



SIEGFRIED LIENHARD

ON SOME KEY-TERMS IN NEWAR BUDDHISM*

An exceedingly difficult field of learning in which most of the work still remains to be done, is, as we know, the history of Newar Buddhism. Though there is no paucity of material and though researchers can draw on vast and manifold sources, such as large numbers of manuscript colophons and inscriptions, several chronicles (*vamsāvalī*) and, last but not least, quite a few foreign reports, from Chinese pilgrims to Catholic missionaries and British government officers, we are still ignorant of even the main lines of this history and have only a faint idea of the development of Newar monasteries and Buddhist monastic life in the Kathmandu Valley.

An extremely disturbing obstacle in investigations concerning Newar Buddhism is undoubtedly the fact that its scholars have not yet been able clearly to define certain terms given to some of its fundamental institutions and thus, to mention only the two most important examples, fail to interpret the words *bāhā*: and *bahī* correctly. The present paper attempts to elucidate a few key-terms in Newar Buddhism. In recent years, the meaning of some of these terms has been repeatedly discussed¹.

* In honour of the eminent scholar Siegfried Lienhard, we republish, as a token of affection and gratitude, his article from *Change and Continuity. Studies in the Nepalese Culture of the Kathmandu Valley* (Torino, Cesmeo, 1996, p. 241-256).

¹ Macdonald and A. Vergati-Stahl, *Newar Art. Nepalese Art During the Malla Period*, Warminster 1979, pp. 73 f.; M. Sh. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala. A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, Volume I: Text, Princeton 1982, pp. 137 ff. and 294 ff.; S. Lienhard, *The Survival of Indian Buddhism in a Himalayan Kingdom*, in H. Bechert and R. Gombrich, *The World of Buddhism*, London 1984, pp. 111 ff.; D. N. Gellner, *The Newar Buddhist Monastery. An Anthropological and Historical Typology* in: N. Gutschow and A. Michaels, *Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley*, Sankt Augustin 1987 (Nepalica, 4), pp. 367-414; J.K. Locke, *The Unique Features of Newar Buddhism* in: T. Skorupski, *The Buddhist Heritage*, Tring 1989 (Buddhica





In Newar Buddhism, objects and persons have either a Sanskrit or a Newari name or, which is most useful for all sorts of research, both a Sanskrit and a Newari denomination. In Newari a Vajrācārya is called a *gubhāju*, which goes back to the older forms *gurubhāju* < *gurubharādāju* and means “guru saint”, “holy guru”, while the term Śākya(bhikṣu), though often replaced by the word *bare*, has no exact equivalent in Newari. *bare* (from Skt. *vandya*) is ambiguous, since, above all in older Newari, Vajrācāryas were also considered to be *bares*, especially as long as they had not yet undergone their *ācāryabhiṣeka*. Strangely enough, there is no native word corresponding to Skt. *vihāra*, which is pronounced *bihāra* in Newari and is the most widely used term in the whole Buddhist world, to designate the monastery building. There are, it is true, the words *bahā:* and *bahī* which, however, do not mean “monastery” or “temple building” in general, but are, as is well-known, two different types of *vihāra*. In the *bahī*, the community consists of Śākya(bhikṣu)s; in the *bahā:*, however, it may consist either of Vajrācāryas only, of Śākya(bhikṣu)s only, or of a mixture of Vajrācāryas and Śākya(bhikṣu)s. The deity installed in the main-shrine of a *bahā:* is invariably called the *kvā:pā:dya:*, whereas, in a *bahī*, the deity is termed *gāmdhūridya:*. Both expressions appear arcane and have, since no Sanskrit equivalents have been found, continued to puzzle curious scholars.

We may assume that things which are known only by a Newari, and not also a Sanskrit, term are institutions which perhaps arose in a later phase of development, when Newar Buddhism, a survival of the Indian Buddhist tradition, had proceeded its own way and that they are therefore specifically Newar. Such is the case with *bahā:* and *bāhī*. As can be shown by comparing the Sanskrit names of Newar monasteries with the Newari names of the same monasteries, the Sanskrit word *vihāra*, which has been in use since early Buddhist times, stands not only for Newari *bahā:* but also for *bahī*. The Ratnākaramahāvihāra, one of the most famous *bahā:s* in Patan, is in Newari called Ha:khabahā:,

Britannica, Series Cont. I), pp. 71-116. - See also Lokesh Chandra, *Borobudur. A New Interpretation*, in: A.L. Dallapiccola and St. Zingel-Avé Lallemand, *The Stūpa. Its religious, historical and architectural significance*, Wiesbaden 1980 (Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, Südasiens-Institut, Univ. Heidelberg, 55), pp. 306-308.





‘the *bahā:* near the River Ha:’ (Ha:khusi < Ha:kha)², while the Vikramaśīlamahāvihāra, one of the oldest *bahīs* in Kathmandu, was also called the Thambahī in Newari because of its location, meaning ‘the *bahī* of the Upper Town (of Kathmandu)’.

