CHRISTIAN JAHODA

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORGANISATION IN A BORDER AREA OF TIBETAN CULTURE: TABO, SPITI VALLEY, HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

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Vorgelegt von w. M. Andre Gingrich in der Sitzung vom 28. April 2015

Cover: Tabo, Spiti Valley (C. Jahoda, 1998)
Back cover: Prayer wheel with donation inscription, Tabo Monastery (C. Kalantari, 2009)

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is the revised and updated version of my unpublished doctoral dissertation *Sozio-ökonomische Organisation in einem Grenzgebiet tibetischer Kultur: Tabo - Spiti Tal (Himachal Pradesh, Indien) – Geschichte und Gegenwart. Ein Beitrag zum Konzept der „peasant societies"* (University of Vienna, 2 vols., 2003). Compared to the original version the introduction was considerably shortened and adapted. The original chapter on sources is not contained here and will be published elsewhere in extended form as a monograph (*Quellen zur Kulturgeschichte von Spiti und des oberen Kinnaur im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*). The main chapters were updated whereever appropriate by incorporating research carried out since then and by adding references to works that appeared in the meantime or are about to be published. The latter are related mainly to historical sources and conclusions based on their analysis.

In terms of methodology this book is primarily the result of a combination of textual and fieldwork study. My involvement with Spiti and Upper Kinnaur and the wider area of historical Western Tibet (mNga' ris skor gsum), including Ladakh, Guge (Gu ge) and Purang (sPu rang), began in the early 1990s with stays in Tibetan-speaking areas of Northwestern India and archival studies of historical texts and documents. The ethnographic material gathered and analysed in this book was mainly collected during five periods of field research in Spiti and Upper Kinnaur between 1997 and 2002 during which all major seasonal activities were covered. In 2000 and 2002 fieldwork was carried out within the framework of an Austrian Science Fund (FWF) research project (P12951) and an interdisciplinary research unit (S8702) at the University of Vienna respectively.

My research between 2005 and 2007 at the Commission for Social Anthropology (since 2010: Institute for Social Anthropology) at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna was funded by a grant from the Oesterreichische Nationalbank, Anniversary Fund for the Promotion of Scientific Research and Teaching, Project No. 10944 (Director: Ernst Steinkellner) and between 2008 and 2014 by grants from the Austrian Science Fund (P20637 and P21806). These research projects not only brought me back to Spiti and Upper Kinnaur, but also opened doors to comparative research in Ngari Prefecture in the west of the Tibet Autonomous Region. In addition, they afforded me the privilege of close scholarly collaboration with Veronika Hein, Christiane Kalantari, Hubert Feiglstorfer, Patrick Sutherland, and the late Tsering Gyalpo. I am immensely grateful for their companionship and friendship.

Studies of historical documents and inscriptions in the field and also in libraries and archives played an important role in the original research for my dissertation and became even more important in the process of updating historical information since 2003. Most important in this regard were research stays at the following institutions: British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, London (2003); China Tibetology Research Center (CTRC), Beijing; University Library, Leipzig; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin; Moravian Archives, Herrnhut (2005); National Archives, Delhi; Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi; Amnye Machen Institute, Dharamsala; Himachal Pradesh State Archives, Shimla (2009). In the last few years, through research in Ngari Prefecture and in particular in collaboration with Tsering Gyalpo and other scholars from the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa, so far unknown or inaccessible historiographical texts and documents became available which enabled the consolidation and deepening of various insights into historical developments in the 10^{th} to 12^{th} centuries.

From 2000 onward my fieldwork in Spiti and Upper Kinnaur (since 2006 also that in Ngari Prefecture) was strongly supported by the *Phonogrammarchiv* (Audiovisual Research Archive) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Nearly all sound recordings of interviews, performances of songs, speeches, etc., and many hours of video recordings of economic and social activities as well as of village or monastic festivals, etc., were made with equipment provided by the Phonogrammarchiv where all these recordings are also archived in the best possible way. I am indebted to the staff there, Bernhard Graf, Christian Huber,

Franz Pavuza, Nadja Wallaszkovits and in particular Dietrich Schüller, former director of the *Phonogrammarchiv* (with whom I also had the pleasure of carrying out a joint field trip to Upper Kinnaur and Spiti in 2002), for supporting my research thoughout all these years.

I wish to thank the people of Tabo and also the monks of Tabo Monastery, in particular the late abbot Geshe Sonam Wangdü and Lama Zangpo, for the help and assistance I received. I want to extend special gratitude to Lobsang Nyima (aka Rajinder Bodh) and Dechen Angmo, Dechen Lhundup, Thrinle Dorje, Lama Sonam Tobgye, Tobgye Tshering, Gendun Dorje and Padma Dorje all of whom were very helpful in various ways during my stays. I am also sincerely grateful for the aid and support given to me by Gathuk Sonam (Poh), Konyer Tenzin (Lalung), abbot Kenzur Rinpoche (Dankhar), Chöpa Dorje Dawa, Ram Chander (aka Rinchen Dondub) (Sumra), the late Om Prakash Negi, Shamsher Negi, Lama Sushil (Pooh), Tashi Tshering Lhabu (Hansa), Patwari Tenzin Drakpa (Kaza), Deepak Sanan, H. C. Negi (Shimla) and Loephel Khawha (Paris).

I am grateful to Andre Gingrich and Ernst Steinkellner for acting as supervisors of the original dissertation. Moreover, the latter also managed to acquire generous funding from the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna for the translation of this work into English. Both were very supportive of my various academic enterprises and research projects during the last ten years.

Last but not least I want to thank in particular Sophie Kidd for her English translation of this work (and a number of others inbetween and since the time she finished this one).

This book, which appears also as volume II of the series *Studies and Materials on Historical Western Tibet*,* is dedicated in honor of the memory of my friend and colleage Tsering Gyalpo (b. 1961, Glang chu, Western Tibet, China; d. 2015, Berlin, Germany).

Christian Jahoda, Vienna August 4, 2015

* *Studies and Materials on Historical Western Tibet*, Volume I:
TSERING GYALPO, Christian JAHODA, Christiane KALANTARI and Patrick SUTHERLAND, with contributions by Eva ALLINGER, Hubert FEIGLSTORFER and Kurt TROPPER. 2012. *'Khor chags / Khorchag / Kuojia si wenshi daguan* [Kuojia Monastery: An Overview of Its History and Culture]. Lhasa, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang [Old Tibetan Books Publishing House]. Second, revised edition: Vienna, Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2015.

GENERAL REMARKS

The following transliteration of the Tibetan alphabet was used:

ཀ	ka	ཁ	kha	ག	ga	ང	nga
ཅ	ca	ཆ	cha	ཇ	ja	ཉ	nya
ཏ	ta	ཐ	tha	ད	da	ན	na
པ	pa	ཕ	pha	བ	ba	མ	ma
ཙ	tsa	ཚ	tsha	ཛ	dza		
ཝ	wa	ཞ	zha	ཟ	za	འ	'a
ཡ	ya	ར	ra	ལ	la		
ཤ	sha	ས	sa	ཧ	ha	ཨ	a

Words (including names) of the Tibetan dialect used in Tabo and Spiti are also reproduced in Tibetan transliteration as far as this is possible. All words in Tibetan are given in italics, with the exception of names.

Concerning the spelling of names the following criteria have been used: Tibetan names of historical or living persons are given in transliteration. (In a few cases spellings have been used which take account of the pronunciation.) In the case of Tibetan place names (whether original or Tibetanised), as far as these are mentioned in a historical context – e.g. in inscriptions, the Tibetan spellings as they occur there have been given in transliteration. In all other cases modern spellings, as these appear in recent Indian publications, have been used or given additionally.

To indicate the genitive in the case of Tibetan proper names and in order to avoid using the particle 'of', an apostrophe with the appropriate genitive ending has been attached, e.g. Ye shes 'od's. With Tibetan terms no plural formation with the addition of an 's' has been used.

Additional remarks by the author within quotations are enclosed within square brackets. Where I have emphasised terms or phrases within quotations by italicisation this is indicated by the remark "my emphasis".

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to describe and analyse the socio-economic organisation in Tabo Village and the Spiti Valley, a border area of Tibetan culture, today part of the Indian federal state of Himachal Pradesh (H.P.), in terms of its historical development and present situation. The major focus of the study is devoted to the analysis of the relationships between economic structures (conditions of land ownership, economic units, social division of labour), socio-political organisation (village organisation, superordinate units) and social and legal constitution (stratification, inheritance law, marital patterns, inclusive kinship organisation).

The historical section of this analysis (Chapter II) begins with the foundation of Tabo Monastery towards the end of the 10th century AD by members of the West Tibetan royal dynasty, and using historical sources traces the main stages in the political and economic development in Spiti including the neighbouring region of Upper Kinnaur into the 20th century. Excursuses on selected topics (dues: 'pún' / 'bón' / *bon*; corvée labour: 'begar' / *'u lag*; trade; types of 'landowner' and tenants: 'zemindar' / 'zamíndár' in Chapter III) serve to discuss issues beyond the immediate regional geographical context from a comparative perspective. The main focus here lies on the period commencing with the early 19th century. The basis of this historical analysis for the period up to the mid-19th century is provided predominantly by Tibetan historiographical works and documents. For the period from the early 19th century there are various different sources in English, German and French which have been supplemented by isolated inscriptions found at Tabo.[1]

The investigation of present-day conditions (Chapter IV) was undertaken on the basis of several field trips made by the author to Tabo and the surrounding area between 1997 and 2002 as well as the data thereby gathered and the documentation of local source material. In isolated instances this was supplemented by a small number of publications and unpublished reports by Indian scholars and administrative officials.

In terms of theory and concept, the basis for the analysis of historical and present-day conditions was provided by peasant theory models, which imply links between the diachronic and synchronic approaches. For the comparative discussion of particular local and regional conditions additional concepts with limited scope developed for the conditions pertaining in Buddhist communities in Ladakh and Nepal were adopted. This particularly concerns the fundamental importance of Buddhist monasteries for the structuring of the social order as well as the flow of labour, commodities and goods, the role of trade and corvée labour.

The study concludes with a summary of the findings and a survey of further research perspectives (Chapter V) deriving from these, as well as selective documentation of various research materials.

