

Monasticism in Newar Buddhism

A historical analysis

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1.Introduction:

Newar Buddhism is to be classified in the tradition of Indian Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism deriving its lineages from Siddha tradition of Nalanda and Vikramashila Monastic Universities of India. However, it has developed its peculiar characteristics which are one of a kind in the Buddhist history. One should not forget that Newar Buddhism possesses quite a number of indigenous elements, which are not to be found in Indian Mahayana Buddhism. Now that Mahayana Buddhism has disappeared from India, Newar Buddhism found in Kathmandu valley represents one of the few traditions in the world which has retained features inherited directly from India. At one time all forms of Buddhism were believed to have been found in the Buddhism of Nepal.

There are no longer any celibate monks among Newar Buddhist Sangha at the present time. The members of community live in Viharas and have retained its designation (Sangha).

There are two status within caste community namely Vajracharyas and Sakyabhikshus. The Vajracharyas were the masters of Tantric Buddhism and ritual specialists whereas the Shakyabhikshus were Buddhist monks. The Vajracharyas played a higher role than Shakyas because they were given additional initiation (Achaluyegu) on Buddhist tantras. Only the male members of this community after having undergone through the rite of Monastic ordination (skt: Cudakarma) belong to the Sangha. Shakya and Vajracharya boys normally undergo this monastic ordination at the age of five, seven or nine. The rule is that they should be under twelve years of age.

Elders of the monastery addressed as Sthavira Aju will give him Pravrajyavrata or monastic initiation. He stays in the monastery for 4,10,16,20,25 years for Buddhist studies. After finishing his studies he disrobes himself for his lay bodhisattva life. To facilitate his spiritual career, he goes through marriage ceremony. When the couple receive instructions on Buddhist practices, they would be given Vajracharya Abhiseka or Acharya Abhiseka. It forms one of the series of life cycle ritual□.

It should also be noted that the Newar Buddhism has no place for higher ordination (upasampada) by which a novice monk becomes a fully ordained Buddhist monk. The fact that Newar Buddhism has no place for monastic life upgrading except for the Four-Day Observance that seems to be a serious weakness□ to the modern Buddhist and to the western educated persons.

This traditional Buddhism of Newars has recently become the subject of great interest and detail study by Siegfried Lienhard, John K.Locke, David Gellner, Michael

Allen and others□ have been there.

In the present paper I have tried to attempt to present some unique feature of the Newar Buddhism and tried to analyze the validity of its monasticism.

Newar Buddhists describe their structure of religion as integrative in the nature of Shravaka, Mahayana /Vajrayana traditions.

2. Shravakayana in Newar Buddhism

To explain Newar Buddhism of its integrative behavior it is befitting to give an account of monastic rite when young boys receive ordination (skt: Cudakarma) Before the neophytes topknots are cut off, a ritualized exchange between the disciples and the preceptor is supposed to take place. It runs thus.□

ìOh guru, in accordance with your instruction, from this day, and until I have attained enlightenment I shall go Lord Buddha, blessing.î Thus the guru is requested, supplicated by him. The Guru says, ì I of such and such name go for refuge to the Buddha. I go for refuge to the Dharma. I go refugee to the Sangha. While this mandala remains, give up desire (skt: trsna)î (You, as pupil should say) ìOh Lord! Oh Guru, greatly compassionate. For the rest of my life, Ten Akusala karmas must be given up, and other sins, various words-now I shall save beings and so forth.î The pupil said, hearing this instruction,î O Lord, O guru (as you are here) killing and so on I despicably as you say, Oh lord, guru, you have graciously spoken I must go.î

The Sanskrit version of ritual handbook runs as follows:

The Guru said, ãNow son of good family, are you capable of or not of taking up the observance of Going forth as you should. The pupil said, ãOh! My preceptor, I wish to undertake the observance of going forth, please be compassionate. I of such an such name, shall for the rest of my life go for refuge to the Lord Buddha who is greatly compassionate, all knowing, all seeing, beyond the danger of all enemies, great man, of indivisible body of the ultimate body, the dharmakaya, foremost in all religious groups. The guru said, ì Well done, well done, son of good family swear three times that you are capable of abandoning the insignia of a householder and taking up the insignia of the Going forth.î The pupil said, Oh preceptor and assistant, certainly I am capable of the observance of Going forth, three times ì I declare it is true). The Guru said:î Now I the greatly delighting one shall explain-listen dear one: the five precepts followed in this observance are laid down with explanations ì

Now the neophyte's topknot is cut off with a gold plated razor along with this mantra:

Om sarva jnana avarana chedaya chedaya hum phatî

(Cut cut all obstacles to understanding)

The absence of topknot is perhaps the most crucial marker of the distinction between Shakya ,Vajracharya (Buddhists) and the rest of other castes in the Kathmandu valley. After consecration by holy water from white conch shell, the boys are given a new name and three robes. They are given begging bowl and a staff (silaku), which has an effigy of the Buddha (or of a Stupa) at the top. He is permitted to enter into main shrine of Vihara and pay homage to Kwapadeo and make offerings. Newar Buddhists

are very much attached to this four days observance of monastic ideal to maintain one's Buddhist identity.

