



Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines

47 | 2016

Everyday religion among pastoralists of High and
Inner Asia, suivi de Varia

The relationship between monastic and local communities: the example of Lhagang village in Kham Minyag

*Changements des relations entre communautés monastiques et locales :
l'exemple de Lhagang au Kham Minyag*

Sonam Wangmo



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/emscat/2805>

DOI: 10.4000/emscat.2805

ISSN: 2101-0013

Publisher

Centre d'Études Mongoles & Sibériennes / École Pratique des Hautes Études

Electronic reference

Sonam Wangmo, "The relationship between monastic and local communities: the example of Lhagang village in Kham Minyag", *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines* [Online], 47 | 2016, Online since 21 December 2016, connection on 20 September 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/emscat/2805> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/emscat.2805>

This text was automatically generated on 20 September 2021.

© Tous droits réservés

The relationship between monastic and local communities: the example of Lhagang village in Kham Minyag

*Changements des relations entre communautés monastiques et locales :
l'exemple de Lhagang au Kham Minyag*

Sonam Wangmo

Introduction

- 1 Buddhism is an important part of Tibetan civilization and an essential component of many Tibetan people's daily lives. Although notions of monastic and lay community have developed as independent concepts, in reality they are complementary. Lay communities provide labor, supplies and goods, while in return the monastic community fulfills a wide range of the lay community's spiritual needs, in particular the performance of rituals to generate merit for laypeople, to increase their success and happiness, and to protect the community from natural disasters. Melvyn Goldstein and Paljor Tsarong (1985, p. 15) state in their study of Buddhist monasticism that each monk has a responsibility to sever his link to secular life for the welfare of other beings in the temporal world. Yet, monks have to interact with laypeople in order to obtain their material subsistence. Their statement indicates that there are complex relations between monastic and lay communities, which serve to ensure their mutual support and accomplishment of each other's needs.
- 2 This article seeks to understand the relationship between monastic and local communities in the context of social, economic and political transformations in Lhagang (Lha sgang), a village situated in Dartsedo (Dar rtse mdo) municipality in the region of Minyag in Kham (Khams Mi nyag, Eastern Tibet). The analytic focus is on two crucial periods – the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the sociopolitical changes after 2004. First, based on the information collected from interviews, I will investigate the historical context of Lhagang monastery during the Cultural Revolution. Exploring

the religious revival in the 1980s, I will then examine what monks and laypeople did to restore religious sites, including the monastery. I will also discuss how the implementation of new policies and economic reforms has brought changes to both lay and monastic communities, and their actions toward these transitions. Finally I will demonstrate what changes have taken place in the relationship between lay and monastic communities at the present time.

Photo 1. Lhagang village (2014)



© SONAM WANGMO

- 3 The original inhabitants of Lhagang village used to form a pastoral settlement with only thirteen households in the late 1940s and early 1950s¹. Local people still call it “The Thirteen Households of Lhagang”. However, Lhagang was a pastoralist area and it is possible that there were many more uncounted pastoral families at that time. For example, some of the herding families that only lived in their temporary houses during winter were not counted among the households of Lhagang village. There are no other sources available to date on the origin of these thirteen households in Lhagang, but there is a consensus among the villagers to the effect that they had lived there for many generations.
- 4 Today this former nomadic area is well known among both Tibetans and Chinese due to its monastery, Minyag Pel Lhagang Yongdzog Rabga Lhakhang (Mi nyag dpal lha sgang yongs rdzogs rab dga’ lha khang), which is located on the north side of the village. It is considered to be one of the most important Sakya (Sa skya) monasteries in the Minyag region and has a good reputation among local laypeople. The major reason for its significance is that the monastery preserves a Buddha Śākyamuni figure, which many believe equals the so-called Jowo (Jo bo) statue in Lhasa in importance. Therefore, many pilgrims and visitors come to Lhagang, which also led to the early establishment of a tourism industry in Lhagang before similar developments in surrounding towns.