THEMATIC CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY

Both the thematic concept and the regional area treated in this study were chosen in consideration of various extant studies. Carrasco's *Land and Polity in Tibet* (1959) constitutes the first attempt at a comparative study of the conditions of land ownership and political organisation in Tibet and neighbouring areas of Tibetan culture. It contains a number of fundamental approaches which are still relevant and thus could not be disregarded in this study. Among the more or less specific conceptual ap-

[1] See JAHODA (in preparation) for a survey of various historical sources pertaining to the study of the cultural history of Spiti and Upper Kinnaur.

proaches to the social, political and economic system of recent Tibetan society as demonstrated by the example of local communities and administrative units which were developed in Tibetan anthropology in the late 1960s to the early 1980s the work of Melvyn Goldstein, Barbara Aziz and Eva Dargyay deserves particular attention, as – in contradistinction to Carrasco's study – their data derive from their own field studies. These studies were thus of considerable importance for the approach taken to the subject matter of this study.

The starting point for the approach taken by this study is the ownership of the means of production – in this case, land and/or livestock – as the basis for the analysis of socio-economic organisation. However, ownership of the means of production is politically determined, being subject to the power-holders who as lords paramount levied dues and/or taxes from the producers. In keeping with the religiously legitimised (Buddhist) system of power a certain system of dues and taxes was established, the structural configuration of which was expressed in a particular type of socio-economic organisation of producers as evinced by various characteristics, the most typical of which was the type of indivisible and inalienable peasant holdings. In historical terms these landholders formed a social core stratum in various Tibetan communities (albeit with certain variations) sharing certain comparable elements in the sphere of economic, social and kinship organisation, e.g. marital patterns, inheritance law, etc.

In terms of methodology the peasant model, as conceived in Robert Redfield's anthropological work and as modified and further developed into a politico-economic model by later authors, in particular Eric Wolf, despite justified criticism of certain aspects by various scholars (e.g. Michael Kearney), would seem best suited to describe both historical politico-economic conditions in the regional context of a border area of Tibetan culture as well as in their development under the changing political conditions up to the present day. One or two anthropologists concerned with communities of Tibetan culture have examined this model and/or some of its individual elements (e.g. Charles Ramble, Graham Clarke). Their findings have also been taken into account in this study.

The necessity of including additional concepts, especially with regard to the significance of the monasteries in these societies, derives from the work of Clarke in particular; at a local and translocal level the Buddhist monasteries constitute a major element in the control of economic activities and distribution of goods, and thus had a special status right from the outset.

In this respect, when applied to individual aspects connected to the existence of Buddhist monasteries, it seemed necessary to extend the basic peasant model with specific additional models, especially as concerns the relationship between monastery and land, with various consequences for the social and economic structure of the village communities. Here Graham Clarke's work in Helambu / Yol mo gang ri (Nepal) should be mentioned. Concerning the connections between the existence of a monastery and the transfer of goods and labour (especially that of women), the research undertaken by Anna Grimshaw in Ladakh for instance may be seen as exemplary.

In this connection Charles Ramble's concise studies of historical change on a local level – likewise pertaining to village communities in a border area of Tibetan culture – should also be mentioned. Among other things, they provide clues for more extensive hypotheses on the (varying) rate of development of different cultural elements.

In addition, account should be taken of those studies devoted to an analysis of trade and its importance for communities in border areas of Tibetan culture (e.g. van Spengen) together with related aspects such as the phenomenon of obligatory labour and transport services, which were typical of areas under Tibetan as well as Indian cultural influence (e.g. Grist).

Finally, it has been attempted to incorporate comparative aspects to the greatest possible extent: in historical and regional terms these primarily concern Upper Kinnaur. As relevant to the main topic of this study comparative data on the socio-economic type of the landholder or tenant should be mentioned, the characteristics of which have altered dynamically during the course of historical and present-day developments, determined to a considerable extent by the political framework. Dietmar Rothermund's work (1978) provides links and references for the development on the Indian side. Deepak Sanan's unpub-

lished report (1997) evaluating development programmes since Indian independence provided a valuable basis for exploring the present-day situation in the Spiti Valley.

Both in its subject matter and in its choice of society examined, this study can also be regarded as a further development of research begun in a previous study (JAHODA 1994). This consisted of an examination of marital patterns occurring in selected societies of Tibetan language and culture in terms of their association with particular social strata together with an analysis of this relationship using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (cf. *ibid*., 446–451). The correlations arrived at in this study derived from the comparison of various different societies, the ethnographic descriptions of which can be adjudged good pioneering work but which from a present-day perspective were inadequate in terms of conceptual approach and methodology. A more precise investigation of the socio-economic conditions in one of these societies, in particular of the social strata, their historical differentiation process (as far as this could be determined) and the socio-economic organisation in villages or larger socio-political units emerged as the next necessary step in pursuing the aim of studying the connections between marital patterns, social strata and economic structures. A detailed study of a delimited area should provide the opportunity of resolving these correlations into clearer relationships.

The results of my previous study conform to the hopes expressed by Pedro Carrasco in his preface to *Land and Polity in Tibet* (CARRASCO 1959: iii) that future research should regard his provisional analyses made on the basis of extant literature as preliminary work for more detailed studies in regions such as Tibet, Ladakh, or Spiti etc., as soon as these areas were accessible and relevant Tibetan documents were available. To this extent the present study can also be understood as a continuation of the path marked out by Carrasco and owes to it numerous impulses. At the same time it should be pointed out that some of the data in his study are questionable, a circumstance that has led to a critical evaluation of Carrasco's work by for example Goldstein. However, Goldstein's criticism is not directed at his basic concept but exclusively at the basis for his data, i.e. the use of sources whose quality and value Carrasco was unable to assess, with the result that in many cases their defects were absorbed into his conclusions (GOLDSTEIN 1968: 2–3).

Excursus: A Brief Survey of the Research Situation in Some Tibetan-speaking Areas of India and Nepal (*c*. 1950–1980)

The deficit noted by Carrasco of primary anthropological studies, in particular of socio-economic questions in Tibetan-speaking areas was somewhat ameliorated by the 'opening' of a number of areas and the field research carried out there since that date.

This opening took place in Ladakh from 1976, in Tibet from 1980 and in Spiti from 1992 (SANAN 1997: 26). The 'opening' of these areas refers primarily to general access for tourists (and thus as a rule also for researchers). Isolated field trips by researchers also took place before the 'opening' of these areas, access having been obtained by special permit (e.g. L. Petech in Ladakh in 1975 [PETECH 1977: xii]; D. Snellgrove in 1953/54 [SNELLGROVE 1957: x], A. Lamb in 1955 [LAMB 1956: 251], D. Klimburg-Salter in 1978 [personal communication] or members of Japanese expeditions from Naritasan and Kōyasan in 1978, 1982 and 1986 in Spiti [STEINKELLNER 2000: 319]). Of the individuals named above, only Lamb concerned himself with anthropological, socio-economic and socio-political issues.

Nepal was opened up in stages from 1952/3: it was then that scholars (including Tibetologists and anthropologists) were for the first time allowed access to the Tibetan-speaking areas in northern and north-eastern Nepal (FÜRER-HAIMENDORF 1975: 1–4, JACKSON 1984: 13): G. Tucci travelled to Mustang in 1952, C. von Fürer-Haimendorf to Khumbu in 1953. In the following years (up to the latter half of the 1970s) anthropological research was carried out almost exclusively among the Sherpas in north-eastern Nepal, initially above all by Fürer-Haimendorf and later among others by M. Oppitz, F.W. Funke, M. Schmidt-Thome, S.B. Ortner and B.N. Aziz. Only rarely did isolated researchers succeed in gaining special permission to penetrate other Tibetan-speaking regions in northern Nepal (e.g. D. Snellgrove, who got as far as Tsarang in 1952, or M. Peissel, who reached Mustang in 1964 [see JACKSON 1984: 13–17]).

The mid-1970s saw the publication of the first anthropological studies on north-western Nepal (e.g. GOLDSTEIN 1974, 1975b, 1975c, 1976, 1977a, 1977b), which have since been continued in studies with various regional and thematic focuses (including among others LEVINE 1976, 1980, 1981 [and 1988]; SCHULER 1977, 1978 [and 1987]; CLARKE 1980a-c, 1983). Even if Charles Ramble's statement regarding the choice of region for the field research for his doctoral thesis in 1980 – "[...] it appeared that most of the Tibetan-speaking communities of Nepal lay in territory that was closed to foreigners." (RAMBLE 1984: 4) – has now been superseded, restrictive conditions still obtain for scholarly research in many Tibetan-speaking areas of Nepal. The same is true of some areas in Ladakh, Spiti, Kinnaur and Tibet.

Despite the opening up of these regions, which in some cases occurred several decades ago, the situation of research in some areas must still be regarded as being in its infancy. This is true particularly of Spiti and Upper Kinnaur: the only two pieces of research carried out and published by Indian authors in Spiti are those by B.R. Rizvi (RIZVI 1987, based on field research carried out in October 1973) in Tabo and C.S. Vaidya (VAIDYA 1998)[2] in Kibber.[3] This is in itself remarkable in that studies of development programmes in Spiti and Kinnaur were commissioned or indeed produced by various Himachal Pradesh government offices without their authors having ever set foot in the areas under investigation. See e.g. BHATNAGAR, SHARMA and SHARMA (1980) and SHARMA, BHATI and THAKUR (1990–91), in which special 'field investigators' were commissioned to collect data which were then collated, evaluated and published under the names of the 'principal investigator' and his 'co-investigators'.

A special position is occupied by studies which focus on issues dealing with the political, social and economic system in Tibet before 1959, the data for which, however, were not collected in Tibet itself but from Tibetan-speaking refugee communities in Nepal, India and Switzerland. To this category belong Melvyn C. Goldstein's doctoral thesis (GOLDSTEIN 1968) on a village community called Sa mda' in rGyal rtse District, the findings of which were explored further in a series of articles (GOLDSTEIN 1971a-d), as well as Barbara Aziz' study (AZIZ 1978) of Ding ri in south-western Tibet and Eva Dargyay's publication on the structure of an agricultural administrative unit comprising three villages (*brgya tsho*) in rGyal rtse District (DARGYAY 1982). These studies are important for their documentation of the conditions that prevailed in Tibet before 1959, recording data which would be impossible to gather today. The value of this research remains in the opportunities it offers for comparison of social stratification, the various types of agricultural goods as well as individual aspects connected with these matters.

However, the main contribution made by these studies to the conception of this work lies in their approach, which combines their data on individual, local units with the perspective of the wider political economic and religious system, also in its historical dimension. On this basis models and terminologies were developed and 'principles'[4] formulated which could be deployed and tested in a broader context for the purposes of comparison. It is also one of the fundamental aims of the present study to go beyond a

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[2] Since the work on my dissertation was finished French anthropologists, such as Isabelle Riaboff and Pascale Dollfus, and others carried out research in Spiti and Upper Kinnaur (cf. RIABOFF 2002, DOLLFUS 2004). In recent years, Lobsang Nyima (Yannick) Laurent took up similar lines of research as represented in this study in Dangkhar (LOBSANG NYIMA 2010, 2011, LAURENT 2013, 2014). A combination of historical and anthropological research is also undertaken by Tashi Tsering (see TSERING and ISHIMURA 2012, TSERING 2013).