Duties of a Sakyabhikshu

For the four days the Shakya bhikshu must beg his food daily
And must live the life of Buddhist monk, though they continue to live at home.
They have to observe the regulations of diet of the monk
Avoid contact with unclean (association with dogs and shoes)
And keep ten precepts.

The neophyte receives his first alms from the Senior Ten elders (Dasaparamita Sthavira Ajus) of the monastery and his family Buddhist priest. During the tenure of his monkhood he had to visit the main shrine and pay homage to Kwapadeo and make offerings.

On the fourth day the neophyte returns to the lay life. The boy then hands over the begging bowl and staff and takes off his robes. Since the topknot is never maintained by Sakyabhikshus even after disrobing ceremony they are given the status of Sakya bhikshu. Since then the absence of topknot is perhaps the insignia of a Buddhist monk or Sakyabhikshu. Disrobing ceremony does not signify the abandonment of monastic vows but transition from Shravaka to Mahayana practice.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time as when the system of celibate monasticism disappeared in Nepal. We are certain that celibate monks existed even during the seventh century. Chinese Pilgrim Xuan Xang mentioned in his travel diary that the number of Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhist monks were more than two thousands.□ An inscription of Amshuvarma has also confirmed a conspicuous presence of Bhikshuni Sangha belonging to the Mahasanghika sect.□ as well as Mahasanghika Bhikshu Sangha□.

Now the question arises as to what was the vinaya lineage of Newar Buddhist Tradition. At present we find difficulty in finding parallel reference in the Chudakarmavidhi tradition with Mahasanghika or Mulasarvastivada tradition. A newly discovered inscription in Bhaktapur also suggests a presence of Mahasanghika Bhikshuni lineage.□

Duties of Buddhist Sangha in Newar Buddhist Vihara

The duties of elders are to oversee the daily, monthly, and annual Buddhist functions and festivals. They also organize initiations into bhikshu Sangha i.e (performance of Chudakarma, Acaluyegu ceremony of initiated members' offspring) as well as regulating the discipline of the Sangha and social rules.

All the male members who are initiated in a Mahavihara constitute the Sangha. Mahavihara has guthi including all the initiated members. The senior-most member of the guthi of the vihara is addressed as mahasthavira, the Chakresvara and other elders are addressed as Sthavira Ajus.

The Buddhist Vihara of the Kathmandu valley has also a daily puja dedicated to the main image, the Kwapadya enshrined in the Vihara. At one time the Viharas of Kathmandu valley too had a complete schedule of rituals for throughout the whole day.

This is no longer in practice except at a few places like Janabaha in Kathmandu and Kwabaha in Patan.□

Among these practices the recitation of Namasangiti, Danagatha, Aparimita Dharani, Saptavihnotta puja strotra, Dasaparamita Strotra,, Buddham trailokya strotras are the most prominent ones.

Besides, the recitation of Asta sahasrika Prajnaparamita, Panaraksa and Nava Sutras are the scriptural bases of the Newar Buddhism. One thing is sure that meditation on Samatha and Vipassana is definitely lacking. Those Vajracharyas and Sakyas who had received the initiation on cakrasamvara or acaluyegu, however, meditate for some time on deity yoga and some recitation only. Now a days a Vajracharya or Sakyas perform the retreats for intensive practice very rarely.

Duties of a Bhikshu Sangha in a Theravada monastery.

The Buddhist monastic community or the ordained Sangha has played a crucial role in keeping alive and passing on the lineage of the teachings and practice since the time of Buddha himself. Every Buddhist monastic community has some common religious and devotional exercises each day-brief and simple in Theravada monasteries, for example: Buddhapuja, Paritrana, Mangal sutra recitations in ceremonial and Kathinotsava in special occasions. In regular occasions, the Theravada monks gives the instructions on the practice of samatha and vipassana meditation for the Upasakas and Upasikas.

Their vinaya lineage is obviously Sthaviravada.

Duties of Bhikshu Sangha in a Tibetan Monastery

In most of the Tibetan monasteries, at about 4 AM the monks usually gather together with the morning bell. They clean up the floor and offer prostration to the main deity of the monastery and some begin to offer water bowls and decorate the altar with butter lamps. Monks gather to perform first tormas (ritual cake) offering followed by ceremonial tea. Then they recite texts on Guru Yoga, Vajrasattva, Tara Puja and Long Life Buddha.

The form of Guru Yoga (Padmasambhava and his lineage in case of Nyingma tradition) may vary in each tradition but the plan is however similar in nature. After formal group recital some silently sit in meditation until 7 or 8 AM. If the sponsors have some specific pujas they continue it until its completion. Sometimes they go out to the sponsors' residence to perform pujas lasting whole day. During the day time, some perform meditation and personal practices in their own apartment or room. In some monasteries small novice children usually read and write Tibetan grammar and English in the afternoon. They recite by hearing small ritual texts.

