

Newar Buddhist Initiation Rites

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Buddhism as practised by the Newar community of the Kathmandu Valley has several unique features not found in other countries where Buddhism is practised. This fact has been noted by scholars from Brian Hodgson down to the present day. However, surprisingly little research has been done on the rituals and rites of the Newar Buddhists. Hence much that has been written is marred by a lack of any detailed knowledge of these rites and rituals. Recently I had the opportunity to witness the bare chuyegu rite at the Machindra Baha in Kathmandu.¹ I would like in this article to present a description of these rites as performed on this occasion in the belief that any understanding of the sociological and religious phenomenon of Newar Buddhism must begin with a factual account of the religion as it is practised today. It would be useful, of course, to edit the actual ritual texts used for these rites and publish them with this article, but it would make the essay entirely too long and there are some discrepancies between the rubrics of the texts and the rites as performed today. Hence I will refer to the texts mainly for the readings and recitations which are used in the ceremonies.² I would hope to edit the actual texts at a later date.

The clergy of the Newar Buddhists are the bare,³ a caste made up of two sub-divisions, the śākya and the vajrācāryas (or more commonly in Newari the gubhājū). They are the custodians of the ancient shrines of Buddhism, the bahās (Sanskrit: vihāra), and the vajrācāryas are the family priests of all the other Buddhist castes among the Newars. The bahā is the centre of their religious life and the focus of their social relations. The members of a bahā are a patrilineal descent group, i.e. one is a member of his father's bahā. He must be initiated there, and he is entitled to share in the life and rites of that bahā only. The initiated male members of these families constitute the bahā saṅgha, a term used from the earliest days of Buddhism to denote the community of bhikṣus, or Buddhist monks. Office and function within the saṅgha go by seniority of initiation. The bare chuyegu is the initiation rite of the bare. The membership of some bahās is composed of only śākyas, some of only vajrācāryas, and some are mixed. The saṅgha of the Machindra Baha is composed of both śākyas and vajrācāryas, and the difference between the functions and status of the groups is clear from the initiation rite.

A recent article by Michael Allen in South Asia gives a brief description of the bare chuyegu rite as performed in Patan.⁴ It is evident from his article that there are differences between the Patan rite and the Kathmandu rite, especially in regard to the

ceremonies pertaining to the vajrācāryas. Furthermore, I suspect there are minor differences and local customs in each of the bahās. However, the main outlines of the ceremony are the same, and the manuscripts which I have seen show that they have remained the same for at least 250 years.

The Machindra Baha is situated in Kathmandu in Kel Tole, about half way between Asan Tole and Indra Chowk. Though it is known by this name to most non-Newars, its proper Newari name is 'Jana Baha', and a large percentage of the Newars who frequent the temple are not even aware of the use of the name Machindra Baha. Its Sanskrit name is 'Kanakacaitya Mahavihara.'

The construction of these ancient bahas is standard: a courtyard enclosed by a two storied structure, the lower story of which is usually a sort of open veranda and the upper story of which provided the residence rooms of the monks in the days when these monasteries housed communities of celibate monks. On the ground floor, usually opposite to the entrance of the courtyard is the main non-tantric shrine of the bahā which houses the main deity of the saṅgha, called kwāpā deo in Newari. This is usually one of the transcendent Bhuddhas or one of the principal Bodhisattvas. In front of this shrine is found a caitya and a dharma dhātu maṇḍala which is used for the principal pūjās performed within the bahā. On the top floor, usually directly above the shrine of the kwāpā deo, is the āgam, the room which houses the tantric deities and where the secret tantric rites of Vajrayana Buddhism are performed. Machindra Baha is something of an exception to the rule. The shrine of the kwāpā deo, which houses an image of Aksobhya, is on the ground floor to the right as one enters the courtyard. One reason for this difference is a disastrous fire in 1917 which destroyed the entryway and all the buildings on the right of the courtyard. The other, and more important reason for the difference is the presence of Seto Machindranath (Avalokitesvara), who is housed in a free standing temple in the centre of the courtyard. According to tradition, the bahā and its saṅgha predate the setting up of this image. However, Avalokitesvara has completely usurped the place of the kwāpā deo in the life of the saṅgha.⁵ The original entryway into the bahā compound was from the west, opposite the shrine of the kwāpā deo; the temple of Avalokitesvara was placed in the centre of the courtyard facing east, and a new entryway was made to face that temple. In front of the temple of Avalokitesvara is a small caitya, called the Kanaka Caitya from which the bahā gets its Sanskrit name. In front of this is a recessed rectangle for the homa rites and a large dharma dhātu maṇḍala set into the pavement. All of the principal rites associated with the life of the saṅgha, except the secret tantric rites, are performed in front of the temple of Avalokitesvara. The members of the saṅgha serve by turn as priests in the temple of Avalokitesvara and not in the temple of the kwāpā deo. Pūjā is offered once a day to the kwāpā deo when the priest on duty makes the rounds of all the shrines in the courtyard. Except for this the kwāpā deo is totally ignored.

