

**Contribution of Anagarikas for the development of
Theravada Buddhism in Nepal**

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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the master's degree of
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**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FROM THE
RESEARCH DIRECTOR**

This is to certify that, Jayju Rajkarnikar, a student of the Tribhuvan University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, submitted his thesis, *Contribution of Anagarikas for the development of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal* as the partial fulfillment of, Master's Degree paper in Nepali History, Culture, and Archaeology to fulfill the thesis course requirements. I propose this thesis for the mandatory evaluation, affirming the quality of the thesis was completed under my guidance and supervision.

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LETTER OF COMMITMENT

This research paper, *Contribution of Anagarikas for the development of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal*, has been prepared under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Nirjala Pokharel, to obtain the certificate of Master's Degree from the Central Department of Nepali History, Culture, and Archaeology at Tribhuvan University. I affirm that this thesis is an original piece of work authored by me and has not been presented for any degree at any other university or academic institution.

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ACRONYM

- **AN** – Anguttara Nikaya
- **B.S.** – Bikram Sambat (Nepali Calendar)
- **CE** – Common Era
- **DHP** – Dhammapada
- **DN** – Digha Nikaya
- **MN** – Majjhima Nikaya
- **N.S.** – Nepal Sambat
- **SN** – Samyutta Nikaya
- **VIN** – Vinaya Pitaka

GLOSSARY

- **Abhidhamma Pitaka** – A philosophical analysis of Buddhist teachings, explaining mental states, consciousness, and ultimate reality.
- **Adhikaranasamatha** – Vinaya rules specifically addressing monastic disputes and conflict resolution within the Sangha.
- **Ahimsa** – The principle of non-violence, promoting compassion and refraining from harm to any living being.
- **Anagarika** – A Buddhist renunciant nun who adopts monastic discipline but remains a layperson, often serving as a bridge between monks and lay followers.
- **Asta Shila** – Eight Precepts observed on special Buddhist holy days, adding renunciation of entertainment, luxury, and eating after noon. They are Non-Harming, Non-Stealing, Celibacy, Truthfulness, Sobriety, Moderation in Eating, Simplicity in Entertainment & Adornment and Simple Living.
- **Bhikkhu** – A fully ordained Buddhist monk who follows the monastic code (Vinaya), consisting of 227 rules in the Theravāda tradition.
- **Bhikkhuni** – A fully ordained Buddhist nun who follows the Vinaya, adhering to 311 rules in the Theravāda tradition.
- **Bhikkhuni Sangha** – The organized community of fully ordained Buddhist nuns, initially established by Buddha.
- **Bhikkhuni Vibhanga** – A section of the Vinaya containing additional disciplinary rules specific to Buddhist nuns.
- **Cullavagga** – A supplementary Vinaya text detailing disciplinary rules and conflict resolution.
- **Dasa Shila** – Ten Precepts followed by novice monks and nuns, extending ethical rules to humility, simplicity, and detachment from wealth. They are - Non-Harming, Non-Stealing, Celibacy, Truthfulness, Sobriety, Moderation in Eating, Avoiding Entertainment & Adornment, Simple Living, Avoiding Handling Money, and Avoiding Worldly Occupations.
- **Dhammadinnā** – A revered female disciple known for her wisdom, recognized by Buddha as the foremost in explaining the Dhamma.
- **Dharmachakra Pravartana** – The "Turning of the Wheel of Dharma," referring to Buddha's first sermon at Sarnath.

- **Khandhaka** – A collection of rules dealing with monastic procedures, including ordination and daily conduct.
- **Mahaparinirvana** – The final passing of Buddha into complete Nirvana, indicating liberation beyond physical existence.
- **Mahavagga** – A part of the Vinaya that covers ordination, monastic lifestyle, and rules for communal harmony.
- **Nirvana** – The ultimate goal in Buddhism, signifying the end of suffering, desire, and rebirth, leading to spiritual liberation.
- **Pancha Shila** – The Five Precepts for lay Buddhists: abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxicants.
- **Parivara** – A summary and analysis of Vinaya rules, serving as a training manual for monks.
- **Patimokkha** – The core set of monastic rules for monks and nuns, recited bi-weekly for self-discipline.
- **Samyak Sambodhi** – The state of complete enlightenment attained by Buddha after years of meditation and self-discipline.
- **Sigalovada Sutta** – A discourse in which Buddha advises laypeople on ethics, social responsibilities, and household life.
- **Śīla** – The ethical and moral discipline in Buddhism, forming the foundation for spiritual development and enlightenment.
- **Sutta Pitaka** – A collection of discourses (sutras) by the Buddha, covering his teachings on morality, meditation, and wisdom.
- **Sutta Vibhanga** – A section of the Vinaya explaining each monastic rule and its origins.
- **Tantric** – A form of esoteric practice in Vajrayāna Buddhism, using rituals, visualization, and mantra recitations.
- **Therigatha** – An anthology of poems composed by early Buddhist nuns, reflecting their spiritual experiences and enlightenment.
- **Tripitaka** – The "Three Baskets" of Buddhist scriptures: Sutta (teachings), Vinaya (monastic discipline), and Abhidhamma (philosophy).
- **Vajrayāna** – A Buddhist tradition incorporating esoteric teachings, tantric rituals, and rapid enlightenment methods.
- **Vinaya Pitaka** – The monastic code that governs the conduct of monks and nuns, ensuring discipline within the Sangha.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Siddhartha Gautama was born in Lumbini 2,588 years ago. He left his hometown of Kapilvastu at the age of 29 and embarked on a six-year ascetic journey in Bodhgaya, where he eventually achieved enlightenment, or Samyak Sambodhi, at the age of 35. Because of this life-changing event, he came to be known as the Buddha. The Dharmachakra Pravartana (Turning of the Wheel of Dharma), his first sermon on this revelation, was given at Mriga Dava (Deer Park) and is considered to be the beginning of his teachings and the official founding of the Buddhist tradition. Buddha devoted the remaining forty-five years of his life to sharing what he had discovered, only for the good of humanity. He attained Mahaparinirvana in Kushinagar and died at the age of 80.

The Eightfold Path, which described a means of overcoming suffering, and the Four Noble Truths were essential components of Buddha's teachings. The Buddha taught that there is suffering, that it has a cause, and that one can achieve Nirvana, or release, by figuring out and removing this cause. His teaching was widely accepted by people from all walks of life, from kings and affluent elites to the destitute and disenfranchised, including Brahmins and others deemed to be of inferior rank at the time. He made it clear that this route to emancipation was open to everyone, regardless of social class. Throughout his teachings, Buddha attracted a wide range of followers, including members of different socioeconomic classes, ethnic groups, laymen, laywomen, monks, and nuns. His student Ananda's influence eventually resulted in the admission of women into the monastic order, which paved the way for the establishment of the nunnery. The fourfold community—monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen—was established as a result of this evolution and served as a fundamental framework for the spread of Buddhism (Tuladher, B.S. 2541, p. 9).

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to state that the Buddha's teachings advocated equality based on these four tenets. The four pillars of Buddha's doctrine were the upāsakas, upāsikās, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, and the fourfold assembly. Buddhism accorded women the same position and respect as men.

In the evolution of Buddhism, women were essential. Women were prominent from the Buddha's period, including Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, Dhammadinnā, Khemā, Uppalavaṇṇā, Sujātā, Visākhā, Supriyā, and Ambapālī. Up to the age of 29, Buddha was cared for in Kapilavastu by his stepmother, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī. With the help of Ananda, Buddha's personal attendant, who persuaded Buddha to ordain her, she became the first ordained nun in the Buddhist order. Following her ordination, women who had given up domestic life found sanctuary in the Bhikkhuni Sangha, an order of nuns.

The phases of spiritual development—stream-entry (sotāpanna), once-returner (sakadāgāmi), non-returner (anāgāmi), and arahantship—were accessible to both men and women who followed Buddha's teachings. The importance of nuns was so great to Buddha that he named two of them "foremost female disciples" (Aggasāvika) (Tuladhar, 1997, p.9). In Buddhism, the words of the Buddha himself are revered to the same degree as the "Therigatha," a compilation of poems written by enlightened nuns (Tuladhar, 1997, p. 9).

In the third century BCE, under the rule of Emperor Ashoka, women also made important contributions to Buddhism. Both his daughter Sanghamittā and his queen Vidisha were instrumental in the development of Buddhism. As a nun herself, Sanghamittā went to Sri Lanka to spread the Dhamma and ordain the local queen (Altekar, 1960, p. 210). Because she ordained Queen Anula, Sanghamittā made a significant contribution to the growth of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. As another example of the crucial role women played in Buddhist history, Charumati, who is said to be Ashoka's daughter, is credited with founding the Charumati Vihara (Chabahil) in Nepal.

Buddhism also benefited greatly from the contributions of women throughout the Licchavi period. The active participation of women during this period is mentioned in one Chabahil inscription (Regmi, 1983, p. 148). The Theravāda tradition, which established distinct orders of monks and nuns, is evident in the early history of Buddhism in Nepal. Both monastic orders were mentioned in Licchavi period inscriptions. However, the impact of Vajrayāna Buddhism did not become significant until the 7th century. Women, particularly nuns and laywomen, continued to support

the growth of Buddhism during this time.

The evolution of Buddhism persisted even during the Middle Ages. However, the Theravāda tradition started to wane under the influence of Hinduism during King Jayasthiti Malla's reign, which resulted in the rise of nuns and domestic monks. The Vajrayāna and Tantric traditions, which are still followed today, originated from the tradition of married monastics. Women still remained to be crucial to the growth of Buddhism.

This contribution continued till the present era. Monks and nuns were exiled from Nepal during the Rana era. One prominent nun, Anagārika Dharmapālī, petitioned Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher to stop the nuns from being expelled (Tuladhar, 1997, p. 53). Anagārika Dhammavatī started the resuscitation of the Rishini (Dasa Shila Mata) tradition in Nepal after she returned from Burma. Even the daughters of Rana ruler Mohan Shumsher, Mandira and Purnalakshmi, were ordained by her (personal interview, Anagārika Dhammavatī).

As a result, women from the ruling elite contributed significantly to Buddhism even during the Rana period. To sum up, women have contributed significantly to the growth and spread of Buddhism over time. Nepalese women still play a significant role in the dissemination of Buddhism today. For instance, laywomen have been playing an equally significant part in the Anagārika Sangha's active efforts to preserve the Buddhist order's sustainability.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite women's significant contributions to the development of human society and culture from ancient times, their efforts have often been overlooked in patriarchal societies. Even though women were highly revered in ancient religious and cultural contexts—addressed with titles such as 'mother,' 'sister,' or 'fortunate one'—they remained marginalized in many aspects of life. For instance, in Buddhism, while the Buddha openly praised Sujātā's offering of milk-rice as pivotal in his attainment of enlightenment, it was still challenging for women to gain the right to establish the Bhikkhunī Sangha (the order of nuns). This highlights the contradiction between

reverence for women and the societal limitations placed on them. Though women have made substantial contributions to Buddhism, this topic has not been studied thoroughly. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the following points:

1. What roles does Anagarika play in the development of Theravada Buddhism?
2. What are the codes of conduct (Śīla) followed by women in Theravada Buddhism?
3. What is the current status and role of Nepali Anagarika in the development of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal?

1.3 Research Objectives

Every research study has specific objectives that guide its direction. The main objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To investigate the role of Anagarika in the development of Theravada Buddhism.
2. To study the codes of conduct (Śīla) followed by women in Theravada Buddhism.
3. To analyze the current status and role of Nepali Anagarikas in the development of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal.

1.4 Literature Review

The literature reviewed for this research includes both local and international works on the history of Buddhism and women's roles within it. While there has been substantial scholarship on the Buddha's life and teachings, there has been less focus on the role of women from ancient to modern times. Key texts reviewed include:

A.S. Altekar (1960), *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*.

While primarily focused on Hindu civilization, Altekar's work offers a valuable comparative perspective for understanding the position of women within the broader context of Indian religious traditions. This text explores the social, religious, and cultural roles of women within Hinduism, and likely touches upon the interaction between Hindu and Buddhist traditions, which were often intertwined in ancient India. It could include discussions on women's roles in both Hindu and Buddhist

traditions. The specific mention of Sanghamittā, the daughter of Ashoka and sister of Mahindra, and her role in spreading Buddhism to Sri Lanka is critical. This information highlights the widespread influence of women in the early expansion of Buddhism and provides useful comparison for the role of women in Nepal specifically. By examining Altekār's work, one can gain a broader understanding of the societal norms and expectations for women at the time, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the unique context of Buddhist women.

P. V. Bapat(1971), *2500 Years of Buddhism*.

Bapat's comprehensive work provides a sweeping overview of the development of Buddhism over a vast period. Importantly, it includes discussions on the monastic codes for both male (Bhikkhus) and female (Bhikkhunīs) monastics, highlighting the structure of monastic life and the specific rules that governed each group. The discussion of the establishment of the Bhikkhunī Sangha, is important because it signifies the recognition of women's ability to attain spiritual enlightenment and the formal structures developed to support their practice. This text provides a useful historical context and detailed understanding of the monastic framework in which women practiced.

Daniel Wright (1972), *History of Nepal*.

Wright's "History of Nepal," while not solely focused on Buddhism or women, serves as an important foundational text for understanding the historical context of Buddhism in Nepal. This book typically dedicates sections to the influence of Emperor Ashoka, a pivotal figure in the spread of Buddhism. Of particular interest is its discussion of Ashoka's purported visit to Nepal and the subsequent introduction of Buddhist principles. Furthermore, it specifically highlights the legendary role of Ashoka's daughter, Charumati, in establishing a vihara (monastery) in Chabahil. This detail is significant because it points to early examples of women's agency in the propagation and institutionalization of Buddhism. Wright's account provides a critical starting point for investigating how women, even in the context of ancient Nepal, were active participants in the evolution of Buddhist practices and institutions. Its inclusion serves to emphasize the deep historical roots of women's engagement with Buddhism in the Nepalese landscape.

Bhikshu Amritananda (1973), *Buddhist Women in Ancient Times, Vol. 1 and 2*.

This two-volume work by Bhikshu Amritananda is a crucial resource for exploring the role of women in early Buddhism. Unlike general histories, Amritananda's text directly addresses the lives, contributions, and challenges faced by women in ancient Buddhist societies. He provides detailed accounts, likely drawing from primary Buddhist texts (like the Vinaya Pitaka, Jatakas etc.), of prominent female figures – both nuns and lay practitioners. This book is likely to shed light on various aspects of their lives: their roles in the Sangha (monastic community), their contributions to the preservation of the Dhamma (Buddhist teachings), and their individual journeys toward spiritual enlightenment. Amritananda's work would be very significant in understanding not just the generic role of women in Buddhism but specifically the lived experiences and contributions of these early figures.

Bhikshu Amritananda (1974), *The Character of Female Practitioners in Ancient Times*.

This work by Amritananda appears to be a more focused study compared to his earlier two volumes, delving more specifically into the lives of women who chose the path of monastic life as nuns (Bhikkhunīs) during the time of the Buddha and in the period following. This study likely explores not just the monastic rules and their adherence to them, but it might also provide insights into the internal dynamics of the Bhikkhunī Sangha, their interactions with the monks, and the challenges faced by women seeking spiritual liberation in a male-dominated society. This text offers a deeper look into the motivations, challenges, and spiritual achievements of these early female practitioners and offer valuable insights into gender dynamics within the Buddhist monastic framework.

Bhikshu Amritananda (1982), *A Short History of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal*

This text focuses specifically on the Theravāda school of Buddhism in Nepal. This gives a critical understanding of the Theravada tradition in Nepal and the challenges it has faced in various periods. This is especially important if the focus is on the impact of Theravada Buddhism on the lives and positions of women. It also focuses on the key historical figures involved in its revival. It might include the

important role of the Anagarika movement as this revival movement is crucial for the later developments in Nepalese Buddhist life.

Bhikshu Gyanpurnik (B. S. 2032), *The Bhikkhu and Bhikkhunī Patimokkha*.

This work is a crucial resource focusing on the Patimokkha, the collection of monastic rules for both monks (Bhikkhus) and nuns (Bhikkhunīs). It provides a detailed outline of the conduct required of each group, shedding light on the specific regulations and expectations of both orders. The emphasis on Mahāprajāpatī's role as the first female disciple further underscores the importance of understanding the historical context for women's ordination. This book is an essential resource for understanding the lived experience and limitations placed on women in the Sangha and is critical for any study on women monastics in Buddhism. (Note: This is calculated based on the Bikram Sambat calendar, where 2532 B.S. corresponds to approximately 1975/76 CE.)

Dr. Suman Kamal Tuladhar (B. S. 2034), *The Contribution of Nepalese Anagarikas in Buddhism*.

Elaboration: This article focuses on the modern contributions of the Anagarika movement in Nepal. It focuses on the ways these modern individuals, both men and women, are actively engaged in promoting and disseminating Buddhist teachings. This study highlights the continuing tradition of lay Buddhists engaging in the practices and spread of Buddhist teachings. It also allows the study of how these individuals are supporting Buddhist institutions and their role in modern society, and is particularly important in assessing the modern position and contributions of women within this movement.

Bhikshu Mahaprajna (N.S 1098), *Lalitavistara*.

Elaboration: "Lalitavistara" is a key Buddhist text that recounts the life and teachings of the Buddha. This text likely contains detailed information on the rules established by the Buddha for both male and female monastics. This is of particular importance is the depiction of Mahāprajāpatī's, Buddha's stepmother and the first Bhikkhunī, ordination. The work likely provides insights into the initial hesitation and eventual acceptance of women into the monastic order, along with the specific rules

and guidelines that were implemented to ensure the harmonious functioning of both Sanghas. This text provides a closer look at the historical foundation of the Bhikkhunī Sangha, from a text believed to have originated in the first few centuries CE.

Vidhavati Malvika (B.S. 2035), *Ideal Buddhist Women*.

This book, originally written in the Newar language and translated into Nepali, provides a unique perspective on the ideal roles and contributions of women within Buddhism. It delves into the lives and experiences of important women figures like Kṣemā Gautamī, highlighting their significant contributions to the Buddhist tradition. Notably, the book also explores the Buddha's approach to counseling women, revealing his role as a psychotherapist who considered women's emotional needs. This highlights a more holistic approach to women's well-being within the Buddhist framework. Its focus on the lived experiences of specific women, coupled with the translator's focus, provides a valuable resource in examining both how women contributed to the tradition and how their experiences and emotions are considered.

Anagarika Kusum (N.A), *The Establishment of the Anagarika Tradition in Nepal*

This publication details the modern development of the Anagarika tradition in Nepal, focusing on individuals who adopt a renunciate lifestyle but do not ordain as monks or nuns. By establishing an Anagarika tradition, men and women can live a renunciate life within the context of lay society, allowing them to pursue Buddhist practices and learning and support the Sangha without requiring a formal ordination. This publication likely discusses the individuals who were instrumental in establishing and developing this tradition, providing key insights into how the roles and practices of women have evolved in modern times. Its focus on the Anagarika tradition in Nepal is significant for the discussion of modern practices and the continued importance of women in the revival of Buddhist life.

Bhikshu Sudarshan Mahasthavir (B.S. 2053), *Buddhism Around the World*.

While the title suggests a global overview, this book focuses specifically on Buddhism in Nepal, particularly the Theravada tradition. Critically it looks at the Theravada tradition during the Rana period, a historical period which was marked by significant political and social changes in Nepal. It is likely to focus on the challenges

faced by Theravada Buddhists during this era. This text provides an understanding of the obstacles encountered by Theravada Buddhists during a crucial historical period, and likely highlights the role of both monks and lay followers in preserving and promoting their practice. It therefore is critical for understanding the modern role of Buddhist traditions in Nepal and for its contextual importance for women.