[3] Other spellings also occur, such as Kibar or Kyi bar (see DGE RGAN 1976: 327.15).

[4] In a summary Dargyay presents the results of her examination of three villages as an illustrative example of general structures in Tibet: "The manner of structure, made clear here in the example of three villages, characterizes not only broad regions of Tibet in the last decades of independence but also the relationships as formed in the last two or three centuries. Herewith is set at the disposal of Tibetologists, a model of the socio-economic structure of central Tibet, useful for further research in the fields of Tibetan economic and social sciences." (DARGYAY 1982: 96). Also the 'monomarital principle' ("only one intaking-spouse marriage per generation") formulated by Goldstein should be mentioned (see GOLDSTEIN 1968: 57). As the result of her investigations of Ding ri, Aziz highlighted the basic importance of the household as the factor determining the form of social stratification and economic organisation: "It is not the idea of descent, but rather the concept of household which stands out as the keystone around which social relations are articulated. It is the *residence principle* which is central." (AZIZ 1978: 117; my emphasis).

description of local or regional ethnographic conditions and to place the analysis of these conditions in a wider ethnological context of comparison with Tibetan societies and – within the framework of a broader socio-anthropological perspective – with other peasant societies.

Basic Approach of the Present Study

All scholarly investigations are based on particular concepts or assumptions (paradigms) which, even if they are mostly not expressed as such, determine the aims of the study. The elements determining the basic approach of this study will therefore be briefly outlined here. (This will be limited to the thematic, i.e., regional [geographical], political and historical framework of the investigation.)

The basis of socio-economic organisation may be seen in the conditions of ownership of the most important means of production, i.e., land ownership and/or animal husbandry, depending on the type of economy. The conditions of ownership of the means of production are determined politically, i.e., they are subject to the power-holders. In the case of land, the latter are usually the lords paramount ('oberste Grundherren'), while the producers usually have the status of tenants. This stratum can be further differentiated according to the general political and economic conditions of the historical development, although this differentiation tends to result in groups with less land and fewer rights and obligations. (Other differentiations found concern for example groups with different ethnic origins which perform particular tasks – as blacksmiths, musicians, weavers, etc. – within the context of the internal social division of labour.)

The power-holders, as the lords paramount, levy dues and/or taxes from tenants, originally in the form of payments in kind. In general, these dues and/or taxes can be used for very different purposes. With a system of rulership based on religion such as that of the West Tibetan kingdom they were primarily used for religious purposes, i.e. the construction of religious buildings (monasteries, temples), for their decoration, for the inviting of high-ranking scholar monks and in particular for the continuous maintenance of religious institutions, i.e., the financing of the monks and their food as well as religious rituals. To ensure the unbroken continuity of this maintenance the lords paramount chose a particular method according to which the produce of certain villages or nomadic groups was assigned to a monastery so that the monastery effectively assumed the status of an owner of land or livestock. This corresponded to a particular kind of socio-economic organisation among the producers which guaranteed continuous, regular and permanent maintenance (for the monastic institutions).

Formally this manifested itself in the existence of a type of indivisible peasant holding (or a system of pasture allocation and reallocation in the case of nomadic producers holding rights of usufruct over certain plots of pasture; cf. GOLDSTEIN and BEALL 1989: 621–622). These peasant economic structures had their counterpoint in particular forms of social organisation (marital patterns) and inheritance law which varied according to social stratum.

These basic elements demand a combination of approaches from various fields or disciplines. The economic approach includes among other things the production and reproduction of economic conditions, in particular of the conditions of ownership and dues (payments in kind, obligatory labour services – to the extent that the latter can be reconstructed historically) of the relevant taxation units, holdings of peasant producers with the status of landholders (*khral pa*) or types of peasant family holdings (Chayanov's 'Familienwirtschaft'; see TSCHAJANOW 1923: 9). The relevance of including political conditions results from the function described above of the power-holders and the political and administrative authorities and the corresponding organisation of the taxation system. Sociological lines of investigation concern questions of social organisation, among other aspects for example the recruitment of monks, which according to historical tradition was regulated at certain periods by royal decree promulgated as a law (see e.g. *La dwags rgyal rabs* 37.27–38.1). In the present it survives as a custom practised or declared by a number of families in Tabo of sending the middle son to the monastery.

Socially accepted regulation and practice in the levying of dues and/or taxes always plays an essential role in the analysis of socio-economic conditions, since this is the main instrument of transferring goods

from the producers to the power-holders. The levying of taxes is organised by means of a particular type of tax administration. This task is performed on various political levels by various different functionaries. In the case of a state or nationally constituted organisation the latter are the administrators of political districts, mostly members of the nobility in the role of officials occupying these positions for a fixed/limited term, as demonstrated by the example of the historical Tibetan state (up to the mid-20th century). In the case of semi-autonomous or marginalised areas (such as for example Spiti) there is frequently a mixture of hereditary nobility and (on a local level) elected officials (in charge of administrative or tax districts).

An important aspect of tax obligations apart from the dues paid in kind are the equally obligatory labour and transport services, both in Tibet itself as well as in Ladakh and the Indo-Tibetan border areas (such as Lahaul and Spiti). These were levied on land as the most important means of production from the landholders on the basis of usufructuary right, and from the mid-19th century, at least in Spiti and Ladakh, primarily served the politically-sanctioned transport of goods and people, also for purposes of trade. The resultant burdens are to be taken account of as belonging to the socio-economic organisation of these societies (at certain periods).

In terms of theory and analysis, models of peasant theory, as established in agronomy by Chayanov among others, later conceived as a cultural and anthropological model by Redfield, tested by his students and immediate successors and subsequently modified and further developed by other authors, in particular by Wolf, seem best suited to describe the complex historical politico-economic conditions in Spiti and Upper Kinnaur, a border area of Tibetan culture, as they developed under the changing general political conditions up to the present day. Furthermore, this model allows the various different cultural conditions to be taken into account which characterise this area in the border zones between Tibetan, Indian and Central Asian culture.

A closer comparative perspective with Upper Kinnaur results on the one hand from common historical and religious roots dating back to the 10th century (an important parallel is the existence of historical monasteries and temple complexes) and on the other from the fact that the economy of the village communities of both these valleys displays significant differences from the beginning of the 19th century onwards (the time from which written testimony of various observers exists which allows closer comparison): the economy in the Spiti Valley was based predominantly if not exclusively on agriculture. The keeping of livestock, in particular for wool production, did not play any role to speak of, except as a supplementary contribution to subsistence. By contrast, in Upper Kinnaur both livestock keeping and trading activities played a much more important role within the context of overall economic activities during the period of comparison.

In addition a deeper historical perspective of comparison results from the existence and pre-eminent importance of religious Buddhist institutions – temples and monasteries – and the effect their establishment had on socio-economic organisation, as demonstrated by comparative examples from Nepal and Ladakh (see CLARKE 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1983; GRIMSHAW 1983a, 1983b) (see below, *Supplementary Approaches*, p. 30f.). Another comparative perspective is focused on the varying overall political conditions since the beginning of the 19th century and leads into the present, examining recent development programmes implemented by the government of Himachal Pradesh. This is followed by a discussion of current questions concerning peasant societies and their immediate interaction with or incorporation into larger political and economic contexts (including questions of immigration and emigration).

Regional Focus

The regional focus of this study was co-determined by the FWF (Austrian Research Fund) research project *Early Indo-Tibetan Monastic Art in the Western Himalaya, 10th to 15th Centuries* (1995–2000) and the FWF Interdisciplinary Research Unit *Cultural History of the Western Himalayas* (2001–2006) at the University of Vienna, in which the author has participated. One of the main aims of the former

research project was the documentation of and research into the Buddhist monastery at Tabo in the Spiti Valley, with particular emphasis on the art-historical material deriving from the foundation phase of this monument. The circumstance that research links with the village and monastery had already been established by this project facilitated the acceptance of my research project without the need for the often lengthy phase of establishing contacts that is essential for ethnological field trips.

The existence of this monastery had a major influence on the content and conception of this study. It offered the extraordinary opportunity of studying the relationship between monastery and village, the monastic and lay communities, in its various aspects, and this in a place whose history could be traced back to the 10th century on account of the monastery with its paintings, sculptures and inscriptions from various periods. The possibilities of comparison with other, similarly oriented research on the economic, social and religious aspects of conditions of this kind in Ladakh (GRIMSHAW 1983b, TSARONG 1987, PHYLACTOU 1989, DOLLFUS 1989) and Nepal (CLARKE 1980a-c and 1983, RAMBLE 1984) also contributed to the decision to choose Tabo as the core area for research.

The geographical setting for this study is the Spiti Valley, that is, the drainage area of the river Spiti and its main tributaries (Pin and Lingti) until it joins the river Sutlej at Khab in Upper Kinnaur. Upper Kinnaur comprises the area on the lower reaches of the Spiti from Sumra and on both sides of the Sutlej from the Tibetan border to the Ropa Valley.[5] Thus from a geographical point of view Spiti and Upper Kinnaur (the latter may be equated with the area known as Hangrang; see GERARD 1841: 14–16, cf. also the map in CUNNINGHAM 1854) form a unit. In political terms however a distinction should be made between the two since they belonged to different spheres of influence from the 12th century onwards (see n. 175). This political separation remained after 1846, as British India, which had exercised indirect control over Upper Kinnaur via the British protectorate of Bashahr since 1815, took over direct administration of Spiti. This affiliation to two different administrative units continued after India gained its independence in 1947 and still obtains today. Spiti currently constitutes a sub-district within the district of Lahaul-Spiti, while Upper Kinnaur belongs to the sub-districts (*tehsil*) of Hangrang and Pooh in the Kinnaur district (BAJPAI 1996: 131). Thus, the use of the terms Spiti and Upper Kinnaur denotes in both cases a different political and administrative affiliation. In terms of culture, religion and language, however, Spiti and Upper Kinnaur display common features which nevertheless diminish by degrees in proportion to the geographic distance between them.[6]

The geographical nucleus of this study is the village of Tabo within its present-day limits. The investigation of the socio-economic organisation of a social unit of this kind, which for me provides an important basis for examining other social issues, is thus in essence a form of village study. 'In essence' because it makes no claim to be an exhaustive account of all possible subjects and fields (which cannot in any case be the foremost aim) and also extends beyond the village itself, in that it necessarily traces various connections with superordinate political units and economic, cultural, social and religious structures.