The saṅgha of Machindra Baha is composed of eighteen 'families' and comprises between 140 and 145 initiated male members. Six of the 'families' are vajrācārya and twelve are śākya. However, only about one third of the initiated members of the saṅgha are śākyas.⁶ The eldest of the initiated members, called the thakālī, is the head of the saṅgha, the next eldest, called the noko, is his assistant. The present thakālī is a śākya and the noko is a vajrācārya. These two men preside at all rites and feasts proper to the saṅgha, and preside at the annual chariot festival of Avalokitesvara (Seto Machindranath).

Initiation rites into the saṅgha are held at irregular intervals; the last one at Machindra Baha was held ten years ago. The ritual texts of initiation make no mention of the age of the candidates, but people say they should be initiated when they are about eight years old. In practice they are always initiated before puberty, and when an initiation ceremony is held all the male children who have been born to members of the saṅgha since the last ceremony are initiated. Hence the ages of the twenty five boys initiated into the saṅgha at Machindra Baha in February of 1975 ranged from eleven years to six months. The reason for holding the ceremony at such irregular intervals is purely practical. The ceremony involves a considerable expense, and they wait until they have a sufficient number of boys to justify the expense. In larger bahās initiations would be held more frequently.

The initiation ceremonies take place on five different days spread over an eight-day period. Though the whole initiation is popularly referred to as bare chuyegu, this name properly refers only to the rites which take place on the third, or main, day. Following is a description of the five days of ceremonies.

I Goya Dān̄ tayagu-- 'offering of betel nuts and money'. 25Feb,1975.

Three days before the main ceremony, all those who are to be initiated gather at the Machindra Baha to formally request initiation of the thakālī. This is a very brief ceremony at which the thakālī himself officiates. First, he performs a brief introductory pūjā, followed by the pūjā of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha mandalas. Then a verse is read in Sanskrit and Newari on behalf of the candidates:⁷ 'Today we offer to you five betel nuts, pān, flowers, sandal wood paste, fragrant incense and a lamp requesting you to give us the initiation of Buddhist monks (pravrajya) and to perform the necessary pūjās. Accept these flowers, etc. and grant us the pravrajya.' Pravrajya is the Sanskrit term used from ancient times for the first rite of initiation given to a layman wishing to become a Buddhist monk. The candidates then offer the ritual gifts and a few paisa. This concludes the brief ceremony and the candidates return to their homes.

II Dusala kriyā--preparatory rites. 27 Feb. 1975. (Māgh Pūrṇimā)

Dusāla kriyā is the name for the rites which take place on the day previous to the main initiation rites. The term literally means 'entry rites', for on this day the candidates take the first steps toward entry into the saṅgha. The Sanskrit term for these rites is purvāṅga, a term used by Buddhists and Hindus alike for the initial rites performed in preparation for any auspicious ceremony.

On this day the rites begin about eleven o'clock in the morning. The candidates are first ritually bathed at home and then, accompanied by their families, assemble at the Machindra Baha. From this day until they are released from their vows as monks they are allowed only one full meal a day, and this must be nirāmiṣa, literally 'no meat', but salt, onions, garlic and spices are also forbidden. Further, they are forbidden to wear or touch anything made of leather, and forbidden to touch anything unclean such as a dog.

Though the thakālī presides, he does not officiate at this ceremony nor at any of the ceremonies on the following days. The officiating priest is a vajrācārya from Saval Baha, the same priest who performs the life cycle rites for the image of Avalokitesvara each year. The saṅgha constitutes a family, and just as a family of priests (whether vajrācārya or brahman) is served by a priest from outside the family for these life cycle rites, so the family of the saṅgha has its priest who performs these rites. In Newari the priest who serves the saṅgha of Machindra Baha is called deo gujū, the 'guru of the god'. For the rest of this essay I will refer to him as 'the Priest of Lokesvara'. He is assisted in the performance of the rites by his own assistant called the upādhyāya.