In the after noon around 5-7 PM, the monks assemble for performing pujas of protector deities like Mahakala and so forth. Sometime monks have to perform pujas on the founder's birthday or Drubchen ceremonies. The Ceremonial rituals may continue sometime even for two months at most and one week at least. For Sakyapas the tutelary deity ceremony of Hevajra (a Highest Yoga tantra deity) last for ten days.

During ceremonial days, the abbot has main responsibility to perform larger

and more detailed puja and has to bestow even an empowerment too. During empowerment session the ritual master has more heavy responsibilities than the rest.

In most of the Gelugpa monasteries specially Kopan Monastery where facilities are available for the resident monks, the full time study program includes Buddhist philosophy, debate, English, Tibetan, Nepal language and Thangka paintings. Monks train to become teachers, Meditation Master and translator.

In some great Kagyu and Nyingma monasteries namely kanying and Sechen Monasteries where there are facilities, the resident monks and novices do have an opportunity for higher philosophical studies such as Bodhicaryavatara of Shanti Deva and Pramanavarttika of Dharmakirti. Most of the monasteries are run by the support and donations from individual benefactors and sponsors. The Abbot of the each monastery holds responsibility for the function of the monastery. In some monasteries income comes through the rent from accommodation and visitor's donations.

It should be noted that Tibetan Buddhist monasticism is also based on Mahayana and Vajrayana. It has two types of Buddhist monks: Celibate Buddhist monks and Tantric Buddhist Master with consorts or a Ngakpa Lama. Both of them wear maroon colored robes in ceremonial pujas.

To become a Tantric Buddhist master one should thoroughly go for training under a competent Buddhist Master and go for retreats for at least three years and should have some degree of realization. When his realization is authenticated by his lineage Guru, he is authorized to act as Vajra Master, For Example: late Guru Urgyen Tulku Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche, Guru Tarthang Tulku, Guru Chokling Rinpoche and others. Because of their high degree of realization in profound doctrines of Buddha, they are given higher status than the Celibate monk scholars. This tradition is valid and substantiated by the Buddhist Sutras and Tantras.

To cite few examples, in the Seventh Century Venerable Chandrakirti revered Master Chandragomin for his proficiency and dexterity in Namasangiti doctrine. Venerable Gampopa revered Guru Milarepa as his root guru for his realization of Mahamudra. Venerable Rwa-Lotsawa- revered Nepalese Vajracharya Bhara for his realization of Vajrabhairabha doctrine. The Vinaya lineage of this Tibetan tradition is Mulasarvastivada tradition.

3. Mahayana/Vajrayana

The Newar Buddhists, like Buddhists everywhere, take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, but in a Mahayana and Vajrayana context.

The Buddha is of course, Sakyamuni Buddha but in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, the Five Tathagatas (Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi) are more well known in ritual than the historical Buddha.

The Dharma is realization of Prajnopaya namely unity of wisdom and skillful means. The texts are Vaipulya sutras: Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita, Gandavyuha Dasabhumikasutra, Saddharmapundarika, Suvarnaprabhasa, Lankavatara, Samadhiraja, Lalitavistara, and Tathagataguhyaka Sutra. These texts are recognized as the official texts, they are recited at various times, and the books are worshipped.

The Sangha is of course the Bodhisattva Sangha. Much of the devotional life of the

people revolve around the worship of Eight Bodhisattvas□, especially Avalokiteshvara and Manjushree. Avalokiteshvara is recognized as the head of eight bodhisattvas. He is the representative of Sangha of Bodhisattvas. Just as in Theravada Buddhist tradition the Bodhisattva Sangha is excluded, similarly in Newar Buddhist tradition Shravaka Sangha is excluded. Since the emphasis is laid on Mahayana/Vajrayana tradition of Buddhist Sangha it would be unwise to expect Buddhist Sangha of Newar Buddhists in Theravada context.

In Newar Buddhist tradition, there seemed to be no harm giving Shakyaputta, the status of lay Buddhist monk provided that they maintain refuge and Bodhisattva vows or even tantric samaya.

The rationale behind the abandonment of Shravaka practice is given in disrobing ceremony of Chudakarma.

ě Oh, Lord Guru! By your grace I have undertaken the vow of Going Forth first, given the Ten Unproductive sins in accordance with the five Precepts and Eight Precepts, and carried out the Disciples's path. Now I shall take up the path of Mahayana. Please accede to this request. The Guru says: Very good, lay disciple, take up the path of Mahayana. Take up the practice of the great lord of liberation, the Guru Vajrasattva, lord of Mystic circle.□ What is the practice of the Mahayana like?