Historical context of Lhagang monastery during the Cultural Revolution and the subsequent Revival

- 5 Lhagang monastery is a relatively large monastic community. In 1950, it had 110 resident monks². In 1956, Sakya Dagchen Jigdral Rinpoche (Sa skya bdag chen 'jigs bral rin po che) and his family visited Kham, staying in Lhagang monastery for more than one week to perform a *Lamdre* (*Lam 'bras*)³ ceremony for local people. In her autobiography, Dagchen Rinpoche's wife briefly mentioned that the monastery was an important pilgrimage center, frequently visited because of the famous Jowo (Jo bo) statue (Jamyang Sakya & Emery 1999, p. 182). However, in her account during her stay in Lhagang, she does not provide any further information about the number of monks or the general situation of the monastery; her focus is on the political situation. A government source referred to as ZS⁴ recorded that Lhagang district⁵ had a total of seven monasteries in 1963, of which Lhagang and Senge (Seng ge) monasteries were the most prestigious ones. These seven monasteries are noted as having 627 monks and two nuns (19.2 per cent of the total population)⁶. These figures indicate the large scale of Lhagang monastery just before the Cultural Revolution.
- 6 The period from 1966 to 1976 was a difficult and dramatic time all over Tibet. Religion became one of the key targets of the Red Guards, and all expressions of Buddhism and popular belief were prohibited. Private spiritual activities and altars were forbidden, countless religious scriptures, sculptures, and murals were destroyed and prayer-wheel walls were torn down (Goldstein 1998, pp. 9-10). Gelek also mentioned this period in his research on Washu Sethar, stating, "not long after the beginning of the cultural revolution in 1966 changes were introduced. All land and livestock were collectivized and the pastoralists worked under a system allotting to each the same benefits, regardless of the amount of work produced carried out or output produced. Organized religion and monasteries were abolished at that time, and a growing number of monks returned home to take part in economic production" (Gelek 1995, p. 56). In such circumstances, Lhagang monastery was also unable to escape: it ceased to function as a center of religious practice and suffered severe damage. For instance, elderly monks told me that many statues were destroyed and many religious texts were burned. An old woman also said that one of the major changes was that the pastoralists reduced their level of work under the collective production system and lost their religious freedom. She also recalled the participation of some local Tibetans in the destruction of old religious texts and other items. She added that these people were now poor and suffered an unhappy life; she believed this to be retribution for having destroyed religious texts and artifacts. However, not many elderly people who went through these hard times are still alive. Some of those I spoke to were children at that time and had few memories of what happened, whereas others had been herding sheep and yaks in the mountains and therefore said they had little knowledge about events in the village⁷. Yet, they insisted that at that time all the monks had to leave the monastery and were forced to revert to secular life.
- 7 This situation continued until the shift in policy launched by the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in December 1978. This historic meeting ushered in a series of wide-ranging reforms dealing with key issues, such as the marketization of China's economy and cultural issues, among them freedom to practice religion (Goldstein 1998, p. 1). According to an old lady, the revival

of religion in Lhagang began rather late, almost two years after the decisions of 1978. However, it was still a dynamic revival that took place in Lhagang with the reemergence of many religious traits similar to those of the past, but with certain modifications.

- 8 At the time of religious revival, a “new” Lhagang emerged. Many religious texts, sculptures and murals had been destroyed or damaged beyond repair. An old monk told me that there was a statue of Karma Pakshi Chokyi Lama, the 2nd Karmapa (Karma pakshi chos kyi bla ma, 1204-1283) in the assembly hall and murals of other Kagyü (Bka’ brgyud) lamas in the main hall, but all were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Today, there is no longer any evidence of Kagyü figures in the monastery. He further stated that the Jowo statue was attacked, but a layman named Sangye (Sangs rgyas) hid the head of the effigy and later returned it to the monastery. Since then, a new Jowo statue has been cast. However, he did not think it was a good idea to let the public know that the present statue was cast after 1978, saying that he feared that people’s devotion would suffer if they knew⁸.
- 9 Half of Lhagang monastery’s land was requisitioned by the local Food Bureau (or Grain Supply Centre) during the Cultural Revolution. The villagers still refer to a well on the west side of the monastery as the “Food Bureau’s Well”, because the Bureau dug it at that time. The monastery only got back a part of that land from the Food Bureau after the post-1978 revival. Later, the Sichuan College of Buddhism (Si khron nang bstan slob grwa) took over the unreturned land, building a monastic school and students’ quarters there, and the Food Bureau was gradually displaced from the monastery’s land. The abbot explained that the Sichuan College of Buddhism was approved by the Central Government and had more authority than the monastery. But it still took a long time to regain the area that had been lost, because people can recall the Food Bureau’s main gate was still in front of the Padmasambhava Hall in 1998. In 1999, Khenpo Dorje Tashi (Mkhan po Rdo rje bkra shis) built an 18-metre high Avalokiteśvara hall on the site where the Food Bureau’s building used to stand.
- 10 The destruction caused a spiritual crisis in Lhagang community. However, most of the monks and laypeople made efforts to save their traditional monastic culture. For example, laypeople appeared to be fervent Buddhist adherents and to see Buddhism as a symbol of ethnic identity and culture. Thus, the lay community has taken an active part in the restoration of religion, and it is important to point out that the revival could not have taken place without the participation of the local residents. Moreover, having been forced to engage in secular life during the Cultural Revolution, not many monks returned to Lhagang monastery when it reopened, as it was difficult for them to abandon their families. Besides, the monastery did not have any stable rental income and monks could not receive donations from laymen as in the past because of restrictions on religion. Therefore individual monks mainly depended on invitations to perform religious rites or services for laypeople. According to a 70-year old monk, since the religious revival, the main source of income has been from the families of monastics. Although it is difficult to make generalizations about the living expenses of monks in Lhagang, the families’ contributions seem to have only met minimal subsistence requirements.
- 11 After the period of destruction, Lhagang monastery’s shrine, murals, and sculptures were repaired, but only partially. Melvyn Goldstein (1998, p. 11) also noted that, “[...] the matrix of beliefs and practices that comprise Tibetan Buddhism have not been