The Priest of Lokesvara performs the rites seated in front of the dharma dhātu maṇḍala, and facing the temple of Avalokitesvara. To his left sit the five senior-most members of the saṅgha; the thakālī, the noko, and the next three eldest. On his right sit the thakālīs of three other bahās in the vicinity: Mahabodha Baha, Terhan Baha, and Saval Baha. They represent the three jewels: the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.

The candidates are seated in a semi-circle to the left of the five senior members of the saṅgha. They are arranged according to age and for all of the rites which follow they proceed according to seniority.

The ceremonies begin when the wife of the thakālī, known as the thakālī nakiñ, 'brings in the god Ganesh'. She first goes to the small Ganesh temple outside of the bahā and there 'attracts' the god into a kalaśa (water flask). This she brings in to the officiating priest who sets it up near the dharma dhātu maṇḍala.

In Newari this is called the inaya kalaśa (Sanskrit: Vinayaka kalaśa). After the usual introductory rites common to all vajrācārya pūjās, the Priest of Lokesvara performs the kalaśa pūjā.⁸ At the conclusion of this a group of musicians blow horns and play cymbals. The long ritual horns are called kahāl (or simply kā) in Newari and are blown by men of the farmer caste (iyāpū). The cymbals, called bhujāñ, are played by members of the butcher caste (kasaiñ). Then the candidates perform the pūjā of the guru maṇḍala step by step according to the instructions of the Priest of Lokesvara.⁹ The guru maṇḍala is a basic rite performed at the beginning of all vajrācārya pūjās, including the kalaśa and homa pūjās. The guru in question is Vajrasattva who is taken as the guru of all the vajrācāryas. Hence on this day the candidates are taught this basic rite which they will need for the rites on successive days and for any pūjās they may perform later. Many of the candidates, of course, are too young to understand what is going on or to follow the instructions of the priest, so they are assisted by a woman from their household who sits behind them and performs the rite with them or for them. The woman is usually their father's sister or their grandmother.

Next the thakālī goes along the line of the candidates, from eldest to youngest, and ties a tuft of hair at the crown of the head with a small piece of white cloth which contains a particle of gold. This is the basic preparatory rite for the shaving of the head the next day. At the conclusion of this the candidates light a small lamp next to the guru maṇḍala and perform pūjā to it. Then follow the concluding rites and blessings common to all such pūjās. Finally each of the candidates goes up to the Priest of Lokesvara and receives from his hand a tikā of rice and red powder. He then goes to the door of the temple of Avalokitesvara to pay his respects. This concludes the preparatory rites.

III The Bare chuyegu--'the making of the bare'. 28 Feb. 1975.

Bare chuyegu is the proper Newari term for the ceremonies of this day, and means literally 'the making of a bare'. Bare is a Newari version of the Sanskrit term vande, the term of respect used from ancient times for the Buddhist monk or bhikṣu. Hence the ceremony is the making of a bhikṣu. The Sanskrit term used in the text for these ceremonies is pravrajya. The term cūdā karma is also used both popularly and in some of the ritual texts, however it applies properly to only one part of the ceremony as will be evident below. The terms upanayana and vratibandha are also popularly used, even by the bares themselves; but they are not used in the texts I have seen, and are obviously used in analogy to the similar Hindu rites.

The ceremonies begin on this day at seven in the morning in a festive atmosphere. After ritual bathing and the paring of their nails at home the candidates are brought into the bahā where they take up their places in seniority as the day before, to the left of the elders of the saṅgha. They are still dressed in their ordinary street clothes, the top knot of their hair still tied with the piece of white cloth.

Again the Priest of Lokeshvara officiates with the five elders of the saṅgha seated on his left and the thakālis from the three other bahās on his right. In addition to the upādhyāya, several other assistants, some from Machindra Baha, some brought by the Priest of Lokeshvara, help with the performance of the rites. The pūjā arrangements are more elaborate than on the previous day and include all of the paraphernalia for the homa rite which are set up around the recessed rectangle between the dharma dhātu maṇḍala and the Kanaka Caitya. In addition to the main kalaśa set on the dharma dhātu maṇḍala, two other kalaśa are set up on the far side of the homa, one golden the other silver. These are required for ceremonies later in the day and the main kalaśa cannot be removed from the maṇḍala until the rites are completed. To the right of the Kanaka Caitya are a number of small earthenware pots filled with sacred water, one for each of the candidates, which will be used for the consecration of the bhikṣus. Off to the right of these are a number of brass plates set on tripods about eight inches in height which will be used to collect the hair cut from the candidates. To the side of these are baskets containing the monks' robes and ornaments which the candidates will don after their consecration. According to the rubrics the water in the earthenware pots should be brought from the 'four seas', but since this is impossible the water is brought from the Visnumati River, as is all the water used at the Machindra Baha for ritual purposes.