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar (B.S. 2053), *The Buddha and His Dhamma*.

Ambedkar's "The Buddha and His Dhamma," written from a socio-political perspective with his emphasis on caste and social equality, presents a unique perspective on Buddhist teachings concerning women. He offers a critique of Brahminical/Vedic traditions and their views on women, contrasting these with the more egalitarian principles of Buddhism. Ambedkar may also draw on specific stories such as the Chandaliya, a woman from an untouchable caste who encountered and was affected by the teachings of Buddha, to illustrate Buddha's rejection of discriminatory social norms. This would allow for a unique insight on the historical understanding of gender roles within the framework of Buddhism, offering a potentially different approach to that of more traditionally academic writers.

Bajramuni Bajracharya (B.S. 2056), *Introduction to Newar Culture*.

This book provides a cultural overview of the Newar people, a significant ethnic group in Nepal with a distinctive Buddhist tradition. Newar Buddhism has significant differences from other Buddhist traditions, and this book discusses not only general cultural practices but also the role of women in Newar Buddhism. This work could delve into the unique social customs and religious practices of Newar Buddhists, such as their emphasis on specific rituals or their caste system. This text provides insights into the unique cultural context within which Newar women have interacted with Buddhism. This inclusion is particularly important as it allows for the exploration of how specific cultural traditions intersect and influence women in the context of Newar Buddhism.

H.L. Singh, (B.S. 2062), *A Brief Encyclopedia of Buddhism in Nepal*.

This book serves as a valuable reference guide, providing concise information on key figures, including women, who have contributed to the development of

Buddhism in Nepal. It is important as it provides a quick reference for many key figures, both male and female, who have impacted the tradition, as well as a quick reference for key events and periods within the history of Buddhism in Nepal. It may not give in-depth analysis but would be useful for a general introduction and to identify any key figures who may warrant further investigation in other sources.

Nirmala Pokharel (B.S. 2049), *Licchavi nari*.

Women of the Licchavi dynasty, particularly Rajyawati, Bijayawati, Chyamasundari, Gunawati, and Bhogini, likely played a crucial role in flourishing Buddhism in Nepal. As the mother, wife, and daughter of King Manadeva—who actively promoted Buddhism by establishing Man Vihar—they would have followed his religious pursuits. Given their status and influence, they may have contributed to the construction of Buddhist viharas, stupas, and religious monuments. Their patronage would have supported Buddhist monks, rituals, and teachings, helping expand Buddhism's presence in Nepal. The thesis 'Licchavi Nari' by Nirmala Pokharel (2049 B.S.) highlights how these royal women were not just supporters but active participants in religious endowments. Their engagement in religious and cultural projects ensured that Buddhism thrived alongside Hindu traditions, reinforcing their role in shaping Nepal's spiritual and architectural heritage. Their influence in promoting Buddhism reflects their authority and dedication to religious patronage.

Som Prasad Khatiwada (2022), *Bauddha Sanskriti Kosh*.

"Bauddha Sanskriti Kosh" is an extensive Nepali-language encyclopedia authored by Dr. Som Prasad Khatiwada, that serves as a significant resource on Buddhist culture, encapsulating a wide array of topics pertinent to Buddhism. Its detailed entries cover various aspects of Buddhist traditions, practices, art, architecture, and historical developments, providing readers with an in-depth understanding of the subject matter.

Despite its scholarly depth, "Bauddha Sanskriti Kosh" is accessible to a broad audience, including students, researchers, and general readers interested in Buddhist culture. Its publication fills a notable gap in Nepali-language resources on Buddhism,

contributing significantly to the preservation and dissemination of knowledge of Anagarikas.

1.5. Significance of study

While there is a wealth of scholarship on Buddhist monasticism and philosophy, the specific experiences, agency, and impact of female practitioners, both monastic and lay, have not received the in-depth, nuanced attention they deserve. This neglect is especially problematic given the significant ways women have shaped Buddhist traditions, from the earliest days of the Sangha to the modern revival and spread of Buddhism. "The historical and contemporary roles of laymen, laywomen, and Anagarikas (ordained women practitioners) in the development and spread of Buddhism are undeniable, but these vital contributions have largely remained on the periphery of mainstream academic discourse.

By going beyond the frequently quoted accounts of notable early bhikkhunīs (nuns), this study fills a crucial knowledge gap by examining the variety of women's roles in various historical eras, geographical locations, and Buddhist traditions. In particular, this research seeks to shed light on:

1. **The Agency of Laywomen:** Taking into account regional differences, this study investigates how laywomen actively contributed to Buddhism beyond supportive roles by looking at their agency in community formation, transmission, and preservation.
2. **Anagarikas' Lived Experiences:** This study explores the motives, difficulties, and contributions of Anagarikas—ordained women in traditional monastic life—in particular regional contexts.
3. **The Historical and Cultural Specificities:** By rejecting essentialized experiences and emphasizing various cultural navigations, this study delves into how local cultures—particularly the Nepalese context—have impacted women's positions in Buddhism.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

Although secondary sources provide useful insights, a deeper analysis would require extensive engagement with original source materials, which is beyond the practical limits of this study. This research primarily relies on published secondary sources, primary texts in translation, and scholarly analyses of the Buddhist traditions, particularly concerning women in Nepal. Original Sanskrit, Pali, and Newari texts are not examined due to time constraints and language limitations, which could limit the depth and nuance of understanding certain historical periods or cultural specificities.

Limited Ethnographic Data and Geographical area: The primary data for this study comes from textual sources, interviews conducted within two monasteries, and previously published material; the lack of broader ethnographic data and geographic area restricts the ability to observe and analyze contemporary women's practices in real time within a broader context. This research does not include extensive ethnographic fieldwork or participant observation outside of the selected monasteries.

Focus on Specific Monasteries: The results of this study may not be applicable to all monastic communities in Nepal or to the larger Theravada tradition because of its extremely narrow emphasis, which is limited to the Bhikkhunī communities within two particular monasteries in Kathmandu.

Potential for Bias in Secondary Literature: Although every effort is made to address these limitations, it is crucial to recognize that the available secondary sources on women in Buddhism may also contain biases or reflect specific interpretations, which means that interpretations based solely on secondary sources may not accurately reflect historical experiences.

Limited Focus on Laywomen: The research acknowledges the role of laywomen, but it focuses primarily on the contribution of monastic women, which may limit the analysis of lay women's interactions and lived experiences in Buddhist practices and traditions. This is mainly because the study needs to be focused.

Methodology of the Study:

This research employs a qualitative, exploratory approach to investigate the role and influence of Buddhist women, specifically Anagarikas (ordained female practitioners) in the Theravada tradition in Nepal. This approach is appropriate given

the nature of the research questions, which aim to explore and understand complex social and religious phenomena rather than to quantify or establish causal relationships. The study prioritizes in-depth understanding, nuanced interpretation, and the rich description of lived experiences.

1.7. Research Design:

The research design is descriptive, focusing on the detailed exploration of women's roles and contributions within the chosen context. This means that the research gathers detailed information on how women participate in Buddhist practices, what their experiences are, and why they choose the paths they follow, through both lay and monastic traditions. As such, this research is not intended to test a specific hypothesis using statistical methods. Instead, it uses descriptive facts, contextual details, and the voices of the participants to answer the research questions. This is because the intention is to generate nuanced, detailed understandings of the experiences of women.

1.7.1. Sampling Strategy:

Due to the specific nature of the research, the study employs a purposive sampling technique.

Purposive Sampling: This method is used to select two specific bhikkhunī monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley. The selection is based on criteria relevant to the research questions, such as: the presence of an active anāgārikā community, the history and reputation of the monastery within the Theravada tradition, and accessibility for the researcher. The purpose of this focused selection is to study a context where it is known the research topic is of importance.

1.7.2. Data Collection Methods:

The research utilizes a multi-method approach, combining primary and secondary data collection:

Primary Sources:

Observations: The researcher conducts participant observations within the selected monasteries, aiming to understand the daily lives, practices, and interactions of Anagarikas. These observations are recorded as field notes, detailing the spatial layout of monasteries, the schedules of activities, and the dynamics of the Anagarikas communities. The researcher has paid careful attention to both formal and informal interactions between the participants. This observational data provides the empirical foundation for understanding monastic culture and daily practices.

Key Informant Interviews: In-depth interviews are conducted with key figures, such as senior Anagarikas, monastic leaders, and potentially other individuals who possess specialist knowledge of the Theravada tradition and the history of female monasticism. These interviews are semi-structured, using an interview guide to address specific themes related to the research questions, while remaining open to emergent themes.

Interviews with Anagarikas and Locals: Interviews are conducted with a range of Anagarikas within the monasteries, as well as local lay individuals who interact with the monasteries or are involved in related Buddhist practices. This aims to gain varied perspectives on the topic. These interviews seek to understand the lives, experiences, challenges, and contributions of women within Buddhism. The interviews are also eliciting information on their understanding of the role of women in Buddhism, the challenges they face, and their reflections on the tradition.

Photographs: Photographs are taken to supplement field notes and observation, which are a powerful means of capturing both the context of practice and the physical and ritual elements of the research. These photographs include both general scenes of the monasteries, as well as the daily and ritual activities of the participants.

Secondary Sources:

Scholarly Literature: The researcher has extensively reviewed scholarly journals, articles, and books related to Theravada Buddhism, women in Buddhism, and the cultural context of Nepal which provides a framework to understand the historical and theoretical underpinnings of the research topic, and understand prior approaches to the research.

Primary Source Translations: Translations of relevant Buddhist texts, including the Pali canon, and any other relevant translated texts. This includes monastic codes of conduct and relevant historical narratives. These textual sources are crucial for understanding the historical origins of female monasticism in Buddhism and how this has shaped present practices.

Research Papers: Existing research papers and thesis that focus on related topics, which allows the research to understand current themes in the area, as well as identify any potential gaps in knowledge.

1.8 Chapter Organization:

The research chapter organization is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Introduction to Theravada and Contribution of Anagarikas

Chapter 3: Sila and its procedures

Chapter 4: The Current Contest of Nepali Theravada Anagarikas

Chapter 5: Conclusion And Discussion

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

2.1 The Development of Buddhism

Shakyamuni Buddha was born in 563 BCE in the ancient Shakya dynasty of Kapilavastu, which is now part of Lumbini in modern-day Nepal. His mother was Queen Mahamaya Devi, and when Prince Siddhartha was born, Queen Mahamaya was traveling from Kapilavastu to her parental home in Devdaha when she gave birth in the lovely garden known as Lumbini. Unfortunately, Mahamaya died seven days after Siddhartha was born, and Siddhartha was raised by his aunt, Mahaprajapati Gautami (Bapat, 1989, p. 20).

At the age of sixteen, Siddhartha Gautama married Yasodhara, a princess from the Koliya clan, and they had a son, whom he named "Rahula" (meaning obstacle), signifying the bondage of worldly life. At the age of twenty-nine, Siddhartha left his newborn son and wife behind in order to gain an understanding of the nature of life, including why we die, what happiness is, why suffering exists, and whether suffering can be overcome (Amritananda, 1982, p. 19).

Siddhartha gave up the worldly life and became an ascetic, traveling from place to place in pursuit of enlightenment. He learned deep meditation techniques from renowned teachers like Alara Kalama, Uddaka Ramaputta, and Makkhali Gosala, but he realized that knowledge alone would not bring him enlightenment, so he left their company and continued his journey alone. He arrived at Uruvela (modern-day Bodhi Gaya), where he settled close to the Neranjana River (Bapat, 1989, p. 20). There, under the Bodhi tree, he meditated for six years, suffering from extreme austerities without food or water; his body deteriorated, but he never found the answers he was looking for (Bapat, 1989, p. 20).

The importance of physical sustenance led Siddhartha to accept a rice milk offering from a woman named Sujata, who mistakenly believed he was a forest deity (Ambedkar, 1997, pp. 60–61). After being revitalized, Siddhartha entered a deep meditation and, on the first watch of the night on the full moon night of Vaishakha, he attained bodhi (enlightenment). He realized that suffering exists but can be overcome,

and after enlightenment, he became known as Gautama Buddha. His philosophy was based on the idea that suffering can end, and his teachings focused on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path as a way to achieve liberation from suffering.

The post-Vedic period, which is also referred to as Buddha's time, was characterized by two main paths: the path of rituals (karma) and the path of knowledge (jnana). Vedic sages lived in forest hermitages and taught students both knowledge and ritual practices. The Vedic tradition placed emphasis on four stages of life: Brahmacharya (student life), Grihastha (householder), Vanaprastha (forest-dwelling), and Sannyasa (renunciation). After finishing their studies, students would return to household life, eventually moving into the stages of renunciation and forest-dwelling in pursuit of spiritual truth.

While Gautama Buddha's approach was also influenced by the Vedic tradition of renunciation, it placed more emphasis on direct realization via practice than on knowledge or ritual. Buddhism, on the other hand, downplayed the significance of ritual and instead focused on achieving bodhi, or enlightenment.

The Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (community) are referred to as the Triple Gem in Buddhist tradition. Originally, the Sangha was made up entirely of male monks, but ananda convinced Buddha's close disciple Mahaprajapati Gautami to become the first female monk, creating the first bhikkhuni (nun) order.

After his enlightenment, Buddha delivered his first sermon to five ascetic companions in the Mrigdavana (Deer Park) at Sarnath (Ambedkar, 1997, p. 96). He conveyed teachings on discipline and righteous living that were applicable to both monastics and laypeople, teaching them that anyone who wished to live a pure life should observe five precepts: non-violence, not stealing, refraining from sexual misconduct, speaking truthfully, and abstaining from intoxicants.

The Buddha taught householders how to live a moral life because he thought that discipline was the only way to achieve peace and happiness. One of his most significant teachings to laypeople was the "Sigalovada Sutta," which gave guidance on the responsibilities and relationships of family life (Amritananda, 1982, p. 4).

The Tripitaka, which is divided into three sections—the Sutta Pitaka (teachings), the Vinaya Pitaka (monastic rules), and the Abhidhamma Pitaka (philosophical teachings)—contains the teachings of the Buddha. He traveled around with his disciples for forty-five years, preaching to people of all backgrounds, including kings, queens, common people, and even courtesans like Amrapali, who gave her wealth to the Sangha and became a dedicated lay disciple. Sujata and Mahaprajapati were important figures in Buddhist history; Sujata started the custom of almsgiving, and Mahaprajapati was the first bhikkhuni, which allowed women to join the Buddhist Sangha.

Despite his initial reluctance, Buddha eventually agreed to allow women to join the Sangha on the condition that they follow additional monastic rules, which were recorded in the Vinaya Pitaka and established monastic codes for both bhikkhus and bhikkhunis. All people, regardless of gender, could achieve the four noble stages of enlightenment: stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, and arahant.

Women like Khema and Uppalavanna were similarly honored as foremost nuns, and Buddha appointed prominent disciples like Sariputta and Maha Moggallana as foremost monks (Tuladhar, 1984, p. 9). The teachings of the early bhikkhunis were collected in a text known as the Therigatha, which is a part of the Tripitaka (Tuladhar, 1984, p. 9).

Gautama Buddha entered Mahaparinirvana at Kushinagar at the age of 80. His teachings persisted after his passing, with numerous disciples preserving and spreading his teachings. Today, Buddhism has expanded globally and continues to inspire people from all walks of life.

2.2 Types of Buddhism:

2.2.1 Mahayana Buddhism

With its emphasis on the bodhisattva ideal—a compassionate being who seeks enlightenment not only for personal liberation (nirvana) but also for the benefit of all sentient beings—Mahayana Buddhism, which translates to "Great Vehicle," is one of the two main branches of Buddhism, along with Theravāda. It began in India in the first century CE and spread throughout Central and East Asia, especially flourishing

in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. In contrast to Theravāda, which places more emphasis on individual liberation, Mahayana sees enlightenment as a goal that can be attained by everyone, not just monks or ascetics.

The idea of *sūnyatā* (emptiness), which teaches that all phenomena lack inherent existence and arise dependently, is central to Mahayana philosophy. *Upāya* (skillful means), which refers to the compassionate adaptability of enlightened beings who modify their teachings to fit the understanding and needs of various people, is another important idea.

Mahayana also comprises a wealth of texts, often more poetic and philosophical in tone, such as the Lotus Sutra, Heart Sutra, and *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, which introduce new cosmological concepts, such as multiple Buddhas and celestial bodhisattvas, and build upon previous teachings.

Mahayana Buddhism evolved into a number of schools and traditions over time, such as Zen, Pure Land, and *Yogācāra*. Each of these schools has its own practices and interpretations, but they all aim to develop compassion, wisdom, and insight for the good of all living things.

2.2.2 Vajrayana Buddhism

All of the fundamental teachings of Mahayana Buddhism are included in Vajrayana Buddhism, also called Tantric or Esoteric Buddhism, which emerged in India in the 7th century CE. Vajrayana means "Diamond Vehicle" or "Thunderbolt Vehicle," signifying unbreakable wisdom and the ability to swiftly dispel ignorance. It also adds a sophisticated layer of ritual, symbolism, and meditation techniques with the goal of enlightenment quickly, sometimes even in a single lifetime.

Vajrayana is characterized by its use of tantras, sacred texts that contain esoteric instructions, visualizations, and rituals; practitioners use deity yoga—visualizing themselves as enlightened deities to transform ordinary perception into enlightened awareness—mandalas (symbolic diagrams), mudras (ritual hand gestures), and mantras (sacred sounds). These practices are thought to accelerate spiritual progress,

but because of their complexity and potential for misunderstanding, they require initiation and guidance from a qualified guru or lama.

Vajrayana regards all occurrences as intrinsically pure, seeking to unveil the enlightened nature already inherent in each person, and it sees the body, speech, and intellect not as barriers but as potent instruments for transformation when used properly.

Vajrayana's vibrant rituals, profound philosophical insights, and emphasis on experiential wisdom make it a distinctive and dynamic form of Buddhism. This tradition is most prominently practiced in Tibetan Buddhism, which combines Vajrayana methods with Mahayana philosophy and monastic discipline. It is also found in parts of Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia, and Japan (in the form of Shingon Buddhism).

2.2.3 Theravada Buddhism

One of the oldest and most traditional schools of Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, also known as the "Teaching of the Elders," has its roots in the Buddha's earliest teachings and is mostly practiced in Southeast Asian nations such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos. It is also becoming more and more popular in other parts of the world, including the West.

Historical Background

Theravada Buddhism is thought to be the closest living tradition to the original teachings of the Buddha. The teachings of Theravada Buddhism are based on the Tripitaka or Pali Canon, which consists of three "baskets" or collections of texts and was first preserved and transmitted by the early disciples of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, who met at several councils to preserve and transmit his teachings after his death. The first schism in the Buddhist community occurred after the Buddha's death, giving rise to various schools of thought and practices:

Vinaya Pitaka (rules for monastic discipline)

Sutta Pitaka (discourses of the Buddha)

Abhidhamma Pitaka (philosophical and doctrinal analysis)

The focus of Theravada practice is to adhere strictly to the original teachings of the Buddha, as transmitted through the Pali Canon. It places emphasis on meditation, ethical conduct, and wisdom as the path to Nirvana (liberation from suffering).

Core Beliefs

Theravada Buddhism adheres to several core principles that guide its practices:

The Four Noble Truths:

Dukkha (suffering): Life is characterized by suffering and dissatisfaction.

Samudaya (origin of suffering): The cause of suffering is craving or attachment.