Listen and I will tell you the most fundamental of religious practices which is comprised by the Mahayana can never be fulfilled without a consort. Nor can the Mahayana or its observance be complete. Without Tantric initiation, how much more (is tantric initiation necessary for) liberation. Therefore, you, knowing the ultimate god and goddesses who as skill-in means and wisdom, take up the practice of Mahayana and abandon that of the Shravaka.Ā

In these versions, entering the Mahayana under the instruction of Guru can make up the fault of abandoning the monastic vow. Taking consort for Buddhist practice has been a general theme for Tantric Buddhist Practitioner. The idea of Swayamvara and Marriage has been a life cycle ritual as described in Kriyasamucaya of Jagatdarpana Acharya.

Exploring Celibacy in Bhikshusangha of Newar Buddhist tradition

Buddha often placed dhamma first and vinaya second in relevance to his teachings. According to Buddha, Vinaya is the most important of the Three Pitakas for the survival of the Sasana. Vinaya rules are used for regulating outward conduct of the individual and the collective practice of the Sangha. Dhamma is for the inward development and the attainment of a good life.

Celibacy is considered as holy and good in most of the religions of the world, especially within the Buddhist Sangha of Theravada and Mahayana traditions.

As Buddhism is spread in Western countries, the practice of celibacy is being critically questioned for the first time.

In those places, many people consider the voluntary abstention of from sexual activity strange or even unnatural. If celibacy is a Buddhist religious ideal, then what about the student of Buddhism to think of those Japanese, and High Tibetan Lamas whose marriages are accepted by their cultures? Are they all subject, by their religious

principle, to ostracism as sinners then ?

History shows that the practice of celibacy is as old as asceticism in India, much older than the Historical Buddha himself. Before the Buddha was born, there were ascetics who practiced celibacy as a spiritual discipline conducive to the attainment of enlightenment.

Although celibacy was quite common, the practice may not have been very strict since some rishis or ascetics took their wives with them to practice asceticism in solitary places of and in India.

When Buddha taught celibacy as important commitment for his disciples, Celibacy came to be held in highest regard for its own sake as well as for the pleasing impression it created in pious lay people. Once the strict practice of celibacy had become a strong norm, its transgression came to be seen as a sinful thing.

In his first sermon the Buddha mentioned sexual intercourse as a base or low act performed by common people as opposed to monks. He said that addiction to attractive sensual pleasures and addiction to self torture are both extreme practices since, as extremes, they are inconsistent with the middle path that leads to nirvana.□

In Theravada tradition , Buddha had to prohibit every kind of sexual behavior by members of the Sangha community as unfit acts and had to punish through formal meeting of the sangha.

Only the willing celibate is a proper candidate for ordination, but others may seek it. The monks' unmarried life is individually free. A monk can devote all his time and energy to spiritual development. But if he is not active in spiritual practices there is nothing special about his monkhood. It is both a waste of time and painful restraint on his freedom in terms of sexual activity, especially when he longs for it.

According to Parajika rules of Vinaya the ordained monk who has violated the moral code of celibacy loses his monkhood. Such a monk cannot attain liberation or Nirvana.

It should be noted that the ultimate aim of the practice of celibacy is to eradicate the mental defilement- greed, hatred, and delusion. The fulfillment of celibacy is said to be the attainment of Nirvana.

In Newar Buddhist tradition, Bahis are said to be the repositories of celibate Monastic tradition. When Celibate communities existed, if celibate monks decided to become householder monks, they left their celibate monastery and joined a baha.□ According to Dr. Locke's hypothesis, two institutions namely celibate and non-celibate existed side by side from the earliest days. Gradually, and as a result of the ascendancy of the Vajrayana, the celibate communities diminished, finally succumbing to the dominant tradition of and becoming married ě celibate monks (brahmacharya bhikshu).□ If more accurate information on the Lichchavi and so called Thakuri period is ever made available, he is confident to say that the celibate communities were always in minority.

Since the Buddha advocated the path of restraint or renunciation in Shravakayana practices, the ultimate aim is the attainment of Abiding Nirvana (skt: pratishtha nirvana). But in Mahayana/Vajrayana form of Buddhism, the Buddha advocated the path of transformation for his advanced bodhisattva disciples. He taught the

doctrine of Great Bliss and Emptiness to attain the state of Buddhahood (skt: apratishtha nirvana) (Non-abiding Nirvana). In this form of teaching Buddha Vajradhara made use of Lust or even sexual bliss in the path to Enlightenment. From the point of view of Theravada tradition this view can be merely a joke. On the other hand Tantric Buddhists regard their practice as authentic in view, meditation, practice and fruition and blameless in ideal as the Middle Path of Buddha.

3.1 Newar Buddhism as a lay Bodhisattva Practice

It seems that there had been a provision for lay Buddhist monkhood which became very popular in the valley of Kathmandu, the validity of this tradition was also corroborated by the text ě SiksasamuccayaĀ of Acharya Shanti Deva; It runs thus: Punara aparam kulaputra bhavisyanti anagata adhvani grahstha pravajita adikarmika bodhisattva.