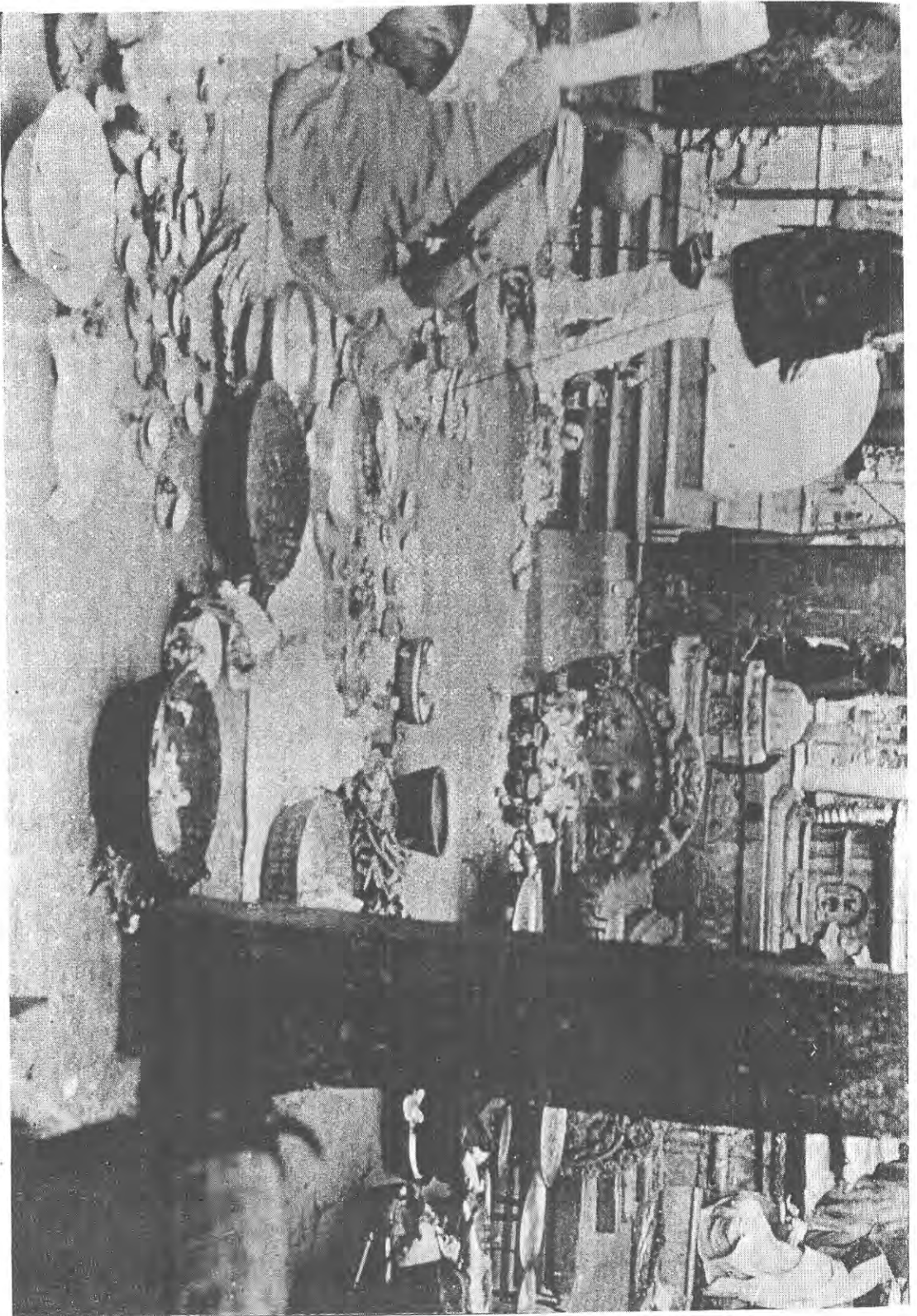
The ceremonies begin as on the previous day when the thakālī nakiṇ brings the inaya kalaśa from outside and it is set up next to the maṇḍala. The officiating priest then performs the guru maṇḍala, the kalaśa pūjā rite, and the ritual setting up of the fire for the homa rite. He then offers the prescribed grains into the fire as an offering to Avalokitesvara. These rites are all preparatory to the actual initiation ceremonies. For the sake of convenience I have divided the ceremonies of initiation into seven parts. Such a neat division does not actually exist in the text and as a matter of fact several of the ceremonies overlap because of the large number of candidates.

