Sikkim is inhabited by the Bhutia (Bod), Rong (dazong) and the Mon. Besides them the Lepchas, the Marwars, the Bhais and the Nepalese live there. As a result of that the cultural scope of Sikkim throws a multi-coloured view and speaks about the sum total of a community both physical and mental. The performing art is dance, music, song, visual art and architecture that show the external aspects of mind of a people belonging to a particular locality. So the communicative culture may be either uni-ethnic or multi-ethnic according to the people residing in a particular place.

As regard the people(s) of Sikkim they hold a legacy of many hundred year grown and nurtured in the lap of the mount Kanchanjunga. Kanchanjunga is regarded as the guardian deity of the land. Tista and Rangit make Sikkim the land of rice that is dazong (bra dza). It suggests that the Sikkimese culture stands on economic prosperity since the olden days.

The location of Sikkim is strategically important to connect Tibet, presently Tibet Autonomous Region (That is TAR) of China on the North and Bongal on the South and Nathula and Jelepla mountain passes to south Tibet (Lhoka).

According to the tradition popular in Sikkim, Padmasambhava is said to have stepped in Sikkim. That makes the land purified. The Bhutias (Bod pa) then feel Sikkim as a holy land blessed by Kanchanjunga. Similarly the Rong pa, the Lepcha find Sikkim as a seat of their sacred deity.

The Mon is said to be the ancient people of Sikkim. The word Mon literally means in Tibetan persons belonging to the slope downwards a mountain. In course of time they have changed their segregated life in secluded places and have developed a culture, cohesion and harmony with the other inhabitants of Sikkim as da zong pa or Sikkimese.

J. Claude white in his book 'Sikkim and Bhutan' points out the Sikkim was inhabited by the Lepcha or Rong and a few Mon people who mostly remain in the vicinity of woods. The Lepchas have a distinct culture from that of the Bhutia who migrated to Sikkim in 17th century (?) and established a kingdom. Thus Sikkim culture is multi-rum. As regards the Lepchas, their original home is still undetermined. Fr. Hermann has discussed about their present life in Sikkim with their traditional style which is distinct from that of the Bhutia in Sikkim and dag pa and were in the upper course of Brahmaputra river approaching to the Arakan hills in Burma. It requires further probing though ethnic assimilation already occurred in many cases.

The Lepchas are few in number amounting not more than 22,391 in many clans. As they prefer a quiet life in contrast to that of the other inhabitants in Sikkim, the cluster of Lepcha community is a bit away from the cities. The agriculture based Lepcha community however enjoys the privilege of the present day economy with profession like government service and white colour-jobs. Lepcha business men are not many in number. In the present context the Lepchas generally profess Buddhism. It may not be always akin to the rituals observed by the Bhutias belonging to the Tantrik sects like Nyimap, Karmapa, Dag pa ka gi etc. The Gu la pa Lepcha Buddhists are scarce.

As regards the performing arts of the Buddhist the Lepcha monks though major in
number take part in the occasional monastic dances. In the social performances, the Lepcha women take part along with the Bhoteas. The present story is concerned with the monastic dances only.

RUMTSEK MONASTERY
The Rumtek Monastery is an offshoot of the Kadampa sect which originated by the 12th century A.D. Buddhism entered in Tibet in the 7th century A.D. It was enthusiastically accepted by the inhabitants of Yarlung valley and subsequently spread all over Tibet. In the 12th century the Buddhist fold of Tibet was carried Mongolia and Chinese Court when Kublai Khan was on the throne of the Yuan dynasty (1206 A.D.) in China. Buddhism therefore got a new dimension and that tended to develop various interpretations of the existing Buddhism. As a result of that various sects grew in Tibet and the Karma lineage originated. (The 1st Karma pa, teacher the 12th century A.D.) Among them the Karmapa Bakshi or Pakshi became an eminent personality to formulate the distinct monastic order in an and outside Tibet. Karmapa use black hat to signify their identity and claim their line with the Nangjampa (panda) probably 8th century A.D.) tradition of India. Black hat suggests the mystic ritual in the high esoteric sphere. In contrast, Nomapa monks prefer red hat and Gelsupa, yellow hat. Here distinction of colour is symbolic and related to their respective mode of practice towards spiritual attainment. In Sikkim, Nyangmapa also became popular and the Pemayangtse monastery was established. Tashi Ling and Yensang are the other two important monasteries.

The first Karmapa was honoured with the designation of Bakshi or Pakshi in Mongolian which means Guru or high priest. The successor of Karmapa Bakshi was Karma Zang byung rdo rje who was invited to Yoking by the emperor Tensur Tsukwan. The fourth Karmapa Rol padma rdo rje was a friend of the last king of the Mongol Dynasty. The fifth Karmapa De shes gling Pa was invited to China during the reign of Ming emperor Yong Lo (adoration of Ming dynasty 1368-1628 A.D. but the time of yang Lo was 1403 A.D.). It means that the Karmapa had close relation with the Mongol as well as the Ming rular in China. In Sikkim Karma Kangepa was established when the first monastery was built at Babong in 1730 A.D. by Gyurmed Narjigal the 4th Choygal in Sikkim. The King Choygal Panden Thrupdub Namgyal regarded it as an incarnation of Karmapa Lhakpa. Rumtek and Phodong also belongs to Kargu.