Nirodha (cessation of suffering): Suffering can be overcome by eliminating craving.

Magga (path to cessation): The Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering.

The Noble Eightfold Path: The path to end suffering and attain enlightenment (Nirvana) includes right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Karma and Rebirth: Theravada Buddhism teaches that actions have consequences (karma), which affect future experiences. This principle is tied to the concept of rebirth, where individuals continue the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara) until they attain enlightenment.

Meditation and Mindfulness: Meditation is a crucial aspect of Theravada practice. The two main forms of meditation are Samatha (concentration meditation) and Vipassana (insight meditation). The goal is to develop mindfulness and insight into the nature of reality, leading to wisdom and the cessation of suffering.

Arhatship: The ultimate goal of a Theravada practitioner is to attain the state of an Arhat (a fully enlightened being). Unlike the Mahayana tradition, which seeks Buddhahood for all sentient beings, Theravada focuses on individual liberation, with an emphasis on personal effort to achieve Nirvana.

Theravada Buddhists practice a wide range of rituals and practices that are intended to foster wisdom, ethical behavior, and mindfulness. The monastic community is a fundamental aspect of Theravada Buddhism, as it is crucial to the preservation and teaching of the Buddha's teachings. Monks and nuns adhere to a rigorous code of discipline that is laid out in the Vinaya and act as spiritual mentors for laypeople. Both lay practitioners and monks spend a great deal of time in meditation, with a focus on Vipassana meditation, which is especially valued because it helps practitioners understand the nature of impermanence, suffering, and non-self.

By providing food, robes, and other necessities to the monastic community, lay followers create a reciprocal relationship in which laypeople gain merit and monks are supported in their spiritual endeavors. The Five Precepts—the prohibitions against killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxication—are among the most important rituals and festivals in Theravada Buddhism, which is more centered on individual practice, but also includes important festivals and rituals, such as Vesak, which commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha, and the Rains Retreat (Vassa), in which monks retreat for intense meditation and study.

A timeless guide to achieving freedom from suffering and reaching the ultimate goal of Nirvana, Theravada Buddhism is particularly appealing to those looking for a clear and practical path to spiritual liberation because of its emphasis on meditation, ethical conduct, and the pursuit of enlightenment. Theravada Buddhism is still a deeply rooted and influential tradition, known for its dedication to preserving the Buddha's original teachings. Its emphasis on personal effort, meditation, and ethical living provides a clear path for practitioners to attain enlightenment.

2.2 Significance of Shilas in Buddhism

The idea of Shilas, or ethical precepts, is crucial to Buddhist practice because it offers fundamental rules that enable practitioners to live lives based on compassion, mindfulness, and non-harm. According to Buddhism, Shilas are meant to promote moral behavior as a necessary condition for attaining mental clarity and spiritual advancement; they are based on the teachings of the Buddha and are voluntary rules that are followed to promote personal accountability and moral integrity (Harvey, 2013). The importance of Shilas goes beyond individual morality; they are a social

structure that promotes harmony and cooperation within the community, bringing personal behavior into line with the more general ethical principles of compassion, truthfulness, and non-violence (ahimsa) (Keown, 2020).

The fundamental tenet of the Shilas is that spiritual development is inextricably linked to ethical behavior. For example, the Pancha Shila (Five Precepts), the more sophisticated Asta Shila (Eight Precepts), and Dasa Shila (Ten Precepts) offer a systematic method for minimizing harmful behaviors, fostering virtues, and eventually laying the foundation for more profound states of meditative absorption and wisdom. Gethin (1998) asserts that the Shilas are fundamental elements of the Buddhist path, fostering inner purity and laying the foundation for enlightenment. By abiding by these precepts, practitioners not only refrain from actions that would cause harm to themselves and others, but also develop a mental state that is conducive to comprehending the nature of suffering and the way to liberation.

The focus on voluntary adherence to the Shilas is also important because it reflects Buddhism's view of morality as an intentional, self-regulated practice rather than a set of rules that are imposed. Practitioners follow these precepts with the knowledge that ethical discipline is a type of self-cultivation that aids in the realization of nirvana, or freedom from suffering (Keown, 2020; Harvey, 2013). In this way, the Shilas are both communal and personal, acting as guiding principles that benefit the individual and advance the welfare of society as a whole.

2.2.1 Pancha Shila (Five Precepts)

In Buddhism, the Pancha Shila or Five Precepts function as foundational ethical principles intended to guide lay practitioners in cultivating moral integrity and mental clarity. Unlike religious commandments, these precepts are voluntarily undertaken as a commitment to personal growth and ethical living. By practicing the Five Precepts, Buddhists aim to develop virtues such as compassion, wisdom, and mindfulness, which align with the Buddha's teachings on reducing suffering and promoting harmony (Harvey, 2013; Keown, 2020).

Abstaining from Killing: This precept is the foundation of compassion toward all living beings. According to Harvey (2013), the Buddha emphasized non-violence

(ahimsa) as essential to spiritual progress. Avoiding harm to others not only reflects a compassionate mindset but also generates positive karmic outcomes. Observing non-violence encourages practitioners to see beyond their immediate desires and consider the well-being of all beings.

Abstaining from Stealing: This precept underscores respect for others' property, fostering trust and ethical integrity within communities. By refraining from theft, practitioners develop self-restraint and reduce greed, helping to foster a social environment rooted in mutual respect (Keown, 2020). The concept of "not taking what is not given" aligns with Buddhist teachings on reducing attachment and dependency on material possessions.

Abstaining from Sexual Activity: While the Five Precepts encourage avoiding sexual misconduct, the Eight Precepts call for complete celibacy. This guideline is significant because it redirects energy from physical desires toward spiritual pursuits. By observing celibacy, practitioners seek to free themselves from attachments that may lead to emotional distress or distraction, promoting inner peace and focus on spiritual practices (Gethin, 1998).

Abstaining from False Speech: Practicing truthfulness is critical for mental clarity and trust. Avoiding dishonesty supports harmonious relationships and prevents conflicts arising from misunderstanding or deception. According to Harvey (2013), this precept helps practitioners develop a sense of integrity and accountability, aligning speech with the values of compassion and non-harm.

Abstaining from Intoxicants: Intoxicants are seen as barriers to mental clarity, as they impair judgment and increase susceptibility to unskillful actions. By refraining from intoxicants, practitioners maintain a focused mind, which is essential for mindfulness and insight meditation practices. Keown (2020) notes that abstaining from substances that cloud the mind is foundational to spiritual discipline and personal responsibility in Buddhism.

Collectively, the Five Precepts provide a comprehensive ethical framework that promotes individual well-being and social harmony. These guidelines encourage Buddhists to act mindfully and compassionately, thus supporting a life that aligns with the Dharma. By internalizing these precepts, practitioners build a foundation for

moral development and spiritual growth, emphasizing that true happiness arises from ethical conduct and consideration for others (Harvey, 2013; Gethin, 1998; Keown, 2020).

The Asta Shila (Eight Precepts) and the Dasa Shila (Ten Precepts) serve as ethical codes that lay practitioners, novice monks, and nuns often observe to support their spiritual discipline and growth. These precepts represent a deepened commitment to ethical conduct and a method for intensifying personal spiritual practice. Extending from the basic Pancha Shila (Five Precepts) which are intended for general ethical behavior, the Eight and Ten Precepts encourage practitioners to cultivate restraint, simplicity, and self-discipline, which are considered essential on the path toward spiritual liberation (Harvey, 2013).

2.2.2 Asta Shila (Eight Precepts)

The Asta Shila introduces three additional precepts to the core Five Precepts, emphasizing restraint and renunciation of sensual pleasures. The Eight Precepts are traditionally observed on certain days, particularly on Uposatha, which are Buddhist observance days similar to a "Sabbath" for self-reflection and recommitment to moral practice (Gethin, 1998). Each precept plays a distinct role in fostering mental clarity and moral purification.

Abstaining from Eating After Noon: This precept encourages moderation and self-control, focusing the mind away from indulgence in physical sensations such as hunger or taste. By observing this, practitioners aim to develop detachment from bodily cravings, which fosters inner tranquility and supports mindfulness (Harvey, 2013). This practice also reminds practitioners of the temporariness of physical sustenance, redirecting focus toward spiritual nourishment.

Abstaining from Entertaining Performances: Refraining from sensory entertainments, such as music and dancing, is a method of minimizing distractions that could hinder meditation and mindfulness. This precept emphasizes simplicity and focus, reducing the influence of external stimuli that can lead to mental restlessness (Keown, 2020).

Abstaining from Using Luxurious Beds or Seats: This precept promotes humility and detachment from physical comfort. By avoiding luxurious items, practitioners cultivate a sense of equanimity and simplicity, qualities essential for reducing attachment to material pleasures and for focusing on the spiritual aspects of life (Gethin, 1998). The emphasis on simplicity and humility reinforces the Buddhist understanding that comfort and contentment arise from within rather than from external circumstances.

The Eight Precepts encourage practitioners to adopt a lifestyle that is conducive to introspection, mindfulness, and ethical integrity. By abstaining from various forms of sensory indulgence, practitioners cultivate mental clarity and discipline, which are foundational to achieving spiritual progress (Harvey, 2013).

2.2.3 Dasa Shila (Ten Precepts)

For novice monks and nuns, the Dasa Shila or Ten Precepts provide a more rigorous ethical framework, incorporating the Eight Precepts with the addition of two more guidelines. The Ten Precepts form a preparatory code of conduct for those considering full monastic ordination, emphasizing simplicity and detachment from worldly pursuits.

1-8. The Initial Eight Precepts: Novices observe the same precepts as those in the Asta Shila, with similar intentions of fostering ethical behavior, renunciation, and mental clarity (Gethin, 1998).

Abstaining from Adorning the Body with Garlands, Scents, or Ornaments: This precept is aimed at cultivating non-attachment to physical appearance. By avoiding beautification, practitioners focus on inner qualities rather than outer appearances, recognizing the impermanence and superficiality of physical beauty (Harvey, 2013). Keown (2020) explains that this practice reduces vanity and redirects attention toward self-purification and spiritual growth.

Avoiding the Use of Money: This final precept encourages detachment from material wealth and dependence on the generosity of others. Novices rely on alms, which fosters humility and allows them to cultivate gratitude and a sense of community interdependence. The Buddha's monastic community historically

depended on laypeople for sustenance, creating a symbiotic relationship that emphasized humility and renunciation (Gethin, 1998; Keown, 2020). By refraining from handling money, novices learn to trust in the generosity of others and avoid the distractions and complexities associated with financial matters, further enabling focus on spiritual goals.

The Ten Precepts provide a comprehensive ethical framework for those entering monastic life. By following these precepts, novices embrace a life of renunciation and simplicity, which are central to Buddhist monasticism (Harvey, 2013). These practices not only prepare novices for full ordination but also help them internalize values that are essential for long-term spiritual growth.

Together, the Eight and Ten Precepts deepen the ethical and spiritual commitment of Buddhist practitioners, fostering qualities such as humility, self-restraint, and mindfulness. By gradually renouncing attachments to material goods, sensual pleasures, and worldly distractions, practitioners cultivate an internal state conducive to wisdom and compassion, which are the hallmarks of the Buddhist path. Each precept encourages a unique form of renunciation and mindfulness, and taken collectively, they form a discipline that supports profound personal transformation.

The Asta Shila and Dasa Shila exemplify the Buddhist emphasis on ethical living as a prerequisite for achieving enlightenment. According to Buddhist teachings, ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom are intertwined components of the path to liberation, and these precepts provide structured guidance for developing these qualities (Gethin, 1998; Harvey, 2013; Keown, 2020). By following these precepts, practitioners not only contribute to their own spiritual growth but also promote harmony and compassion within their communities, embodying the Buddha's vision of a peaceful and mindful society.

2.3 The positive side of shila

In Buddhism, Shila can be viewed as an ethical contract or agreement that people willingly make to live a life of virtue, self-discipline, and mindfulness. Although some may consider these ethical precepts to be restrictive, they are meant to foster personal development, mental clarity, and compassion, helping practitioners on their journey to enlightenment (Harvey, 2013). Rather than imposing strict restrictions, Shila emphasizes the significance of self-regulation and understanding one's actions and their consequences. The Buddha taught that following the precepts allows practitioners to purify their minds, in preparation for deeper insights and spiritual advancement (Gethin, 1998).

The Buddha stressed compassion and non-harm as central to the practice of Shila in Buddhist teachings; for example, he discouraged killing and promoted kindness and respect toward all sentient beings. The principle of not taking what is not freely given addresses the importance of honesty and respect for others' property, and speaking truthfully and kindly is also crucial, as the Buddha advised against lying, gossiping, and hurtful speech that could harm others (Keown, 2020). The precept regarding right speech not only advises people to avoid deceit but also fosters harmony in relationships and social interactions, highlighting the power of words to uplift or harm (Harvey, 2013). By practicing mindfulness in speech and action, people can align their personal behavior with the values of compassion and non-violence (Keown, 2020; Gethin, 1998).

Buddhists are guided to live truthfully and responsibly, aligning their lives with Buddhist values that prioritize peace, kindness, and respect for all beings. The Buddha also taught that misusing substances, engaging in harmful speech, stealing, and violence leads to suffering, reinforcing the connection between ethical discipline and freedom from harm. By following the Pancha Shila (Five Precepts) and other ethical guidelines, practitioners avoid behaviors that lead to mental disturbances and emotional distress, fostering inner peace and promoting harmony within society (Gethin, 1998).

Following the Pancha Shila encourages practitioners to transcend selfish desires and

refrain from actions that cause suffering to others, fostering an ethical foundation that supports inner freedom and social harmony (Harvey, 2013; Keown, 2020). In this way, Shila serves as both a moral compass and a means of self-cultivation, supporting the Buddhist path to liberation by cultivating a pure mind and compassionate heart. Shila's teachings inspire a journey of self-awareness and ethical living, with the goal of removing destructive habits and nurturing a compassionate heart.

The Vinaya-pitaka

One of the three main divisions of the Tripitaka (or Pali Canon), the Vinaya Pitaka is essential to the moral and disciplinary practices of Buddhist monks and nuns. It is a comprehensive set of rules and guidelines that the Buddha established to maintain harmony, purity, and moral conduct within the Sangha (monastic community). Unlike some religious texts that offer strict decrees, the Vinaya is dynamic and responsive, shaped by historical and social contexts that encourage a spirit of ethical self-regulation among monastics. The Vinaya has been meticulously preserved and passed down through the generations, and it forms the moral foundation of Theravada Buddhism and, to a lesser degree, other Buddhist traditions.

Important divisions within the Vinaya, such as the Patimokkha Sutra, Sutta Vibhanga, and the categories of rules for monks and nuns, provide a framework for understanding the moral and disciplinary standards expected within the Sangha. This investigation goes into further detail about the structure of the Vinaya Pitaka, its function in assisting the monastic community, and its significance as a living tradition that fosters a disciplined, reflective, and ethical life path for practitioners.

Each of the five major portions of the Vinaya Pitaka—the Sutta Vibhanga, Khandhaka, Parivara, Patimokkha Sutra, and various minor texts—has a distinct function in advising monks and nuns on proper conduct, duties, and everyday behavior.

The Patimokkha Sutra is considered the central text of the Vinaya Pitaka, with 227 rules for monks and 311 for nuns that are routinely recited at group meetings to strengthen ethical awareness and responsibility. Each rule is discussed separately in the Sutta Vibhanga, along with an explanation of its genesis, which was frequently a

reaction to particular events in the early Sangha (Harvey, 2013; Gethin, 1998), and through this framework, monks and nuns are urged to internalize ethical behavior, promoting personal growth and preserving the integrity and reputation of the monastic community.

Two important divisions of the Khandhaka are the Mahavagga and the Cullavagga. The Mahavagga gives instructions on how to establish the monastic order and practices for communal harmony, while the Cullavagga discusses more complex disciplinary rules and is frequently referred to as the last segment of the Vinaya Pitaka. The Khandhaka is a comprehensive record of the procedural aspects of monastic life, including rules for the ordination process, communal ceremonies, and conflict resolution, among other aspects.

The Parivara facilitates a deeper understanding of the Buddha's teachings on ethical discipline and is especially helpful for those preparing for higher ordination. It serves as a summary and review, enabling monks to methodically study the rules and comprehend the reasoning behind them.

Role of the Patimokkha Sutra and the Ethics of Self-Regulation

Central to the ethical self-regulation expected of the monastic community is the Patimokkha, which is often recited every two months in the Theravada tradition. It is separated into several categories, such as Parajika (defeats or expulsions), Sanghadisesa (formal meetings for reconciliation), Patisekhiya (minor training rules), and Sekhiya (learning training rules). The Parajika includes serious offenses that, if committed, result in immediate expulsion from the Sangha, such as theft, sexual misconduct, murder, and false claims of spiritual accomplishments. The Sanghadisesa includes rules that require a period of penance or probation, frequently involving reconciliation meetings with the Sangha (Keown, 2020; Harvey, 2013).

When it comes to minor rules, the Patisekhiya governs actions that may be harmful to the discipline of the Sangha, and the Sekhiya rules provide direction on daily manners, including how to dress, eat, and interact with laypeople. These rules are a reflection of the Buddha's practical approach to discipline, which emphasizes mindfulness and respect for the community. By internalizing these precepts, monks

and nuns reaffirm their commitment to the path of enlightenment by living a lifestyle that values moderation, humility, and awareness in interactions.

Sutta Vibhanga and the Importance of Contextual Ethics

This commentary on rules encourages monastics to apply the Buddha's teachings to the particular situations they face (Gethin, 1998). For example, one of the rules in the Sutta Vibhanga advises monks to maintain a respectful distance from women in order to avoid attachment, which is in line with the practice of mindfulness and detachment. The Sutta Vibhanga also gives context for the rules in the Patimokkha by explaining their origins and elaborating on scenarios in which these rules were established.

The Buddha's understanding that ethical behavior must be responsive to particular contexts, ensuring that the rules support the ultimate goal of mental and spiritual clarity, is reflected in the Sutta Vibhanga, which reminds monks and nuns of the original intent behind each rule and emphasizes a compassionate and situational approach to discipline rather than strict obedience (Harvey, 2013).

2.3.1 Bhikkhuni Vibhanga: Special Rules for Nuns

Nuns are expected to follow an extended version of the Patimokkha, with additional rules pertaining to interactions, etiquette, and respect toward monks. The Bhikkhuni Vibhanga focuses on rules specifically meant for nuns, categorized by their severity and importance. This section includes seven categories, from the Parajika to tribunal offenses, covering all aspects of a nun's conduct; the inclusion of these additional precepts has sparked contemporary discussions regarding gender dynamics in Buddhist communities, but it also reflects the historical and social context of ancient India (Gombrich, 1988; Keown, 2020).

The Bhikkhuni Vibhanga assists nuns in navigating moral dilemmas within the Sangha by establishing rules that address both individual and collective responsibilities. While the additional regulations represent greater limitations for female monastics, they are meant to uphold their dignity and maintain the integrity of the monastic order, promoting respect among members of the community.

2.3.2 Khandhaka: Procedures, Ceremonies, and Conflict Resolution

The practical aspects of monastic life are covered by the Khandhaka, which is composed of the Mahavagga and Cullavagga. The Mahavagga contains instructions on ordination procedures, highlighting the significance of a methodical approach to initiating new members. For instance, candidates for ordination go through a questioning process to gauge their commitment and motivations. By establishing strict criteria, the Mahavagga guarantees that people are ready for the monastic lifestyle and are driven by a sincere desire for spiritual development (Harvey, 2013; Gethin, 1998).

