



Rituals, Objects, and Monastic Life: The Living Archaeology of Tawang Monastery

Millo Hakhe

Abstract - Arunachal Pradesh remains archaeologically underexplored due to rugged terrain, heavy rainfall, and limited accessibility, yet surveys since the 1970s have revealed prehistoric tools, Neolithic sites, and Buddhist monastic structures. This study examines Tawang Monastery as a living institution of the Monpa community, using an object-centred ethnographic approach grounded in archaeological ethnography and material agency theory. Through non-intrusive observation, documentation, photography, and interviews, ritual and utilitarian objects in monasteries, households, and museums were analysed as active mediators of social relations and cultural continuity. Comparative observations from Urgelling and Sangelling monasteries contextualize the regional monastic network, highlighting the need for interdisciplinary preservation and future research.

Keywords: Tawang Monastery, Archaeological Ethnography, Material Culture, Monpa Community, Object-centered Approach

Introduction:

Arunachal Pradesh, formerly known as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) prior to 1972, is the northeasternmost state of India, covering an area of 83,743 sq. km. Although the British explored the region in the early twentieth century and conducted preliminary surveys, systematic attention remained limited. After India's independence in 1947, the region gradually began to receive governmental focus. However, it was particularly after the 1960s, following the Chinese claim over Arunachal Pradesh and the 1962 Sino-Indian War, that the Indian government intensified its administrative and developmental engagement with the area. From the 1970s onward, the state opened more substantially to academic research, including archaeology.

Despite this progress, archaeological research in Arunachal Pradesh has faced significant challenges. The state's rugged topography, marked by steep mountains, dense forests, and heavy rainfall, poses serious logistical difficulties. Poor road connectivity further restricts systematic field surveys. The upper ridges receive particularly high rainfall from November to February, limiting accessibility for extended research work. Nevertheless, dedicated efforts by administrators, officials, surveyors, and scholars—often supported by local

communities have led to the identification of important archaeological sites across the region.

From the 1950s onward, several Western anthropologists conducted fieldwork in Northeast India, bringing Arunachal Pradesh into broader academic focus. Earlier historical narratives of the region suffered from gaps due to the absence of substantial material evidence. These lacunae began to be addressed through archaeological discoveries (Malik 2008: 267). Interdisciplinary collaboration between archaeology and geology has contributed significantly to uncovering diverse material remains, including fossils, stone tools, weapons, and utensils. Excavations have also yielded architectural vestiges, sculptures, paintings, terracotta objects, bricks, woodcarvings, inscriptions, and coins. Many of these artefacts are now preserved in state museums.

Systematic archaeological investigations began in the 1970s, with an initial focus on prehistoric remains. In 1971, S. H. Rao of Dibrugarh University discovered Paleolithic tools in the Kamlang Valley of Lohit district. In the same year, Y. A. Raikar of the Research Department of Arunachal Pradesh reported semi-precious stone chips such as chalcedony and jasper from Vijayanagara in Tirap district, identifying them as Mesolithic relics. Later, in 1979, D. K. Duarah reported a possible Neolithic site in West Kameng district. These discoveries marked important milestones in reconstructing the prehistoric cultural sequence of the region.

In addition to excavated materials, significant private collections are preserved in monasteries and individual households. These include implements and utensils, as well as metal objects of Tibetan and Burmese types made of silver, brass, and copper, commonly found in religious centres. Heirloom objects such as gongs, preserved among non-Buddhist tribal communities and sometimes possessing exchange value, are also noteworthy.

Architectural evidence constitutes another important dimension of Arunachal Pradesh's archaeological heritage. Monasteries, stupas, shrines, and forts have been identified at sites such as Bhalukpong, Naksaparvat, Itanagar, and Bhismaknagar. Monastic architecture is particularly prominent in Tawang and West Kameng districts. Sites including Zemithang, Tawang, Kalaktang, Rupa, and Birang, as well as



Gelling, Tuting, Mechuka, Mankhota, and parts of Upper Siang and Dibang Valley, are known for Buddhist monasteries and chortens associated with various sects. Some of these monuments are dated to the eleventh–twelfth centuries CE. Important ritual objects made of clay, metal, and stone, preserved in monasteries, chapels, and households, have also been reported from multiple districts. When systematically analysed, such evidence can illuminate the socio-religious, political, and territorial history of the region.