Rumtek Monastery, a seat of Karmapa has been vigorously organised after the advent of the 16th incarnation of the Karma hierarchy in India by the Sixties of the century from Tosur phu Monastery. Rumtek thus preserves the legacy as one of the Karma establishments in India with its seat in the Tibetan monastic order.

MONASTIC DANCE
According to the Theravada tradition a Buddhist monk is not supposed to attend or participate in a dance or music (mata ga vida ha) bhikhu dassana (verison) in pa (trig-taka), while the Buddhists belonging to Tantrik fold especially those belonging to Siddha lineage participate in the performing dance, music and orchestra. These are regarded as mode of esoteric practices. A monastic dance is sacred and mystic in expression with symbolic gesture (medra). In Tibetan it is called "Cham."
'Champa' literally meant mithumpa which corresponds to harmony and concord. Gar 'cham' suggests an agreeing performance in which harmony and concord prevail. A monastic dance is therefore a psycho-physical performance performed to exhibit the agreement between the mundane and the super-mundane harmony. In the Buddhist esoteric practice, there are six worlds of animate beings in the wide universe in which stars and constellations are immaterial. Above that there are several spheres of light of different colours as the Tattvik texts like G?vyasamaja Tantras, or Tathagataguhya?uka and the Laghu-Kalasha?ka Tantras are mentioned. The Khoro 'Cham' suggests dance with frightful mask and is symbolic in contrast to mudras 'cham or Lha 'Chaza' divine dance with mask. The nature manifests in a sober, grand and handsome forms as well as it appears dreadfust, fright and cruel. A monastic dance shows both the aspects of the nature with symbolic exhibition.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In course of personal visit to Rumtek there had been an occasion to witness an excellent performance of 'Cham dance' by the monks of Rumtek a few years back. It was probably a day of holy observance by the end of October when the monks were out to express their esoteric confinement. The performance was in daytime which appeared to me to be novel. It reminded me of the remote days of our country when the dramatic presentation happened to be performed in the daytime. The inner significance of such occurrence is to appreciate true harmony between the nature and the human beings.

There has been a leader of the dance who is 'champ pon'. A 'cham pon' is not only efficient in performance artistic celibacy but also is elevated in esoteric field. 'Cham' or monastic dance may be distinguished from the 'Lha mo' dance of the house holders. Usually 'Cham' is an exposition of esoteric silence through symbolic gestures, whereas Lha mo dance is performed with music.

In the orchestra of harmonious music 'Rol mo', the sound of Rol mo da also differs in respect to 'cham' and that in Lha mo dance.

As regards the rol mo da (rol mo sgra) there are different kinds of musical notes such as:

i. Sgra cha pha ba ka ka li (Ka ka li)
ii. Mi gsal snan pa dha na (dhara)
iii. Sin tu tho ba to ra ti (tara)
iv. Sa ma dha ni cha lan gcig (saadhvami)
v. Fe (g) dan pi Lhan (') wun ba la gi (vallaka) and six instruments are -
   i. Cen tebu (the damaru)
   ii. Ma du
   iii. Si-khol
   iv. Dandi rna (drum)
   v. Tai ma (Nepalese drum)
   vi. Nkhor ma (kettle drum, fort drum)

It is evident that the above names suggest a high order in implementation of music and musical notes which had been probably originated out of Indian musical tradition. Padma Sambhava is said to have the innovator of the monastic dance in the Saivite (bsam yas) monasteries as esoteric rituals in the 8th century A.D.
It is to add that the monastic music and dance developed in the Trans-Himalayan Tibet plateau with the assimilation of the trends belonging to the music of the neighbouring countries like China, Mongolia, and those of the Gurpa and Dog pa. It may require a separate study on which Nebosky has already focused some light.

In this connection about eighteen musical instruments are accompanied to make the music harmonious (sgron mtha' po) these are:

i. gar nkar
ii. bro
iii. ma bo cha
iv. rda ma
v. mar phran
vi. rda ma chen mo
vii. nkar ma
viii. Ph. wu ngag geig pa
ix. rda ma kha geig pa
x. lege kyi s'i khrel
xi. Ksar bai s'i drod
xii. Ph. van ngag sum pa
xiii. ma nu kun da
xiv. s'i snan Ph. chen sa tun pa
xv. fag do pa
xvi. ral ma dru
xvii. Ph. syan
xviii. Ling bu

The supra- mundane spiritual perspective of 'cham is always presented by the gait, movements, careful stepping and gesticulation with awareness. In every minute action of a 'cham pow of dancer, the awareness of movement is primary and esoteric. The circumambulation on the stage (gar 'cham s'i) is also symbolic with reference to night exercise and reverse order (aulom and pratileṣṭa). The spiritual upgrading is presented through careful stepping and directed circumambulation as mentioned in the 'cham vṛtta, the book of dance. In this respect each monastery has developed its own tradition and that is important in the growth of the culture.

RESUME
Keeping in view the limited time in presenting the paper, here it is sum up that the monastic dance presented in the Rumtek monastery preserves the heritage of the ancient performing art which had a composite culture complex in unifying India, Tibet, China and Mongolia.