The extended geographical area is determined by the Gram Panchayat of Tabo, to which the villages of Lari and Po (Poh) (as well as the separate settlements of Po Marang, Nadang and Kurith belonging to the latter, which are at least nowadays regarded as part of the village) also belong. The village of Sumra, like Poh at a distance of about 10 km from Tabo but already part of Kinnaur, should also be counted as

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[5] Here I follow Sanan and Swadi, who define Upper Kinnaur according to physical geographical criteria as follows: "Upper Kinnaur consists of the last 30 km of the river Spiti's journey to meet the Satluj as well as the main Satluj valley, from Shipki la to the Ropa valley." (SANAN and SWADI 1998: 18).

[6] A quotation from Sanan and Swadi may serve to give a basic characterisation of the cultural relationship between Spiti and Kinnaur: "Culturally, Kinnaur [...] and Spiti [...], together constitute two broad zones cutting across their administrative boundaries. Middle and lower Kinnaur are a transitional zone where local gods and traditions have blended with influences from both Hinduism and Buddhism. Each succeeding ridge up the Satluj marks a sub-culture, exhibiting increasing influence of Buddhism. Upper Kinnaur and Spiti, immediately contiguous with Ladakh and western Tibet in the trans-Himalayan region of India, are closely akin to socio-cultural fabric of Tibet." (SANAN and SWADI 1998: 32).

part of this core area on account not only of its geographical proximity but also of the connections on the level of kinship and religion. The terms sPi lcog, sPi ti lCog la, sPyi sde lCog la or lCog la'i sde found in inscriptions and texts (see PETECH 1997a: 252, n. 20) presumably reflect a larger historical (administrative) regional unit to which Tabo also once belonged, as attested by the expression Pil Cog rTa po (*Chos 'byung me tog snying po'i sbrang rtsi'i bcud* 500b). This textual evidence corresponds to hypotheses posited on the basis of cultural and art-historical investigations: "Tabo seems to have always had the closest cultural ties to the villages west as far as Po [Poh] and east to Nako in Kinnaur. This area may have been known as Cog-la [lCog la], which appears several times in the 10th-century inscriptions in Tabo." (KLIMBURG-SALTER 1997: 23).

The next-largest geographical unit is the Spiti Valley (as defined above). This valley has always been a border area of Tibetan culture, both in the past and in recent times, and it is for this reason that connections pointing in this direction have principally been followed up and Tibetan terminology preferred. In the description of later periods and recent or current conditions in particular there is of course a necessity to include significant influences from other origins (e.g., the British and Indian administration).

Peasant Theory

The decision to adduce models of peasant theory to describe the chosen subject matter of this study arose for reasons of heuristic expediency (see SCHEPERS 1974: 1119), apart from the circumstance that they had been used by a number of major authors who have dealt with the same or similar subjects (among others by Carrasco, who frequently uses the term *peasants* without ever explicitly defining it, as well as by Wolf, Goldstein, Rothermund, Clarke, Ramble, van Spengen). Another important criterion was the need to describe the historical development of the socio-economic organisation of a society on a local level in relation to the determinative conditions of political power over long periods up to the present day. This implies both the combining of diachronic and synchronic as well as comparative approaches, as demonstrated for example in Carrasco's study of land and polity in Tibet and adjoining areas of Tibetan culture.

The particular suitability of peasant theory models consists in my opinion of their ability to take into account processes of social change, whether these are externally initiated or as part of the logical course of development within a society. This is also connected to the circumstance that these models, in particular in their cultural and anthropological form (above all in Redfield and his followers),[7] were developed for cultural border and mixed zones.

The classification and designation of the population of Tabo as peasantry arose from the perspective of economic anthropology as it could be classified neither as a tribal, 'traditional'[8] subsistence society, nor as an example of peasantry with heavily-capitalised specialised agriculture with a dominant market production, but was to be placed *somewhere in between*. In this respect, i.e., in the assumption that there are different forms of peasantry, I follow Wolf, who characterises the type of the peasant-cultivator (in distinction to the primitive cultivator) essentially by the production of a 'fund of rent' (i.e., a particular form of surplus which is siphoned off by the group controlling the peasantry):

> "It is important to note, though, that *there are many different ways in which this fund of rent is produced, and many different ways in which it is siphoned from the peasant stratum into the hands of the controlling group*. Since the distinctions in the exercise of this power have important structural effects on the way the peasantry is organized, *there are consequently many kinds of peasantry, not just one. So far, then, the term "peasant" denotes no more than an asymmetrical structural relationship be-*

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[7] See REDFIELD 1941, 1953, 1955, 1965b, MCKIM MARRIOTT 1955.

[8] Subscribing to Wolf's dictum that "such labels ['traditional'] merely describe a phenomenon—and describe it badly—they do not explain it." (WOLF 1966: viii) this term is used as little as possible in this study.

tween producers of surplus and controllers; to render it meaningful, we must still ask questions about the different sets of conditions which will maintain this structural relationship." (WOLF 1966: 10; my emphases).

The precondition for this kind of "functional division of labor between cultivators and rulers" (*ibid*., 4) on the producer's side, apart from the production of a minimum that supports his existence, expressed as a defined amount of calories ('caloric minimum'), and a replacement fund – "amount needed to replace his minimum equipment for both production and consumption", *ibid*., 6), is the production of two kinds of 'social surplus'. Besides the fund of rent (see above) this consists of a ceremonial fund, the resources for which (labour, goods or money) serve to fund the ceremonies that accompany social relationships (weddings, etc.).

On the basis of his (their) relationship to a group of "controlling outsiders" Wolf analyses the balancing of the needs of the cultivator(s) versus the claims of other persons as the fundamental dilemma of the peasant holding: "His holding is *both an economic unit and a home*." (*ibid*., 13). Like Chayanov, he saw an increase in production or a reduction in consumption as the two fundamental strategies of the households whose organisation was determined by the number and composition of their members as well as by the coordination of consumption needs in relation to labour power or the number of people working in any given household. Of these two strategies one might predominate over the other for certain periods, or they could be varied according to context. For Wolf, a basic characteristic of peasant society can be derived from this constellation: "[...] a peasantry is always in a dynamic state [...]." (*ibid*., 17).

In the case of the economic systems of energy transfer or *ecotypes*,[9] i.e., the procurement and production of foodstuffs and surplus (together with the necessary technical equipment), Wolf differentiated between palaeotechnical (among others long-term, sectorial and short-term fallowing systems [or Eurasian grainfarming], permanent cultivation [or hydraulic systems] and permanent cultivation of favoured plots) and neotechnical ecotypes, especially those determined by the use of industrially-produced technical and chemical methods. On the basis of the elementary characteristics of this system he analyses the relationship between individual factors – (amount of) land, (input of) labour, (length of the) growing season, productivity (per unit of land or labourer), population density – thereby inferring various structural connections and implications, for example, the existence of particular types of plough, the need for the keeping of (ploughing) animals and thus for supplying them with fodder, etc. The connections he formulates can be applied in a range of cases to conditions in the village of Tabo and the Spiti Valley and also provide criteria for characterising local systems as well as systems that are historically different.

The same is true of the methods for acquiring complementary (non-agricultural) goods and services, i.e., the social division of labour or specialisation (on the level of the household or village community),[10] the barter systems of the peasants connected with various markets as well as their coexistence with the long-distance trade engaged in by the ruling elite. In particular, the periodical meeting of various communities at a market place with the purpose of exchanging special products, referred to by Wolf as a sectional market, has relevance for the analysis of historical conditions in Tabo, the Spiti Valley and Upper Kinnaur, while the implications and effects of increasing participation or involvement in a general system characterised by market economy factors is important for the analysis of present-day conditions. This concerns both the conditions and strategies of individual households as well as larger communities,

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[9] "The ecological adaptation of a peasantry [...] consists of a set of food transfers and a set of devices used to harness sources of energy to the productive process. Together these two sets make up a system of energy transfers from the environment to man. Such a system of energy transfers we call an ecotype." (WOLF 1966: 19).

[10] The Indian *jajmani* system cited by Wolf as an example for intra-community division of labour – "The system of stipulated rights and services between dominant cultivators and dependent specialists is called the *jajmani* system; the dominant cultivator is the *jajman*, or patron, of the *kamin*, or worker, who performed services in return for grain." (WOLF 1966: 39) – can also be adduced to characterise fundamental conditions in Tabo, at least in the present and recent past.

and also includes the general conditions substantially determined in the case of Spiti and Kinnaur by state-sponsored programmes or promotional measures for access to employment. One of the most important consequences of the exchange of goods in a system characterised by markets is not only its effect on the goods produced by the peasants and the exchange for other goods and services thus facilitated but also on the means of production themselves, human labour power and land, which may thereby become a commodity with a market value:

> "[...] the market may come to affect not only the peasant's fund of profits, but also his fund of rent, and through both his precarious balance of subsistence, replacement, and ceremonial funds." (WOLF 1966: 48).

The transfer of the fund of rent (or fund of profit) produced by the peasants into the hands of a person or group controlling them can occur in various ways according to Wolf. Nonetheless, it always takes place under the ultimate control of the lord paramount over the land cultivated by the peasants ("Such a person exercises *domain* over the land, *domain* meaning *ultimate ownership or control over the use of a given land*.", *ibid*., 49; 'domain' here emphasised by Wolf, otherwise my emphasis). The claims on the goods or services of the peasants – i.e., taxes and dues in the form of payments in kind, money or labour – could thus extend to different classes and types of peasants (and again to landless labourers who were dependent on the latter):

> "Whatever the method used to assess dues, each piece of land cultivated thus supported through a given year an entire pyramid of claims and counterclaims, from the lord who controlled the political entity of which the village formed a part right down to the outcast sweeper." (*ibid*., 49).

Wolf defines the forms of domain relevant for the peasantry as "patrimonial, prebendal, and mercantile domain" (*ibid*., 50). Patrimonial domain means that the peasant producers cultivating the land are under the control of landlords who receive tribute in return for the use of the land:

> "The domain becomes the inheritance of a line of lords, their patrimony. Such rights can be pyramidal, with lords of a higher order exercising inherited rights over lords of a lower order and lords of the lower order exercising domain over the peasants who work the land. The peasant is always at the base of such an organizational pyramid, sustaining it with his surplus funds, which are delivered in the form of labor, or in kind, or in money." (*ibid*., 50–51).