Despite these achievements, substantial potential remains for further archaeological exploration. Preservation and systematic documentation of material remains continue to require urgent attention. One major limitation in reconstructing the region's past is the relative absence of an indigenous written literary tradition. Consequently, scholars increasingly rely on comparative ethnological and linguistic studies, as well as early literary accounts from neighbouring regions such as Assam and adjoining territories including Tibet, Bhutan, and Myanmar. Such approaches help trace historical and cultural interconnections across the eastern Himalayan region.

Area of Study

The present study is centered on **Tawang Monastery**, situated in the Tawang circle of **West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh**. Located in the northwestern part of the state, the monastery serves as the principal religious, cultural, and social institution of the Monpa community. The region's historical and geographical significance is marked by its proximity to Tibet and Bhutan, reflecting deep cultural linkages that have shaped the religious identity and material traditions of the local population.

The study explores Tawang Monastery as a living institution, examining its role in the everyday life of the Monpas and its broader influence on local socio-cultural practices. Given the limited availability of inscriptional and numismatic sources for the region, the research adopts a material culture perspective, focusing on the **ritual and utilitarian objects** preserved within the monastery, households, and local museums. The objects are analysed as active mediators of social relations and cultural continuity, rather than as passive relics of the past.

In addition to Tawang Monastery, the study incorporates comparative observations from **Urgelling Monastery**, **Sanggelling Monastery**, and other nearby religious sites. These additional monastic centres provide contextual reference and comparative data to understand the broader monastic network of the region. The primary fieldwork was conducted through a combination of non-intrusive observation, object

documentation, and ethnographic interviews with key informants, including monks, teachers, local residents, and custodians.

Overall, the area of study encompasses the monastic landscape of Tawang and its surrounding communities, with particular emphasis on the **material culture** associated with Buddhist practice and Monpa identity. This approach enables the reconstruction of historical continuities and transformations in monastic traditions through the study of surviving objects and contemporary cultural practices.

Literature Review:

Studies on the Buddhist monasteries of Arunachal Pradesh remain limited. To explore the Buddhist monastery of Arunachal Pradesh, it becomes incumbent to understand literature works done on Trans-Himalayan region of India, Tibet or East Asian and South East Asian countries. The earliest references to Buddhist communities in the region appear in colonial ethnographic accounts produced by British officials and scholars. Writers such as Elwin (1872: 14) mentioned a few Buddhist tribes of the northeastern region, primarily describing their cultural and social practices rather than the monasteries themselves. Dalton referred to the Khamti tribe as practitioners of Buddhism and noted the presence of certain Buddhist groups in the Mishmi Hills. Elwin described distinctive features of Khamti monasteries, praising the community's skill in carving images of the Buddha, some of which were preserved in small, remote temples. He also observed the presence of amber and glass Buddha images within Khamti monasteries. According to Dalton, only a few Buddhist temples existed in the Khamti region; these were constructed of timber, with carefully carved structures and well-arranged interiors. He further documented ritual objects such as statues, prayer drums, bells, and lamps, emphasizing the interaction between monasteries and local communities in shaping festivals, ceremonies, customs, and belief systems. Despite these valuable observations, systematic literary or archaeological studies of monasteries in Arunachal Pradesh were largely absent.

In contrast, other Himalayan regions such as Ladakh, Leh, and Himachal Pradesh began to receive sustained scholarly attention from the late nineteenth century onward. Before formal academic research emerged, European explorers including George Bogle (Markham: 1971), Samuel Turner (1800), and Thomas Manning (1811) documented Tibetan monastic traditions and customs during their travels. Scholars such as Csoma de Kőrös (1834) and H. A. Jäschke (1881), through translations of Tibetan literary sources, laid the foundation for systematic study of Tibetan-style monasteries.



By the mid-nineteenth century, attention gradually shifted toward the physical and structural analysis of monasteries. Emil Schlagintweit (1863: 205–209), a specialist in Tibetan studies, explored major Buddhist sites in Leh, Ladakh, Sikkim, and Bhutan. His research included detailed surveys of monastic structures, chortens, mani walls, prayer wheels, and flags. Employing building-to-building documentation, informal interviews, and structural measurements, he sought to examine the function and significance of monastic objects and architecture. A similar descriptive approach was later adopted by A. L. Waddell (1895), whose work focused primarily on monuments and ritual objects rather than their social context.