No scholar has so far seriously questioned the commonly accepted assumption that Newari *bahā:* is derived from Skt. *vihāra* / *bihāra*. Since there is a striking similarity between the word *bahā:* (the older, literary form of which is *bahāla* / *bahāra*) and Skt. *vihāra*. More thought, on the other hand, has been devoted to the expression *bahī*, the meaning of which has been considered to be more problematic. Various scholars have pointed out certain differences in the architectural structure of the *bahā:* and that of the *bahī*³. Some observe that *bahīs* seem to be older and, as has already been mentioned above, are connected with Sākya (bhikṣu)s (or Brahmācāryabhikṣu)s⁴, whereas *bahā:s* house Vajrācāryas and/or Sākya(bhikṣu)s. But practically all scholars stress the fact that many *bahīs*, as opposed to *bahā:s*, lie ‘outside’ the cities. As this observation could be corroborated by linguistically approximating Newari *bahī* to Skt. *bahis* ‘outside’, the term *bahī* has a rule been taken to mean an ‘outside’-town-monastery’.

A great step forward in ascertaining the function and, to some extent, the history of *vihāras* has been achieved by David N. Gellner in his study on *The Newar Buddhist Monastery*⁵. In one of its parts, the author attempts to outline the history of the *bahīs* and their relation to *bahā:s* on the basis of the *Bhāṣāvamaṅśāvalī* written in Patan about 1800⁶. As we know, this

² This was the old site of the Ha:khabahā: which, being a *lāykūbahā:*, a *bahā:* of the Royal House (of Patan), was originally situated in the vicinity of the Royal Palace in Mangal Bazar. However, it retained its old name Ha:khabahā: when, during the 17th century, the Royal Palace in Patan was extended and the monastery, to make space, had to move to its present site opposite Bubahā:.

³ M.B. Joseph, *The Vihāras of the Kathmandu Valley*, in: *Oriental Art*, XVII, 1 (1971), pp. 121-143; W. Korn, *The Traditional Architecture of the Kathmandu Valley*, Kathmandu 1979; M. Sh. Slusser, *op cit.*, pp. 136 ff.

⁴ A.W. Macdonald and A. Vergati-Stahl, *op. cit.*, p. 73. — The Brahmācāryabhikṣu)s have, in later times, called themselves Sākya(bhikṣu)s.

⁵ Cf. footnote 1.

⁶ Cf. L. Petech, *Mediaeval History of Nepal (e. 750-1482)*, Rome ²1984 (Serie Orientale Roma LIV), p. 8.



modern chronicle composed in Nepali covers Nepalese history from its very beginnings and has become known to a wider circle of readers through the – thrice reprinted – free translation into English⁷. Having gone to the original text, Gellner shows that the chronicler speaks of those living in *bahīs* as of *nirvāṇik vānaprasthas*⁸. In the same *Vaṃśāvalī*, the *bahī* is, as Gellner points out, paraphrased in Nepali by *nirvāṇik vānaprasthabihār*, which, freely translated, means ‘monastery of the non-married (and) nirvana-orientated’, while *bahā:* is glossed in Nepali as *sāmsārik tāmtrik bihār*, which, of course, means ‘monastery of the tantric (and) world-orientated’. The term *vānaprastha bhikṣu*, used to denote the inhabitants of the *bahīs*, is further contrasted with the expression *grhastha ācārya*, which clearly designates residents in *bahā:s*. As Gellner rightly remarks, *bahīs* nowadays do not differ profoundly from *bahā:s*, since, in the course of time, *bahīs* have adopted most of the features characteristic of *bahā:s*. *bahīs*, which are older, were *vihāras* frequented by celibate monks, whereas *bahā:s*, which are newer, were inhabited by the married followers of Vajrayāna, who were naturally tantric and, at least from the Malla period onwards, came to represent the main stream of the Doctrine. The Bhikṣus of the *bahīs* embraced the nirvanic form of the Doctrine, the Ācāryas in *bahā:s* on the other hand, accepted karmatic or, to employ the term used in the *Bhāṣāvāṃśāvalī*, saṃsāric Buddhism⁹.

We should, however, be careful when interpreting the word *vānaprastha*, which, in this context, is used in a very particular manner. I cannot subscribe to Gellner’s opinion that, though *vānaprastha* ‘usually denotes a Hindu forest ascetic, the third of the classic four stages (*āśrama*) of a Hindu’s life’, the

⁷ History of Nepal. Translated from Parbatīya by Munshi Shew Shunker Singh and Pandit Sri Gunanand, with an introductory sketch of the country and people of Nepal by the editor Daniel Wright, Cambridge ¹1877, Calcutta ²1958, New Delhi ³1983.

⁸ Wright 1958, pp. 143 f. - The word *vānaprastha* is a tatsama and should thus not be rendered with ण, as has consistently been done by Gellner. See the *Nepālī Brhat Śabdakoś* edited by the Nepāla Rājakīya Prajñā-Pratiṣṭhān, Kathmandu 2040, *sub verbo*.

⁹ For the distinction between nirvanic (‘nibbanic’) and karmatic (‘kammatic’) Buddhism, see M.E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society. A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes*, Berkeley - Los Angeles - London ²1982, pp. 31-139. Cf. also S. Lienhard, *Gūmlā, der heilige Monat der buddhistischen Newars* (in publication).



Bhāṣāvamśāvalī seems ‘to use *vānaprastha* as a synonym for Skt. *vanavāsī*, ‘living in a forest’, which is precisely the term used for Theravada monks.’ On the contrary, the chronicler employs the term *vānaprastha* to refer to those individuals who, like Hindus, have withdrawn from house and family to live an ascetic life. Writing in Nepali – a language, which for the most part is spoken by Hindus – the author, however, used this predominantly Hindu expression to define not certain Hindus, but certain Buddhists. When describing people living in *bahīs* as *vānaprasthas*, the author of the *Vamśāvalī* by no means intends to say that these people were forest-dwellers (*vanavāsin*) and thus lived ‘outside’ (Skt. *bahīs*) the cities. He simply stresses the fact that the inhabitants of the *bahīs* were not ‘householders’, as are the Ācāryas of the *bahā:s*. While the Ācāryas have always lived in the bosom of their families and could therefore be described as samsaric, the Bhikṣus in the *bahīs* were celibate and, according to the chronicle, still aimed at Nirvana as their soteriological goal.