Concerning Adikarmika Bodhisattva Acharya Anupamavajra stands prominent. His works had a great influence in Nepalese Buddhist tradition. It is surprising and interesting to note that Adikarmika Pradipa which was composed in 1098 AD. by Anupamavajra had profound impact on the daily practice of Newar Buddhist society even till today. In this context it is perhaps befitting to cite the verses of Adikarmapradipa□

To state briefly, it deals with the following practices of Newar Buddhists.

1. Taking Refuge in Triple Gems
2. Reciting Namasangiti
3. To recite Bhadracharya Pranidhan
4. To offer Preta bali
5. To Circumambulate Caitya, Buddha statues etc.
6. To perform Gurumandala rite
7. To meditate on tutelary deity
8. To recite Prajnaparamita and other Mahayana sutras
9. To recite Danagathaō
10. To perform Bodhisattva practices joyfully
11. To study Buddhist scriptures
12. Offering food to Triple Gems and tutelary deity before eating
- 13 Offer fivefold prostration to Buddha of ten directions
- 14 Sleeping in a lionōs posture after meditating on Deity Yoga

According to Newar Buddhist tradition, even after disrobing ceremony of Cudakarma, Shakyas and Vajracharyas do not cease to be bhikshus or Buddhist monks, but pass from the state of celibate bhikshus to that of Grihasthi bhikshus, a fact underlined by the name Sakyabhikshu used to refer to them down the ages. In disrobing ceremony the following lines are met with about the status of bhikshu.

ī You have gone through Sravakayana and now come to Mahayana, the greatest of the Buddhist Yanas. You have participated in some Vajrayana rituals and after going through some higher ordinations you will know what Chakrasamvara is.ī□

3.2 The impact of Master Atishaís teaching on Newar Buddhism

Master Atisha who wrote Bodhisattvakarmadimargavatara also propounded the concept of the Adikarmika Bodhisattva practice. Since Atisha was contemporary with Anupamavajra and Advayavajra, both of them must have borrowed the ideas of lay bodhisattva practice from him.

Atisha first emphasized the practice of refuge and generation of Bodhicitta on the basis of Sevenfold Practice (skt:saptavidhanauttara puja) Newar Buddhists are proficient in performing ģsattvapujaĀ (verse.5 of Adikarma)

He also promulgated the theory of moderation of consuming food habits and food offerings to Gurus and triple jewels (verse no.10-11)

With a view to teach the whole sentient beings one should recite profound Mahayana sutras (like Prajnaparamita and so forth) (verse no.7 in Adikarma)

After completing one's morning duties One should practice the act of fivefold prostration to Triple Gems with a view to liberate all mother sentient beings and should sleep in lion's posture (see Caryasamgraha pradeepa) after completing one's devotional exercise (verse.no.14.)

One should practice the unity of samatha and vipassana and should realize the emptiness of all body and ephemeral nature of all phenomena. Whereas Anupamavajra mentioned only the necessity of practice of Deity yoga (verse.no 14.).□

Offering one's food to tutelary deities and Dharmapala before eating meal is one fundamental daily practice of Adikarma bodhisattva (see Caryasangraha pradeepa)(verse no.11 in Adikarma)

By analyzing these references we can conclude that Atisha's teaching had great influence on Newar Buddhist tradition too. Atisha's reformation in Buddhist monasticism is well known in Tibet. He tried his best to uplift Buddhist monasticism during his sojourn in Nepal. He composed Caryasamgraha Pradeepa, and Vimalratnalekha nama to enhance the monastic ideal of Newar Buddhism.He even strongly prohibited the act of taking initiation of Highest Yoga Tantra for monastics. Because of short duration of his stay in Nepal he could not influence to higher degree and strengthen. Later Anupamavajra's superseded Atisha's influence because of his tantric teachings.

4 Decline of Celibate Buddhist Monastic Community in Nepal:

Now the question arises why Newar Buddhists prefer to be Grihastha Bhikshu rather than to be celibate monks. There has been a constant conviction among the historians or local Buddhists that celibate Buddhist monks existed in the Newar Buddhist tradition until the advent of King Jayasthitimalla (15th. century).

My own hypothesis is that King Jyasthitimalla alone cannot have wiped out the celibate monastic tradition of Newar Buddhism. The decline of celibate monasticism in Newar Buddhism started long before the advent of King Jayasthitimalla.

King Jayasthiti Malla had to witness the total disappearance of celibate monastic tradition by activating his so-called social reformation. We can guess that there were few number of celibate Buddhist monks even during Atisha's period. He seemed to have established a pre-Kadampa monastic order. Atisha ordained a prince and named him as Padmaprabha. One of his monk friend, due to growing influence of Buddhist

tantrism, had asked Master Atisha for the promulgation of non-tantric Mahayana Buddhist doctrine. Accepting his request Master Atisha had composed Caryasamgrahapradipa□ to comfort him.