Subsequently, scholars such as A. H. Francke (1914) adopted a material culture perspective to examine the relationship between monasteries and local communities. During his surveys in Ladakh and Leh, Francke analyzed ceremonial objects and explored the structural development of Tabo monastery in relation to neighbouring regions such as Nepal and Tibet. His work emphasized stylistic evolution and dynastic influences, particularly changes in walls and architectural designs. However, material objects themselves received comparatively less analytical attention, as his primary concern remained dynastic history.

The period after the 1950s marked a significant transformation in archaeological methodology with the emergence of ethnoarchaeology. Influenced by L. R. Binford's (1977) theoretical framework, scholars increasingly examined present material culture to interpret past societies, particularly in regions lacking written sources. Researchers such as Bettlinger (1987), Thomas (1983), and Torrence (1986) incorporated ethnological data within scientific and processual approaches. In the study of Buddhist monasteries, this shift encouraged interdisciplinary methods. Nevertheless, much research especially on Tibetan-type monasteries continued to prioritize art and architectural history. Krishna Deva (1974) similarly investigated Buddhist monuments in Nepal to identify Indian and Tibetan artistic influences. Inspired by such work, Laxman Thakur conducted systematic studies of structural design and monastic objects at Nako and Tabo in Ladakh.

From the 1970s onward, archaeological surveys extended beyond monastic complexes. A. K. Singh (1970) conducted village-to-village surveys in Kinnaur (Himachal Pradesh), documenting bronze cult images and wooden sculptures from sites such as Rangrik, Ropa, Kothi, and Ribba. He provided stylistic definitions, provenance analyses, and chronological frameworks (ninth–twelfth centuries CE), highlighting Kashmir's role in artistic dissemination across the western Himalayas.

By the late twentieth century, Marxist and socio-economic perspectives further expanded monastic studies. Scholars such as R. A. Stein (1972), Beatrice Miller (1961) and Namkhai Norbu (1989) examined monasteries within broader cultural and economic networks, relating Tibetan monastic objects to Chinese and Mongolian parallels. Goldstein (1985) and Chapela analyzed monastic production systems, including ritual objects such as prayer wheels. Michael Henss (1981) surveyed surviving monastic architecture in central Tibet, linking religion and economy.

Chandra L. Reedy's *Himalayan Bronzes: Techniques, Styles and Choices* (1997) represents a major interdisciplinary contribution. Analyzing over 340 objects, he combined geology, chemistry, art history, archaeology, statistics, and ethnography to investigate manufacturing techniques, trade networks, and cultural interactions among Tibet, Nepal, Kashmir, and China. His methodological use of analogy and relational analogy remains particularly significant.

O. C. Handa's *Buddhist Western Himalaya* (2001) offered a comprehensive material study of monasteries in Lahul, Spiti, Beas, and Satluj valleys. Unlike colonial interpretations that treated Himalayan monastic culture as an extension of Tibet, Handa argued for its distinct regional identity (Handa 2001: 7–20).

Overall, scholarship on Himalayan monasteries has largely focused on architecture, paintings, and chortens, with limited archaeological attempts to connect monasteries and material objects to broader socio-cultural life. Although recent surveys in Leh and Ladakh continue, the emphasis remains predominantly art-historical.

More recently, Alex Wallace (2017) approached monasteries from a social anthropological perspective, studying Spituk and Rizong monasteries in Ladakh. He examined differences in social organization and lay-monastic relations, exploring how social environments shape monastic narratives and daily practices. Earlier works by Goldstein (1988) and Grimshaw (1983) similarly addressed monastic life through social dynamics.

In terms of literary scholarship on the monastery of Tawang, only a limited number of studies have been undertaken on this region, as relatively few scholars have initiated systematic research on it. Among the early contributions, Niranjan Sarkar (1981) conducted a cultural study of the region, with particular emphasis on Tawang Monastery. His analysis relied primarily on the physical features of the monastery and, to some extent, on the traditional lifestyle of the Monpa community. Sarkar



provided a valuable firsthand account of Tawang Monastery and its surrounding region. He documented notable architectural and artistic elements, including vibrant wall paintings, a gold-plated statue approximately twenty-eight feet in height, prayer wheels, and the intricately carved main doors of the sanctum sanctorum, complete with brass knockers and ornamental plates featuring elaborate designs. His work is largely ethnological in orientation, focusing on contemporary traditions and customs while situating the monastery within the broader cultural life of the region.