Wolf defines prebendal domain – thereby essentially following Max Weber (cf. WEBER 1920: 314f.) – as the kind of non-hereditary domain awarded to officials in strongly centralised bureaucratic states in remuneration for their duties. Other forms, not directly land-based, existed (such as for example in the Indian Mughal empire) in the granting by the king or state of the right to levy taxes to so-called "tax farmers", who were permitted to retain a portion of the dues for themselves. A characteristic shared by patrimonial and prebendal domain is the component of 'ceremonial' ambience that this exercise of domain had, and of elements that symbolised the reciprocal nature of this relationship: "Many services rendered such [*sic*] a lord had ceremonial aspects, and on occasion the lord reciprocated in kind." (*ibid*., 52). It is immediately evident that these forms of domain outlined by Wolf can for the most part serve to describe e.g., the historical conditions in Tabo and the Spiti Valley or the various types of holding in Tibet of the mid-19th to the mid-20th century (*gzhung gzhis*, *chos gzhis*, *sger gzhis*; see SURKHANG WANGCHEN GELEK 1984: 20 and below, p. 77f.). This becomes even clearer if one sees the functions of ceremonial described by Wolf in the context of a domain based on religion, as was the case in the West Tibetan kingdom from the end of the 10th century:

> "Such ceremonial might serve several functions. It would [...] serve to balance the asymmetrical relation between peasant and power-holder by compensating the peasant ritually. It would, at the same time, surround the figure of the power-holder with ritual value, thus underwriting the legitimacy of his domain as against the latent counterclaims of those upon whom such domain was exercised." (*ibid*., 53).

Tibetan Cultural and Social Anthropology

Peasant models in cultural or social anthropology, as explicitly formulated by Redfield or Wolf, or implicitly used for example in Carrasco's studies, were of major importance for the ethnographic research carried out by Graham Clarke and Charles Ramble in Tibetan communities. Clarke's (as also Ramble's) reception of these concepts is focused on the terms *Great* and *Little Tradition*, the methodological utility of which he sees in their application to specific cultural and historical conditions within a limited area, in his case Yol mo gang ri (Helambu):

> "Their importance is not as an absolute framework, but in terms of method, as a contrast to other such categories. [...] I use these terms Great and Little Tradition, and other such seemingly imprecise contrasts, as analytical notions of use in the account of the cultural and historical particulars of Yolmo." (CLARKE 1983: 23).

Incidentally, this also corresponds to the approach adopted by Redfield, who developed and used these concepts in order to analyse local communities which differ by degree from one another, and not as a fixed description of larger civilisatory units.[11]

In this publication Clarke limited himself to the analysis of a social element that occurs on both levels – on the larger, civilisatory, Tibetan-Buddhist level as well as on the local level, namely the rule governing the succession of a lineage of lamas (*bla ma*). He examined its cultural history and transformation from a spiritual lineage as part of a *Great Tradition* of Tibetan Buddhism in the social context of Yol mo and described its transformation on an institutional and ideological level from indirect to direct (patrilinear) descent. Further cultural and historical, and in particular social and economic aspects of this process – beginning in the 10th century as a religious process and becoming a strikingly political and economic process from the end of the 17th century – had been described by Clarke in earlier studies (CLARKE 1980a-c), albeit without reference to Redfield's concepts (on this, see also below *Supplementary Approaches*).

During the 1980s a new discourse on peasant models developed in socio-anthropological research on Tibet prompted by varying interpretations of the term *mi ser*. The salient points of the various positions and the broad range of opinion are reflected in the following statements by Surkhang Wangchen Gelek, Franz Michael and Melvyn Goldstein:

> "*Mi-ser*—this is a term for which there is no English equivalent. Basically, it refers to an individual who is bound to the land of a lord. In Tibet the lord can be monastery, aristocracy or government. These peasants cannot be deposed of their land, but also cannot leave the land without permission of their lord." (SURKHANG WANGCHEN GELEK 1984: 28–29, n. 4).

> "The term 'mi-ser' was a generic term, referring to the vast majority of the non-religious part of the population [...]. In English the term should best be rendered as 'subject' or 'commoner'." (MICHAEL 1986: 73).

Goldstein's description of the typical characteristics of the *mi ser* corresponds with that of Surkhang Wangchen Gelek; nevertheless, from a comparative perspective he thought it appropriate to classify the *mi ser* together with the serfs of medieval Europe and thus to translate the term *mi ser* by 'serfs' (see in particular GOLDSTEIN 1986, 1988 and 1989a).

This dispute, which was not free of political implications – the (*ex post*) legitimisation of the 'liberation' of Tibet as a feudalistic, unjust system (Michael; see also *Dokumente und Illustrationen zur Sozialgeschichte Tibets, China* 1995 and n. 12) – began in the *Tibet Journal* (1986, No. 4) with two 'pro-

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[11] Thus Clarke's question "Should we use the term Great Tradition for Tibetan civilisation as a whole, or reserve it solely for those aspects which derive from doctrinal Buddhism?" (CLARKE 1983: 23) and his answer: "Certainly there are major problems for anyone who would wish to generate a fixed and absolute typology. On examination, any category such as Tibetan civilisation or doctrinal Buddhism splits up into various influences, ideas, periods and persons." (*ibid*., 23) should be regarded as a clear statement of position with regard to the erroneous understanding and application of Redfield's concepts.

grammatic' articles by Michael and Goldstein and was continued in several controversial statements issued between Goldstein and Beatrice Miller up until 1989 (see GOLDSTEIN 1988 and 1989a, and MILLER 1987 and 1988). In essence, it revolved around the answer to the question of whether the group of individuals referred to as *mi ser* were serfs and Tibet had (thus) had a feudal system before 1959. (As late as 1995 these questions were answered in a resounding affirmative from a Marxist position in a publication issued in Beijing and distributed in Chinese embassies abroad.)[12] Michael answered the first question in the negative, not only with reference to the 'tral pa' [*khral pa*] (lit. 'tax-payers'),[13] but also to the 'dü chung' [*dud chung*] ("who owned no land, but were free to move and who sold their labor for work in the fields or the transport trade", MICHAEL 1986: 74) and 'tsong pa' [*tshong pa*], "the traders and private entrepreneurs" (*ibid*., 74). For this reason, and also on the basis of additional arguments (great social mobility,[14] the lack of political rebellions,[15] elements of profit-orientated, 'capitalist' economy, e.g., in the institution of 'labrang' [*bla brang*]), he also gave a negative answer to the second question of the existence of a feudal system.

Goldstein took the completely contrary view, giving a positive answer to the first question but answering the second in the negative, for completely different reasons to Michael. This was based on the analytical differentiation between serfdom and feudal society.[16] He understood serfdom as a system of economic production that was not necessarily linked to a particular (e.g. feudal) socio-political system, and defined it from a comparative perspective as a "cross-culturally relevant type" (GOLDSTEIN 1986: 82) by four distinctive components:

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[12] "Vor 1959 war Tibet eine Feudalgesellschaft mit Leibeigenschaft. Neben den allgemeinen Eigenschaften der feudalen Leibeigenschaft wies sie auch viele Überreste des Sklavenhaltersystems auf. Dieses Gesellschaftssystem war noch grausamer und finsterer als die Leibeigenschaft im europäischen Mittelalter. Die Wirtschaftsinteressen der Feudalherren wurden durch ein politisches System geschützt, das religiöse und politische Macht kombinierte." (*Dokumente und Illustrationen zur Sozialgeschichte Tibets, China* 1995: 52). "Die Feudalherren umfaßten die Klöster (die hochrangigen Mönche), die Beamten der Lokalregierung, den Adel sowie ihre Vertreter." (*ibid*., 56). "Die Leibeigenen kamen aus den Schichten der 'Thralpa' und der 'Dudchong'. 'Thralpas' machten 60-70% aller Leibeigenen aus. Sie leisteten Frondienste für die Feudalherren." (*ibid*., 57). "'Dudchong' bedeutet 'kleiner Haushalt'. 'Dudchong' waren hauptsächlich bankrotte 'Thralpa'. Ihre soziale Stellung war noch niedriger als die der Thralpa, ihr Leben noch härter. Dudchong machten 30-40% der Leibeigenen aus. [...] Die 'Nangzen' waren die Haussklaven. Sie machten 5% der damaligen Gesamtbevölkerung Tibets aus. Sie besaßen keine Produktionsmittel und keinerlei Rechte." (*ibid*., 58). "Leibeigene und Sklaven machten 95% der gesamten Bevölkerung Tibets aus, darunter waren 60% Bauern, 20% Hirten und 15% Lamas der unteren Schicht. Wie die Produktionsmittel besaßen die Feudalherren auch die Leibeigenen als ihr persönliches Eigentum, welche keine politischen Rechte und keine persönlichen Freiheiten hatten. Die Leibeigenenhalter durften ihre Leibeigenen und deren Kinder tauschen, verpfänden, verschenken oder verkaufen. Nur mit Genehmigung des Feudalherrn durften die Leibeigenen heiraten. [...] Wenn ein Leibeigener keine Fronarbeit leisten oder kein Geld verdienen konnte, mußte er Steuer bezahlen. [...] Das bebaute Ackerland, das Zugvieh und die Agrargeräte eines Leibeigenen, der arbeitsunfähig geworden war, fielen zurück an den Feudalherrn." (*ibid*., 66). "Abgaben umfaßten in Tibet die Pachtzinsen für Land und Vieh, Fronarbeiten und Steuern. Die Hauptform der Bezahlung des Pachtzinses war die Fronarbeit. Es gab daneben einen gemischten Pachtzins aus Naturalienabgaben, Fronarbeit und Geldabgabe. Die Feudalherren bewirtschafteten 70% des Ackerlandes selbst und verpachteten die anderen 30% als thralkang-Land an die Leibeigenen. Diese mußten dann mit ihrem eigenem Zugvieh und ihren eigenen Agrargeräten zu festgelegten Zeiten unentgeltlich auf dem 'Selbstverwaltungsland' der Feudalherren arbeiten. Das war die sogenannte innere Fronarbeit. Außerdem mußten die Leibeigenen für die Lokalregierung noch äußere Fronarbeit leisten, dazu kommen ferner Naturalien- und Geldabgaben. Es gab zwei Arten von Pachtzinsen für Vieh: Die Abführung von tierischen Produkten entsprechend der aktuellen oder entsprechend der ursprünglichen Zahl der gelieferten Tiere." (*ibid*., 70).