It seems that there might have been two causes on the decline of celibate Buddhist monastic system of Newar Buddhist tradition. These are:

- a) Lack of royal patronization
- b) Impact of Vajrayana Buddhism

Lack of royal patronization

If we research and analyze deeply the historical background of other Buddhist countries, it becomes clear that a strong patronage from a ruling circle is essential to maintain the Celibate monastic community. While considering the events since Buddha's period, his monastic community was well and fully patronised by King Prasenjit, King Bimbisara, King Ajatasatru. And in later periods, Emperor Ashoka, King Kaniska, King Harsha Vardhana, and Pala and Sena Kings too had patronised the Buddhist Sangha and then flourished.

When Islamic invasion took place in important monastic centers of Buddhism in India, they ransacked and thoroughly destroyed them. There being no supporters to monastic community, The Sangha could not thrive in India, thereby resulting in the total disappearance of Buddhist Sangha.

On the other hand, the Buddhist monastic Sangha thrived and flourished with the support of kings/governments and wealthy patrons in Tibet, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma and some other Southeast Asian countries. The decline in monastic community is clearly seen in the withdrawal of active support and patronage from the government. The same reason can be applied to Newar Buddhist monastic community too. Due to lack of support from Hindu rulers of Kathmandu valley, the celibate monastic tradition could not survive, let alone flourish.

Impact of Vajrayana Buddhism

To describe the presence of celibate Buddhist monks during the transition period (880-1200AD) of Nepalese Buddhist History would be only speculative rather than factual event.

The emergence and flourishing of Vajrayana Buddhism and its associated cults were distinctly visible due to the activities of Mahasiddha tradition of Highest Yoga Tantra in Nepal and India.

Rise of Vajrayana Buddhism paved the way for the growth of non-celibate monastic tradition in India, Nepal and Tibet till the advent of Atisha (982-1054). It is a fact that with the rise of Vajrayana, celibate Buddhist monastic traditions began to dwindle and then slowly disappeared in Nepal completely by the end of 15th century.

The transition period of Nepal witnessed the birth of several outstanding Buddhist Masters of Nepal who were well versed in Tantric Buddhism. Nepalese Buddhist Masters had constant touch with the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Masters.

According to Padma Kathang, a treasure text among Nyingma tradition around

the eight century Buddhist Master Guru Padma Sambhava is said to have visited Sankhu, Pharping and other places in Kathmandu valley and diffused Tantric Buddhist teachings. He took two female disciples called Sakyadevi and Kalasiddhi as his consorts for the practice of Atiyoga sadhana.

Guru Paindapa and Chitherpa were the famous and gifted disciples of Naropa (10th century). Marpa(11th century), the great translator of Tibet had stayed in Kathmandu valley for three years to study Anuttarayoga Tantra under Paindapa and Chitherpa.

According to the biography of Marpa, he received teachings on Catuhpith Tantra and Cakrasamvara tantra from these Nepalese Gurus at Ratnakara Mahavihara of Patan.

The study of Highest Yoga Tantra among these Great Masters is a common curriculum of their tantric studies. It is generally thought that the practice of Highest Yoga Tantra is not fit for every body. For people who lack the necessary qualifications, Tantra is said to be extremely dangerous .Such people can greatly harm themselves if they enter into tantric practice. Thus the Dalai Lama cautions that tantra is not appropriate for the minds of many. If one's mental continuum has not been ripened by the practices common to both sutra and Tantra Mahayana- realisation of suffering, impermanence, refuge, love , compassion, altruistic mind generation, and emptiness of inherent existence-practice of the Mantra vehicle can be ruinous through one's assuming an advanced practice inappropriate to one's capacity .Therefore, its open dissemination is prohibited; practitioners must maintain secrecy from those who are not vessels of this path.□

Those who are judged to be suitable receptacles for tantric initiations are sworn to secrecy. The Initiates are required to take a series of vows (samaya),one of which is not to reveal tantric teachings openly. The promised retributions for breaking the vows include painful suffering in 8 vajra hells reserved for those who transgress their tantric promises.

It involves taking many types of initiations. Four of the most important are:
Kalasa abhiseka (Vase empowerment)
Guhya abhiseka (secret empowerment)
Prajna abhiseka (wisdom empowerment)
Sabda abhiseka (word empowerment)

The first involves giving initiation using water in a vase and is found in all four tantra sets. The other three are used only in highest yoga tantra. It is taught that receiving vase initiation causes to attain the rank of Nirmanakaya Body of the Buddha.

The secret, knowledge and word initiation, sometimes involve practice with a karmamudra (actual consorts) and ingestion of impure substances. The karmamudra and substances may be either imagined or real in Tibetan tradition. But in Nepalese tradition use of real karmamudra is stressed while taking acharya abhiseka too. The followers of these tantras use the desire in the path to enlightenment. They can transform energy of sexual desire into blissful wisdom consciousness. Through Deity Yoga they enhance the experience of wisdom and compassion. The ultimate goal of these practitioners is the attainment of Buddhahood in one life time. Since these involve

sexual practices the celibacy of the monkhood is dangerously threatened.

