

## Preface

It was rare opportunity for me to explore and introduce the richness of the libraries of Buddhist monasteries and monastic institutes (*sheda*) of Darjeeling hills and Sikkim. The monasteries like Jangsa Dechen Chholing Gompa or Thongsha (Bhutan) Gompa, Gompa Hatta, Kalimpong dates back to 1678 when Kalimpong was part of Bhutan.

The collection of the monastic libraries is unique and priceless. Generally the collection in libraries consists of ancient books consisting mostly of xylographs, lamaic encyclopedias, manuscripts etc. It was also observed that in many monasteries the lamans encyclopedias - *Kan-gyur* and *Tengyur* were brought from Tibet. These two books are carried out in processions on special festivals. Manuscripts such as *Bardo Thodol* or "The Tibetan Book of the Dead" was also preserved in Karma Dorjee Chyoling Monastery (Bhutia Busty Monastery), Bhutia Busty, Darjeeling.

The *Lha-Khang*, is the most sacred area of the monastery. It also serves as the function of an assembly hall so it is also called *Du-Khang*. This assembly hall also serves as the library and reading room. At the same time it is also a place for praying and performing rituals. Besides the books, on the altar are the images of "The Three Rereat Ones" with Shakya Muni or Gautam Buddha in the centre, Guru Rimpoche or Padmasambhava to the left and Che-resi or Awaloketaswara to the right. Guru Rimpoche is almost always attended by his wives Khando Yeshe Tsho-gyal on his left and Lha-cham Mandarawa on his right. Beside these images of other deities are also found.

The interior of the assembly hall is breathtaking. The walls are decorated with murals and ceilings with mandalas. At the same time there are chortens, thangkas, musical instruments, butter sculptures its.

Chapter 1 covers the "Approach to the Problem, Title of the Problem, Hypothesis, Aims and Objectives of the Study, Need and Significance of the problem-A rational, Methodology, Literature survey, Coverage of Monasteries, Sources of Data, Scope and Delimitation of the Study".

"Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism" is given in Chapter 2. It is then followed by the Historical Background of Darjeeling Hills in Chapter 3.

"Public Libraries in Darjeeling District" is present in Chapter 4.

"Growth of Buddhist Monasteries and their Libraries in Darjeeling-Hills from 1678-2014" is present in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 deals with the “Detail Report of the Study of the Libraries of Fourty Five Buddhist Monasteries in Darjeeling Hills”. “Observations and Findings” are given in Chapter 7.

“Suggestions and Recommendations” are covered in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 deals with “Scope for Further Research”. “Conclusion” is given in Chapter 10. Bibliographical Reference, Questionnaires, Glossary of Tibetan Buddhism and Index are towards the end of the thesis.

During the survey work, on the spot sketches of diagrams and figures have been made. They were later scanned. These diagrams and figures help in better understanding of the details in the thesis.

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Darjeeling district covered with 60.89 % of its land under Himalayan dense forest producing exquisite biodiversity and variations in climate with a diversified fauna and flora. Therefore, designs...Â Therefore, designs great scope for agricultural development in the rural area of the Himalayan foothills to boost rural economies. Darjeeling District is the northernmost district of the state of West Bengal in eastern India in the foothills of the Himalayas. The district is famous for its hill stations (often referred to as the Queen of the Hills) and Darjeeling tea. Darjeeling is the district headquarters. Kurseong, Siliguri and Mirik, three other major towns in the district, are the subdivisional headquarters of the district. Kalimpong was one of the subdivisions but on 14 February 2017, it officially became a separate