restored to their original state like frozen vegetables defrosted in a microwave oven. Some individual cultural traits have reemerged identical with the past, but others have reappeared somewhat changed, and still others have not reemerged at all". The revival is not a simple recovery and reproduction of the past, but rather a reinvention of a religious tradition that began in the 1980s and still continues. Shifting political landscapes have stamped the history of Lhagang during the Cultural Revolution and strengthened the mutual involvement of monastic and lay communities in the revival of religion.

Sociopolitical and economic transformation in the new millennium

- 12 The official discourse about the minorities of China or the "Western regions" in general is that they are less developed than the central big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, where the majority is Han Chinese. The state began to launch specific policies in the name of development. For example, the "Great Development of the West" campaign (*xibu da kaifa*) launched in 2000 and aimed to accelerate economic development in economically deprived Western regions. Melvyn Goldstein and Cynthia Beall (1991, p.112) also point to China's policy of rapid development in Tibet, "that the government's strive for modernization and increase productivity was enthusiastically conveyed even in remote areas like Phala in Central Tibet". As for the reason behind these policies in Tibetan areas, it has been argued by Emily Yeh (2013, p. 231) that, "[...] the Chinese state has staked the legitimization of its sovereignty over Tibet on Tibetan gratitude for the gift of development." However, these policies have not had as great an effect in Lhagang as in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Nevertheless, the initiatives associated with these strategies attracted mainly Han Chinese tourists to visit Lhagang. But because it took time for local people to become accustomed to the new lifestyle and also due to the SARS restrictions, the number of tourists decreased in 2003. It was only after 2004 that the government began to systematically implement various projects towards urban development, resulting in significant changes in the population and residence pattern in Lhagang as well as in new ways to secure incomes through tourism. Since then, the village can be considered to have entered a new era, which I will term "The New Millennium".
- 13 At the same time, the government promulgated a new policy, called "The New Rural Construction" (*xin nongcun jianshe*), resulting in significant changes in Lhagang. First, the state tried to ensure that urban development was achieved through government-subsidized projects, which focused on infrastructural development, such as road and house construction. Indeed, the vast majority of houses in Lhagang were built during this time. Emily Yeh (2013, p. 231) describes examples of how the state attempts to foster Tibetan life through subsidizing the building of new houses in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. However, in Lhagang, where almost every household was obliged to rebuild their house under this policy, only houses along the road were subsidized; the rest received no support from the state.
- 14 Second, many pastoralists were encouraged by means of various benefits to sell their domestic animals and settle down based on the state's pastoral policies, which assume that serious pasture degradation is underway due to overgrazing (Goldstein 1991, p. 258). Especially many pastoralists from other surrounding places chose to settle

down in Lhagang village under the state's new subsidy scheme of "Poverty Alleviation Through Migration (*yimin fupin*)" launched in 2009, aiming to resettle pastoralists from certain regions into the county towns (Gruschke 2008, p. 6). Finally, with the population having increased dramatically in Lhagang village, job opportunities diversified. Andrew Fischer (2008, p. 23) argues that in the Tibetan areas pastoralists are generally considered to be wealthier than farmers, this being the reason why Tibetan pastoralists tend to be much more resistant towards manual wage labor than Tibetan farmers. However, in Lhagang, pastoralists were the group that became economically marginalized due to the sudden change of different lifestyle and lack of work skills and experiences compared to farmers. Hence they had no choice but to enter into low-wage employment for subsistence, such as construction work.