[13] "Their obligation of service was matched by a contractually documented and hereditary right to *own* their *own* land, which they could increase through purchase [...]. [...] their obligation did not in any way mean that they were physically 'subject to the will of the owner of a fief,' as inherent in the meaning of the term 'serf' or the German 'Leibeigener' (bodily owned), the status of the peasantry in medieval Europe." (MICHAEL 1986: 73; my emphases).

[14] "[...], Tibetan society was characterized by a degree of social mobility rarely encountered elsewhere." (*ibid*., 70).

[15] "There have never been 'peasant rebellions' or upheavals against the system of its religious leadership." (*ibid*., 74–75).

[16] In this Goldstein follows theoretical considerations formulated by Paul Sweezy: "*Some* serfdom can exist in systems which are clearly not feudal; and even as the dominant relation of production, serfdom has at different times and in different regions been associated with different forms of economic organization." (SWEEZY 1978: 33, quoted after GOLDSTEIN 1986: 82).

> "1) Peasants (serfs) who are hereditarily tied to land and obligated to provide free labor on the landholding elite's agricultural estates. The holders of these estates, the lords, possess the legal right to command this labor from their serfs on demand without recompense, although there may be customary or legal limits to this extraction. 2) Such peasants (serfs) subsist primarily by means of agricultural fields provided on a hereditary basis by their lord. This land, however, was not owned by serfs and could not be sold by them. 3) Serfs do not have the choice or legal right to terminate this relationship. They are hereditarily bound to serve and cannot unilaterally relinquish their land and obligations. 4) Lords exercise a degree of judicial control over their serfs, although a central government may also exercise judicial authority over the serfs." (*ibid*., 82).

On the basis of these premises his comparative investigation of the conditions in Tibet allowed him to interpret the social system that existed there in the 20th century until 1959 as a whole as a *variant* of serfdom, despite the absence of the political relationships of (European) feudal society (as defined by Marc Bloch).[17] Goldstein applied this characterisation not only to the "'taxpayer'" [*khral pa*] *mi ser* but also to the landless *mi ser* (presumably in the majority),[18] whose status he explained as "'derived' serfs": "The landless *misers*' [...] status *derived* from an original status of tied 'taxpayer' *miser*." (*ibid*., 108).

For this reason Goldstein rejected the use of the terms "subjects", "tenants" or "commoners" being applied to the Tibetan *mi ser* as distortions of the social reality, and kept to the term serf, also from a comparative perspective, even while acknowledging differences to other variants (e.g., in medieval Western Europe or 19th-century Russia): "Tibet, to be sure, did differ markedly from European serfdom in the absence of a class of 'free peasants,' in the tremendous number of 'derived' landless serfs, and in the fact that Tibetan serfs had legal identities." (*ibid*., 108).

With this approach Goldstein's peasant model stands between that of Dalton (cf. DALTON 1972) and Wolf, in that like Dalton he starts out from a direct comparability (albeit reduced to economic factors) with the status of the Western medieval peasantry, without however like the latter assuming a close connection with the feudal political system. Thus his model contains approaches both for comparative investigations of societies which can be at considerable geographical and historical remove as well as for investigations of regional and historical variations within a single or related societies:

> "Future research on the traditional Tibetan social system should be directed precisely to determining both regional variations in the Tibetan system and the historical and historico-ecological determinants of these differences, as well as explicating the similarities and differences between the Tibetan serf system and other examples of 'serf' systems." (GOLDSTEIN 1986: 109).[19]

In this respect the present study regards itself very much as an exploration of the question of a regional and historical variant of this type of economic and political system in a border area of Tibetan culture with similar forms of social and socio-economic organisation.

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[17] "A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement (i.e. the fief) instead of salary, which was out of question; the supremacy of a class of specialized warriors; ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man and, within the warrior class, assume the distinctive form called vassalage; fragmentation of authority—leading inevitably to disorder; and in the midst of all this, the survival of other forms of association, family, State, of which the latter, during the second feudal age, was to acquire renewed strength—such then seem to be the fundamental features of European feudalism." (BLOCH 1965 II: 446, quoted after GOLDSTEIN 1986: 81).

[18] Goldstein differentiated between five types of landless *mi ser*: "1) human-lease or *mibo* [*mi bogs*], 2) tax appendage or *trenon* [*khral snon*], 3) hereditary servant or *tsheyog* [*tshe g.yog*] [...], 4) *miser* [*mi ser*] without any status, and 5) *miser* [*mi ser*] who were illegally free as a result of running away from their lord and estate." (GOLDSTEIN 1986: 94–95).

[19] It is regrettable that research work on the anthropology of Tibetan society, including that by Goldstein, show that little notice is taken of models, approaches, debates and issues in this and related subjects as contained in publications by Redfield, Wolf, Dalton or Shanin *inter alia*, not only in a 'neighbouring' discipline but within these scholars' own academic field.

Supplementary Approaches

As has already emerged from the remarks on the choice of regional focus, the existence of a monastery was of especial importance for the content and conception of this study. A specific institution of this kind therefore also demands the inclusion of approaches which were developed not only in recognition of the central importance of a religious institution of this kind for the religious but also for the social, economic and cultural organisation of a community. These approaches refer among other things to the relationship between monastery (or temple) and land, monastery (temple) and (the control over) the transfer of goods and labour (also and especially that of women) as well as monastery and trade.

In this concrete case the monastery at Tabo played an important role in the development of the specific interest that influenced the direction of the research as well as in the more precise conception of the investigation. This manifests itself particularly in the discussion of topics pertaining to the religio-cultural sphere and – more importantly in this context – to the socio-economic field. This circumstance gave rise to a fundamental research issue at the beginning of the investigation, namely of the connections between the monastery – founded in the late 10th century and containing rich holdings of paintings, sculptures, inscriptions etc. – and the village: which elements of the present-day social and economic structure and organisation of the village could be linked to the existence of this monastery since its foundation, in its sumptuous decoration as well as its uninterrupted and continuing maintenance? Or to put it another way, what conclusions might be drawn from the analysis of present-day social and economic organisation of the village in respect of earlier periods, that is, what capacities does (did) the village offer/provide 'of itself' (and what services can/could be demanded of it) in order to contribute to the foundation, decoration and maintenance of a monastic institution such as Tabo?

The foundation, decoration and maintenance of the monastery must be seen as depending on 'external' factors in several respects. The foundation through the donation of land and manpower for the construction, its decoration through the financing of artisans and their materials, its maintenance through the recruitment of monks from local communities, the levying of dues in kind and labour services. This enumeration displays characteristics of a politico-economic system whose salient quality is to transfer the surplus of a peasant stratum of producers to a group that controls it with the purpose of founding, decorating and maintaining a religious institution whose conception was rooted in the ideology of its royal founders and patrons.[20] The correspondence displayed by this description with Wolf's peasant model attests to its relevance for the investigation of the socio-economic conditions in Tabo, also from the perspective of this approach. On the other hand the monastery's fundamental role (which had existed from the time of its foundation onward) – at the very latest since the research carried out by Clarke among Tibetan-speaking communities in Yol mo gang ri (Helambu), Nepal, it has been established that temples should also be seen in this light ("The temple is the distinctive and central feature of a Lama village [...].", CLARKE 1980a: 81) – also directs the researcher's gaze 'inwards', that is, to the consequences for the structure of the village's social organisation itself.

As Clarke has shown, the transformation of a hermitage under the control of a lineage of religious Buddhist teachers ("religious masters", *bla ma*) into a temple, prompted by the external (royal) granting of land, could lead to that temple or its owner[21] rapidly assuming control of all resources:

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[20] Cf. Klimburg-Salter's statements, made on the basis of art-historical analyses: "The Main Temple was a royal monument and its decorative programme was based on the ideology of its patrons: legitimacy and piety. The concern with legitimacy appears to have been paramount both in the secular and religious spheres. [...] all of the large corpus of inscriptions and many of the iconographic themes, particularly the assemblies, can be explained from this perspective." (KLIMBURG-SALTER 1997: 220).

[21] "The lineage Lamas are the agnatic descendants of the founder of the temple. Ideally there is only one lineage Lama who occupies a position analogous to the abbot [...] of a monastery. He is the legal owner of the temple and in cases where the temple is the recipient of a religious land-endowment [...] from the State and the village is built on that land, he has great authority." (CLARKE 1980a: 82).

> "In the late seventeenth century [...] these religious masters received land-grants from the state. The grants were originally from Newar Kings of Kathmandu, and subsequently from Gurkha Kings of the Shah Lineage. These masters were then no longer just temporary pilgrims, or the occupants of isolated hermitages, but the landlords of cultivators down the hillside in the valley bottom. Their *dgon pa* (literally 'solitary place', also retreat / monastery / religious centre) up the hillside became *lha khang* (temples). Subsequently, these became the focus of village settlements as their descendants intermarried with local elites." (CLARKE 1983: 24).

In this way a society previously based on the concepts of kinship and lineage was transformed into a society that was organised on the basis of residential rules and in which the relationship between temple and household became the dominant relationship: "[...] corporate social life is organised between households in relation to the temple, rather than in accordance with lineage and kinship." (CLARKE 1980a: 81).

The transformation in this village brought about a fundamental recasting of the values upon which the social order had hitherto been based. At the end of this political, economic and religious process the temple became the owner of the fields, the administrator of the articles of value belonging to the community, and furthermore not only the centre of religious but also social and economic life:

> "To become a full village member involves taking a loan from the temple, [...]; the number of village membership positions is fixed and controlled by the temple priests in terms of households and is not subject to partition or other claims of the agnatic kin." (CLARKE 1980a: 81).

In his explanation of the historical development of this region Clarke distinguished between internal factors, such as natural topographic conditions, forms of production connected with the latter (transhumance), relative remoteness, etc., (to this extent comparable with Wolf's concept of the ecotype) from external factors such as the intrusion of a lineage of religious teachers with a 'more developed' culture and its legal authority, assigned by far-off political power-holders, over the land:

> "From the north, from Tibet, came a relatively sophisticated life-style and culture. This could be adopted only by people with an economic surplus, and its very maintenance implies trade and inter-course with a wider, urban, world. From the south, from the States of the Kathmandu Valley, came the *legal authority for the initial control of land that allowed this economic development*. Hence the dominance of the priest of Tibetan culture, and the subsequent economic possibility of expansion for Lama Lineages. At a later date global economic circumstance encouraged the emergence of other local economic elites. The temples of the Lama Lineages became the foci around which these new elites crystallized. Then not just the economic surplus, but also political and spiritual authority, were concentrated in the hands of one people: the Lama people of Helambu." (*ibid*., 322; my emphasis).