The Buddha emphasized transparency, fairness, and the importance of harmony within the community by codifying these procedures, which include additional disciplinary protocols, particularly for dealing with conflicts and disputes within the Sangha. The Adhikaranasamatha, a part of the Cullavagga, lists seven rules aimed at conflict resolution, including methods for addressing grievances, holding reconciliation meetings, and, in extreme cases, expelling disruptive members.

This section highlights the Buddha's vision of a well-organized monastic institution that serves as both a religious community and a social model of ethical conduct. The Khandhaka thus serves as an organizational manual, defining rituals and reinforcing the responsibilities of monks and nuns toward both their peers and the lay community.

2.3.3 Parivara: Summation and Practical Application

In many Buddhist traditions, the Parivara is used as a teaching tool, helping monks internalize the disciplinary code and strengthening their commitment to the monastic lifestyle (Keown, 2020). The Parivara, the last section of the Vinaya Pitaka, is especially helpful for novices and those preparing for higher ordination, as it fosters a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities. It also serves as a review and summary of the previous sections, allowing monks to reflect on the Vinaya's teachings in a methodical manner, strengthening their understanding of the rules.

2.3.4 Ethical and Spiritual Significance of the Vinaya Pitaka

Through its rules, the Vinaya encourages ethical behavior not just as a set of prohibitions but as a path toward self-purification and enlightenment. By adhering to these rules, monks and nuns develop self-discipline, equanimity, and resilience—all of which are critical for overcoming attachments and delusions. Therefore, the Vinaya Pitaka has profound ethical and spiritual significance within the Buddhist tradition, embodying the core values of non-violence, humility, honesty, and mindfulness (Harvey, 2013; Gethin, 1998).

Since many of the Vinaya's rules are designed to prevent harm to others, the Vinaya also emphasizes the importance of compassion. The precept of ahimsa (non-violence) serves as the foundation for the rules against killing, and the precepts on truthful speech and responsible communication reinforce the commitment to honesty. These ethical principles help the Sangha fulfill its role as a moral role model for lay practitioners, encouraging them to uphold moral principles in their own lives.

2.3.5 The Role of the Vinaya Pitaka in Modern Buddhist Practice

While the world and societal structures surrounding monastics have changed, the ethical principles found in the Vinaya remain essential for maintaining the integrity and purity of monastic life. The Vinaya Pitaka is the cornerstone of monastic discipline in Buddhism, and its relevance is still vital in the modern Buddhist tradition. By ensuring adherence to a set of moral guidelines, the Vinaya Pitaka enables Buddhist monks and nuns to live a life that is focused on spiritual growth, wisdom, and compassion.

The Vinaya Pitaka remains a manual for monks and nuns in modern Buddhist societies, guiding their daily activities and interactions. In nations like Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and other places where Theravada Buddhism is practiced, the Vinaya has a significant impact on monastic life. This ethical system governs many facets of life, from individual behavior to preserving communal harmony, with an emphasis on self-discipline, mindfulness, and the development of virtue (Harvey, 2013).

Additionally, the Vinaya Pitaka continues to be an important part of monks' and nuns' education and ordination. In many Buddhist countries, studying the Vinaya is a fundamental component of monastic training, helping novice monks and nuns to understand the rules that govern their lives and follow a path that is in line with the teachings of the Buddha. By internalizing the Vinaya, practitioners develop virtues like self-control, patience, and humility—all of which are necessary for moving forward on the path to enlightenment (Keown, 2020).

In addition to protecting the integrity of the monastic community, the Vinaya Pitaka also helps monks and nuns grow spiritually on an individual basis. The Vinaya's ethical rules and precepts are intended to help practitioners purify their minds and rid themselves of the defilements of greed, hatred, and delusion (Gethin, 1998). The ultimate goal of following the Vinaya is to achieve enlightenment, and by doing so, monks and nuns make sure that their lives are in accordance with the values of Buddhist ethics.

The Vinaya Pitaka's rules are not meant to restrict personal freedom for the sake of restriction, but rather to eliminate distractions that could obstruct the cultivation of insight. For instance, the practice of celibacy, one of the main precepts for monks and nuns, helps to cultivate a mind free from sensual attachment, enabling practitioners to focus their energy on meditation and wisdom. Similarly, the prohibition against lying and stealing helps to maintain harmony within the monastic community and prevents actions that could generate negative karma, further impeding the spiritual path.

The teachings of the Pali Canon, especially the Dhammapada, emphasize the importance of ethical behavior in the Vinaya. The Buddha states that "mindfulness is the path to the deathless" (Dhammapada, verse 21), and ethical behavior is one of the fundamental practices for sustaining mindfulness. As a result, the Vinaya complements other facets of Buddhist practice, like wisdom and meditation, to create a comprehensive approach to spiritual development (Harvey, 2013; Keown, 2020).

2.3.6 The Concept of Community in the Vinaya Pitaka

The Vinaya Pitaka places a strong emphasis on the value of community, or Sangha, in the monastic tradition. Like the Buddha and the Dharma, the Sangha is regarded as one of the Three Jewels of Buddhism, and it is through the Sangha that the teachings of the Buddha are passed down and practiced, while the Vinaya protects and maintains the harmony of the community. Monks and nuns must adhere to the Vinaya rules in order for the Sangha to continue to be a place for spiritual practice and support (Harvey, 2013).

The Vinaya also stresses the value of accountability and respect for one another in the monastic community. By promoting a culture of humility through practices like confession and reconciliation, the Vinaya enables monks and nuns to own up to their mistakes and ask for forgiveness; this process is restorative rather than punitive, with the goal of mending the relationship between the individual and the community. As a result, the Vinaya encourages the Sangha to serve as a nurturing environment where people can develop spiritually through their own practice and interactions with others (Gethin, 1998).

2.3.7 The Vinaya and the Preservation of Buddhist Tradition

The Vinaya Pitaka also plays an important role in the preservation of the Buddhist tradition itself, as the emphasis on ethical behavior and mindfulness has helped the Buddhist monastic tradition survive for more than two millennia. The Vinaya guarantees the continuation of the Buddha's teachings by upholding discipline and making sure that ethical rules are followed. In a broader sense, the Vinaya serves as a safeguard for the integrity of Buddhism, preventing it from being corrupted or distorted.

In addition to maintaining the teachings, the Vinaya ensures that the monastic community continues to be an active and functional part of society, and monks and nuns who follow the Vinaya are frequently regarded as moral exemplars, and their behavior serves as a model for lay practitioners. The Sangha are respected and revered in part because of their adherence to the Vinaya, which shows their commitment to spiritual practice and ethical living. By continuing to study and practice the Vinaya, monks and nuns help to transmit the Dharma through the generations, ensuring that

the wisdom of the Buddha remains alive and relevant in the modern world (Keown, 2020).

2.3.8 Challenges in Modern Times

Even though the Vinaya Pitaka has remained relevant, the application of the monastic rules has encountered difficulties in modern times. As Buddhism has spread around the world, monastic life has encountered new cultural, social, and political contexts, and in some places the strict interpretation of the Vinaya has been questioned, particularly in relation to the role of women in the monastic community, with debates surrounding the ordination of female monks in certain traditions. As a result of these difficulties, some practices have been adapted to maintain the moral integrity of the monastic community while also meeting the evolving needs of society.

Furthermore, in many Western countries, for example, lay practitioners are becoming more interested in incorporating Vinaya principles into their daily lives, but they may find it challenging to fully embrace the monastic codes outlined in the Vinaya. As a result, there is a growing interest in adapting the Vinaya rules for lay practitioners, ensuring that they can benefit from the wisdom of the Buddhist tradition without necessarily becoming monks or nuns. This is due to the growth of lay Buddhist practitioners and the expansion of Buddhist centers worldwide.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Vinaya Pitaka continues to be an essential source of instruction for anybody aspiring to walk in the Buddha's footsteps, and its teachings continue to influence the way lay practitioners, monks, and nuns live their lives in pursuit of moral behavior, awareness, and spiritual understanding.

In Buddhism, the Vinaya Pitaka is a foundational text that guarantees the continuation of monastic discipline and the ethical practice of its adherents. Through its intricate rules and regulations, the Vinaya shapes the behavior of monks and nuns, fostering a community centered around mutual respect, ethical integrity, and spiritual development. The Vinaya's continued study and practice are crucial to maintaining the Buddha's teachings and making sure that Buddhism remains a vibrant and relevant tradition, whether among lay practitioners or in the traditional monastic setting.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUDDHIST WOMEN ACROSS HISTORICAL PERIODS

3.1 The Era of Buddha

During the time of Buddha, the influence of Buddhism also brought a lot of awakening to women. It had been alike men, they had become resourceful, active, non-violent, and arhat by using charity, dharma, modesty, samadhi-pragya. Their efforts also increased the participation of monks, worshipers as well as nuns and worshippers in Buddhism. Because of their contribution, the names of these women are still famous all over the world which are mentioned below:

3.1.1 Sujata

Sujata Upasika was born in the Senani clan of the Senani Corporation in Purwela during the Buddhist period, and when she reached adulthood, she went to the Nyagrodha tree near Purwela and declared that if she had a son in her first womb, she would marry a member of the same caste clan and offer worship to Salinda Rupa. This was one of 13 women named Sujata both before and during the Buddhist period, including nuns, upasikas, sisters of Visakha Maha Upasika, the daughter of Saket Nagar, one of the forefathers of Priyadasi Buddha, the wife of a student, the wife of Gyatradevandra, and others (Malvika, 1978).

She later married into a Varanasi noble family and gave birth to a son during her first pregnancy. Six years had passed since Siddhartha Gautama Bodhisattva started his penance in the Urvila forest when she remembered her promise and went to the Nyagrodha tree in Purwela to give kheer to Bodhisattva as a forest god. His donation has special meaning in Buddhism because it seems to increase the importance of both charity and kheer. By consuming that kheer, Shramana Gautama became enlightened, and as a result, Sujata Upasika is regarded as the first person to give charity.

3.1.2. Vishakha Upasika

There were eight outstanding Visakha women during the Buddha's illustrious lifetime, all of whom were strong and devoted; among them were the Buddha's devoted mother and his devoted wife, both of whom were role models in their own right. In the core of Buddhism, Vishakha Mahapasika shared Anathapindika Mahajana's great generosity and dedication to the community.

The devoted Bhairava Vishakha Maha Upasika gave to the community by building the Purvarama Mahavihara, spending a generous 27 crores for this noble cause. Anathapindika Mahajana took on the monumental task of building the Jetavana Mahavihara, investing 54 crores to provide a sanctuary for the Sangha. For 18 crores, Anathapindika Mahajana bought the beautiful garden of the orphaned prince, the Jetavana, to ensure that it would serve a higher purpose.

As she approached marriage, her father gave her ten treasured virtues, and the Buddha gave her "eight reasons for female education," emphasizing the value of knowledge and wisdom for women. In her own amazing act of devotion, Vishakha Mahaupasikam sold her masalata prasadhana, worth 9 crores, to purchase land and kindly donate it to the Bhikshu Sangha, demonstrating her deep love for the community (Malvika, 1978).

Vishakha's life story becomes a beautiful testament to the power of compassion and spiritual connection because she is also lovingly remembered as the "mother of death," a nod to her profound understanding and compassion. Her father-in-law, Mrigar, was moved by the teachings of the Buddha and, after achieving the fruit of Srotapanna, honored Vishakha by elevating her status to that of a mother, thus creating a deep and enduring bond of faith between the deer and the Buddha.

3.1.3. Khujuta Upasika

The name "Khuja" means "lame," but Khujuttara's spirit and intellect were anything but constrained by her physical state, and in the rich tapestry of Buddhist history, she stands out as a symbol of wisdom and resilience. Khujuttara was a remarkable woman who shared her name with other worshippers, some of whom were

followers of Theriapadana, while others were associated with Queen Prabhavati Devi, the wife of King Kusha.

Despite being lame, Khujuttara's insight and intelligence shone brightly, and the Buddha himself recognized and cherished her remarkable memory and wisdom, often expressing a desire to learn from her profound understanding. Khujuttara was born into a loving family in the clan house of the Kaushambi people, and her journey was full of obstacles, despite being cared for by a dedicated midwife. She was also Queen Shyamavati's beloved consort.

When Suman went to Malakar's house one day to collect flowers, she was moved by the teachings of the Buddha and changed her habit of stealing money from Shyamavati, which changed her life and made it possible for Queen Shyamavati to personally experience the Buddha's uplifting teachings, which enabled Khujuttara to advance in her spiritual development and reach the stage of Srotapanna Phala.

When Khujuttara went to the Buddha on that auspicious day and imparted the sacred teachings to five hundred women, including Queen Shyamavati, the Buddha acknowledged her extraordinary qualities—her ability to multitask, her devotion, and her acute perception—and rewarded her as a leader among those who exhibit these qualities. Khujuttara Upasika received the Shiksha Pratisambhita, a gift that attests to her spiritual achievements.

Since the Buddha himself admired Khujuttara so highly and encouraged any patriarchal household hoping for their daughter's well-being to strive for her qualities, her life is incredibly inspiring. Khujuttara's legacy endures, providing hope and direction to anyone seeking wisdom and understanding (Malvika, 1978).

3.1.4. Suppavasa Upasika

Suppavas Upasika is also one of the upasias during the Buddinist period. Supparasa Koliya Rajkumari was bom in the royal family of Koliya city. It is mentioned that sine was married to a Salya prince according to the Anguttar Nikayaryakatha and to a Koli prince according to Udanpali and Arthakatha. After going to Patikula, Suppavasa Koliya princess received sratapannaphal in her first meeting with Buddhasanga. After seven years of pregnancy, she gave birth to a son named Shivali. When she was

pregnant, she was greatly benefited by the virtuous influence of the child in her womb. Whenever she had labor pains, she bore the pain by remembering the virtues of Buddhism and Sangha. She had wished to donate to Lord Buddha before she died of childbirth. Buddha and told him that Supranasa was suffering from labor pains. After God blessed her to be happy and give birth to a healthy son, her baby was born well After 11 days of the child's birth, Buddha gave Mahadan to the chief monks for one week. On the last day, Dharmasenapati Sariputra Mabhasthavi, spoke to the seven-year-old Shivali Kumar, and Supnavasa forgot all the pain in her heart and expressed that she could give birth to seven more children. They used to provide meals for people. Any monk or nut who went to his house to beg for alms did not have to return empty-handed. The Buddha had declared her to be the foremost among the worshipers who bestow alms. (Malvika, 1978).

According to Anguttamicays, Suppavasa Uposika's name is also listed among the primary ypasikes. Suppesawa stayed at home and lived as a beggar, adhering to Lord Buddha's teachings that householders should be free from self-sacrifice and greed.

In addition to feeding Suppavase, Assasavika also provided the recipients food, which means "life, wealth, happiness, and strength." He instructed Suppavasa to be SupRanasa Upasica, the daughter of Kolya, one of the devotees of Franithdavika Sravika.

3.1.5. Uttarananda Mata Upasika

Some of the venerable Vipassis are regarded as among the twin forefathers of Lord Buddha, while Manglabuddha is acknowledged as the mother of God. The legacy of women named Uttara is rich and diverse, and among them stands Uttarananda Mata. Throughout history, there have been fourteen exceptional women named Uttara, both before and after the time of Buddha. One of these women was the adored mother of Lord Buddha, and another was the empathetic daughter of a Yakshini.

Puran Singh Punarasimha's beloved daughter Uttarananda Mata, who remained steadfastly aligned with Krishna despite the hardships of poverty, embodied the belief that wealth is not solely measured in material terms, a sentiment beautifully illustrated

in the life of her father, Daridra Punarasimha, who, in spite of financial difficulties, showed profound strength and resilience.

Uttara was inspired by the teachings of Lord Buddha, who gave us guidance on how to overcome negative emotions and behaviors. He encouraged us to replace anger with love, to overcome wrongdoing with kindness, to defeat stinginess with generosity, and to dispel falsehood with truth.

Uttarananda Mata attained the profound condition of Samadhvisphara siddhi, as per the enlightening books of the Vishuddhimarga and Pratisambhida Marga. She became one of the early pioneers of Lord Buddha's teachings, along with Khujuttara Upastkas.

By paying tribute to Uttarananda Mata, we acknowledge her as a leading devotee of Dhyani Shravika, whose example still motivates kindness and devotion to the divine.

3.1.6. Shyamvati Maharani

One of the six women we meet in this poignant chapter of history, Sama, both past and present, whose lives are entwined with the Buddha's legacy: Shyama Maharani's beloved consort was a member of the illustrious clan in Kaushambi, and another beloved Kaushambi companion lamented the unexpected death of Shyamavati Maharani, feeling her absence as a deep void in her life.

A Shyama from a noble family, who lived in Shravasti, had a heart full of love; she had been a courtesan in Varanasi in a past life, and she carried the burden of her experiences into this life; another Shyama was from Bhadravatiya Nagar, the daughter of the city's renowned leader; she gained the name Shyamavati by erecting a fence at the almshouse, which was a sign of her kindness (Amritananda, 1974).

The impact was profound and far-reaching as Shyamavati Maharani heard the teachings of the Buddha, which were lovingly conveyed by the Khajuttara Upasika. Even though she and her family did not personally see the Buddha, they remained steadfast in their faith with unwavering devotion, and all five hundred women who stood with her felt inspired and uplifted, receiving the blessings of the Buddha's wisdom (Amritananda, 1974).

Her title, which emphasizes the beauty of her character in the face of life's hardships and demonstrates her profound respect and dedication to Lord Buddha's teachings, is thought to indicate that he considered her the highest among the devotees of Shravana.

3.1.7. Suppiya Upasika

During the Buddhist era, there are three women known by the name Supriya, which is derived from the name of the Vaipula hill called Suppaso of Baiagriha, which is thought to be the name of King Okkak Rajamabishi of the valley. The first woman mentioned here is Supriya, a devotee of Buddha who was born into an aristocratic family and was inspired when the Buddha was in Varanasi. Supriya Upasika promised to send meat when an ailing monk expressed a desire to eat meat juice, but since there was no meat available in the city at the time, she cut the meat of her own thigh, made juice, and gave it to the monk. Lord Buddha included Supriya Upasika in the list of special worshippers.

3.1.8. Kali Upasika of Kuraghar

The Kali Upasika mentioned here was the daughter of a nobleman in the city of Rajagriha in the state of Magadha, and she married the son of a wealthy merchant from Kuraghar Nagar. She is notable as the first woman in the history of Buddhism to hold a prominent role in this way. Twelve different women named Kali are mentioned before and after the time of the Buddha. Some of them were courtesans in the Jataka stories, while others were companions of the Vesambhu Buddha.

One day, while Satagiri Yakshadev was telling Hemavata Yakshadev about the Buddha's virtues, Kali Upasika was filled with great joy and reverence, despite the fact that she had never met the Buddha, seen any monks, or heard any sermons. She was moved by what she heard from the Yaksha deity, and the Buddha acknowledged her as one of the leading women who gained profound respect by hearing alone (Anushruti). That same evening, Kali Upasika gave birth to a son named Sona, who would go on to study the teachings of the Buddha.

3.1.9. Katyayani Upasika

One of two women named Katyayani was born in Kurarghar Nagar in the Avanti region, where she was called Katyayani after her gotra, according to the Kachaani Jataka. Katyayani Upasika was so devoted and happy as a follower that the Buddha ranked her among the most fortunate devotees.

After hearing the Buddha's sermon, her son Sona Kutikanna Sthavira returned to Kurarghar, Katyayani Upasika and Kali Upasika went to the Dharma meeting to hear his teachings, and Katyayani Upasika's life was fulfilled after hearing Sona Kutikanna Sthavira's motivational sermons. The Buddha proclaimed her to be the most eminent of the female devotees who attained eternal happiness (Malvika, 1978).