- 15 Having sold their livestock and become sedentary, people in Lhagang looked for new fields of economic activity. Andreas Gruschke (2008, p. 2) also claims that, "Tibetan herders adapting to contemporary life have been predominantly perceived as suffering from changes brought about by the Chinese government, while hardly any attention has been given to the changes actively generated by the Tibetan pastoralists themselves." In recent years, tourism has boomed in Lhagang village, and people have started to earn money from tourists; for example, the majority of pastoralists today work as drivers, shop owners, and by renting out their horses to Chinese visitors⁹. In other words, besides the impact from state's shifting policies, many other factors also affect the livelihood of Tibetan pastoralists, such as modernization and economic and cultural adaptability in a global changing world. Pastoralists in Lhagang clearly show that they take on new economic activities and develop coping strategies for a sustainable livelihood.
- 16 According to the abbot and monks, the monastery has also undergone great changes since the new millennium. First, Lhagang monastery improved its infrastructure. For example, the monastery's shop was expanded. Previously it had sold only snacks and ceremonial scarves (*kha btags*). Now it started importing religious items from Chengdu, such as prayer wheels, beads, *thangka* (*thang ka*), and various Tibetan-style ornaments, mainly for the tourists. Then the monastery started large-scale reconstruction of the monks' quarters at the end of 2008; this was completed in mid-2012 at a cost of 2 000 000 CNY, which was borrowed from a bank¹⁰. Finally the monastery started selling entrance tickets to tourists, keeping the money for the monastery itself.
- 17 Another significant change is that the monastery adjusted the recruitment and education of monks. In fact, it is both willing and able to develop its own coping strategies under changing social and economic conditions. Currently, the monastery only has fifty monks who live in the monastic quarters¹¹. Most of them come from Lhagang village and the rest come from two other villages (Phag gso and Bal bsed) affiliated with the monastery. According to the abbot, the number of monks has decreased in recent years. One reason is that fewer boys enroll. Owing to the nine years of free school, most parents rather than sending their sons to the monastery, now choose to send them to school, which they believe will better equip them to obtain a job and a good life in the future. Moreover, there is no basic "wage" for the monks in Lhagang monastery and the villagers think being a monk is not the only way to achieve high social status. One important factor is that in a changing social environment, the number of children per family is decreasing. Since both parents are working, many couples in the village choose to have only one or two children. Compared with the

grandparents' generation, the size of local families has been significantly reduced. Some families lacking manpower occasionally ask monk sons to help with various tasks in the house, and sometimes monks are called back to their families. For example, one family in Lhagang village called their only son back from the monastery after his sister married a man in another village. The monk had to pay 10 000 CNY as a fine for breaking the monastic rule. Another reason for the reduced number of monks is with modernization, monks also want to be part of modern life. For instance, some of the young monks have become fond of gambling, the Internet, bars and video games, and fail to attend the regular chanting sessions in the monastery. Some monks even choose to disrobe and return to lay life¹². In order to maintain the number of monks, the monastery has modified the rules of recruitment, developed new classes, and tried to develop monks' interests instead of enforcing a compulsory program of religious study. The majority of monks, especially the younger ones, supports this initiative.