A significant contribution appeared in 2013 with the publication of *A Brief History of the Establishment of Buddhism in Monyul* by Lobsang Tempa and Thupten Tenpa. This work provides an important historical overview of the establishment and spread of Tibetan Buddhism in the Monyul region, particularly in relation to the growth and development of monasteries. It represents one of the first comprehensive syntheses of historical sources pertaining to the region and offers an informative summary of its religious and institutional history.

Apart from these contributions, much of the available literature consists of administrative or strategic reports rather than detailed academic studies. Some elementary works, such as H. G. Joshi's *Arunachal Pradesh: Past and Present* (2005), provide general discussions of the cultural and social aspects of the state. Joshi outlines the broader social dynamics of Arunachal Pradesh and includes brief references to the tribes of Tawang. However, his treatment remains descriptive and does not engage in a focused analysis of the monastery as an institution.

Overall, the existing body of literature on Tawang Monastery is limited and largely descriptive, concentrating primarily on cultural observations rather than systematic archaeological or interdisciplinary analysis. Consequently, it becomes necessary to engage with scholarship on comparable monasteries and regions in order to develop a more comprehensive analytical framework for the study of Tawang and related monastic institutions.

Despite these contributions, a comprehensive archaeological study linking monasteries, material culture, and socio-cultural transformation—particularly in Arunachal Pradesh remains largely unexplored.

Theoretical Framework:

This study is primarily grounded in archaeological ethnography, supported by theories of material agency. In the

absence of inscriptional and numismatic evidence, archaeological ethnography provides a methodological bridge between contemporary Monpa practices and surviving material remains. By treating objects not merely as passive artefacts but as active mediators of social relations, this framework allows Tawang Monastery to be analysed as a living socio-cultural institution rather than solely as an architectural monument.

The absence of written, inscriptional, and numismatic sources poses a significant limitation for research on Tawang Monastery. In such a context, contemporary material remains constitute the primary source for reconstructing the past. However, material evidence alone is not always sufficient to generate comprehensive historical inferences. It therefore becomes essential to examine contemporary culture and traditions belief systems, ritual practices, customs, and festivals in order to trace patterns of continuity and transformation. The relationship between living traditions and surviving artefacts provides an important interpretive bridge between past and present.

In this regard, archaeological anthropology and ethnoarchaeology offer valuable methodological tools for tracing the historical development of material culture. Among the Monpas of Tawang, objects possessing cultural and ritual value continue to play a central role in social identity. The identity of Tawang Monastery is, to a considerable extent, manifested through the objects it acquires, preserves, and circulates within the community. Objects thus function as agents through which past events and cultural meanings can be interpreted.

Philosophical reflections on materiality further illuminate this perspective. Martin Heidegger (2002: 13–14) argued that the “thingness” of objects becomes most apparent in their use rather than in detached contemplation. His example of the peasant woman’s shoes suggests that objects reveal their essence in everyday practice. Similarly, the artefacts associated with Tawang Monastery derive meaning through lived engagement. The monastery’s identity is not confined to its architecture but is expressed through ritual implements, images, and everyday objects embedded in social practice.

From the 1980s onward, scholars increasingly emphasized the centrality of materiality in cultural analysis (Olsen 2006). Chris Gosden (2005: 196) argued that material objects do not merely reflect thought but actively shape it. Alfred Gell (1998) proposed that art objects possess agency, influencing social relations. However, as Knappett (2002: 98) cautioned, recognizing object agency does not entirely dissolve the dualism between subjects and objects. These debates



nonetheless highlight the importance of examining artefacts as active participants in cultural processes. Applying such perspectives to Tawang Monastery enables a more nuanced understanding of how objects mediate identity, memory, and institutional continuity.

The theoretical grounding of this study also draws upon the historical relationship between anthropology and archaeology. Although these disciplines gradually differentiated during the professionalization of archaeology in the twentieth century, they have long shared methodological and intellectual intersections. The emergence of ethnoarchaeology in the 1960s and 1970s partly influenced by processual archaeology and uniformitarian principles sought to interpret the past through systematic study of contemporary societies. While this approach later faced criticism regarding the reliability of direct analogies by scholars like Feuser (2001), it nonetheless established an important framework for engaging living communities in archaeological interpretation.