3.1.10. Nakulmata the Householder

Although her birthplace and family are unknown, Nakulmata was a female Buddhist devotee who married Nakulpita in Susumargiri Nagar, Bhagga Desh, and they were both referred to as Nakulmata and Nakulpita after they had a son named "Nakul" (Amritananda, 1974).

The Pathayasamvas Sutra explains that an ideal marriage is one in which both partners share similar qualities, thoughts, and devotion; the Asurasutra emphasizes the need for family harmony; the Singalasukta outlines the responsibilities of men and women toward each other; and the Pathayasamvas Sutra tells us that their married life was a perfect example of harmony and happiness.

Nakulmata joined other devotees to hear the Buddha's teachings on the "Eight Qualities of a Woman," as stated in the original sutra, when he visited Susumargiri Nagar. She adhered to these teachings to the letter, while Nakulpita fulfilled five duties toward her, establishing a harmonious marriage. The Buddha acknowledged Nakulmata as the most devoted of the female devotees (Amritananda, 1974).

3.1.11. Ambapali the Courtesan

The Mahaparinibbana Sutta of the Mahavagga Pali records her meeting with the Buddha, where she not only offered him food but also donated her mango grove, Ambavana. Ambapali was a famous courtesan and devotee who was born under a

mango tree in the Vaishali metropolis, hence her name. Her extraordinary beauty caused a great deal of strife among the Lichchavi princes.

Ambapali's request that the five hundred newly ordained monks not be disturbed by her presence when she visited Amravata to meet the Buddha emphasizes her beauty and the respect she commanded. Her devotion to the faith was further cemented when she was profoundly moved by the teachings of her son, Ayushman Bimal Kondanya.

3.1.12. Princess Chundi

The Anguttara Atthakatha states that Princess Chundi was the daughter of King Bimbisara and that her father had given her five chariots. After a disagreement with her brother, Prince Chunda, about religious beliefs, Chundi decided to ask the Buddha for answers, and she traveled with five hundred chariots to meet him at Kalandaka Niwas in Rajagriha's Venuvan.

The Buddha responded to Chundi's brother's questions by saying that those who cultivate righteousness, respect the Sangha, and follow the teachings of Sheela will indeed be reborn in worlds of good fortune. Chundi asked whether a person who seeks refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha and refrains from violence, immorality, and impurities would experience a favorable rebirth.

The Buddha concluded by stating that the Tathagata Arhat is the highest of all beings with form and formlessness, that dispassion is the highest of all virtues, that the Tathagata's Shravaka Sangha is the highest of all communities, and that the Aryakanta Sheela is the highest of all principles. Accordingly, he shared this discourse with Princess Chundi.

3.1.12. Chul Subhadra

Chul Subhadra was the daughter of Anathapindika, a person from Sravasti, and she married the son of Kalak Shresthi, a well-known person from Saket in Kosala state. Her father gave her ten artis at her wedding, just as Dhananjaya Shresthi of Angadesha had given ten artis to his daughter Vishakha. After her marriage, her father-in-law asked her to pay respects to the arahants, but Chul Subhadra turned away when she saw the arahants and their austere appearance. When asked how she felt, she replied that arahants should look like the monks in their community.

After that, Chul Subhadra's father-in-law made the decision to invite the Buddha in the hopes of seeing his divinity. Chul Subhadra reverently climbed to the top floor of her house, gazed toward Jetavana, and thought deeply about the Buddha's virtues before inviting him and five monks to dinner. The Buddha and his five hundred disciples arrived from Jetavana, and thanks to Chul Subhadra's influence, Kalak Shresthi gave the Buddha his garden, which became known as Kalakram. The Buddha appointed Anurudra Sthavir to live here in honor of Chul Subhadra (Malvika, 1978).

3.1.13. Mrigshala Upasika

Her family lived in Sadhuka, a village close to Jetavanaram in Sravasti, and Mrigshala, also called Migashala, was the niece of Rishidatta (Isidatta) Sthapita and the daughter of Purana Sthapita. According to the Angutarnikaya's Migashala Sutta, both her uncle Rishidatta and her father Purana Sthapita had obtained the Sakridagami fruit (Amritananda, 1974).

Mrigshala was unable to comprehend the connection between Purana Sthapita and Rishidatta when Ananda Sthavira visited her home once. She brought this issue to the Buddha, who asked, "What could she understand of this?" Mrigshala asked how both Abrahachari and Brahmachari could achieve the same fruit of Sakradagami, to which the Buddha replied that it was difficult to determine the depth of a man's wisdom and understanding (Malvika, 1978)..

The Buddha explained six types of men in the world:

A temperate man who enjoys a peaceful life with the sages, but who does not listen or act with clarity of vision, does not attain temporary liberation, and upon death, is reborn in a lesser state.

A temperate man who is pleased in the presence of sages, listens to teachings, acts with clarity, attains occasional liberation, and upon death, is reborn in a fortunate state.

A man prone to anger and self-absorption, harboring occasional greed, does not listen, nor act with clarity, does not attain liberation, and is reborn in a lesser state.

A man with anger and self-absorption who, despite occasional greed, listens, acts with clarity, and attains temporary liberation, resulting in rebirth in a fortunate state.

A man characterized by anger and arrogance whose Vachisanskara (verbal impulses) obstructs his understanding and actions, and upon death, is reborn in a lesser state.

A man with anger and arrogance who, despite his Vachisanskara, listens, acts with right vision, and attains temporary liberation, resulting in rebirth in a fortunate state.

Through these teachings, the Buddha illustrated that there are six types of male qualities and ten types of personalities in the world.

3.1.14. Rohini Kshetri Kanya Upasika

When Anuruddha Sthavir, a disciple of Lord Buddha, visited Kapilvastu with five hundred monks, everyone gathered to meet him except for his sister, Rohini. When he learned that she had stayed behind, he sent for her, and when Rohini explained that she had come because she had a skin disease, he suggested that she build an Asansala (meditation hall) with money raised from the sale of her jewelry in order to accumulate merit. She did as he advised, building a two-story hall with seats and filling it with water every day, which eventually cured her skin condition.

When the Asansala was ready, Rohini fed the monks, including Buddha himself, but she did not show up in person because she was ashamed of her appearance. When the Buddha asked why she was not there, Rohini explained that she was reluctant to be seen because of her condition, and the Buddha explained that it was a result of her past karma, specifically anger, and he told a story from her past life to show the effects of anger and jealousy.

After this lesson, Rohini's illness was completely cured, changing her appearance, and many people were blessed.

3.1.15. Mahaprajapati Gautam

A number of ladies, including some celestial beings and followers of Buddha's predecessors, were named Mahaprajapati Gautami both before and after the time of Buddha. Gautama Buddha's foster mother, the younger queen of King Suddhodana, was one of these women (Amritananda, 1974).

Mahaprajapati Gautami was the sister of Mahamaya Devi and the daughter of Anjan Shakya and Sulakshana Rani of Devdah Nagar, both of whom married King Suddhodana, who was initially childless. While Mahamaya Devi gave birth to Siddhartha Gautama when he was just seven days old, Prajapati lovingly raised him as her own. Seven years after Siddhartha left home to seek enlightenment, Gautami saw him again. At one point, when Prajapati wanted to donate clothing, Buddha told her that doing so would honor both him and the Sangha, so she did.

After King Suddhodana's death, Prajapati Gautami was devastated and declared her wish to become a nun, but when she first asked for permission, Buddha refused. Desperate, Gautami put on a green robe, symbolizing a nun's garment, and waited outside in the hopes of seeing the Buddha, but after four requests, she was still denied permission, so she stood there weeping and exhausted, her feet swollen and her face covered in dust. Sthavir Ananda, moved by her resolve, asked her why she was depressed, and after she explained her desire to become a nun, he went to Buddha and argued on her behalf.

Buddha was initially hesitant to allow women to join the Sangha because he anticipated difficulties, but after several requests, he established a rule known as Ashta Guru Dharma (Eight Garudhammas) as a prerequisite for women to join the order. Gautami firmly agreed to follow these rules, so Buddha allowed her to be ordained as the first nun. Five hundred women, including Yasodhara, also took the nun's vows with her (Malvika, 1978).

Mahaprajapati Gautami laid the groundwork for later generations of women in the Buddhist monastic order by becoming the first ordained nun in Buddha's Sangha.

3.1.16. Kusha Gautami Sthavira

During and after the time of Buddha, there were four women named Kusha Gautami, some of whom were the wives of householders, some of whom were devoted followers of Buddha's predecessors, and one of whom was also a cousin of Siddhartha Gautama. The Kusha Gautami described here was born into a noble family in Sravasti before Siddhartha attained enlightenment; she was known simply as "Gautami" at first, but her slim figure earned her the nickname Kusha Gautami. Her life was full of joy until her son passed away unexpectedly, and she went door-to-door in search of medicine to bring her child back, only to be met with sympathy and incredulousness because no one could provide a cure for death.

When she begged Buddha for a way to bring her son back to life, he advised her to gather mustard seeds from a household where no one had ever died. She searched endlessly but was unable to find a single home that had not experienced death, and realizing the universality of mortality, she returned to Buddha empty-handed. A wise person, moved by her suffering, suggested that she visit Buddha.

Buddha then taught her about the impermanence of life, saying that even a day of understanding impermanence was more valuable than a hundred years without it. Motivated by his teachings, Kusha Gautami gained a significant spiritual insight called Sotapatti Phala, and she asked Buddha for permission to enter the monastic community. With his blessing, she became a nun, diligently practiced vipassana meditation, and eventually attained arhatship with profound insight (Pratisambhida knowledge). Later, Buddha praised her humility and dedication by declaring her to be the most important nuns wearing simple robes.

3.1.17. Akula Sthavira

Born into a wealthy and well-respected Brahmin family in Sravasti, Akula Sthavira married and had sons and daughters. When the Buddha was offered Jetavanaram, the monastery in Sravasti, Akula was profoundly impacted by his teachings and became his disciple. After hearing the Buddha's discourse on Kshinasravi Sthavira, she was given the Dharma Eye, which enabled her to see the Dharma's truths. Her children were inspired and eventually followed in her footsteps (Malvika, 1978).

Akula lived a pious home life and actively followed the teachings of the Buddha. Within a year, she was fully ordained into the monastic order and achieved arahatship through diligent meditation. Because Akula frequently experienced the meditative state of Divyachakshu (divine vision), Buddha formally proclaimed Akula Sthavira to be the most virtuous of the nuns with divine vision, acknowledging her great spiritual achievements and her commitment to insight meditation.

3.2 Ashoka Period (362-332 BC)

The Ashoka period (circa 268–232 BCE) marked a significant era in Indian history, particularly for social and cultural development. Emperor Ashoka, one of India's most celebrated rulers, governed the Mauryan Empire and promoted Buddhist values following his transformative experience after the Kalinga War. This era is notable for the promotion of Dharma (moral law), non-violence, and welfare-oriented governance. Ashoka's policies and the spread of Buddhism had a substantial influence on social structures, including the status and development of women.

3.2.1 Women's Status in the Ashoka Period

There was a change in the way women were viewed and treated during the Ashokan period. Although earlier Vedic society gave women some freedoms and rights, the Mauryan Empire's social norms were primarily patriarchal (Thapar, 2002). However, Ashoka's adoption of Buddhism and his advocacy of its egalitarian values helped to gradually improve women's social status because Buddhist teachings held that both men and women could achieve enlightenment, which implicitly acknowledged women's potential and moral agency. As a result, Ashoka's policies gave women more opportunities, particularly in the religious and social spheres.

Ashoka's patronage of Buddhist institutions made it possible for nunneries to be established where women could study religious texts, practice their faith, and be part of the religious community. Women like Ashoka's daughter, Sanghamitta, played important roles in spreading Buddhism beyond India, specifically to Sri Lanka, where she established the order of Buddhist nuns (Allchin & Erdosy, 1995). This was a significant development because it gave women a respected place in religious society and allowed them to pursue intellectual and spiritual development.

Ashoka's efforts to create a more humane society indirectly contributed to a more respectful and protective attitude toward women, reflecting the Dharmic principle that all life deserves dignity and care. Ashoka's edicts, inscribed on rocks and pillars throughout the empire, also reflect his commitment to social welfare, which included protections for women. For instance, in Edict No. 4, Ashoka emphasized compassion, non-violence, and proper treatment of all people, including women. In particular, he addressed the issue of domestic violence and outlawed certain forms of violence, extending moral and ethical protections to women within the family.

Patriarchal structures, which favored male authority in both public and private spheres, continued to influence women's social lives, in spite of Ashoka's efforts. While women were now seen as capable of participating in religious life, their role in the political and economic arenas was still limited, and traditional gender roles persisted in many areas of life.

While Ashoka's support of Buddhism provided women with educational and spiritual opportunities, social norms restricted their roles to religious contexts. Nevertheless, Ashoka's emphasis on compassion, non-violence, and moral respect helped create a legacy that, over time, contributed to the empowerment of women in Indian society. The Ashoka period was a transformative period that laid the groundwork for the gradual improvement of women's status in ancient India.

3.2.2 Charumati

A prominent figure in Nepal's history and culture, Charumati was the daughter of the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka, and her story is interwoven with the migration of Buddhism from India into Nepal, combining religious devotion, political alliances, and the construction of enduring cultural landmarks.

Her father, Emperor Ashoka, was one of the most powerful and influential rulers of the Mauryan Empire, whose reign was characterized by a transition from conquest to spiritual awakening. Following a series of wars, including the Kalinga War, Ashoka accepted Buddhism and became one of its most ardent supporters, starting the spread of Buddhist teachings throughout Asia (Allchin & Erdosy, 1995). Charumati was influenced by her father's devotion and accompanied him on his pilgrimage to

Lumbini, the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, which introduced her to Nepal, the country she would eventually call home.

As part of the entourage, Charumati saw her father's efforts to honor the Buddha's birthplace, which laid the groundwork for her future contributions to Buddhism in Nepal. The context of Ashoka's pilgrimage is described by Nepalese historian Vajracharya (2002), who highlights his intention to establish alliances with Buddhist communities in Nepal. Ashoka's visit to Lumbini led to the construction of the Ashoka Pillar, a monument that still stands as a testament to Nepal's Buddhist heritage.

The marriage of Charumati to a local prince named Devapala, which took place after Ashoka's pilgrimage, is thought to have established a significant alliance that extended the Mauryan Empire's influence and laid the groundwork for the spread of Buddhism in Nepal. This marriage was probably strategic, aimed at strengthening ties between the Mauryan Empire and the principalities in Nepal, furthering Ashoka's vision of promoting Buddhism across borders (Singh, 2008).

After marrying Devapala, Charumati began building a city that became known as Devpatan, which was close to Kathmandu and developed into a center of religious and cultural exchange, creating a thriving Buddhist community in the center of the Kathmandu Valley. Many scholars believe that Charumati's involvement in the establishment of Devpatan shows her dedication to advancing Buddhist principles and practices, as well as her vision of a spiritual haven that embodied her father's teachings.

3.2.2.1 Charumati Vihara: A Center of Buddhist Practice

The establishment of Charumati Vihara, a monastery she founded in Devpatan, close to the modern-day neighborhood of Chabahil in Kathmandu, is among her most enduring contributions to Buddhism in Nepal. Constructed as a center for Buddhist study, meditation, and spiritual guidance, the vihara drew monks, academics, and practitioners and represented the incorporation of Buddhism into Nepal's religious fabric while acting as a hub for the dissemination of Buddhist teachings.

The Department of Archaeology of Nepal has conducted archaeological studies that have uncovered artifacts that confirm the site's antiquity and its ties to the Mauryan period. These findings highlight Charumati's role in fostering Buddhism in Nepal and her contributions to the religious and cultural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley.

Today, Charumati Vihara holds historical and religious significance, marking an early effort to institutionalize Buddhism in Nepal. Despite centuries of change, remnants of the original vihara still stand, offering a tangible link to Charumati's legacy.

3.2.2.2 Charumati's Influence on the Cultural Identity of Nepal

Beyond establishing a monastery and city, Charumati's legacy has shaped Nepal's cultural identity, influencing the architectural, religious, and historical landscape of the Kathmandu Valley. Charumati's efforts to institutionalize and introduce Buddhism in Nepal were crucial in establishing the religious character of the area. The Kathmandu Valley, with its numerous stupas, monasteries, and temples, owes much of its Buddhist heritage to individuals like Charumati, who bridged religious and cultural traditions from the Indian subcontinent.

Her contributions inspired a tradition of Buddhist art and architecture that flourished in the Kathmandu Valley, combining Indian and Nepalese elements into a distinct Nepalese Buddhist aesthetic. Charumati appears to be a central figure in this artistic evolution, linking her work to the development of a uniquely Nepalese Buddhist identity. Her influence is also evident in Nepal's artistic traditions. The architectural style of Charumati Vihara, featuring characteristic stupas and chaityas, became a prototype for later Buddhist monuments in Nepal.

3.2.2.3 Charumati's Legacy in Modern Nepal

Efforts to conserve Charumati Vihara and other monuments in the Kathmandu Valley have accelerated in recent years as heritage conservationists have realized the importance of these sites to Nepal's history and cultural identity. Today, Charumati's legacy lives on through the preservation of Charumati Vihara and other historical sites related to her life. Chabahil, the area where Charumati Vihara is located, continues to be a significant Buddhist pilgrimage site, drawing tourists from all over Nepal and beyond.

Charumati's contributions have become a source of pride for Nepal's Buddhist community, and efforts by the government and local organizations to preserve these sites have helped to keep Charumati's legacy alive, serving as reminders of her enduring influence on Nepal's cultural heritage and her dedication to Buddhism. The significance of maintaining Buddhist monuments in Kathmandu is emphasized.

As the daughter of Emperor Ashoka, Charumati inherited her father's devotion to Buddhism and used her position to create a spiritual and cultural sanctuary in Nepal. Through her marriage to Devapala and the establishment of Devpatan and Charumati Vihara, she nurtured a Buddhist community that continues to shape Nepal's religious landscape. Charumati's legacy reflects the peaceful coexistence of Hindu and Buddhist traditions in Nepal, symbolized by the close proximity of Charumati Vihara and the Pashupatinath Temple. Her influence endures in the Kathmandu Valley, where her contributions to Buddhism have permanently etched Nepal's cultural identity.

As Nepal continues to honor its Buddhist past, Charumati's legacy stands as a testament to her vision of a united, harmonious society rooted in spiritual diversity. Her efforts to promote Buddhism in Nepal alongside Hindu traditions exemplify the inclusive spirit that defines Nepal's religious heritage. Charumati's story is one of devotion, resilience, and cross-cultural connection.

3.2.3 Sanghamitra

Alongside her brother Mahendra, Sanghamitra carried her father's vision of spreading the teachings of the Buddha throughout South Asia. With her commitment to Buddhist principles and her influence in promoting the Dharma, Sanghamitra created a cultural and spiritual bridge between India and neighboring regions. She is famous for playing a crucial role in the spread of Buddhism beyond India's borders, especially to Sri Lanka.

3.2.3.1 Early Life and Ashoka's Influence

Sanghamitra was born into a royal Mauryan family during the time of her father, Emperor Ashoka, who is renowned for being a major Buddhist convert. Before Ashoka's conversion, his reign was characterized by fierce military campaigns,

especially the devastating Kalinga War, but this war also sparked Ashoka's moral transformation, which led him to embrace Buddhism and advocate for compassion and non-violence as guiding principles (Allchin & Erdosy, 1995). During this time of transition, Sanghamitra observed her father's commitment to the teachings of the Buddha and his mission to spread moral rectitude and peace throughout his empire.