- 18 The first of the classes to be organized was the basic class (*rmang gzhi 'dzin grwa*), which was established in 2003. It takes three years to complete and is compulsory for novices. It teaches general knowledge about Tibetan culture, language and history, an introduction to basic Buddhist texts, as well as lessons in Chinese and mathematics. The monastery provides a monk who is competent in both languages as well as other teachers, while the abbot himself teaches reading and recitation of Buddhist texts. The purpose of imparting basic knowledge to novices is that these young boys should have reached the same level of as the state primary school if they choose to leave the monastery after they have completed this basic class. Thus the class has very intensive courses. Currently it has around thirty pupils and three teachers of different backgrounds.
- 19 Lhagang monastery is also very concerned about where a monk can go if he leaves the monastery. That is why the *thangka* class (*thang ka 'dzin grwa*) was opened at the end of 2011, sponsored by various NGOs. The aim is to teach the novices how to paint *thangkas*, but not on a daily basis. The reason suggested by one informant is the lack of students as well as teachers. He said that so far this class has only between ten and fifteen students. As they have to learn the skill in their leisure time, not many novice monks are interested in attending, although the abbot recommends *thangka* painting as a good way to make a living outside of the monastery if necessary¹³.
- 20 These two classes are only for novice boys, who after completion can decide whether they want to remain in the monastery and continue the study of Buddhist philosophy or return to secular life. Today, Lhagang monastery still accepts whoever wants to be enrolled as a monk, and this reform in monastic education system gives the novices more freedom and their families more time than in the past to decide whether their son will become a monk.
- 21 In order to maintain the number of monks, the monastery is also trying to develop monks' interests. For instance, in their spare time, monks try to educate themselves and learn new skills that will help to preserve the religion. One of the monks I visited was learning computer skills from a pile of self-study books. He told me that in the past, he had mostly concentrated on memorizing ritual texts, but that he was now learning how to make a webpage for the monastery. He had taken this initiative so that people can learn about Lhagang via the Internet. He also said that because of his computer skills, the abbot had requested him to type up many religious texts, and he praised the utility of laptops in preserving old scriptures. He was very happy with the

monastery supporting young monks to develop their own interests in order to enrich their monastic life. The abbot told me that young monks often play basketball and football. He hopes that, in addition to the study of Buddhism, the monastery can also help them to develop their own interests and cultivate their fitness in order to make monastic life richer. The monastery wanted to organize some sporting events, but had failed to do so because local people think that monks should remain in the monastery and focus on reading scriptures. If they want to exercise, they say, monks should do more prostrations and circumambulations¹⁴. Although the monastery is trying its best to develop monks' interests and give them more freedom, laypeople are more concerned with what constitutes appropriate behavior for monks: they think that monks should not have too much intimacy with the lay community, and that becoming a monk is a serious life-long commitment and not just a frivolous temporary engagement. For this reason the monastery's proposal for reforms did not receive the full support of the locals.

Relationships shaped by destruction and development

- 22 As mentioned above, Lhagang has been through many transformations since the 1960s, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the "The New Rural Construction" policy (2004) being the most important periods. The many changes that have occurred have resulted in the monastic community entering into more frequent contact with laypeople. The monks who spend more time in interaction with the lay community spend less time on religious chores, and thus their role is also becoming more dynamic and varied. Nowadays, monks are no longer religious practitioners who spend most of their time in the monastery; they also work as traders, serve as tour guides, counselors, and teachers of secular "students", most of whom are Chinese. At the same time, quite a few younger monks who have traveled or studied in India have had an opportunity to widen their perspectives and are in close contact with the outside world. They are more conscious of the underdevelopment of their villages caused by isolation and lack of access to means of communication, such as the Internet, mobile phones etc. Therefore, they are taking upon themselves to disseminate knowledge of their monastic and local culture as interpreters for both local people and outsiders, such as pilgrims as well as Han Chinese tourists. Many of the younger generation are quite optimistic about these changes, and think the monastery's increased involvement in secular life is unavoidable because of its important role in the community and numerous duties within a rapidly changing society. On the other hand, an old man lamented that, "In the past, a monk's frequent engagement in earning money would receive occasional rebuke from the laity in Lhagang, who regarded him as an unprofessional monk. But nobody says anything about this now. The world is truly changing"¹⁵. It can be inferred that members of the old generation are critical towards the monks' engagement in secular life and the more recent changes brought to Lhagang.
- 23 Another interesting phenomenon is that the monastery assumes an important role in the community by solving social conflicts and helping to overcome difficulties that laypeople encounter in daily life. Lhagang is the commercial center for the surrounding villages and pastoral communities, and many people visit the village regularly to buy their daily supplies. The number of visitors increases during the religious festivals such as ritual dance festivities. At these gatherings, arguments, pilfering, and sometimes

quarrels cause fights to erupt. This has been a problem in Lhagang for a long time, but since the monastery requested laypeople to follow the Buddhist doctrine of “Accomplishing the Ten Virtues” (*dge bcu bsgrub pa*)¹⁶, the situation has improved slightly. According to local people, the idea of promoting the Buddhist doctrine of the “Ten virtues” among the lay community in Lhagang was put into practice in 2010 by Khenpo Dorje Tashi and Lama Drudrag Gyamtso (*’Brug grags rgya mtsho*), as well as other highly respected religious masters from neighboring monasteries. They organized a dedicated religious teaching session in the course of which they explained the rule and its religious benefits to “free [the community] from sins” (*sdig pa dag pa*), with the caveat that breaking the rule would bring misfortune for the rest of an offender’s life. They stated that any violation of this edict would have the consequence that the monastery would cease performing rituals, such as funerals, for transgressors. The main purpose of imposing the rule was to reduce robbery and other serious crimes.