It is fascinating to discover that definitions very similar to those found in the *Bhāṣāvamśāvalī* are given by the Newar informant of B.H. Hodgson. As Hodgson, who was the British Resident in Nepal from 1833 to 1843, had entered Nepal already in 1821, a gap of only about twenty years lies between Hodgson’s arrival in Nepal and the date of completion of the *Bhāṣāvamśāvalī* (ca. 1800). To this may be added that both the chronicler and B.H. Hodgson’s informant were born in Patan. Hodgson refers to his learned Newar informant Amṛtānanda, who was a *Śākya* (*bhikṣu*) by birth, in his essay *On the the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet*¹⁰ and, in the same work, reproduces Amṛtānanda’s answers to twenty questions on Newar Buddhism.

¹⁰ *Essay on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet, together with further papers on the geography, ethnology and commerce of those countries*, Serampore 1841, Calcutta ¹1857; London ²1874 (reprinted, with corrections and additions); and Amsterdam ³1982 (reprinted, with a supplement by Dr. Mahadeva Prasad Saha), p. 35: ‘Soon after my arrival in Nepaul (1821), I began to devise means of procuring some accurate information relative to Buddhism... My first object was to ascertain the existence or otherwise of Bauddha scriptures in Nepaul; and to this end I privately instituted inquiries in various directions, in the course of which the reputation for knowledge of an old Bauddha residing in the city of Pātan, drew one of my people to his abode...’ See also *ibid.*, p. 65: ‘These extracts were made for me... some years ago by Amrita Nanda Bandyā, the most learned Buddhist then, or now, living in that country.’





In his reply to Hodgson's twentieth question on 'How many castes are there amongst the Bānras?'¹¹, Amṛtānanda says *inter alia*: 'The Bandyas are divided into two classes; those who follow the Vāhya-charya, and those who adopt the Abhyantara-charya – words equivalent to the Grihastha āsrama and Vairāgī āsrama of the Brāhmanas. The first class is denominated Bhikshu, the second Vajra Achārya. The Bhikshu cannot marry; but the Vajra Achārya is a family man.'¹² This is indeed an extremely important statement, as it not only confirms what has been said in the Patan *Vaṃśāvalī* but also offers a clue to what I think is the correct interpretation of the word *bahī*.

caryā, a term often used both in Hinduism and in Buddhism, denotes a certain religious 'attitude', 'state' or 'course of life' adopted by a group of believers. Thus, for example, *brahmacarya* is 'the state of an unmarried student', *bhikṣucaryā* 'the course of life of a bhikṣu' and, a term well-known in Newar Buddhism, *upāsakacaryā* 'the religious attitude of a layman'. Instead of the Hindu term *āsrama* employed in the *Bhāṣāvāṃśāvalī*, Amṛtānanda makes use of the word *caryā*, which, as we said, is not exclusively Hindu but occurs in Buddhist terminology, too. It is characteristic of the four Hindu stages of life that they are regulated by age and follow one after the other, while there is no such succession as regards the Buddhist *caryā*. The terms *abhyantara-* and *vāhyacarya*, both of which are tatsamas, are opposites: whereas *abhyantara* has the meaning of 'inside' and is used in phrases such as 'inside the house', 'inside the door' but also 'inside a (certain) community', *vāhya*, which would better be rendered as *bāhya*, means 'outside' and occurs in constructions such as, for example, 'outside the house', 'outside the door', but also 'outside a community', be that a caste, a family or a country. It is in exact conformity with this latter use, that is to say, 'inside' or 'outside' a (certain) community', that we must interpret *abhyantara-* and *bāhyacarya*, for *abhyantara*, on the one hand, denotes a 'course of life inside the family, *bāhyacarya*, on the other hand, a course of life outside the family'.

¹¹ *baṃṛā* (also *bāṃdā*) is the Nepali equivalent for Newari *ba(n)re*, *Skl.vandya*. Cf. S. Lienhard, *A Note on the Newari Term bare*, IT XIV (1987/88), pp. 265-268.

¹² B.H. Hodgson, *Essays*, etc., pp. 51-52.





Arranging the material we have discussed until now under the headings *bahā:* and *bahī*, we get the following label:

<i>bahā:</i>	<i>bahī</i>
Ācārya = Vajrācārya	Bhikṣu = Sākyabhikṣu
gṛhastha	vānaprastha
abhyantaracarya	bāhyacarya
saṃsāric	nirvāṇic
tantric	non - tantric

We now see that the *bahā:s* are inhabited by (Vajra-)ācāryas, who are householders and thus have adopted the ‘inside-the-family-way’; they are furthermore world-orientated and tantric. The *bahīs*, however, house Bhikṣus, who, in older times, were celibate and thus followed the ‘outside-the-family-way’. Most of the expressions given in my table are found in the *Bhāṣāvamśāvalī*. The terms *ācārya* (*vajrācārya*) and *bhikṣu*, however, are also employed by Amṛtānanda, while it is only Amṛtānanda who uses the words *bāhyacarya* and *abhyantaracarya*.