Ashoka's desire to spread Buddhism outside of India laid the foundation for Sanghamitra's journey to Sri Lanka and her subsequent efforts to cultivate a lasting Buddhist community. Nepalese historians have highlighted the impact of Ashoka's transformation on his children, particularly Sanghamitra and Mahendra, who were instilled with a sense of responsibility to carry forward the Buddhist mission. This upbringing influenced Sanghamitra's commitment to Buddhism and her readiness to take on the monumental task of spreading the Dharma.

3.2.3.2 Sanghamitra's Mission to Sri Lanka

In order to expand Buddhism outside of India, Emperor Ashoka dispatched emissaries to a number of places, including his children, Sanghamitra and Mahendra, who were sent to Sri Lanka at the request of King Devanampiya Tissa, who had developed an interest in Buddhism and wanted advice on how to bring it to his realm. Sanghamitra's arrival in Sri Lanka was a turning point in the island's religious history because she and her brother established a flourishing Buddhist community there (Singh, 2006).

The sacred relic, known as the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, was planted in Anuradhapura, one of the most revered sites in Sri Lanka and a symbol of the Buddha's teachings. Sanghamitra brought a cutting from the Bodhi Tree, under which Siddhartha Gautama had achieved enlightenment. Her efforts to plant and care for the Bodhi Tree demonstrated her understanding of Buddhist symbolism, representing the Buddha's enlightenment as a beacon for followers, and creating a physical connection between the people of Sri Lanka and the origins of Buddhism in India.

3.2.3.3 Establishment of the Bhikkhuni Sangha

The founding of the Bhikkhuni Sangha, or order of Buddhist nuns, in Sri Lanka was one of Sanghamitra's most important contributions. Seeing the need for a structured community of female practitioners, Sanghamitra led women on the spiritual path,

ordaining them as nuns and giving them the training required to study and teach the Dharma. This act was revolutionary because it increased the inclusivity of Buddhism and gave women the chance to seek spiritual enlightenment.

Sanghamitra's leadership in this area was crucial because it established a precedent for female monasticism in other Buddhist communities, influencing future generations of Buddhist nuns in both Sri Lanka and Nepal. Nepalese scholars say that Sanghamitra's founding of the Bhikkhuni Sangha in Sri Lanka was an example of her dedication to gender equality within the Buddhist tradition. The Bhikkhuni Sangha not only permitted women to actively participate in the religious life but also helped spread Buddhism among families and communities as ordained women became teachers and leaders in Sri Lankan society.

3.2.3.4 Sanghamitra's Influence in Nepal and the Kathmandu Valley

Although the primary focus of Sanghamitra's mission was Sri Lanka, her influence was felt throughout South Asia, including Nepal, where her efforts to establish the Bhikkhuni Sangha had a knock-on effect in the Kathmandu Valley, inspiring Buddhist women to pursue monastic life and helping to spread Buddhism among Nepalese women who saw in Sanghamitra's example a path to spiritual fulfillment and community leadership.

Sanghamitra's contributions to the Bhikkhuni Sangha are often credited with inspiring the Nepalese practice of monasticism among women. The Kathmandu Valley, a historically significant region for both Buddhism and Hinduism, became a center of Buddhist scholarship, art, and architecture. Many argue that the Bhikkhuni Sangha's influence on local Buddhist practices and the persistence of female monasticism are evidence of Sanghamitra's influence on Nepalese Buddhism.

3.2.3.5 Sanghamitra's Legacy in South Asian Buddhist Culture

The Bodhi Tree she planted in Anuradhapura remains a symbol of peace and enlightenment, representing Sanghamitra's devotion to Buddhism and her commitment to cultivating religious harmony. Her role in spreading Buddhism to Sri Lanka laid the groundwork for Sri Lankan Buddhist practices, which in turn influenced the spread of Theravada Buddhism to Southeast Asia. Sanghamitra's

contributions had a profound and long-lasting impact on South Asian Buddhism, fostering a cultural exchange that strengthened ties between India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

The legacy of Sanghamitra's mission is also evident in Nepal, where Buddhist communities commemorate her contributions to the dissemination of the Dharma. Poudel (2018) emphasizes how Sanghamitra's commitment to preserving the teachings of the Buddha has sparked the preservation of Nepal's Buddhist heritage, especially the temples, monasteries, and stupas that dot the Kathmandu Valley. These historic sites, many of which were influenced by Buddhism from India and Sri Lanka, bear witness to Sanghamitra's role in forging cross-cultural ties that have sustained Buddhist traditions for centuries.

Symbolism and Cultural Unity

As a living example of how Buddhism has historically fostered peace, compassion, and understanding among diverse communities, Sanghamitra's journey to Sri Lanka and her establishment of Buddhist practices there represent the spirit of cultural unity that characterizes Buddhism's spread throughout South Asia. Her commitment to the Dharma transcended national and cultural boundaries, establishing a bridge between the peoples of India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

As a model of cross-cultural engagement, Nepalese historians highlight the significance of Sanghamitra's work. By fostering Buddhist traditions in a foreign country, Sanghamitra showed a dedication to creating religious communities founded on spiritual kinship and shared values. This legacy of cultural unity continues to influence the relationships between Buddhist communities in South Asia, where Sanghamitra's contributions are regarded as a pillar of Buddhist history.

3.2.3.6 Sanghamitra's Relevance in Contemporary Buddhist Practice

The legacy of the Bhikkhuni Sangha continues to inspire movements advocating for gender equality within Buddhist institutions, and Sanghamitra is frequently celebrated as a symbol of women's spiritual agency. Her pioneering efforts to establish the Bhikkhuni Sangha resonate with modern Buddhist women who seek a place in monastic life and leadership. Sanghamitra's life and accomplishments remain relevant

to contemporary Buddhist practice, especially in the context of women's roles within the religion.

Sanghamitra's story serves as a source of inspiration for Nepalese Buddhists, who view her journey as an affirmation of Buddhism's principles of compassion and equality. Her influence on the growth of female monasticism continues to be a potent example of how Buddhism has adapted to the needs and aspirations of its adherents. In Nepal, her contributions are recognized through Buddhist festivals and commemorations that acknowledge her role in spreading the Dharma.

Sanghamitra's life and work demonstrate a deep dedication to the propagation of Buddhism and the development of religious communities based on empathy and solidarity. Her trip to Sri Lanka and her role in founding the Bhikkhuni Sangha helped pave the way for Buddhism's expansion in South Asia and beyond. Her legacy is celebrated in Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka, where she is recognized as a trailblazer in Buddhist history.

Her life embodies the Buddhist ideal of service to others and continues to inspire men and women who aspire to live in accordance with the Dharma. As a revered figure in the annals of Buddhist history, Sanghamitra continues to serve as a symbol of the transformative power of dedication and compassion in promoting peace and enlightenment. Her story is representative of Buddhism's transcultural influence, showing how the religion has fostered connections between diverse communities through shared spiritual values.

3.3 Women during the Lichchavi period

In order to understand the social status of women in Nepal during the Lichchavi period (c. 400–750 CE), it is necessary to piece together information from inscriptions because there are few historical records outside of these epigraphic sources. Although the Licchavis migrated from the northern Indian Gangetic plains, they did not significantly alter Nepali society; instead, they preserved pre-existing customs and cultural practices in the Kathmandu Valley, which was the center of Licchavi society, while many remote areas of the country remained largely unaffected. Place names like Mallapuri and Purbadesh, which are mentioned in records attributed to King Mandeva

I, demonstrate the limited reach of Licchavi cultural and administrative influence outside of the valley.

The Licchavi period was characterized by a rich pluralistic religious environment, with Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, and Buddhism coexisting and flourishing. Buddhism in particular enjoyed significant recognition and influence, as evidenced by numerous inscriptions from this period. For example, King Jayadeva II's genealogy in the Pashupati records honors King Vrishadeva as a "follower of Buddhism" (Sugatshasan Pakshapati), suggesting the king's respect for Buddhism and indicating its political and social acceptance in Licchavi society.

The inscriptions of Shankardeva, who probably donated land for Buddhist vihara, or monasteries, like the Navihara (Regmi, 1965), provide additional evidence of the Licchavi rulers' support and patronage of Buddhism. These records show that the establishment and upkeep of Buddhist institutions were valued acts among Licchavi royalty, and an inscription from King Mandeva I's reign in Chabahil mentions a woman named Kinnari who donated land to support Buddhist worship, highlighting the active role of women in religious life and philanthropy during this time.

Another noteworthy example can be found in the inscriptions at Lagantol in Kathmandu, where a man named Manigupta and his wife, Mahendramati, commissioned an Avalokiteshvara statue in dedication to dharma (Sharma, 1989). Although it is undated, it is likely from around 547 CE and shows how both men and women were involved in religious endowments and how they shared a devotion to the Buddhist path. These records show that women of the Licchavi period, especially those of higher social status, had the freedom to engage in and contribute to religious and charitable activities, and their donations and patronage of Buddhist institutions indicate that they were respected in society and that their contributions to religious causes were valued socially and culturally.

Many inscriptions from the Licchavi period record the assistance and contributions of individuals, including women, to the spread of Buddhism. For example, a record from Patan's Chaptol states that a concubine (called a "Bhogini") of a wealthy man named Dharmapali donated a piece of land, called Akshaneyvi land, for the reconstruction of a Buddha temple (Gandhkuti) and for the Arya Bhikshuni Sangha

under the "Chatusvishamahayana" school. This contribution by a woman illustrates the active role that women could play in religious patronage during this time.

An inscription from Musun Bahal in Kathmandu suggests that donations were made explicitly in the name of a nuns' association, highlighting the significance of female monastic communities and the charitable support they received from local patrons (Sharma, 1989). Other records from Swayambhu show donations of land for Buddha worship, indicating that both men and women were involved in supporting Buddhist worship and institutions.

By the seventh century CE, Buddhism was well established in Nepal, as demonstrated by the large number of temples and viharas backed by the ruling class. For instance, the renowned Lichchavi king Shivadeva I had a vihara named after him, "Shivadev-Vihara," highlighting the respect the monarchy showed for Buddhism. Buddhism continued to flourish under King Anshuvarma's rule; inscriptions from Thapathali and Hadigaon list a number of Buddhist temples that received royal patronage alongside Shaiva and Vaishnava shrines; temples like Gunavihar, Srimanvihar, Srirajvihar, Khajunrikavihar, Madhyamvihar, and Samanyavihar were specifically named, indicating a well-organized network of state-sponsored Buddhist institutions. Additionally, records indicate that Anshuvarma built a dhara (stone water spout) for the benefit of monks living in a Buddhist vihara near Dakshinkali, further demonstrating royal support for the Buddhist community.

Additional information about the status of Buddhism in Nepal during this period can be found in the writings of the Chinese traveler Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang), who traveled to India soon after Anshuvarma's reign. Xuanzang noted that both Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhist sects were practiced, indicating the pluralistic nature of Nepalese Buddhism during the Lichchavi period (Banerjee, 1958).

Additional records show that Buddhist practices persisted even after the reign of King Anshuvarma. Buddhism had close ties to Tibet during the reign of King Narendradev, with whom he reportedly developed close relations. Accounts from this era depict a period of peace and stability, with merchants, scholars, and monks traveling freely throughout Nepal without fear of banditry, suggesting a favorable environment for Buddhism to flourish. Narendradev's personal devotion to Buddhism is also

documented, as he is reported to have carried an image of the Buddha on his waist, highlighting his personal veneration of the Buddha (Sharma, 1989).

During the Lichchavi period, women made significant contributions to Buddhism. According to inscriptions, some women actively supported Buddhism, and one record from Patan mentions a woman named Mrgini who donated a significant amount of land to the Arya Bhikshuni Sangha for the restoration of a Buddhist temple. Her donation highlights both her commitment to Buddhism and her desire for moral development, as she prayed for her freedom from future reincarnations as a woman, viewing such a rebirth as an undesirable fate. Another inscription from Chabahil contains a statement reflecting a woman's hope to be reborn as a man in the next life, attributing this wish to the virtue of her charitable deed actions.

Women's contributions to Buddhism through land donations and other acts of piety show that they were active supporters of Buddhist practices rather than passive participants, and the records also reveal the nuanced view of femininity in that era, where some women sought to transcend their gender in subsequent lives, reflecting societal perceptions of gender roles at the time. These records offer invaluable insights into the religious and social landscape of the Lichchavi period, particularly regarding the role and status of women.

3.4 Women in the era of Medieval Period

Buddha AD states that the Middle Period of Nepal's history was from 880 to 1766, or from the start of Nepal Samvat to Prithvi Narayan Shah's conquest of the Kathmandu Valley. Along with political ups and downs, there were also religious ups and downs, but there were also a lot of Buddhist activities during this time. Both domestic and foreign Buddhist scholars used to travel between Nepal and Tibet, and people from Nepal and Tibet would go to study in Buddhist schools like Nalanda and Vikramshila in India. Buddhism also had an impact in Nepal because Tibetans used to pass through Nepal.

In Nepal, Buddhist scholars used to deliver religious sermons in temples. However, because of the unending civil war, the nobles started acting arbitrarily, which prevented religious activities from continuing until the Great Earthquake of 1255–1344, which caused immense damage. As a result, the tradition of performing

Navagraha Sadhana and Shraddha Tarpan gained notoriety as centers of religious studies and viharas became sites of social rituals. At the same time, Bajrayana and Tantrayana also had an impact on Vihar.

The royal family of pre-medieval Nepal was split into two factions at the same time because of foreign invasions and power struggles. No. Since 1292, two clans have appeared inside the Royal Palace of Nepal Mandal, with the names Dev and Malla behind them. The tradition of aiding neighboring countries started to settle in them in an attempt to make each other appear powerful. The Doyas, who supported one faction, would invade Nepal, while the Khasas, who supported another faction, would arrive. The Doyas' attack caused more harm to the Buddhist environment of Nepal Mandal than the Khasas' attack.

The attack by Bengal's Sultan Samasudin in 1350 was even worse than the Doya and Khasa attacks. He reached Nepal via the eastern road on the day of Shukla Navami in 1350, destroyed the Chaitya of Swayambhu and Patan's Pi Bahal, and looted the commodities that were kept in the womb. The custom of one Buddha taking turns guarding the priceless Buddhist legacy emerged at the same time. While giving the Buddhist community the impression that the conserved materials are in their original state, the "Bahidyo Taygu" tradition was also established.

3.5 Buddhism in the Modern Era

Following the Malla era, the Shah dynasty gained dominance. The living goddess Kumari originally bestowed the tika, a symbol of blessing, on King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who brought Nepal together. He restored the social and religious elements of Nepal to their former state. He ordered Swayambhu in Nuwakot to be renovated and gave Buddhist lamas a sizable portion of land. Additionally, he ordered that Kathmandu's Samyak Mahadan, a lavish almsgiving event held once every twelve years, continue. Nepal saw more political unrest following his unification than social or religious activities. Women started to have greater sway over political issues during this time than over religious rituals. The governing dynasty changed in the latter part of the 18th century. When Jung Bahadur rose to power in 1845, he and his family took control of Nepal's government. They neglected other issues in favor of pursuing their own interests. Buddhism was neglected and Hinduism was given priority in religious matters. By calling Buddhism an atheistic religion, they

discriminated against it. As anti-Buddhist sentiment increased, attempts were made to repress Buddhists.

Chandra Shumsher was appointed Nepal's prime minister in 1901. He carried out a number of reforms throughout his rule. Those opposed to Buddhism did not accept Chandra Shumsher's construction of various buildings in Lumbini and his declaration that violence was not to be allowed there. With his backing, non-Buddhist forces began stating that while it was legal for Buddhists to convert to Hinduism, it would be illegal for Hindus to convert to Buddhism.

As a result, throughout Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher's tenure, Buddhist monks and nuns were still ordained in spite of his anti-Buddhism. At the age of 18, Jagatman Vaidya, who lived in Patan Saptapur Mahavihara, traveled to Calcutta to sit for the entrance exam around 1920. He met Anagarika Dharmapala, a Buddhist missionary from Sri Lanka who lived in Dharmarajika Vihara. At Dharmapala's suggestion, Jagatman changed his name to Dharmaditya Dharmacharya, influenced by the Theravada Buddhism that Dharmapala practiced. He played a key role in the resurgence of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal after returning there and was the first to advocate for it. He arranged exhibitions in Kathmandu's Maru Tole in 1923, despite the persecution of the Rana regime, featuring a variety of vibrant pictures of Buddhist Jataka tales, from the birth to the nirvana of the great man Gautama Buddha, which had been printed in Germany, Sri Lanka, and Burma. He established the "Buddha Dharma Sangha" at the home of Dharma Sahu (Dharman Tuladhar) in Kathmandu's Talasi Tole on the day of Guru Purnima of Nepal Sambat 1044 (1924). With Khadgaraj, Triratna Man, Buddharatna, Kuldeep, and Chittadhar 'Hridaya' as members, he was the Sangha's principal administrator and promoter. Following that, associations for male and female lay practitioners, known as the "Buddhopasaka Sangha" and "Buddhopasika Sangha," respectively, were established. As the first of their sort in Nepal, these Sanghas were founded with the intention of advancing Buddhism, which was revolutionary at the time. (Sudarsan, 2053 B.S.)

In 1925, on the day of Buddha Jayanti, the first edition of the monthly magazine 'Baudha Dharma' in Nepali was released under his editorship and publication as part of his efforts to spread Buddhism (Nepal Sambat 1045). Additionally, he published a

number of Buddhist magazines in Bengali, Hindi, English, and Nepali. Beginning in January 1927, he published 'Buddhist India', a two-year English-language quarterly journal. He therefore produced 72 essays and compositions on the history of Mahayana Buddhism, the teachings of Himalayan Buddhists, the religion and responsibilities of the Tamang community, the life and teachings of Lord Buddha, and Buddhist philosophy and religion without regard to language bias.

In 1924 (BS 1981), the Kyanchapa Lama of the Mahapani Bajrapani sect traveled from Tibet to Kathmandu for a pilgrimage, just months after Dharmaditya began promoting Theravada in the city. Prem Bahadur Shrestha and four other young men were ordained in the Mahayana tradition and started living as monks (Ghelung) after being moved by his religious teachings. According to Buddhist customs, Prem Bahadur Shrestha (Palden Syarav), also called Mahapragya, and the other four—Machandra, Mahajnan, Mahavirya, and Mahakshanti—started soliciting alms on the streets of Kathmandu.

They were banished from the nation in July 1925 (BS 1982) because this infuriated Chandra Shumsher, the then-autocratic Rana king. Dharmaditya Dharmacharya greeted these exiled Buddhist monks, hosted a news conference, and revealed the Rana government's repression of Buddhists when they arrived to the Mahabodhi Society in Calcutta after their visit to Bodh Gaya, India. The Rana government was forced to explain itself to the British Indian government and played a significant role in voicing compassion for the monks who were sent into exile.

In the course of promoting Buddhism throughout the nation, Kindol Vihara was refurbished thanks to the work of Dharmaditya Dharmacharya. Through his efforts, he was able to get Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher to halt the sacrifice puja that was being offered on the statue of Maya Devi in Lumbini. He also established the 'Buddhist investigate Mandal' in 1953 (Nepal Sambat 1073), which aims to study and investigate Buddhist statues, sculptures, and paintings created by Buddhists during the month of Shravan in addition to displaying them. He established the 'Jagat Uddhar Buddhist School' in Jogmuni Bajracharya's home in Kathmandu sometime between 1955 and 1956 (2012–13 B.S.), and he became its principal while Jogmuni served as its superintendent. In addition to teaching Pali three times a week at Tribhuvan

University, he was a Mahayana and Hinayana teacher at that school. Likewise, he founded the Nepali Buddhist Institute in Kalimpong in 1921.