- 24 People from Lhagang said that certain monks used to resolve conflicts in the past, but not in the organized and systematic manner as they do presently. However, after the monastery espoused the “Ten Virtues” rule, many people have started to follow it and everyone now feels safe to leave their domestic animals far from home during the night. The campaign has apparently had a positive effect on society and has contributed to a reduction of robberies and other crimes. Clearly, the monastery’s initiative to implement Buddhist virtues as a township regulation has gained the support and obedience of the laity. At the very least, the rules set down by the monastery promoted close connection between lay and monastic groups, and the monastery’s engagement in moral education and conflict resolution also reveals the monks’ assumption of social responsibility.
- 25 Both monastic and lay communities in Lhagang remain highly influenced by the trauma of the Cultural Revolution and the effects of economic and political transformations since 2004. Monastic members, especially, have found themselves in a more secular and materialistic environment, requiring them to adapt to the transformations. They are now more involved in social transactions because of their important role in the community and numerous responsibilities for the monastery. Meanwhile, the local community needs the monastery’s participation to solve conflicts and satisfy its demand for meritorious returns. All these have led both parties to continue to live in interdependence and symbiosis.

Conclusion

- 26 This article has analyzed the relationship between the lay and monastic communities in Lhagang with a particular focus on recent historical events, such as the Cultural Revolution, and subsequent economic and sociopolitical changes. Ten years of religious persecution have left deep scars in the memory of Lhagang villagers, who regard their religion as an integral part of life. However, these events also stimulated lay people to become more active and responsible in their efforts to restore monasteries and local monastic culture, while at the same time the implementation of many development projects initiated by the government and the overall global modernization have resulted in both the monastic and lay communities making efforts to adapt the new society around them and being a part of the modern world. The mutual influence and

the interaction between the monastery and village appear to have strengthened their mutual bonds through adjustments and adaptations to changing society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fischer, A. M. 2008 Subsistence and rural livelihood strategies in Tibet under rapid economic and social transition, *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 4 [online, URL: http://www.thlib.org/static/reprints/jiats/04/pdfs/fischerJIATS_04_2008.pdf, accessed 21 May 2016].
- Gayley, H. 2013 Reimagining Buddhist ethics on the Tibetan Plateau, *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 20, pp. 247-286.
- Gelek 1995 The Washu Serthar. A nomadic community of Eastern Tibet, in Clarke (ed.), *Development, Society and Environment in Tibet, Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995* (Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), pp. 47-58.
- Goldstein, M. C. 1998 Introduction, in M. C. Goldstein & M. T. Kapstein (eds.), *Buddhism in contemporary Tibet. Religious revival and cultural identity* (Berkeley, University of California Press), pp. 1-14.
- Goldstein, M. C. & C. M. Beall 1991 Change and continuity in nomadic pastoralism on the western Tibetan Plateau, *Nomadic Peoples* 28, pp. 105-23.
- Goldstein, M. C. & Paljor Tsarong. 1985 Tibetan Buddhist monasticism. Social, psychological and cultural implications, *The Tibet Journal* 10(1), pp. 14-31.
- Gruschke, A. 2008 Nomads without pastures? Globalization, regionalization, and livelihood security of nomads and former nomads in Northern Khams, *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 4 [online, URL: http://www.thlib.org/static/reprints/jiats/04/pdfs/gruschkeJIATS_04_2008.pdf, accessed 23 May 2016].
- Jamyang Sakya & J. Emery 1990 *Princess in the land of snows. The life of Jamyang Sakya in Tibet* (Boston, Shambhala Publications).
- Powers, J. 1995 *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism* (New York, Snow Lion Publications).
- Yeh, E. T. 2013 *Taming Tibet. Landscape transformation and the gift of Chinese development* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press).
- Zhong guo ke xue min zu yan jiu suo, Si chuan shao shu min zu she hui li shi diao cha zu 1963 *Yulong, Sexu, Changtai, Ta gong, Da tang bam and Zong de deng mu qu cai liao* 玉隆, 色须, 昌台, 塔公, 大唐坝和宗德等牧区材料 (Materials on pastoral areas. Yulong, Sexu, Changtai, Lhagang, Datangba, Zongde, etc.) [no publication information available].