The word *bāhya* brings us back to the discussion on the Newari word *bahī*, the older, literary form of which is *bahiri* / *bahili*. *bahī*, however, is not a genuine Newari term. It is an Indo-Aryan loan-word; in Nepali, for example, we have *bāhirī*, an adjective, and *bāhira*, which can be used as an adverb, a postposition or an adjective. Both words mean ‘outside’, ‘being outside’, ‘outsider’ and are related to Sanskrit *bāhya* and *bahis*. Since not all *bahīs* were situated outside the city, the term *bahī* can hardly be explained as meaning an ‘outside-town-monastery’. We arrive, as a matter of fact, at a much better and far more convincing interpretation, if we connect *bahī* with Skt. *bāhya* (or *bahis*) in the specific sense that the term ‘outside’ bears in the compound *bāhyacarya*. If we interpret it in this way, the word *bahī* can be defined as designating an ‘outside-family-monastery’ or, in other words, a *vihāra* the inhabitants of which had (in the past) adopted a ‘course of life outside the family’.

In contradistinction to the *bahī*, the *bahā:* represents a newer type of *vihāra*, the inhabitants of which have embraced a ‘course of life inside the family’. As we have already said, the Bhikṣus





of the *bahīs* were formerly celibate but later largely adapted themselves to the tradition of Vajrayāna and are nowadays married, whereas the Vajrācāryas in the *bahā:s* have always been married. Unlike the word *bahī*, *bahā:* does not indicate anything about the state of the inhabitants of the *bahā:*. Scholars, in fact, never saw the need to explain its meaning or derivation, as *bahā:*, with an apocope of the ultimate syllable, goes back to the older form *bahāra* /*bahāla* which, being strikingly similar to Skt. *vihāra* / *bihāra*, was simply taken to be a Newarized variant of *bihāra*¹³. In reality, the word *bahā:* is not a Newari equivalent of *bihara* but is a modern contraction of the classical word *bharāḍa*, which is derived from Skt. *bhaṭṭāra(ka)* (m.), *bhaṭṭārikā* (f.). It is noteworthy that the use of Skt. *bhaṭṭāra(ka)* and Newari *bharāḍa* is by no means restricted only to Buddhism and Buddhist monastery buildings. Just as Skt. *bhaṭṭāra(ka)* served to denote a ‘great man’ or a ‘great deity’¹⁴, in particular learned Buddhist teachers and a special class of Śaiva monks, so does New. *Bharāḍa*, as well as its modern forms *bāhā:* and, still more contracted, *bhā*, designate a ‘god’, a ‘great lord’ or a ‘worshipful person’. Thus, for example, God Kumāra is frequently spoken of as *Kumāra-bharāḍa*, the ‘great Lord Kumāra’, and a Vajrācārya is in Newari, as already mentioned, called a *gubharāḍaju*¹⁵, which

¹³ Even the vowel change (*bihāra* < *bahāra*) posed no serious problem, since *i* in unstressed syllables of tatsamas has been often pronounced as *a* and could thus be written as either *i* or *a*. The phenomenon is well-known from, for example, Bihari and Hindi. It is interesting to observe that H.A. Oldfield in his work on Nepal renders the name of the region Bihar, thus called on account of its numerous Buddhist monasteries and today one of the States of the Republic of India, not as ‘Bihar’ but as ‘Bahar’; *Sketches from Nepal. Historical and Descriptive with an Essay on Nepalese Buddhism & Illustrations of Religious Monuments & Architecture*, 2 vols., Delhi 1974 (reprint), vol. II, pp. 40 (‘Modern Bahar’), 52 (‘Bahar Proper’), 53, 58 and 59 (‘Bahar’).

¹⁴ Examples for this use are abundant in both the epigraphy and the historiography of Nepal. See, for instance, R. Gnoli, *Nepalese Inscriptions in Gupta Characters* (Rome 1956, Serie Orientale Roma, X), *bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājasrī-Vasantadeva* (pp. 22 and 22), *bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājasrī-Gaṇadeva* (pp. 26 and 28-29), *bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājasrī-Śivadeva* (pp. 31-32, 35, 37, 41 and 43) and Dhanavajra Vajrācārya and Kamal P. Malla, *The Gopālarājyavaṃśāvalī* (Wiesbaden 1985, NRC Publications, 9): *śrīmat-Paśupati-bhaṭāraka* (p. 25), *śrī-Paśupati-bhaṭāraka* (pp. 31 and 36), *śrī-Bugmalokeśvara-bhaṭāraka* (p. 31), *Viṣṇu-bhaṭāraka* (p. 30) and *Śaṅkareśvara-bhaṭāraka* (p. 32). It is not without interest to note that the word *bhaṭ(t)āraka*, when used for a king, precedes the respective name but, when used for a god, is put after the name.

¹⁵ *ju* placed after the noun is a Newari term of respect. *bhāju* in *gubhāju* is, however, not





in modern Newari is shortened to *gubhāju*, a ‘venerable guru’. In later times, the semantic field of *bharāḍa* as well as of *bahā:* and *bhā* was extended so much that the term came to denote any deity, person, place or object that was considered ‘sacred’.