Of central importance here was the granting of land to this group of religious teachers for the maintenance of the temple:

> "The original, inalienable, religious land-grants to priests of Tibetan culture were of *decisive significance* for the direction of the dominant cultural idiom of the region. They had one direct purpose: namely to cover the costs of running the temple. The priest also was the landlord, and the income came in kind from share-cropping tenants. This land could neither be resumed by the state, nor disposed of by the priestly beneficiary; it had to be handed down, from father to son, without partition, in perpetuity. Hence *these land-grants gave an institutionalised permanence to these temple-sites*, and this was the 'seed' of the local development which recast Tibetan Buddhist culture in the idiom of a small-scale community." (*ibid*., 322; my emphases).

With reference to the historical development in Tabo a series of common elementary structural features, above all in the granting of land for the maintenance in perpetuity of a religious institution (whether temple or monastery) and the dominance thus effected over a stratum of producers, can be recognised, as well as differences, such as for example the differentiation of the lord paramount from the locally dominant lama lineage(s). The latter distinction had an effect for example on the way land rights were handed down, which was based on different criteria than in the case of a monastery such as that at Tabo. Clarke also gives a clear indication of how this basic constellation, initiated by the granting of land to a

religious institution, implies in addition to the control over an economic surplus (cf. CLARKE 1980a: 322) the conducting of trade:

> "[...] such wealth as its [Yol mo's] inhabitants have been able to acquire at various periods of their history, by trade and landlordism, has been under the political overlordship of the Nepalese state and the religious authority of Tibetan Buddhism." (CLARKE 1983: 25).

In Clarke's anthropological analysis of a local society the elements outlined above of a peasant model close to that formulated by Wolf forms the framework rather than the core of his perspective: the latter is focused primarily on the cultural development and the formation of ethnic identity in a locally limited, very heterogeneous community, and in terms of this focus displays its indebtedness to Redfield's approach.

In the light of Clarke's analysis, which was conducted in accordance with or along related lines to the peasant models of Redfield and Wolf, the question of the foundation and decoration of the monastery at Tabo and its maintenance can be explained on the one hand in historical terms but also structurally and with reference to local topographical and economic circumstances on the basis of criteria such as the relationship of landlord to producer, land rights, etc. The question of the maintenance in perpetuity of this monastery thus leads inevitably to an investigation of the contribution made by the local population. In what form and to what extent this took place (and still takes place) thus forms a part of the investigation of the socio-economic organisation at Tabo, inasmuch as this can be reconstructed from historical or recent sources.

In two studies (GRIMSHAW 1983a and 1983b) Anna Grimshaw investigated socio-economic relations between monasteries and lay village population together with (control over) the transfer of goods and labour (with special focus on that of women) based on the example of a Buddhist monastery and convent of the dGe lugs pa School (at Ri rdzong and Jo mo gling respectively) and a village (Yangthang) in Lower Ladakh. The objectives of Grimshaw's doctoral thesis (supervised by Edmund Leach) (GRIMSHAW 1983b) were concerned generally with the relationship between religion and society and the concrete manifestation of Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhism in a local community in Ladakh, in order thus to analyse in exemplary fashion the functioning of a monastic system in the local and partly also in a wider context.

She justifies her methodological approach in taking the monastery – but not the village – as her point of departure in the following way:

> "The monastic institution is the formal representation of the Tibetan understanding of the Mahayana Buddhist doctrine and it occupies a central position in every aspect of the society. Spiritual preoccupations and material concerns are defined and ordered by the monastery." (GRIMSHAW 1983b: ii).

This prompts the question of the relevant unit for an investigation of this kind as well as of the basic factors for the functioning of a particular trilateral relationship between the monastery, convent and village. Grimshaw's line of enquiry is directed primarily towards the monastic sector, though the circumstance that the monastery and convent were at a distance from the village probably contributed to making an either/or decision and not to view the monastery and convent primarily as an indivisible element of a unit of both. Her description of the role of nuns as celibate women also in an informal context should in any case be singled out as one of the very first studies of this subject.

Given these premises, Grimshaw's interest was thus focused on particular structural differences between the monastic, conventual and lay communities which lie principally on a religious and ideological level. Correspondingly the concept of the (celibate) body forms a central metaphor in her analysis,[22] which in a paradigmatic way – following methodological propositions formulated by Stanley

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[22] "Celibacy lies at the centre of this institution [monastery] and enables the community to exert influence over a considerable geographical area. [...] The corporate celibate body of the monastery exercises a temporal authority whilst the ritual celibate body of its representatives restricts and governs the regions of spiritual practice. Celibacy is the link between its external functioning and internal practice." (GRIMSHAW 1983b: 174).

Tambiah (TAMBIAH 1970) – starts out from the absolute primacy of synchronic structural (over historical) perspectives. Because of these limitations in objectives and methodology, the significance of historical secular figures, events, circumstances and developments is marginalised[23] and while economic conditions, at least to the extent that they concern the monasteries, are described in great detail, they are ultimately subordinated in importance to religious concepts.[24] This would seem to be problematic in particular from a perspective which orients itself on relations of production, and here again on the question of ownership of the means of production, above all of the land, and on the other hand because of the circumstance that some of the conclusions extend beyond the self-imposed frame of the study's objectives.[25]

Taking into account the premises and limitations noted above, Grimshaw's research resulted in a range of important findings, in particular as concerns the institution of the monastery (with the primary focus being on the relations between the convent and the monastery and their relationship to the village rather than the other way round) and its importance in systems of trade, transport, banking and loans. In this she emphasised that the continuity and reproduction of the monastery and/or convent as a celibate institution, in particular of the monastery, depends on the women in two ways: in a material sense through the production of goods for exchange and trade, and in a physiological sense through the production of manpower for the economy and religious institutions. In addition, she demonstrates that the monastery occupies a focal position on an economic level in that it organises the local societal groups (lay village population, the nuns from the convent) in terms of production, distribution, exchange and reproduction. The relations between monastery, convent and village are characterised by the flow of specific goods and services. While the lay population and the convent place labour and goods at the disposal of the monastery (see GRIMSHAW 1983a: diagram 1, p. 127), the monastery in turn 'supplies' religious ceremonies, luxury goods, economic control and raw materials (see *ibid*., diagram 2, p. 127). Decisions affecting distribution and exchange or trade are made in the monastery, where in general the most important decisions not only about the movement of goods but also about the deployment of labour and capital are taken, with the main emphasis lying on redistribution.

Immediate redistribution affects the movement of surplus perishable goods. (For example, the fruit and vegetables produced by the nuns are taken to the monastery, from where part of this produce flows back to the convent.) Delayed redistribution affects means of production (raw wool, seeds, tools; even time is cited by Grimshaw in this context) and luxury goods (symbolic importance of exclusivity and expression of inequality), obtained with proceeds derived from trade – an exclusive preserve of the monastery.

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[23] Cited here as an example is her brief account of the founding of the West Tibetan kingdom and the establishment of a new political system whose power-holders exercised ultimate control over the land – in effect, over all means of production, and from the time of Ye-shes-'od at the latest legitimised their dominion predominantly or also in religious terms: "King Glang-dar-ma was murdered in A.D. 842 and during the subsequent era of tremendous upheaval, a branch of the Tibetan ruling family migrated to the areas of Ngaris and Purang. *Their descendants eventually divided the whole region, including Ladakh, between themselves*." (GRIMSHAW 1983b: 14; my emphasis).

The fundamental role of the early West Tibetan rulers as well as the later kings of Ladakh in the foundation and patronage of temples and monasteries – whether as initiators and/or by the granting of land, together with labour services and dues, permission to recruit monks, etc. – does not seem to be adequately rendered by formulations such as "royal interest in the religion and its encouragement of monastic expansion" (*ibid*., 186).

[24] In places Grimshaw's terminology seems to approach the dimensions of philosophical and mystic notions: "The areas of economy and religious doctrine are bound together through the activity of the monks and it is this direct involvement, *thereness*, which guarantees the continued dominance of the monastery in the social organisation." (GRIMSHAW 1983b: 229; my emphasis; underlined in the original).

[25] "Since the perspective on the society stems from the community of celibate women, the villages are understood primarily in terms of these relations rather than by an analysis of their social and economic organisation *per se*." (GRIMSHAW 1983b: 237, n. 19; my emphasis; underlined in the original); "By focussing upon the relationship between monastery and village it is easy to forget that these two groups have many other links with individuals and communities which are independent of this particular relationship." (*ibid*., 78).

The circumstance that the nuns with their modest material needs place their labour and time exclusively at the service of economic activities makes the convent the most productive sector of society. The lay village community is characterised as a factor of the continuity of the production system, the religious structure and its main component, i.e., manpower. As producers of (male) producers rather than products (due to the constraints of the former role) women are of central importance in guaranteeing this continuity since the processes of physiological reproduction constitute the essence of the whole system. Grimshaw thus presupposes higher subsistence pressure for the village as compared with the convent, whose subsistence is based largely in the redistribution of self-produced goods.

Grimshaw clearly recognises the salient role of the monastery in the sphere of trade as well as the reasons for it, in particular the possession and control of the surplus of goods: "The realm of exchange is only open to the monastic community who possess and control the surplus to be marketed, have the trade links over large distances and the manpower and knowledge to participate fully in it." (GRIMSHAW 1983b: 108). Because of this, only the monastic community of Ri rdzong had (sufficient) capital in the form of money, which was mostly re-invested in prestigious luxury goods and not in the economy, for example in order to increase production. (In many cases control of the village's manpower also implies having recourse to it for transport services. Thus, this was a further important factor in profitable activity in trade.) The accumulation of capital in the monastery or temple (under the control of a local lama lineage), as comparably described by Clarke, constituted an important basis for their function as bank and credit institutions, to which in each case religious elements and motives also contributed (not only in the case of donations and foundations).

As a whole, Grimshaw regarded the economic dominance of the monastery as being determined by three factors: "[...] the control over labour power, the ability to convert produce into commodities for exchange and the monopoly of trading routes [...]." (*ibid*., 240, n. 30). She specifies the factor of (human) labour power in relation to other factors as follows: "The control, primarily over men (and only secondarily over land, tools, technical knowledge) [...]." (*ibid*., 240, n. 30). For her, the answer to the question of the reason for this dominance – "[...] why and how the monastic community is able to lay claim to other men's labour, the answer remains dispersed in the economy and *more problematically* in the form and demands of the religion." (*ibid*., 98; my emphasis) – is to be found in the economy itself or in the form or the demands of religion and not primarily in (historico-)political power structures, i.e., in the existence of a political elite and lords paramount, who created the basis for permanent maintenance of a religious institution (monastery or temple) through the allocation of land together with part of the agricultural production to a group or stratum of producers.

