least the immediate future.

The Theravadin claims to spiritual superiority and more accurate adherence to the teachings of the Buddha have made a considerable impression upon some Lamaists of the district. The reappearance of Burma and Ceylon as independent nations in which Buddhism was the dominant religion has led to several pan-Buddhist conferences which have been attended by both lay and monastic members of the Lamaist communities, who have

returned from these conferences with *strengthened* Lamaist convictions. They have seen similarities in practice within Sinhalese Buddhism and Lamaism. Both had masked dances, both had local deities who needed propitiation, and both had some corrupt monks. However, as one lay Lamaist delegate phrased it, there was "an honest or open corruption to be found among the Lamaist monks," who did not need to conceal their interest in money and the things of this world. And, in terms of doctrine, Lamaism still "offers its hope, its aim, that eventually all can become Buddha."

Here, perhaps, lie the answers to the questions that were posed earlier. In the theme of the Bodhisattva career and the deliberate rejection of the "selfish" quest of the Arhat, the Lamaist communities find both reassurance and reaffirmation of their faith. Whether their Sangha grows or shrinks in number, whether accommodations must be made between the cloistered, celibate ideal and the realities of life in a modern, secular state, there will always be some who will be embodied Bodhisattvas. Despite the numbers of venal or mediocre monks, there will be some who are truly capable and who still selflessly continue through the cycles of rebirths to help and to lead the unenlightened.