Although all Buddhist monasteries inhabited by Vajrācāryas have been named *bahā:s*, the same term, which simply means ‘sanctum’, is sometimes used of Hindu shrines, too. When in the summer of 1986 I visited the town of Saṃko and there made inquiries about its *bahā:s*, some elderly people pointed out to me several buildings which were clearly Hindu. In Kathmandu we have, for instance, the Kuladipabahā: situated at Ṭeku, the confluence of the Rivers Bishnumati and Bagmati, as well as the Binchebahā:, the *āgaṃ* of the clan of the Bijugus¹⁶. Both are Hindu sanctuaries but are, as can be seen from their names, considered as *bahā:s*.

The use of the term *bahā:* is also attested in connection with *caityas*, books and religious paintings, as all these things are regarded as sacred and worthy of worship. A current expression for *caitya* in modern Newari is *cībahā:* (or *cīvahā:*) which is frequently shortened to *cībā:* (or *cīvā:* respectively) and has as its older, classical form *caityabharāḍa*, a ‘*caitya* sanctuary’. A term to be mentioned in this context is *cībahā:bare*. It is especially common in Patan and refers to members of Buddhist castes below the rank of a Vajrācārya and Śākyabhikṣu who can only receive a lower type of *bare* ordination. They are called *cībahā:bare*, i.e. ‘*bare* of a *caitya* sanctuary’, since their consecration takes place, not in a *vihāra*, as in the case for Vajrācāryas and Śākyabhikṣus, but near a *caitya* inside a courtyard.

The word *bahā:* appears furthermore in the technical term *paubahā:* or, shortened, *paubhā:*. It is derived from the older form *patibharāḍa*, a *bahā:*, that is to say, a holy object, in the shape of a painting (*pati*) and is the name given to a special type of narrative painting which depicts the various episodes of the

to be confused with the lexeme *bhāju* meaning ‘lord’, ‘gentleman’, ‘master’, the etymology of which is quite different, since *bhā* in *bhāju* must be derived from Sanskrit *bhadra* ‘pleasant’, ‘kind’, ‘good’ to which is added the Newari honorific *ju*.

¹⁶ Also called Binchem (< Bijuguchem). The Bijugus were Pradhāns from Bhaktapur who later moved to Kathmandu.





story in successive scenes arranged below and contiguous to each other¹⁷.

In the same way as *bahā:* was used of *caityas*, books (*puṭhibharāḍa*, ‘holy book’) and sacred paintings, so did the same term serve to name that type of *vihāra* which became representative of Vajrayāna, the main stream of Newar Buddhism. While the term *bahī* should be connected with Skt. *bāhya* or *bahis* in the specific sense of ‘outside the family’ and thus characterizes a monastery of celibate Bhikṣus, *bahā:* is a shortened form of *bharāḍa* and designates the holy thing *par excellence*: a sanctuary of Vajrācāryas.

It appears that for some time Vajrācāryas were the sole ministers of Vajrayāna, since we must bear in mind that Vajrayāna evolved inside Mahāyāna and we can, therefore, assume that Ācāryas living in *bahā:s* were originally mahāyānic. Bhikṣus, on the other hand, were devotees not so much of Mahāyāna as of Hīnayāna. Of the two initiation ceremonies, *pravrajyā* and *upasampadā*, Vajrayāna communities performed only *pravrajyā* (Newari *bare chuyagu*), which was once the rite of admission into the Order but was gradually transformed into the ceremony of admission into the community of the respective *bahā:*, while *upasampadā* was replaced by the ordination into a Vajrācārya, the *ācāryābhiṣeka* (Newari *ācā: luyagu*). It goes without saying that *bahā:s* had no place for monk ordination, as all members lived as householders, whereas in older times Bhikṣus living in *bahīs* must naturally have performed both *pravrajyā*, the ceremony of acceptance into the Order, and *upasampadā*¹⁸.

When Vajrayāna became powerful, Bhikṣus in the *bahīs* found difficulty in resisting this esoteric branch of Buddhism. Since

¹⁷ Cf. S. Lienhard, *Die Abenteuer des Kaufmanns Simhala. Eine Nepallsche Bilderrolle aus der Sammlung des Museums für Indische Kunst Berlin*, Berlin 1985 (Veröffentlichungen des Museums für Indische Kunst Berlin, vol. 7), p. 45 and footnote 143.

¹⁸ Since, before the time when Vajrayāna took over, there existed a clear dichotomy between householder-Ācāryas and celibate monks, that is to say, between *bahā:s* and *bahīs*, I can by no means subscribe to the opinion of Hemrāj Shākya and other Newar scholars that *bahīs* were a lower type of *vihāra* where (Śākya) bhikṣus received preparatory training for entering a *bahī:* and becoming Vajrācāryas. Cf. also M. Sh. Slusser, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 295: ‘Some Nepalese Buddhist hold that the *bahī* were schools for novices’. Others claim the term *bahī* as the diminutive form of *bahī*; see M. Sh. Slusser, *ibid.*





they were celibate, they were called – or called themselves – Brahma-caryabhikṣus (Brahmacārins for short), a title which they replaced with Śākyabhikṣu or, for short, Śākya, when Vajrayāna became more and more dominant and Vajrācāryas began to look down upon Bhikṣus. The strange fact that there exist today not only *bahā:s* and *bahīs* which are exclusively inhabited by Śākyabhikṣus, but also *bahā:s* with Vajrācāryas and Śākyabhikṣus can help us to trace the development. It seems Bhikṣus in all the *bahīs* divided into three groups which eventually embraced the prevailing form of Buddhism, although in different ways and at various stages. Some Bhikṣus, having abandoned both their customs and their *bahīs*, sought admission to some of the *bahā:s*, which led to the formation of mixed *saṅghas* (Vajrācāryas and Śākyabhikṣus). Others founded their own *bahā:s* (consisting exclusively of Śākyabhikṣus), while the third and biggest group remained in their time-honoured *bahīs*, though these Bhikṣus, too, finally adjusted themselves to the practices of the *bahā:s*. Features which distinguish them from Vajrācāryas are, above all, that Śākyabhikṣus are not entitled to perform sacrifices with fire (*homa*) and that their councils of elders (*stavira*) consist of only five elders, not ten as is the case in Vajrācārya- *bahā:s*.