Building upon ethnoarchaeology, archaeological ethnography has emerged as a flexible and dynamic approach that integrates archaeological, anthropological, and ethnohistorical methods. Hamilakis (2011: 70–73) conceptualizes archaeological ethnography as a transdisciplinary and transcultural space that blurs rigid distinctions between past and present. It encompasses multi-sited fieldwork, participant observation, interviews, archival research, and engagement with diverse stakeholders (Hamilakis 2011: 399–400). Similarly, Meskell (2005: 81–82) describes it as a hybrid practice that situates living communities within ongoing processes of cultural negotiation, politicization, and heritage formation.

Archaeological ethnography emphasizes the coexistence of multiple temporalities within a single heritage space. Hamilakis (2011: 79) illustrates how structures from different historical periods ancient temples, later graffiti, and modern remains—interact to produce layered meanings. Such an approach is particularly relevant to Tawang, where ritual objects, architectural forms, and contemporary practices coexist within the monastic landscape. Studies by scholars such as Castañeda, Armstrong (2011), Breglia (2006), and Sullivan (1991) further demonstrate how local perceptions, testimonies, and engagements with heritage sites provide critical interpretive insights. Sullivan’s reliance on interviews to understand local relationships with the Tulum site exemplifies the value of community narratives in archaeological analysis.

Methodologically, archaeological ethnography incorporates participant observation, structured and unstructured interviews, documentation of material culture, and, where possible, digital

recording of architectural features. Given the absence of epigraphic and numismatic records in Tawang, reliance on local testimonies and lived practices becomes indispensable. The present study is therefore informed by similar strategies, integrating ethnographic engagement with material analysis.

Both archaeologists and anthropologists frequently employ comparable data-collection techniques, particularly in contexts where living traditions inform the interpretation of material remains. Anthropological studies of monastic communities such as those by Grimshaw (1983), Goldstein (1998), and Alex (2017) have utilized participant observation, structured interviews, and close engagement with key informants to understand social organization, ritual life, and daily practices. These methods provide the contextual framework necessary for interpreting artefacts not merely as static objects but as components of dynamic cultural systems.

In sum, the theoretical framework of this study integrates ethnoarchaeology, archaeological ethnography, and theories of material agency to examine Tawang Monastery as a living institution embedded in historical continuities. By situating contemporary practices alongside surviving material culture, this approach seeks to reconstruct the socio-cultural processes that have shaped the monastery and its regional identity over time.

Methodology:

This study is grounded in an **object-centred ethnographic approach** informed by archaeological ethnography and material culture theory. Since Tawang lacks inscriptional and numismatic records, the research relies primarily on material remains and contemporary cultural practices. The study adopts a framework similar to that used by Bernard L. Herman (1992) and Chandra L. Reedy (1997), focusing on the cultural meanings and functions of objects rather than merely their aesthetic value. Herman’s object-centric method, though originally applied to North American material culture, provides a useful model for interpreting the relationship between objects, social identity, and tradition in the Tawang context.

Data Sources

The primary sources for this study include:

- **Objects preserved in museums**
- **Ritual and utilitarian objects used within monasteries**
- **Household artefacts and domestic objects**

- Architectural features and monastic structures
- Oral testimonies and local narratives

Research Strategy

The research adopts a **non-intrusive anthropological field strategy** combining observation, documentation, interviews, and comparative analysis. The methodology follows four main stages:

1. Field Survey and Documentation

A field survey was conducted at four major monasteries (see Table 1.1), including **Tawang Monastery, Urgelling Monastery, and Sangelling Monastery**, with special emphasis on Tawang Monastery. The survey documented:

- Monastery layout and structural design
- Ritual objects and artefacts
- Architectural features such as chortens, flags, and wall paintings
- Surrounding landscape and settlement patterns

2. Object Documentation and Classification

Objects were documented through detailed observation, photography, and descriptive recording. The study uses **object classification** similar to Reedy (1997), categorising objects as **metallic and non-metallic** to analyse their function, production, and cultural significance. Descriptive criteria such as material, form, function, and usage context were recorded systematically. Museum objects were examined where possible, although measurements were limited due to administrative restrictions.