That's why Atisha in his Bodhipath pradeepa strongly prohibited practicing Highest Yoga Tantra for it endangers their celibacy or monastic vows. According to Atisha Dipamkara, lay Bodhisattva life is much more favorable for the practice of Highest Yoga tantra disciplines as stated in Bodhipathpradipa:

For attaining Bodhisambhara in a simple way it has been set forth in the Kriya Caryā ways. If one is desirous of the practice of Guhyamantra by pleasing the Guru, receive the complete Acharyaabhiseka. Blessed thus, you will purify all the negativities and become suitable vessel to achieve realization. In Adi Buddha Maha tantra, it is strictly prohibited that secret wisdom initiation is not the privilege of the celibate monks. The ordained one who abides in the asceticism if receives that initiation the vow of asceticism will degenerate due to the practices of restrictions. The practitioner will be defeated, downfall will arise, due to which he will fall among the lower realms never will there be realization. □

If this is so why the Newar Buddhists take risk in being a celibate monk and at the same time practice Anuttara yoga tantra. So their preference to be a lay Bodhisattva practitioner is most likely one. Atisha also gives an option that those monastic who are highly advanced practitioners, and have received permission from the authentic Masters, for them there is no prohibition to receive these four initiations and practice. Later on Tantric Masters began to give these initiations irrespective of students' qualification and the Sangha suffered a lot resulting in a swift decline of monastic Buddhism.

Conclusion:

We have just discussed the nature of Newar Buddhism as being faultless according to the textual tradition. But if they fail to practice and study then it might become an obsolete religion. The purpose of my paper is not to glorify the Newar Buddhism but present the existing situation. It is true that lay Bodhisattva practice is valid tradition authenticated by Siksasamuccaya of Shanti Deva. Thus the Newar Buddhism can not be said to be corrupt form of Buddhism as some are tempted to allege. All forms religious principles are followed by Newar Buddhists too.

Therefore, It is necessary that the Newar Buddhists should revive and receive the lost teachings of Tantric Vajrayana Buddhism from Tibetan Buddhist Masters to bridge the gap of lineage of practice that has been ignored and lost in a way.

If we could create some celibate Buddhist monks practicing Newar Vajrayana Buddhism then the structure of Newar Buddhism can be complete. In order to achieve this goal, a good relation and interaction with Theravada and Tibetan Buddhist monks should be established.

It is true that Four days of observance of monastic vows are too symbolic in character. It lacks the foundation of monastic upgrading. So the Theravada monks who were trained in Burma, Thailand and Sri Lanka even charged Newar Buddhist monasticism with having no ground at all. The basis of their charge is that Newar Bajracharya and Shakyas are lay Buddhists and they are not monks.

As we have discussed the sustenance of Buddhist monasticism is very difficult

if not impossible without the support and cooperation from the government. Here in our present context here today, if the local, national and international community come forward to support Newar Buddhist monasticism then it would be an excellent contribution to the history of South Asian Buddhism.

Newar Buddhists can contribute a lot concerning Sanskrit oriented Buddhism. There are yet many unexplored areas of Buddhist culture and practice among the Newar Buddhism.

To conclude, a word of Dr.Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the famous Indian Buddhist Scholar is worth mentioning:

“One great service the people of Nepal did particularly the highly civilized newars of the Nepal valley, was the preservation of all the manuscripts of Mahayana Buddhist literature in Sanskrit, it was the contribution of Sri Lanka to have preserved for human kind the entire mass of the Pali literature of Theravada buddhism.this was also on to Burma, Cambodia and Siam. It was similarly the great achievement of people of Nepal to have preserved the equally valuable original Sanskrit texts of Mahayana Buddhism”

Thank You!

□ Acarya Kriyasamucaya mentions 10 life cycle rituals to be performed they are as follows

- 1.Jatakarma
- 2.Namakarma
- 3.Annaprasana
- 4.Cudakarma
- 5.Cudakarmavisarjana
- 6.Vajracaryabhiseka
- 7.Swayamvara
- 8.Vibaha
- 9.Diksa
- 10.Sthavira

□ Heinz Bechert and Jens-Uwe Hartmann:“Observations on the reform of Buddhism in Nepal” in the Journal of The Nepal REsearch Centre,Vol VIII 1988

□ Siegfried Lienhard,“Nepal:the survival of Indian Buddhism in a Himalayan Kingdom” in the World of Buddhism, ed.by H.Bechert and Richard Gombrich,London,1984,pp.108-114

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Stephen M.Greenhold:The Role of the Priest in Newar Society in James Fisher ed.Himalayan Anthropology (The Hague:Mouton,1978),483-503

□ Mr.David N.Gellner: Monastic Initiation in Newar Buddhism p.53,ed.Richard Gombrich,Oxford University papers on India Vol.2 part 1,1988

□ Life of Huein Tsiang,-pl..