Other marks that distinguish Vajrācāryas from Śākyabhikṣus, in the past as well as today, are their head-dresses and the insignia they carry. Nowadays, the use of the ceremonial dress is restricted to Sthaviras of both classes; they shave their hair in connection with certain rituals only and wear their robes solely at religious ceremonies. It may, however, be taken for granted that, originally, many Ācārya-householders and certainly all celibate monks always had shorn heads and wore their priestly clothes all day long. Vajrācāryas and Bhikṣus dressed identically in their priestly capacity, wearing the same clothes as they do today: the upper part of the body covered by a wide jacket with sleeves, the *cīvara*, the lower part by a long skirt, the *nivāsa*, fastened round the waist and reaching down to the ankles. There is, however, as already H.A. Oldfield, a fine observer, has noted, a marked difference with regard to head-dress and instruments. The insignia Śākyabhikṣus carried with them are a begging-bowl



(Skt. *piṇḍapātra*¹⁹, New. *gulupā*: < *gurupātra*) and a sceptre-like metal staff (Skt. *khakkhara*, *khikkhira*, *khikkhirika*, *khikkhilikā*, New. *silāpūpau*²⁰) which, in older times, was used by alms-begging monks to keep dangerous dogs and cattle at bay²¹. The begging-bowl and metal staff are even today handed over to the newly ordained monk in the *bare chuyagu* rite. Since for the inhabitants of the *bahā:s* monkhood is only a transitory stage and is succeeded by higher initiations, a Vajracārya is characterized by other insignia. He wears a rosary around his neck and should hold in his hand, or carry with him, a book and the thunderbolt (*vajra*) he receives at the end of his *ācāryābhiṣeka*. As head-dresses, which like the other insignia are today only worn during ceremonies and on festive occasions, Vajracāryas use splendidly ornamented copper-gilt crowns; Śākyas, however, cloth-caps coloured bright red.

It is clear that, with the exception of the cloth-cap, an apparently recent innovation added to the insignia proper when Bhikṣus in the *bahīs* gradually adapted themselves to Vajrayāna, the whole outfit of Śākyabhikṣus is that of a monk and thus corroborates what we have stated above. Although it proves difficult to date the period of their conversion to the form of Buddhism practised in the *bahā:s*, we may not be wrong if we tentatively place the main part of transition between the reign of King Jayasthiti Malla (1382-1395 A.D.), when the caste system became consolidated, and the middle of the 17th century.

Two terms extremely difficult to account for are *kvā:pā:dya:* and *gāṃdhūridya:*. As I have mentioned at the beginning of this article, *kvā:pā:dya:* is the name given to the main deity in the non-tantric shrine in *bahā:s*, while quite another word, namely *gāṃdhūridya:*, is used for the same deity in *bahīs*²². Both terms

¹⁹ That is to say, 'the bowl (*pātra*) for the daily food ration (*piṇḍa*)'; for *piṇḍa* cf. J. Fezas, *Le droit népalais de la succession et ses sources classiques*, vol. 1, Paris 1985, pp. 309-12.

²⁰ *silā-pū-pau* goes back to *śīla-pavitra-paṭhi*, 'the pure staff of disciplined conduct'.

²¹ For this metal staff cf. J. Takakusu (ed.), *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671-695)*. by I-tsing. Transl. By J. Takakusu, Oxford 1896, Taipei 1970 (reprint), p. 191. - See H. Ambrose Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal*, Vol. II, Delhi 1974 (reprint), pp. 141-43.

²² Though the *gāṃdhūridya:* is said to belong only to *bahīs*, according to an inscription dated 1388 A.D. mentioned by M. Sh. Slusser a *gāṃdhūlibhattāraka* was installed in



have been interpreted in various ways. The word *kvā:pā:dya:* has been twice explained by J. Locke, though each time differently. In his first interpretation²³, Locke considers *kvā:pā:dya:* to be a ‘corruption’ of *kvācapāladeva*, which, according to him, means ‘the guardian deity of the *saṅgha*’. The expression *kvācapāla*, shortened to *kvā:pā* in modern Newari, is well attested in older documents²⁴. Some Newar scholars do indeed maintain that *kvāca* is an old term for *saṅgha* which since long fell into oblivion²⁵. Apart from its occurrence in the compound *kvācapala*, there is, however, no textual evidence for the use of *kvāca* as a separate word in the meaning of ‘*saṅgha*’. Gellner holds the view that ‘the term *kvācapāladeva* may have been deliberately derived from (a) a piace associated with the Buddha and (b) a similar-sounding (though actually different) root (*kuṭī/kūṭa*) and made into the technical term for the main deity of a *bahā*’²⁶. In another, recent and much more plausible, interpretation²⁷, J. Locke considers *kvā:pā:dya:*, as before, to be a modern Newari contraction of *kvācapāladeva* (also spelled *koca*^o / *kvoca*^o), though he now derives the word *kvāca*, with good reason, from Skt. *koṣṭha*. As Locke discovered, the word *koṣṭhapāla*, a Sanskrit equivalent for *kvācapāla*, is used as an attribute for Buddha in a Nepalese copper-plate inscription in Sanskrit from the year Vikr. S. 1445 (A.D. 1387²⁸). This inscription celebrates the installation of a golden Buddha image by a donor named Mānacandra Śākya

Laganbahā: in Kathmandu; cf. Slusser, *op. cit.*, p. 295, footnote 138. Cf. also D. N. Gellner, *op. cit.*, pp. 391 f.