3. Interviews and Ethnographic Inquiry

The study employs **semi-structured and unstructured interviews** to understand local beliefs and practices related to the monastery and its objects. Interviews were conducted with:

- Two Lamas and two teachers of Tawang Monastery (key informants)
- Local residents and scholars
- Museum staff and custodians (where accessible)

The interviews focused on:

- Ritual practices and customs
- Object usage and symbolic meanings

- Monastic life and social relationships

The interviews were complemented by informal conversations and participant observation.

4. Photography and Measurement

Photographic documentation was used to capture relevant objects, architectural features, and landscape settings. Where permitted, measurements were taken using calipers and measuring tape for monastic and household objects. Structural measurements of buildings and chortens were also recorded. The coordinates of each site were captured using a handheld GPS device for future reference.

Analytical Approach

The study employs **analogy-based reasoning**, a key method in ethnoarchaeology and archaeological ethnography. The research uses:

- **Direct historical analogy** to identify cultural continuity between past and present practices
- **General comparative analogy** to evaluate similarities between contemporary material culture and archaeological evidence from neighbouring regions

This comparative method allows the researcher to trace the origin, transformation, and continuity of objects and traditions in Tawang. The approach further involves comparative analysis of artefacts within the monastery and in domestic contexts to examine the relationship between monastic and lay cultural practices.

Conclusion:

The present study of Tawang Monastery, situated in the northwestern Himalayas of Arunachal Pradesh, underscores the pressing need for systematic archaeological and ethnographic engagement in the region. Historically, Arunachal Pradesh has remained peripheral to mainstream archaeological research due to its challenging topography, poor accessibility, and limited infrastructural development. Despite these constraints, the state has yielded significant material remains that have helped reconstruct its prehistoric and historical trajectories. The discovery of Paleolithic and Mesolithic tools, Neolithic sites, and the emergence of Buddhist monastic structures collectively highlight the region's deep-rooted cultural continuity and



historical significance. However, the paucity of inscriptional and numismatic sources continues to constrain a comprehensive reconstruction of the region's past, rendering material culture and living traditions indispensable for historical inquiry.

The present research positions Tawang Monastery not merely as an architectural monument but as a living institution embedded in the everyday life of the Monpa community. By adopting an object-centred ethnographic approach, the study demonstrates that the monastery's identity is constituted through the ritual and utilitarian objects it preserves, circulates, and mobilizes within the community. These objects ranging from ritual implements, statues, and prayer wheels to household artefacts and architectural elements—are not passive relics but active mediators of social relations, memory, and cultural continuity. The monastery's material culture thus provides an interpretive bridge between the present and the past, enabling us to trace patterns of transformation and continuity within monastic and lay traditions.

The theoretical framework grounded in archaeological ethnography and material agency proves particularly productive in the context of Tawang, where written sources are scarce. Drawing upon the insights of Heidegger, Gell, Gosden, and Hamilakis, the study emphasises that objects acquire meaning through lived practice and social engagement. In this respect, Tawang Monastery exemplifies how material culture shapes and sustains institutional identity, while simultaneously reflecting broader historical and cultural interconnections with Tibet, Bhutan, and the eastern Himalayan region. The study further demonstrates that the monastic landscape of Tawang is a layered heritage space, where architectural structures, ritual objects, and contemporary practices coexist to produce multiple temporalities.

Methodologically, the research highlights the value of non-intrusive fieldwork, object documentation, and ethnographic interviews in contexts where formal archaeological excavation remains limited. The comparative analysis of objects from Tawang, Urgelling, and Sangelling monasteries provides crucial contextual insights into regional monastic networks and cultural continuities. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of private collections, household artefacts, and local museums as critical repositories of material heritage, often overlooked in conventional archaeological research.

In conclusion, the study of Tawang Monastery calls for a renewed scholarly focus on Arunachal Pradesh's monastic heritage through interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches. The findings suggest that the monastery functions

as a dynamic cultural institution, where material objects, ritual practices, and social relations intersect to sustain Monpa identity and regional history. Future research must prioritise systematic documentation, preservation, and scientific analysis of artefacts, while integrating archaeological, ethnographic, and historical perspectives. Such efforts will not only enrich our understanding of Tawang and its monastic traditions but also contribute significantly to the broader historiography of the eastern Himalayas.

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