Buddhism, which was on the verge of extinction in Nepal, began to flourish once more as a result of Dharmaditya Dharmacharya's significant contribution to its spread both domestically and internationally. We can see firsthand that Buddhism is still being spread and new works are being created in Nepal as a result of his effort. Silva Levi, a well-known historian and Buddhist scholar, was pleased with his work and wrote him a letter of praise. He wrote: "You are sure to acquire in that way a two-fold punya (merit): firstly, by helping Nepalese Buddhism to revive where it had become deplorable, by reviving a philanthropic activity in Nepal, helping Nepalese children to acquire some philanthropic activity of the Nepalese."

3.5.1 The First Theravada Monk, Pragyananda

The first Theravada monk from Nepal, Mahapragya, was one of the five monks banished in July 1925 (1982 B.S.) and traveled to Kushinagar, India, where he received Pravrajya (ordination) from Bhikshu U. Chandramani in 1928. After reading 'Lalitavistara' by Nisthananda Bajracharya, he was moved to become a monk and composed it in Pali. After being ordained, Nepali followers continued to restructure their religion in accordance with the Theravada tradition. Pragyananda, who had been ordained in Kushinagar, arrived in Nepal in 1930 dressed as a monk. This made him the first Theravada monk to enter the country, followed by Shakyananda, Dharmaloka, Aniruddha, Kumar Kashyap, Amritananda, and others. Once he arrived in Nepal, religious activities and the spread of Buddhism began, and he gradually began to explain to the locals the significance of Buddhism, teachings, Dharma sermons, and precepts. The number of male and female devotees grew over time, and in 1931 (1988 BS), he brought willing devotees to Kushinagar and had them initiated by Guru Chandramani.

Bhikshu Mahapragya and Shramanera Amritananda were imprisoned in Bhojpur when Rana Prime Minister Shree 3 Juddha Shumsher exiled the monks in August 1944 (2001 BS), claiming that they were spreading Buddhism in the country. On April 17, 1946 (Baisakh 5, 2003 B.S.), a religious delegation from Sri Lanka, led by Bhikshu Amritananda, arrived in Kathmandu and met with then-prime Shree 3

Paddamshamsher, requesting that Buddhist monks be permitted to enter the country. Once Shree 3 Paddamshamsher granted permission, Theravada Buddhism was once again revived in Nepal.

He thus ordained the first female lay disciples as Anagarika (homeless renunciates) in addition to creating monks. Anagarika Ratnapali (Punyatarā), Anagarika Dharmapali (Chanchhimi), and Anagarika Sanghapali (Sanghatara) were the first women to be ordained. Shramanera Shasanjyoti, a male lay devotee, was ordained at the same time. In this way, both men and women were ordained and admitted into the Buddhist Sangha (community) for the first time in Nepal. This was the first instance in Nepal's Buddhist history. Following this, the proportion of women who became Anagarika grew steadily. In 1986, Bhikshu Pragyānanda delivered Shramanera Pravrajya to 86 male devotees on his 86th birthday (2043 B.S.). He also gave Anagarika and Rishini (ten precepts) Pravrajya to 87 female devotees on his 87th birthday (2043 B.S.).

In this way, Bhikshu Pragyānanda Mahasthavir made a significant contribution to the resurgence of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal and provided women with the chance to become Anagarika, which in turn allowed them to join the Buddhist Sangha. As a result, many women are becoming Anagarika and are playing a significant role in the spread of Buddhism.

3.5.2 The Role of Women in Buddhism in the Modern Era

“After Bhikshu Pragyānanda Mahasthavir made the first three female devotees Anagarika in B.S 1980, in 1954 (1991 B.S), Laxminani Upasika, who had wanted to become Anagarika since earlier, was also taken to Kushinagar by Bhikshu Pragyānanda and after Chandramani Mahasthavir made her Anagarika, she was named Dharmachari. Similarly, in 1939 (1996 B.S), Upasika Tekalaxmi Tamrakar of Pokhara was also inspired by Theravada Buddhism and went to Kushinagar herself and became Anagarika. She was named Dharmashila. Later she returned to Pokhara and built a Vihara on her own. That Vihara was named Dharmashila. It was through her efforts that the tradition of celebrating Buddha Jayanti began in BS 1961 (2018 B.S), and in BS 1965 (2022 B.S), Gyanmala Bhajan was formed. In BS 1972 (2029 B.S), Mahaparitran was organized for the first time and in BS 1987 (2044 B.S), a branch of Dharmodaya Sabha was formed. It was through her efforts that the

construction of the internationally renowned World Peace Stupa was started with the help of Nichi Datsu Fujiguru of Japan.

Ratnamuni Upasaka's mother, a devotee from Butwal (Divyaprabha), also told Bhikshu Pragyananda that she wanted to become Anagarika, but Bhikshu Pragyananda said that Divyaprabha's husband had died and that she needed to ask her children for permission, so her son granted it. In 1941 (1998 B.S.), she became Chandramani Guru Anagarika in Kushigar and was subsequently named Mahanandi.

As a result of his sermons, Tansen residents Yachu Upasika and Kanchi Upasika also wanted to become ordained. In 1942 (1999 B.S.), Bhikshu Pragyananda brought them to Kushinagar and made them Anagarika, naming them Yachu Upasika Thullanandi and Kanchi Upasika Chullanandi. Later, they changed their names to Khemachari and Vivekchari.

Thus, in BS 2007 (1951), following the end of Rana rule in Nepal, schools were established in various places, and Pragyananda Bhikshu also published his books. The Anagarika he made began to follow him, and the number of female devotees and Anagarika increased more than before. He made Birati, Vimukha, Vishakha, Shilachari, Sanhamitra, etc. Anagarika, and included Anagarika made by other gurus.

In this context, Pragyananda Mahasthavir taught the method of meditation in Bhikshu Sumangal Vihara. Upasika Herathaku Shakya was very impressed by it. Lakshmi Kumari Shakya, the mother of Sudarshan Bhikshu, became the chief female devotee. If mothers are educated and of good character, it will affect their children. For this reason, Ganesh Kumari (Dhammavati), daughter of Herathku Shakya, was encouraged by her mother to become Anagarika and walked from India to Burma with much hardship. She passed the Dhammachariya examination there and became the first Dhammachariya passing Anagarika of Nepal. Similarly, Magadhi (Manohara Dev), Madhavi (Shobhalaxmi) became Anagarika and went to Burma. In 2013 B.S(1956), Chameli Shakya (Dhammadinna) and Chini Shakya (Utpalavanna), residents of Lalitpur Nagabahal, expressed their desire not to live a household life in Shakya Singh Vihara, so they were sent to Burma in BS 2017 (1960) and there they received Anagarika Pravrajya by Anagarika Do Pannachari. In BS 2031 (1974), Manshobha Shakya, a resident of Sundhara, also said that she did not want to be a

householder, so Bhikshu Pragyananda remembered the virtue of her parents donating Sumangal Vihara and made her Anagarika with his own Upadhyaya and named her Anupama. She was the last Anagarika to be ordained by Bhikshu Pragyananda.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRESENT STATUS AND ROLE OF ANAGARIKAS

4.1 Contributions of Anagarika's in the Political Sphere

In 1931 B.S., Prajnananda Mahasthvir, the first Theravada monk to arrive in Nepal, began the practice of ordaining women as Anagarikas (lay female followers). Since then, the tradition of women becoming Anagarikas has continued, with Ratnapali, Dharmapali, and Sanghapali being the first to become Anagarikas, though they are not well documented.

"Bhikkhuni Dharmapali petitioned His Majesty's government during the exile of monks under the Rana regime. She showed in this letter that even the Bhikkhunis of that era could work bravely under difficult conditions and take the lead when necessary. The first Anagarikas to emerge were Dharmachari, Virati, Vishakha, Sanghamitta, Mahandi Arati, Shilachari, and Dharmapali. During the Rana period, Dharmapali played an important role; she was arrested for reading Buddhist texts in Trishuli, and Anagarika Dharmashali was also imprisoned for nine days on charges of promoting religion. Other Anagarikas, like Satyashila, Jnanashila, Ratnamanjari, and Gunavati, contributed by erecting monasteries, promoting Buddhist practices, and teaching meditation. Anagarika Dhammashila was the first to establish a Buddhist monastery in Pokhara, which bears her name.

In 1979, as Vipassana meditation gained popularity, two Anagarikas from Burma, Do Pajnachari and Do Sukahari, came to Nepal and started teaching meditation at Dharmakirti Vihara. Anagarikas like Dhammavati, Gunavati, and Ratnamanjari are credited with starting this meditation practice, and Anagarikas like Chameli and Anupama started teaching meditation to children. These Anagarikas are also responsible for the establishment of large meditation centers like the "Dharmashring Vipassana Center" in Budhanilkantha and the "International Buddhist Meditation Center" in Shankhamul.

Anagarikas have played a significant role in promoting Buddhist education. Notable contributions were made by Anagarikas such as Manishila, Jnanavati, Sushila,

Anupama, Dhammadina, Veeryavati, Kusuma, and others, who helped spread Buddhist teachings. Anagarika Madhavi also taught Buddhist classes at the Yashodhara Buddhist School. Anagarikas have been at the forefront of teaching children. They have provided literacy and Buddhist education at the monasteries where they reside. Anagarikas like Sushila, Satya, and Parami have been instrumental in these efforts, as have Anagarikas such as Dhammadina, Anupama, and Kamala. In 1943, under the leadership of Anagarika Dhammavati, the Dharmakirti Vihara established the "Dharmakirti Buddhist Study Group" to educate young people, especially women, about Buddhism and raise awareness. Anagarikas have also been at the forefront of teaching moral education. They have established connections with schools, teaching ethical principles and moral values. Anagarika Panyavati has been teaching in Hadi Village in Lumbini, while Anagarika Sujata has also worked in the Lumbini region.

In the field of Buddhist literature, Anagarikas have played an important role. Following the founding of Dharmakirti Vihara, Anagarikas started writing, editing, translating, and publishing Buddhist texts. Anagarika Dhammavati wrote and published books, while Anagarika Ratnamanjari wrote Rahul's Teachings of the Buddha. Other Anagarikas, like Dhammavathi and Gunavati, also made significant contributions to writing and translating Buddhist literature. Anagarikas also had a profound impact on social service; during the time of Ratnapali, Dharmapali, and Sanghapali, many women gained consciousness and the chance to travel both domestically and overseas. Through the initiatives of Anagarikas, people were given the chance to go on pilgrimages, and today, Anagarikas in Nepal continue to play a significant role in social service and community development.

The establishment of monasteries, the promotion of ethical and Buddhist education, social service, and writing are only a few of the many areas in which Anagarikas in Nepal have made significant contributions. Their position in contemporary Buddhist organizations and activities is also quite admirable.

4.3 The Ordinations of Anagarika's

The act of giving up household life and pursuing spiritual happiness by distancing oneself from worldly worries is known as "ordination" (pravrajya) in Buddhism. "Lord Buddha divided ordination into five categories, which are very important and are also referred to as rare ordinations," the Buddha said. A few of these are the Rishini, Bhikku, Bhikkuni, Shramanera, and Shramaneri ordinations. The Shramanera and Shramaneri ordinations are the ordinations that precede the Bhikku and Bhikkuni ordinations, while the Rishini ordination is the ordination that comes before these.

"In Pali, the Rishi and Rishini ordinations were called 'Ishi' ordinations because they require adherence to the eight and ten precepts, which is why they are sometimes referred to as the 'Shilavati' or 'Dasha Shilamata' ordinations." The fact that the Buddha's Jataka stories reference the Rishini ordination suggests that it was in existence before the Buddha's time.

Some people who were unable to cope with the distractions of everyday life would choose to live in a domestic ashram during the time of the Rishini ordination and devote themselves to spiritual purification by becoming more like ascetics, wearing saffron-colored robes, and not shaving their heads, unlike Bhikkunis. Those who underwent the Rishini ordination were required to follow the eight or ten precepts and eat their meals before 12 PM. After the ordination period ended, they could return to household life, but they were expected to adhere to the five precepts even after they did. If they did not return to household life, they could become a Shramaneri and enter the Buddha's Sangha for the rest of their lives.

In conclusion, the Rishini (Dasha Shilamata) ordination can be interpreted as a chance for people who want to temporarily leave household responsibilities and pursue spiritual knowledge; it does not require shaving one's head, and both married and single people can take part; if they so choose, they can even permanently leave household life and devote themselves to the teachings of the Buddha. Although this ordination is sometimes perceived as a substitute for the traditional practice of seclusion (Gufa) for children, Buddhists see it as a way to gain spiritual knowledge,

while those who follow traditional practices see it as a route to achieve spiritual enlightenment.

4.4 The Method of Granting the Rishini Dasha Shilavati or Shilavati Mata Ordination

Everyone is free to engage in any activity in Buddhism, and there is no distinction made based on caste, income, or social standing. The Rishini (Dasha Shilamata) ordination is therefore open to anyone. Children, middle-aged people, and the elderly are all represented in this ordination. Adults must adhere to the 10 precepts, while children must observe the eight.

4.5 The Procedure for Dasha Shilamata and Rishini Ordinations

Typically, the Rishini ordination takes place in the evening. Since they are not permitted to eat after the ordination, the participants are first cleansed before being fed as part of the preparation process. After that, everyone congregates in one location, where they are handed robes and a Bhikkhu recite the five precepts. "After receiving the robes, they ask the guru for permission to be ordained." After being given the go-ahead, they enter a monastery and leave their homes.

They have to follow the ordination guidelines starting the next day. Morning rituals, meditation, Buddhist prayers, meals, relaxation, sermon listening, and conversations are all part of their daily schedule. After consuming juice and other drinks, they take a nap in the evening.

After finishing their daily responsibilities on the last day of ordination, they are reintegrated into the home life in the evening. The Bhikkunis return to their domestic lives after fulfilling the five precepts and receiving household clothing.

4.6 Rules for Ordination in the Buddhist Order

1. To be ordained, one must be over 7 years old and not exceed 45 years of age.
2. The person must have a complete body, be free from any severe physical deformities, and must not be a eunuch.
3. If the person has had contact with a monastery, they must observe Buddhist precepts as a nun for at least three months before ordination. If they have not had prior contact with a monastery, they must study Buddhism and observe precepts for at least six months.
4. During the nunhood period, full adherence to the precepts is required. If there are any violations, the duration will be extended.
5. An application must be submitted to the International Bhikkhuni Sangha to become a nun.
6. If the applicant is married, they must provide written consent from their husband or children. If unmarried, they must submit permission from their parents.
7. To be ordained, one must have attended at least two meditation retreats, passed the third level of Buddhist education, or completed at least grade 7 in school.
8. Those above 45 years of age who wish to lead a religious life may live as Buddhist nuns but cannot take full ordination.
9. If a person has already been ordained under one teacher but has been disqualified due to some faults, they cannot immediately seek ordination under another teacher.
10. After completing the nunhood period and becoming an Anagarika, one must compulsorily obtain membership in the International Bhikkhuni Sangha by paying a fee of NPR 500. Without membership, they will not be allowed to receive invitations.
11. If one attends an event without obtaining membership, a fine of NPR 100 will be imposed.
12. After ordination, while staying in a group, one must pay respects to senior teachers and sit in the appropriate designated order.

13. Ordained individuals are not allowed to wear black, blue, or green socks, caps, ties, or sweaters. Additionally, no colorful or patterned clothing may be worn.

4.7 Rules for Becoming a Sikkhamana or Buddhist Novice Nun

1. Any Nepali woman wishing to take permanent ordination must be at least 13 years old.
2. The responsible teacher must submit the Sikkhamana application with parental consent to:
 - o Dharmakirti Vihara (if in Kathmandu)
 - o Sunandarama Vihara, Thaina (if in Lalitpur)
3. The Sikkhamana period will last from a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 2 years.
4. The Sikkhamana period is a probationary period, and the following rules must be strictly observed:
 - a) Wearing a white shirt, saffron-colored lungi, and shawl is mandatory.
 - b) Observing the ten precepts is compulsory.
 - c) Studying the meaning of the Five Precepts, Eight Precepts, and Ten Precepts is required.
 - d) Understanding the results of observing the Five Precepts is necessary.
 - e) Memorizing the Three Jewels' chants and various ritual prayers with meaning is required.
 - f) Studying the life of the Buddha.
 - g) Memorizing 11 Paritta (protective) chants.
 - h) Memorizing the Sekhiya rules (rules of proper conduct).
 - i) Providing proof of attending at least one meditation retreat at any meditation center.
5. As the Sikkhamana period is a probationary phase, one cannot accept alms or offerings from the Sangha.
6. After fulfilling the above rules and completing the required duration, the applicant must submit a permanent ordination request along with their Sikkhamana details.

7. Ordination can be granted by summoning five senior nuns from the Sangha and one responsible member from the U.A.S. Committee as required.
8. Ordination vows must be received only from the venerable members of the Bhikkhu Sangha and cannot be taken from monks belonging to Burma, Sri Lanka, or Thailand.

4.8 Tasks and Responsibilities of the Sangha

1. If any negative report is received about an ordained disciple, the teacher will be given suggestions for their improvement.
2. If any rules are changed according to time and circumstances, the teacher will be informed, and they must mandatorily record and preserve the updated rules.
3. The Sangha can regularly provide guidance to the teacher, and the teacher must accept it.
4. If the rules set by the Sangha are violated, appropriate punishment may be given according to the nature of the offense.
5. If the rules are not followed and the Sangha is disregarded, expulsion from the Sangha may occur.
6. If a disciple has already been ordained under one teacher but was disqualified due to some fault, they must remain as a novice nun (Rishini) for five years before being reordained as an Anagarika under another teacher.
7. After accepting a disciple, the teacher must take full responsibility for them for five years. If the disciple commits any offense during this period, the Sangha will not be responsible, and the teacher must take necessary action and inform the Sangha.
8. After ordination, if any teacher passes away, all ordained individuals must be present at the location upon receiving the news. Failure to attend will result in a fine of NPR 200/-.
9. Exemptions will only be granted to those who are taking exams, are severely ill, or are physically incapable of traveling.
10. If a person partakes in a meal without an official invitation, they will be fined NPR 100/-.

4.9 The Beginning of the Rishini (Dasha Shilamata) Ordination in Nepal

Bhikkhu Prajnananda began the practice of ordaining people as Anagarikas in 1923 CE, and it has been going steadily ever since. The spiritual path was readily accepted by those who could give up their domestic lives, while those who were unable to do so started to yearn for temporary ordinations in order to advance spiritually. When Mahathera Prajnananda learned of this, he began the ordination of those who wanted to temporarily give up their home life; these individuals were called Dasha Shilamata (Rishini) or Shilavati. Participants in this ordination were permitted to wear saffron-colored robes, and there was no requirement to shave the head. A large number of married women participated in this ordination. In a same vein, Anagarika Dhammavati restored and opened the Dharma Kirti Vihara in 2022 upon her return to Nepal in 2020. The wife of Mohan Shamsher, who was inclined toward Buddhism at the time, started taking part in Buddhist rites and prayers. For the first time, she ordained her niece Punyalakshmi and daughter Mandira as Rishinis. This ordination was started in 2023 CE by Dhammavati Anagarika.

Following this, on his birthday in 2043 (Bikram Sambat), Bhikkhu Prajnananda ordained seventy ladies as Rishinis (Shilavati). Many women eventually underwent the Dasha Shilamata ordination and started learning spiritual knowledge as a result of this ongoing practice.