NOTES

1. These figures were provided by three of my informants, who are now residents in Lhagang but came there from other villages after 1940.

2. Zhong guo ke xue min zu yan jiu suo, Si chuan shao shu min zu she hui li shi diao cha zu (ZS) 1963, p. 42.
3. This is a Vajrayāna Buddhist meditative system rooted in the view that the result of its practice is contained within the path. In Tibet, *Lamdre* teachings are considered the *summum bonum* of the Sakya school (Powers 1995, p. 23).
4. Zhong guo ke xue min zu yan jiu suo, Si chuan shao shu min zu she hui li shi diao cha zu, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
5. Lhagang area was a name for a larger area including other communities around Lhagang village. After 1992, both Kun nag and Nag luang counties were merged to form Lhagang Township. Today Lhagang township has 18 villages, Lhagang village being one of them.
6. According to this source, among the 627 monks there were 12 “incarnated lamas” (*tülkus, sprul sku*), 14 “abbot” (*khenpos, mkhan po*), 9 “disciplinarians” (*gekös, dge bskos*), and 13 “housekeepers” (*khangsungs, khang srung*).
7. Interview with an informant, June 2012.
8. Interview with an informant, July 2012.
9. The village households have been divided into four groups. Each group has to work in the tourist sector one day by renting out horses or making traditional Tibetan food. In the afternoon, they divide the money they have earned and distribute it to everyone in the group. The next day the tourists will be served by another group, and in this way the groups take turns to earn money from tourism.
10. The abbot told me that every shrine had already been restructured and repaired at least once, whereas the monks’ quarters had never been properly restored. The old ones were not big enough for the present number of monks. He said that on the one hand, he was happy that the monks now had decent quarters, but that on the other hand he was worried about repaying the loan from the bank.
11. Interview with a monk, June 2012.
12. Interview with an old monk, July 2012.
13. Interview with several monks and the abbot, July 2012.
14. Personal communication from the abbot, August 2012.
15. Interview in July 2012.
16. This regulation was originally installed in 2009 by Khenpo Jigme Phuntsog (*Jigs med phun tshogs*) from Serta Monastery (*Gser thar*). It is also called “The simple practices of good conduct of body, speech, and mind.” It refers to the renunciation of the ten non-virtues, *i.e.* violations of: 1-3) three good actions of body: not to take life; not to take what is not given; to avoid sexual misconduct; 4-7) four good actions of speech: not to deceive; to avoid harsh words; to avoid slander of others; to avoid empty speech; 8-10) three good actions of mind: to avoid greedy thoughts; not to be malicious; to avoid the wrong view (Gayley 2013, pp. 247-286).

ABSTRACTS

This article explores the changes that have taken place in the relationship between monastic and lay communities in Lhagang village in Kham Minyag. It details how the opening of the domestic market and different policies launched by the government since 2000 to promote modernization

have not only brought improvements to the material life of the people, but also changed the relationship between monks and lay people.

Cet article explore les changements qui ont eu lieu dans les relations entre les communautés monastiques et les laïcs dans le village de Lhagang au Kham Minyag. Il examine en détail comment l'ouverture du marché intérieur et les différents projets politiques lancés par le gouvernement depuis 2000 pour promouvoir la modernisation ont apporté non seulement des améliorations à la vie matérielle des gens, mais aussi des changements dans la relation entre moines et laïcs.

INDEX

Keywords: Tibet, Kham, Tibetans, Buddhism, monastery, community, nomad, social change

Mots-clés: Tibet, Kham, Tibétains, bouddhisme, monastère, communauté, nomade, changement social

AUTHOR

SONAM WANGMO

Sonam Wangmo is currently a Ph.D student at the University of Oslo in Norway. A native of Kham Minyag, she is conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Lhagang. She is fluent in Tibetan, Chinese and English, and her research is shaped by the dual position of being both an “insider” and “outsider” to her study focus. xxxsi@student.hf.uio.no