²³ J.K. Locke, *Karunamaya. The Cult of Avalokitesvara — Matsyendranatha in the Valley of Kathmandu*, Tribhuvan University (Kathmandu) 1980, p. 14, footnote 15.

²⁴ Thus, for example, in an inscription from the Kvābahā: (Hiraṇyavarṇa-Mahāvihāra) in Patan of the year N.E. 653 (A.D. 1533); see Hemaraj Sakya (and) T.L. Vaidya (ed.), *Medieval Nepal (Colophons and Inscriptions)*, Kathmandu 1970, p. 84.

²⁵ *kvā:* (< *kvāca*) is employed as a classifier in modern Newari in phrases such as *bu cha kvā:* ‘a (certain) measure of land’. When requested to elaborate on this matter, one of my Newar informants suggested very tentatively, that *kvāca* in the meaning of ‘*saṅgha*’ could possibly be explained on the basis of a construction such as **bhikṣu cha kvāca*, ‘a group of monks’, where the same classifier would be used for a certain number of people.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 368, footnote 4.

²⁷ *The Unique Features of Newar Buddhism*, p. 177 f.

²⁸ For an edition (and translation into Nepālī) of the inscription see Śankarmān Rājvaṃśī, *Sthiti Mallako pālako Vi.sam. 1445 ko Mānacandra Śākya ko tāmrāpatra ra tyasko aitiḥāsik vyākhyā*, Pūrṇimā I, 4, pp. 54-57.





in the Kīrtipuṇya-mahāvihāra in Lagan, Kathmandu. The word (*vara*)*koṣṭhapāla* occurs in stanza 6, which, like the majority of the 12 verses, is composed in Upajāti metre. Locke's discovery is very important. In an article published in 1985²⁹, I gave *kvāthapāla* as the older form of *kvā:pā*:³⁰. It is true that *kvātha* also means 'fort' and, in this sense, is connected with *Skt. koṭṭa*. But *kvātha* is, as a matter of fact, also an older variant of *kvāca*. Although *kvātha*, a Neo-Indo-Aryan loan-word, is not attested in literature, *Skt. koṣṭha* would, according to well-known rules of phonetic development, be transformed into *koṭṭha* in Middle-Indian. At a later stage *koṭṭhaka* (< *Skt. koṣṭhaka*), a form enlarged by the suffix *ka*, became *koṭhā* / *kothā* in many modern Indian languages, including Nepālī. In Newari the loan-word *koṭhā* / *kothā* is spelled *kothā*, *kvōtha* or *kvātha* and can even be rendered as *kvāca*, since *t*, non-aspirated or aspirated, and *c* are interchangeable phonemes³¹.

Although it is clear that *kvātha* and *kvāca* are variants which both derive from the Sanskrit word *koṣṭha*, the main difficulty is how to understand the compound word *kvācapāla*. Locke translates the word simply as 'guardian', but comments, following his own first interpretation, that this guardian is a guardian of the *saṅgha*'. As *koṣṭha(ka)* / *koṣṭhikā* also means an 'inner apartment'³² or 'a room for keeping valuable books (and other things which are holy)'³³, I am inclined to translate *kvāca* as 'sacred room', 'shrine'. Locke is certainly right when he states that *Skt. koṣṭhapāla* 'means a guard, a watchman or a storekeeper'. Nevertheless the word *pāla*

²⁹ S. Lienhard, *Buddhistisches Gemeindeleben in Nepal*, in: H. Bechert (ed.), *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*. Erster Teil, Göttingen 1985 (Abhdl. der Akad. der Wiss. in Göttingen, Philolog.-Hist. Kl., 3. Folge, Nr. 149), p. 263.

³⁰ Cf. J.K. Locke, *Unique Features of Newar Buddhism*, footnote 6: 'Some have interpreted *kwāpā* as a shortened form of *kwātha* (See for example Siegfried Lienhard, 'Nepal: the Survival...'). *Kwātha* is a Newari term for a fort and it is true that some of the *vihāras* were referred to as forts... However, most of the *vihāras* were not forts and were not referred to as forts.'

³¹ Cf. H. Jørgensen, *A Grammar of the Classical Newari*, Copenhagen 1941 (Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Hist.-filologiske Meddelelser, XXVII, 3), p. 12, § 9. To the examples given by Jørgensen (*sācān* - *sātān* 'falcon' and *cijak* : *tijak* 'quiet') can be added *pvātha* : *pvāca* 'belly', 'abdomen' (*Skt. pāca* 'digestion') and the causative suffix *cake*: *take*.

³² Cf. D. N. Gellner, *op. cit.*, p. 368, footnote 4.