Young females are now participating in the Rishini ordination, undergoing temporary ordinations and learning about the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha because it has grown so popular. This custom is becoming more and more popular as a substitute for the customary Gufa ceremony for girls. Some parents no longer see the need for the customary Gufa ceremony once their daughters have undergone the Dasha Shilamata ordination. Others think that the traditional Gufa practice would eventually be replaced by the Rishini ordination.

In conclusion, many people consider Rishini ordination to be comparable. To prevent insulting opposing viewpoints, conversations on this practice should be addressed delicately. The Rishini ordination is performed across Nepal and is not just in the Kathmandu Valley. It is regarded as one of the uncommon ordinations in Buddhism and has grown in popularity.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Siddhartha Gautama gained international recognition as Lord Buddha after achieving enlightenment. Buddhism is the name given to the religion he spread. By exposing the essence of human suffering and its remedy, Buddha enlightened the world. He highlighted the Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths, which people still adhere to today. Buddha taught that everyone should use their own logic and not mindlessly follow others; he never asserted that people should solely adhere to his teachings. He emphasized the value of morality and ethical behavior in human existence, which made it clear that discipline is essential to human growth. Following his enlightenment, Buddha drew a large following of followers known as monks (Bhikkhus). Buddha stressed the value of ethics and established particular guidelines for monks and nuns to follow in order to control their behavior. This served to keep the monastic community disciplined.

Buddha also established guidelines for monks and nuns to abide by and stressed the value of the Sangha, or community of monks and nuns. His teachings had a significant influence on women as well, as seen by the numerous women who became enlightened as a result of his encouragement of their involvement in the Buddhist society. He established guidelines for women in the "Gr̥havinaya," which focused on how both men and women should behave in their homes and show respect for their husbands and in-laws.

Donating was a common practice in the time of the Buddha, and he himself became enlightened by eating the offerings (like porridge) that others gave him. Both men and women actively participate in giving and receiving, making this donation practice a fundamental aspect of Buddhism even today. Buddhism was also widely disseminated by women, as evidenced by the donation of mango orchards by Ambapali and the feeding of the Buddha by Sujata. In addition, women were permitted to join the Sangha, and although it is not as common today, the tradition of female monks, or Bhikkhunis, has persisted.

The teachings of the Buddha caused the Sangha to split into two main schools following his Mahaparinirvana (death): Theravada and Mahayana. The Tripitaka, which is composed of three sections—the Vinaya Pitaka, the Sūtra Pitaka, and the Abhidhamma Pitaka—was a compilation of the teachings of the Buddha that were originally based only on oral tradition. The Vinaya Pitaka, which outlines the regulations for monastic life, is considered to be the most significant of them and still serves as a guide for monks and nuns today.

The Mauryan Emperor Ashoka became a major supporter of Buddhism in the third century BCE. Ashoka adopted Buddhism and disseminated its teachings throughout the world after seeing the atrocities of war. While his son, Mahendra, became a monk, his daughter, Sanghamitra, became a nun and made a vital contribution to the growth of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Additionally, Ashoka supported Buddhism in Nepal by erecting an Ashoka Pillar in Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, as a permanent historical reminder of his dedication to the religion. In addition, Charumati, Ashoka's daughter, married a Nepali prince and helped create a Buddhist monastery in Nepal, which is still important in the history of Buddhism in Nepal.

Records indicate that both monarchs and women contributed to the spread of Buddhism throughout the Licchavi period, despite the dominance of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Notably, during this time, women like Mrigini were crucial to the development of Buddhism. With the founding of several monasteries, Buddhism continued to expand during the Middle Ages, and Tantra and Vajrayana Buddhism gained considerable traction.

Buddhism experienced a resurgence in Nepal throughout the modern era, mostly as a result of the work of individuals such as Bhikkhu Pragyananda and Bhikkhu Amritananda. As a result of their assistance in reviving Theravada Buddhism in Nepal, women were permitted to join monastic communities as anagārikas, or laywomen who adhere to Buddhist doctrines but do not get full ordainment. Anagārikas played a crucial part in the propagation of Buddhism, and even in isolated places today, they still educate and disseminate Buddhist knowledge.

With time, new Buddhist customs like the "Rishini Pravrajya"—a kind of ordination

for girls—became more and more well-liked, especially among Nepal's Newar population. Originally used as a kind of initiation, this exercise is today seen as a substitute for the more conventional "Gufa" procedure. One important facet of Buddhism in Nepal nowadays is the evolution of Rishini Pravrajya.

5.2 Conclusion

The spread of the Buddha's teachings affected all social strata, including women, in his day. His lectures on knowledge, meditation, and morality helped women see the true meaning of life and inspired them to perform charitable deeds, which is how the donation tradition got its start. Many women consequently became enlightened and attained liberation. Their contributions, whether through religious practice, charitable work, or the dissemination of the Dharma, have been essential to the history of Buddhism in Nepal and beyond. Women have been integral to the development, propagation, and preservation of Buddhism from the time of the Buddha to the present. Buddha's teachings, which placed a strong emphasis on morality, ethical behavior, and self-discipline, made spiritual practice accessible to both men and women. Women were actively involved in the Buddhist community despite social constraints, and important contributors to its development were Sujata, who fed the Buddha, and Ambapali, a wealthy courtesan who subsequently became a nun. Buddha's progressive views were reflected by the Sangha's acceptance of women, which paved the way for the development of the Bhikkhuni (female monk) lineage.

Buddhism spread further under the patronage of Emperor Ashoka, reaching Nepal, Sri Lanka, and other places. While his daughter Charumati made contributions to Buddhist institutions in Nepal, his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra were instrumental in the expansion of Buddhism. Buddhist women like Mrigini persisted in promoting and defending Buddhism even during the Licchavi and medieval eras, when Hindu customs predominated.

With the help of monks like Bhikkhu Pragyananda and Bhikkhu Amritananda, Buddhism in Nepal had a resurgence in the contemporary age. The reintroduction of women into the monastic community as anagārikas was crucial in the propagation of Buddhist teachings. The importance of women in Buddhism was further reinforced

when the Newar society adopted practices like Rishini Pravrajya.

The history of Buddhism has been significantly shaped by the contributions of women, whether through monastic life, almsgiving, or the dissemination of Dharma. Their ongoing endeavors guarantee that Buddhist teachings continue to be applicable and understandable. Women have played a crucial role in the preservation and spread of Buddhism since the Buddha's time, greatly influencing its effect in Nepal and beyond.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I



Figure 1: *Shaving of hair before ordination*



Figure 2: *Giving of Anagarika attire to the newly ordained Nuns*



Figure 3: *Prayer Hall of Sakyamuni Kirti Vihar*



Figure 4: *Anagarika Paduma (left image) and researcher with Anagarika Paduma (right Image)*



Figure 5: Podium of Prayer Hall of Sakyamuni Kirti Vihar

सिक्खमाणा वा बौद्ध ऋषिणी प्रवजित बन्न आवश्यक नियमहरु :

१. जो कोही नेपाली नारी स्थायी प्रवजित बन्न १३ बर्षको हुनु पर्नेछ ।
२. जिम्मा लिने गुरुद्वारा आमाबुबाको अनुमति भएको सिक्खमाणा निवेदन दिनुपर्छ ।
- काठमाडौंमा भए धर्मकीर्ति विहार,
- ललितपुरमा सुनन्दाराम विहार, चैना
३. सिक्खमाणा अवधि कम्तिमा ३ महिनादेखि २ बर्षसम्म हुनेछ ।
४. सिक्खमाणा अवधि परिक्षण अवधि हो । तसर्थ यी अवधि भित्रमा निम्न नियमहरु अनिवार्य रुपमा पालना गर्नुपर्नेछ ।
क) सेतो सर्ट गेरु रंगको लुङ्गी र सल अनिवार्य छ ।
ख) दशशील पालन गर्नु अनिवार्य छ ।
ग) पञ्चशील, अष्टशील, दशशील अर्थसहित अध्ययन गर्नुपर्दछ ।
घ) पञ्चशील फलाफल अध्ययन गर्नुपर्दछ ।
ङ) त्रिरत्न वन्दना विविध पूजा अर्थसहित कण्ठ गर्नुपर्नेछ ।
च) बुद्धजीवनी अध्ययन
छ) ११ वटा परित्राण कण्ठ गर्नुपर्नेछ ।
ज) सेखीय नियम कण्ठ गर्नुपर्नेछ ।
झ) कुनै पनि ध्यान केन्द्रमा गई एक शिविर ध्यान बसेको प्रमाण हुनुपर्नेछ ।
५. सिक्खमाणा अवधि परिक्षण अवधि भएकोले कुनै संघ भोजन र दान ग्रहण गर्न सक्नेछैन ।
६. यी माधिका नियम पालन गरी समय पुगेपछि स्थायी प्रवजितको लागि गुरुद्वारा पुनः स्थायी प्रवजित निवेदन एवं सिक्खमाणा विवरण भर्नुपर्नेछ ।
७. संघका जेष्ठ गुरुमांहरु ५ जना र यु.अ.स. समितिका प्रवजित सम्बन्धि जिम्मा लिएको कुनै एक जना गुरुमां बोलाई आवश्यकता अनुसार प्रवजित गर्न सक्नेछ ।
८. भिक्षु संघका पूज्य सदस्य भन्तेहरुबाट मात्र प्रवज्या शील ग्रहण गरिएको हुनुपर्नेछ ।
(बर्मा, लंका, थाईलैण्ड बाहेक)

Figure 6: Rules for Becoming a Sikkhamana or Buddhist Novice Nun (Sangh, 2049 B. S)

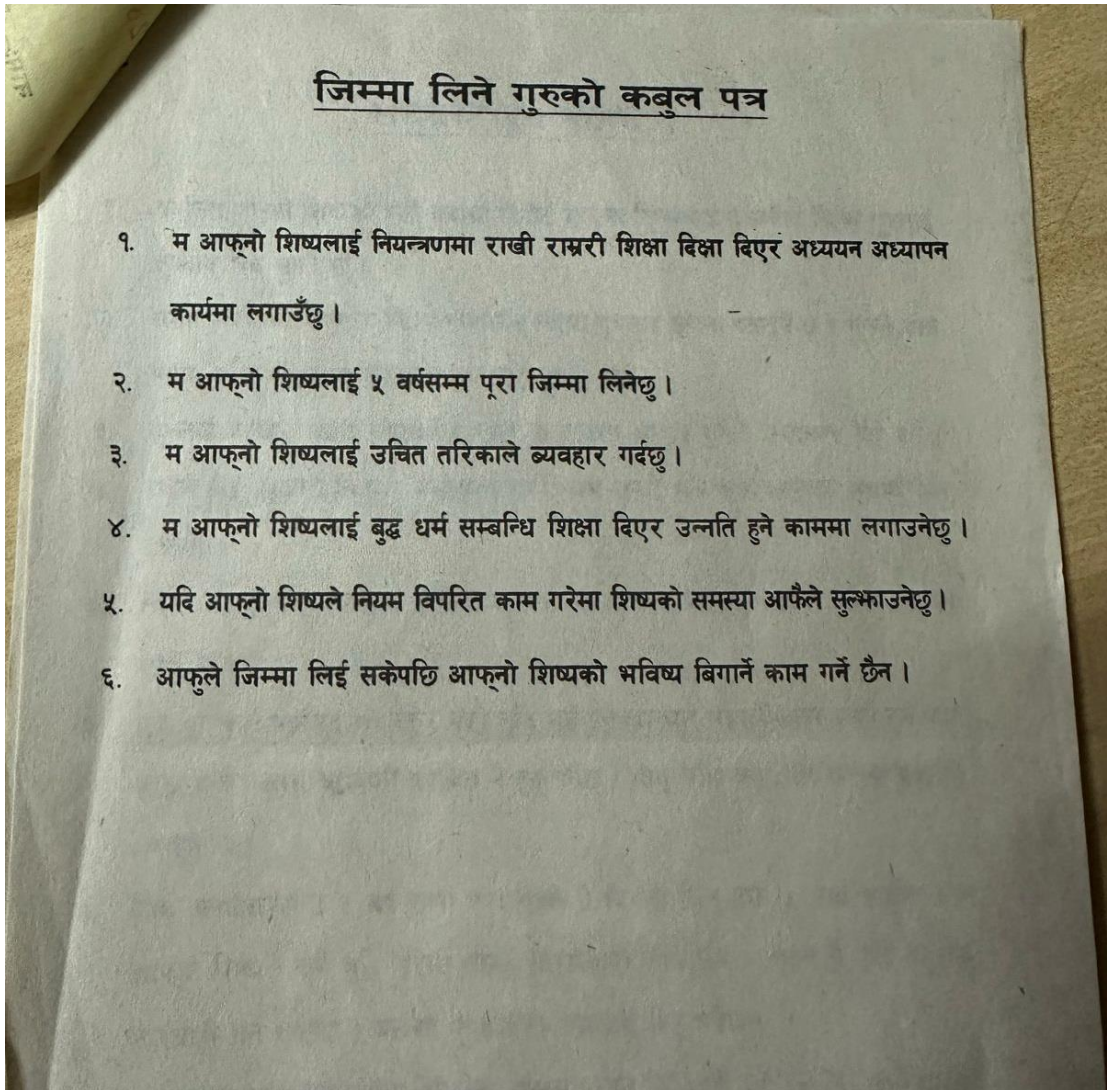


Figure 7: Declaration Letter of Responsibility by the Guru(Sangh, 2049 B. S)

बुद्ध शासनमा प्रव्रज्या हुनको लागि आवश्यक नियमहरू

१. प्रव्रजित हुनको लागि ७ वर्ष भन्दा बढि उमेर र ४५ वर्ष ननाघेको हुनुपर्छ ।
२. शरीरको सबै अंग पूर्ण भएको, केही खून नभएको साथै नपुंसक नभएको हुनुपर्छ ।
३. बिहारमा सम्पर्क भएका व्यक्तिहरू भए प्रव्रजित हुन कमसेकम ३ महिनासम्म बौद्ध ऋषिनी भई शीलपालन गर्नुपर्छ । तर बिहारमा सम्पर्क नभएका व्यक्तिलाई भए कमसेकम ६ महिनासम्म बौद्ध ऋषिनी भएर बुद्धधर्म सम्बन्धि अध्ययन गर्नु पर्नेछ ।
४. ऋषिनी अवधिभर प्रै शील पालन गर्नु पर्नेछ । यदि शील पालनमा टुटफुट भए फेरी समय बढाइनेछ ।
५. ऋषिनी हुनको लागि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय भिक्षुणी संघमा दरखास्त दिनु पर्नेछ ।
६. ऋषिनी हुने व्यक्ति विवाहित भए आफ्नो पुरुष वा छोराछोरी र अविवाहित भए आफ्नो आमाबुबाको अनुमति पत्र पेश गर्नु पर्नेछ ।
७. प्रव्रज्या हुनको निम्ति कम्तिमा २ चोटी सम्म ध्यान शिविरमा बसी सकेको हुनुपर्छ वा बौद्ध परियत्ति कक्षा ३ सम्म पास गरेको वा विद्यालय स्तरको कक्षा ७ सम्म पास गरेको हुनुपर्नेछ ।
८. ४५ वर्ष भन्दा बढी उमेरका व्यक्ति धार्मिक जीवन विताउने इच्छा भए बौद्ध ऋषिनी मात्र भएर जीवनयापन गर्न सक्नेछ ।
९. एक गुरु कहाँ प्रव्रजित भइसकेको कोहि त्रुटि भई प्रव्रज्या च्युट भइसकेकाहरू अर्को गुरुकहाँ तुरुन्त प्रव्रजित बन्न पाउने छैन ।
१०. बौद्ध ऋषिनी अवधि सकेर अनागारिका बनी सकेपछि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय भिक्षुणी संघमा रु. ५००/- शुल्क तिरी अनिवार्य रुपमा सदस्यता हुनु पर्नेछ । सदस्यता विना निमन्त्रणा जाने मौका दिइने छैन ।
११. यदि सदस्यता प्राप्त नगरिकन निमन्त्रणा गएमा रु. १००/- जरिवाना गरिने छ ।
१२. प्रव्रज्या भइसके पछि समूहमा बस्दा आफू भन्दा जेष्ठ गुरुमाहरूलाई बन्दना गरी क्रमानुसार यथाचित स्थानमा बस्नुपर्छ ।
१३. प्रव्रजित व्यक्तिहरूको कालो, नीलो, हरियो, मोजा, टोपी, टाई स्वीटर प्रयोग गर्न पाइने छैन । साथमा रंगिन बुट्टा भएको कुनै पछि प्रयोग गर्नु हुँदैन ।

यी माथि उल्लेखित नियम मैले पढी बुझे यसै नियम बमोजिम म आफ्नो शिष्यलाई प्रव्रजित गर्न अनुमति माग्दछु ।

गुरुमाको नाम:-उमेर.....
 विहार वा आराम:.....
 ठेगाना.....
 फोन.....
 सही.....
 मिति.....

Figure 8: Rules for Ordination in the Buddhist Order(Sangh, 2049 B. S)

संघबाट हुने कामहरू

१. प्रवजित भएकी शिष्यको केही नराम्रो रिपोर्ट आएमा शिष्यलाई सुधारको निम्ति गुरुलाई सुभावा दिन सक्ने छ ।
२. समय परिस्थिति अनुसार नियम परिवर्तन भएमा गुरुलाई सूचना पठाइने छ र गुरुले उक्त नियम अनिवार्य रूपमा रेकर्ड सुरक्षा गरि राख्नु पर्छ ।
३. गुरुलाई बरोबर संघले ओवादादिन सक्ने छ । उक्त ओवादा गुरुले स्वीकार गर्नु पर्छ ।
४. संघले दिई राखेको नियम उलंघन गरी काम गर्नु भने काम अनुसार सजाय दिन सक्नेछ ।
५. संघले दिएको नियम पालन नगरेमा र संघलाई वेवास्था गरेमा संघबाट निष्कासन गर्न सक्ने छ ।
६. एक गुरु कहाँ प्रवजित भइसकेर केहि त्रुटि भई प्रवज्याच्युत भइसकेकाहरू अर्को गुरु कहाँ जाँदा ५ वर्ष सम्म ऋषिणी प्रजजित नै हुनु पर्नेछ । त्यस पछि मात्र अनागरिका प्रवजित गराइने छ ।
७. शिष्य बनाइसकेपछि ५ वर्ष सम्म पुरा गुरुले नै जिम्मा लिनु पर्छ । यस अवधि भित्र आफ्नो शिष्यले कुनै त्रुटि गरेमा संघले जिम्मेवारी लिने छैन । गुरुले नै त्रुटि अनुसार कारवाही गर्न सक्नेछ । यसको जानकारी संघलाई दिनु पर्नेछ ।
८. प्रवज्या भए पछि कुनै गुरुमा मरे पछि सूचना पाउने वित्तिकै उक्त ठाउँमा उपस्थित हुने पर्छ । उपस्थित भएन भने रु. २००१- जर्रीवाना हुनेछ ।
९. संघले उक्त कार्यमा- परीक्षा दिने अवस्थामा, धेरै विरामी वा हिंडुलु गर्न नसक्ने व्यक्तिलाई मात्र सहूलियत दिइने छ ।
१०. आफुलाई निमन्त्रणा पत्र नभइकन त्यसै अट्टेरी भएर भोजन गयो भने रु. १००१- दण्ड लाग्नेछ ।

नाम :

सही :

मिति :

Figure 9: Tasks and Responsibilities of the Sangha(Sangh, 2049 B. S)

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