Grimshaw recognised the stability of the monastic system in the case of the monastery at Ri rdzong since the time of its foundation at the beginning of the 19th century to the present day – and this despite a context marked by political and cultural change – as an essential characteristic. She saw the reason for this lying in the special kind of material and religious relations between monastic institutions, state structures and the lay population.[26] This corresponds to the approach of this study, the aim of which is to

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[26] In this connection Grimshaw also argued (in a teleological manner, no rare occurrence in explanations of polyandry) that the marriage system and polyandry in particular are closely connected to the continuity and stability of the monastic order of society: "On the one hand, in an area of difficult climate and terrain, a community both producing for itself and to support a large monastic population *must* conserve village holdings from fragmentation at death or marriage and from the stresses of *population pressure*. However, on the other hand with limited mechanisation labour power comes to be the central feature of the economy but it is always scarce, not at least due to the particular demands of the religion. In this situation where a family traditionally offers one child to the monastery, thus losing a potential worker for the future and where a high degree of more general celibacy of men and women precludes both their reproduction of the producers, and in the case of the former sex, also their participation in the household economy, the supply of labour is extremely problematic. It is further exacerbated by the obligation of villagers to pay tribute to the monastery in the form of labour services – labour has to be both here (in the village) and there (at the monastery)." (GRIMSHAW 1983a: 132–33; my emphases).

investigate the socio-economic organisation in Tabo and the Spiti Valley, a border area of Tibetan culture which was determined by similar relationships from the end of the 10th century onwards.

Studies by two other authors – Nicola Grist and Wim van Spengen – provide exemplary proof that trade in its diverse geographical and historical facets cannot be examined solely from the perspective of religious institutions in Tibetan-speaking communities.

Nicola Grist has investigated trade in Ladakh in various historical phases up to the recent past (GRIST 1985 and 1994). In her studies she recognises the importance of labour and transport services ('*begar*') to which the peasant population was subject as part of the taxation system. However, her examination of this phenomenon is strictly limited to the use made of these services by the power-holders and their beneficiaries. Thus insufficient account was taken of the specific peasant stratum of subjects who were obliged to provide these labour services and to which this type of organisation primarily related (a form of organisation that incidentally was also widespread in neighbouring non-Tibetan-speaking regions of British India such as Kulu, etc.). This observation is based on the perception that until the middle of the 20th century trade in Tibet (which was under the ultimate control of the state) as well as in Ladakh and Spiti (also during and until the end of British rule) cannot be explained without these fundamental obligations which originate from law relating to the holding of land. Conversely, it is not enough, given the legal origin of these obligatory labour and transport services, to regard them purely in their function within the trade context which differs according to political entity, administrative unit and historical situation (see also the *Excursus: begar / corvée, forced labour / 'u lag – Comparative Perspectives*, p. 76f.). Taking a comparative historical perspective, the present study attempts to describe the respective conditions and development in Spiti and Upper Kinnaur in this regard over the past 200 years, and also aims to explain the reasons for differences emerging in terms of socio-economic organisation, social structures and degree of change (despite similar conditions and circumstances) – as far as this can be reconstructed on the basis of extant source material.

Other, related historical perspectives are connected to the question of particular types of cultivator and the respective typological terms used continuously over the centuries whose meaning changed according to the law relating to the holding of land that pertained to a certain region at a certain period. It would thus seem essential to compare the historical use of the terms 'zemindar' or 'zamíndár', 'landowner', as found in contemporary British sources from the 19th century as a central concept in the description of land ownership in north-west India including Spiti (under British administration *de jure* from 1846, *de facto* from 1848) (see ROTHERMUND 1978), with the Tibetan term *khral pa* (see the *Excursus: The Peasant Concept and 'zemindar / zamíndár' in North-west India*, p. 154f.). These terms and the change in meaning associated with them can thus to a certain extent be adduced as an indicator of certain developments, which in the case of Spiti is still relevant in the present (the problems of central or federal state development programmes aimed at this particular stratum; see e.g. 4.4.1. *Development Programmes of the Central Government and the Government of Himachal Pradesh*, Chapter IV, p. 219f.).

Her argument that household-based taxation practice promotes particular marital strategies whose primary aim is to avoid the division of households concurs with the findings of other authors (e.g. Goldstein). Her interpretation of the spatial expression of polyandry as a consequence of ideological necessity of a monastic order does not appear to be justified, not only in view of the many different circumstances and widespread distribution of polyandry: "Encouraged by the existence of a household tax, rather than a land or property tax, polyandry may evolve as a marriage strategy whereby brothers remain within a single household, manage their property jointly and whilst one brother is absent at the monastery a second may ensure the continuity of production in the village. Significantly, too, the spatial expression of polyandry whereby women remain in the village and their husbands have contact with the monastery, stems from the ideological necessity of a religion founded upon celibate orders. Whilst women ensure the continuity of the religion and its economic system in terms of the manpower made available strictly through physiological reproduction, their confinement to a particular spatial area (demanded by the religion and the problems stemming from celibacy) further ensures the continuity of the production in the village which provides their daily subsistence and possesses the ability to release men for work elsewhere." (GRIMSHAW 1983a: 133).

In two studies (VAN SPENGEN 1987 and 2000) Wim van Spengen investigated the development of trade among the Nyishangba people in Manang District in the north of central Nepal from the 18th century onwards, focusing in particular on the rise in activities connected with long-distance trade from the middle of the 19th century to the present day. In *Tibetan Border Worlds* (2000) he combined this with an analysis of the geopolitical history of Tibet and the geohistory of Tibetan trade. The basic concepts of his approach were oriented on the French schools of historical and regional geography (Paul Vidal de la Blache) and the Annalists (Lucien Febvre, Marc Bloch), in particular the structural history of Fernand Braudel. Based on this, his model of the geohistory of Tibet thus provides the opportunity not only to explore particular methodological and theoretical concepts but also, on the basis of the conclusions derived from them – whether justified or unjustified – the possibility of comparison with regional historical conditions in Spiti, that is, to test their validity to a limited extent. In this context further studies are adduced to elucidate essential elements of the historical economy of Buddhist monastic communities and monasteries in India, China, Tibet and Mongolia, as analysed by Max Weber (1920, 1921), Jacques Gernet (1956), André Bareau (1961), Robert J. Miller (1961) or Himanshu Ray (1986) among others.

Finally, in addition to presenting an account of present ethnographic circumstances and a reconstruction of historical and structural developments, this study aims at contributing to the creation of a specific model of particular types of peasant society that lay in the historical or current sphere of influence of political systems or are a part of these, where the power-holders or political elite were or are indebted to a form of Tibetan Buddhism represented by monasteries or temples which as a rule exercise economic and social dominance directly or indirectly over a stratum of producers through control of the most important means of production, namely land.

II. HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Preliminary Remarks

To date no scholarly historical study has been published which deals specifically with the historical development of Spiti and gives a comprehensive survey of the history of this valley. In order to obtain more detailed information about Spiti it was therefore essential for the purposes of the present study to consult historical Tibetan sources in addition to the studies by Luciano Petech (PETECH 1977, 1988a, 1988b, 1997a, 1999) and Roberto Vitali (VITALI 1996), which treat the history of the kingdoms of Ladakh and/or Gu ge Pu rang, to which Spiti belonged in various constellations over the course of the last millenium.[27] Moreover, those publications dealing specifically with research into the monastery at Tabo and its architecture, collection of manuscripts, paintings, inscriptions etc., were of course used for the period dating from the 10th century onward.[28] These studies contain a wealth of historically relevant information and provide particulars of various aspects of local historical conditions in and around Tabo.[29]

Paradoxically we have better and more detailed information about the period between the 10th and 12th centuries than about the following centuries, when Spiti emerges only occasionally from the shadows of history. Examples of the latter are the war between Ladakh and the government of the Dalai Lama at the end of the 17th century, in consequence of which Spiti – at least nominally – came under Central Tibetan rule. By contrast, hardly any textual sources exist for important historical phases such as the period in which a large number of monasteries, including Tabo, were taken over by the dGe lugs pa School (during the 15th century)!

After the end of the kingdom of Ladakh (1842), Spiti was incorporated into the territory of British India as laid down in the treaty of 1846 between Gulab Singh, who became Mahārāja of Kashmir in the same year, and the British East India Company. The new British supremacy brought changes in the administrative and taxation systems which are documented in the reports of the officials responsible and the *Gazetteers* (HAY 1851, BARNES 1855, EGERTON 1864, HARCOURT 1871, LYALL 1874, *Gazetteer of the Kangra District* 1883–1884b, DIACK 1892 and 1898, *Gazetteer of the Kangra District* 1899, COLDSTREAM 1913, *Gazetteer of the Kangra District* 1918). A number of these reports, in particular the first descriptions of the geography and natural history, as well as travelogues (FRASER 1820a, HERBERT 1825 and 1829, GERARD 1833, HUTTON 1839, 1840a, 1840b and 1841, GERARD 1840, 1841 and 1842, HERBERT 1842, CUNNINGHAM 1844, [HOFFMEISTER] 1847, [WALDEMAR, Prince of Prussia] 1853, KUTZNER 1857) also contain information about the situation in Spiti and Upper Kinnaur in the first half of the 19th century. Of particular value here are the chapters on Spiti and Kinnaur in Victor Jacquemont's *Voyage dans l'Inde* (Paris 1841, 1844) as well as the information contained in this author's published

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[27] Since 2003 some publications appeared that deal mainly with the history of individual monuments or objects (see, for example, LOBSANG NYIMA 2010, 2011, LAURENT 2013, 2014) or that are occupied with the post-17th century period (such as JAHODA 2007c, 2008, 2009 and SCHERRER-SCHAUB 2013).

[28] Cf. the articles and bibliographical data in *East and West*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (1994) ('Tabo Studies I'), KLIMBURG-SALTER 1997, PETECH and LUCZANITS 1999 and SCHERRER-SCHAUB and STEINKELLNER 1999. On more recent research see, for example, LUCZANITS 2004, KLIMBURG-SALTER 2008, TROPPER 2008, ALLINGER and LUCZANITS (forthcoming), KALANTARI (forthcoming b).

[29] Articles by Laxman S. Thakur represent an important addition to these studies as they examine various historical objects bearing inscriptions as well as temple complexes in the wider region, for example a stele in Pooh whose inscription constitutes important evidence of Ye shes 'od's activities in the region (THAKUR 1994), or the temple complex at Nako in Upper Kinnaur which can partly be taken as evidence for an 11th-century foundation (THAKUR 1996) as well as early historical inscriptions in Kinnaur and Spiti (THAKUR 1997).