□ Vajracharya,Dhanavjra-Lichchaviklin kalin abhilekh,pl.

□ Nepalko Prachin Abhilekha,Ins.No.139,p.523

dheyadharmoyam sri dharmarajikamatsul..sanghikabhikshusanghasya].

□ Pasuka :Vol II No.11,N.S.1118 by Yogesh Raj

□ For the list of practices see ě The unique features of Newar Buddhism by John Loke, p.84-85

□

Manjusri,Vajrapani,Ksitigarbha,Khagarbha,Samantabhadra,Gaganganja,Sarvanivarna viskambhi and Maitreya

□ ibid.p.61

□ The Book of the discipline (Vinaya Pitaka) (Mahavagga) Vol.iv,translated by I.B. Horner (London:Luzac & Company LTD,1962,p.15

□ ěThe Unique features of Newar BuddhismĀ by John Locke p.104

□ Ibid.p.105

□ पणम्य श्रीगुरुन् भक्त्या जिनान (च) ससुतान अथ ।

आदिकर्मप्रदीपोरुयम् तदर्थिभ्यो विधियते ॥ १ ॥

शिष्याणाम आशुबोधार्थम् लिख्यते स्पर्धया न तु ।

अतः शान्तदुःखाः सर्वे क्षन्तुम अर्हन्ति माम् प्रति ॥ २ ॥

तत्रादौ देशित ये तु मन्त्राः पूजादिकर्मसु ।

आकृष्यैकत्र सम्पिण्डे लिख्यन्ते ते तु नान्यथा ॥ ३ ॥

मुखशौचादिकम् कृत्वा प्रातर्ध्यानं जपं तथा ।

नामसंगितिपाठम् च कुर्यात् प्रणिधिमेव च ॥ ४ ॥

भद्रचर्यादिना पश्चान् नमस्कारं प्रकृत्य वै ।

शुचि निष्प्राणकम् तोयं जम्भलाय यथाविधि ॥ ५ ॥

दद्याद अष्टौ शतान्येव प्रेतेभ्येश चुलुकांस्तथा ।

पश्चान् मृच्चैत्यकर्मादि बुद्धादीनां च पुजनम् ॥ ६ ॥

गुरोर्मण्डलकं कृत्वा स्वेष्टदेवस्य मण्डलम् ।

प्रज्ञापारमितादीनां पाठं कुर्याद् यथेप्सितम् ॥ ७ ॥

कृत्वा प्रदक्षिणां तेभ्यो प्रणिधिं च विशेषतः ।

बोधिसत्त्वबलिं दत्त्वा शासनस्य चीरस्थितिम् ॥ ८ ॥

आशंसयेत् प्रप्तेन चेतसा सुसमाहितः ।
वन्दनापूर्वकं पश्चाद् गुरुबुद्धां विसर्जयेत् ॥ ९ ॥

पुनर्भोजनकाले च भक्तव्यञ्जनकादिभिः ।
सर्वभौतिकमन्त्रेण बलिं दद्याद् विधानतः ॥ १० ॥

नैवेद्यं त्रिषु रत्नेषु हाद् बेरीत्यै घटीकात्रयम् ।
अग्रासनंचेष्टदेवश्य पश्चाद् भुजीद् यथाविधि ॥ ११ ॥

उल्लिष्टाहारपिण्डं च दत्त्वारुचमनमाचरेत् ।
दानगाथादिकं पश्चात् पठित्वा विहारेद् बुधाः ॥ १२ ॥

बोधिसत्त्वक्रियाः सर्वाश्चतुर्था हृष्टचेतसा ।
पुनः प्रदोषवेलायां सद्धर्मध्ययनादिकम् ॥ १३ ॥

कृत्वा पणम्य भावेन पुचौर्खिलान् जिनान् ।
देवतायोगयुक्तेन सुप्यतां सिंहशय्या ॥ १४ ॥

उत्थाने च पुनः कार्यं वन्दनादि विधिक्रिया ।
आदिकर्मिकं सत्त्वानां मार्गस्तावद् अयं मतः ॥ १५ ॥

See ĀdikarmaprdipaĀ edited by La valley de Poussin in Etude Et Materiaux Boudhisme
II Partie,pp-186-187

□ Michael Allen,Ā Buddhism without monks:The Vajrayana Religion of the Newars of
Kathmandu ValleyĀ,SA 3,1-10

□ Perhaps Anupamavajra preferred to this Deity yoga because of his tantric leaning.

□ Atishaviracita Ekadasagrantha (Eleventh treatises by Atisa) restored,translated and
edited by Ram Cgandra Negi published by Central Institute of Higher Tibetan
Studies,Sarnath,Varanasi, 1992, p.98-100

□ H.H. The Dalai Lama, in Tantra in Tibet,p.47

□ A Lamp for the Path and commentary tr.by Richard Sherburne,SJ,London,George
Allen & Unwin Ltd.1983, p.12