³³ For the latter meaning see F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol. II: Dictionary, Delhi - Patna - Varanasi 1970 (reprint), sub verbo *koṣṭhikā*.





in *kvācapāla* is not to be interpreted in this, its original meaning but in the much vaguer sense which the word *pāla*, or to be more precise *pālaka*, has acquired in Neo-Indo-Aryan where *pāla(ka)* and its derivations only indicate '(somebody who is) related (to something)'³⁴ *kvā:pā:* (*kvācapāla*), in my opinion, means, therefore, 'the one related to the shrine' and *kvā:pā:dya:* 'the God in the shrine'. We may perhaps assume that *kvāca* was the word used for the non-tantric shrine and thus, as a more or less technical term, standing in opposition to the term *āgaṃ*.

An extremely interesting word is *gāṃdhūridya:* which, as *r* and *l* can be interchanged in Newari, is also frequently rendered as *gāṃdhūlidya:*. A detailed account is given by M. Sh. Slusser³⁵ who observes that it 'presumably... derives from Sanskrit *gāṃdhūlideva*, a term encountered from time to time in Nepall sources'. As a possible variant of *gāṃdhūli* she adduces Skt. *godhūli* 'earthdust'³⁶. While the correct spelling of *gāṃdhūli* / *gāṃdhūri* is *gāṃdhūri/gāṃdhūli* (with *ā*) and *dya:* of course represents the Newari equivalent of Skt. *deva*, the word *gāṃdhūri* is not really Sanskrit but a Newari contraction and has nothing to do with Skt. *godhūli*³⁷. The only scholar who has hitherto tried to give an etymology of the expression is D. N. Gellner. He *derives gāṃdhūri from the Sanskrit word gandhakuṭī* which means 'perfumed hut' and was, as is elaborated by Gellner, 'an ancient honorific originally used to describe the place, wherever it was, that the Buddha happened to be staying. In Theravada Buddhism *kuṭī*, hut, is still the term used for the room in which a monk lives'. Though Gellner's derivation certainly looks very convincing, I cannot quite understand how Skt. *gandhakuṭī* could ever develop into Newari *gāṃdhūli*. The syllables *gan* and *ṭī* do not cause any problem, since *gan* / *gaṃ* remains and *ṭī* can become *ri* in Newari. The difficulty lies in the fact that, in this derivation, *gandhakuṭī* is strangely split up into *gan*, *dha-ku* and *ṭī* and that *dha-ku*, a very odd combination of the final syllable of

³⁴ Such as, for example, *vālā* in Hindi.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 295 and footnote 138.

³⁶ For *godhūli* see S. Lienhard, *Cow-dust and Sun-dust: Remarks on Skt. godhūli and gorajas*, IT X (1982), pp. 147-53.

³⁷ D. N. Gellner, *op. cit.*, p. 390.



the word *gandha* and the initial part of *kuṭī*, could scarcely – both together – be abbreviated into Newari *dhū*.

My interpretation is different. If based on a Sanskrit lexeme, Newari *gāṃ* can only derive from *gaṇa*, which designates a ‘group’ of gods, men, animals or things and is an old synonym of the word *saṅgha*. In Pāli a *gaṇācariya* is a teacher with (many) followers and the Pāli phrase *gaṇī ca saṅghī ca gaṇācariyo ca* frequently refers to Gautama Buddha. Interestingly enough, the word *gaṇa* occurs also in the Sanskrit Formula of the Threefold Refuge (*triśaraṇagamana*), in the specific form in which it is used in Newar *vihāras* whenever the *bare chuyagu* ceremony is performed. The third of the three refuges runs as follows:

*saṅghasya śaraṇaṃ gacchāmi gaṇānām agryam*³⁸

‘I take refuge with the *saṅgha*, the foremost of (all) assemblies’.

The passage ‘the foremost of (all) assemblies’ is here expressed by the phrase *gaṇānām agryam*. In this phrase the Skt. word *dhurya(m)*, which also means ‘best’, ‘foremost’, could be easily substituted for the Skt. word *agryam* and this substitution would result in the variant *gaṇānām* likely that the Newari contraction *gāṃdhūri/gāṃdhūli* is based on Skt. *gaṇadhurya*. The *gāṃdhūridya*: installed in the main shrine of the *bahīs* is thus the ‘God of the best of (all) assemblies’, that is to say, ‘of all *saṅghas*’. The first sentence of the *triśaraṇa* formula describes Buddha as the “foremost of (all) bipeds”, the second the Dharma as being the “foremost of (all doctrines that lead to) the freedom from passions”. As these ideas³⁹ are intimately connected with the basic teaching of Buddhism, they fit well into the general atmosphere of the *bahīs*, the atmosphere which in former times pervaded this older form of the Newar *vihāra*.

³⁸ Cf. S. Lienhard, *Buddhistisches Gemeindeleben in Nepal*, p. 271.

³⁹ The Formula of the Threefold Refuge is paraphrased in *Dīpavaṃsa* XI, 35 where the Emperor Aśoka is made to utter the following stanza:

*Buddho dakkhiṇeyyān’aggo Dhammo aggo virāginam/
Saṃgho ca puññakkhettaggo tīni aggā sadevake//*

“The Buddha is the foremost of (all) worthy of gifts, the (Buddhist) Doctrine is the foremost of (all teachings that lead to) the freedom from passions; the (Buddhist) Community is the foremost of (all) fields of merit. These three are the three foremost (things) in the world of men and gods”.