1. Guru maṇḍala and explanation of the meaning of pravrajya.

Under the direction of the Priest of Lokeshvara the candidates perform the guru maṇḍala rite as on the previous day. After they have concluded the main part of this rite the rubrics call upon the priest to explain to the candidates the meaning of the pravrajya.



Performing the guru maṅḡala rite on the day of the dusala
kriya. p.4



2. Pujā arrangements on the day of the bare chuyegu. The Priest of Lokesvara sits before the mandala and the homa fire. To the right are the baskets with the monks' robes and behind them the brass plates for the hair. In the background are the earthenware water pots for the consecration of the bhikṣū. p. 6

One of the assistants reads the texts in Sanskrit and Newari. The text explains that the rite of the pravrajya must be given by the acārya (i.e. vajrācārya) and his upādhyāya, as the bhikṣus do not know how to give it. It also explains that according to the teaching of the lord (Buddha) this pravrajya rite can be given to anyone, to ward off the five great sins. Then the candidates take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. 'I of such and such a name take refuge in the Buddha, who is foremost among all men, for my whole life.' The same is recited for the Dharma and the Saṅgha. Next the pañca śīla (the five rules of discipline) are read to the candidates:

- '1. I eschew all violence.
2. I eschew taking anything not given.
3. I eschew all lust (sexual pleasure) and all useless speculations on such questions as whether the world exists or not, whether there is rebirth or not, etc.¹⁰
4. I eschew all lying.
5. I eschew the drinking of alcoholic beverages, frequenting of places where such are sold, dance halls and the like.'

Next the candidates are to address the officiating priest: 'Oh acārya, please accept me of such and such a name and give me the pravrajya.' The same request is then addressed to the upādhyāya, 'Oh upādhyāya have mercy on me and come forward to give me the pravrajya.' After this the candidates officially conclude the rite of guru maṇḍala, and this concludes the first part of the ceremony.

2. Cūḍā karma--ritual cutting of hair.

First the upādhyāya goes along the line of the candidates and shows each a lamp. This is a common blessing called nirāṅjana and symbolises the dispelling of the darkness of ignorance. Next they are blessed with flowers and given a loin cloth to wear.¹¹ Then each candidate is given a small wicker plate on which are three small earthenware vessels, one containing a bit of unhulled rice, one containing salt, and one containing a bit of cooking oil. To the side of these is placed a lump of meat.¹² This he will present to the barber as payment for his services; at least some of them also presented money. Then the candidate accompanied by his elder sister, or his father's sister, is ritually welcomed by the thakālī nakiñ and led to the barber. The ritual welcoming, which is common to many Newar ceremonies, is performed in the following manner: the thakālī nakiñ holds in her right hand the key from one of those large Nepali locks. The candidate takes hold of the other end with his right hand and she conducts him to the barber. On the way to the barber the candidate is led to a

small stone, about the size and shape of the stone used to grind spices in a Nepali home, and steps on the stone with his right foot once. The stone was placed next to the Kanaka Caitya inside of a small circular area that had been ritually purified.¹³

Four barbers, two men and two women of barber caste, squat to the right, outside of the pūjā area. The barber first wets the hair of the candidate and then shaves his head except for the top knot (cūḍā) which is tied with the white cloth. The cut hair is dropped onto the brass plate held by the boy's sister (or his father's sister). When the barber is finished the sister takes the plate with the hair. It is her task to keep this hair in a safe place until the day when the candidates are released from their vows.¹⁴ She receives from the candidate a piece of cloth (about enough to make a blouse) as payment for her services. The candidate is then led back to his place in the line where he waits for the others to finish.

When all of the candidates have returned to their places they are sprinkled with the pañcagavya (the five products of the cow) by the upādhyāya. He then addresses them: 'As a result of the rites which have been performed you are now householders. It is not too late to change your mind. Do you really want to be bhikṣus and why?' They respond that they indeed want to be bhikṣus and request the pravrajya rite.

The comment of the priest and the rites themselves indicate the significance of this part of the ceremony. The giving of the loin cloth and the shaving of the head except for the top knot is the initiation rite for all of the Buddhist castes exclusive of the bare. In Newari this rite is called kayata cuyegu, 'the giving of the loin cloth'; in Sanskrit it is called mekhala bandhana, 'the tying of the loin cloth, or cūḍā karma, 'the top knot rite'. The term vratibandha is also popularly, but inaccurately, used.

3. The pravrajya--the ordination of the bhikṣu.

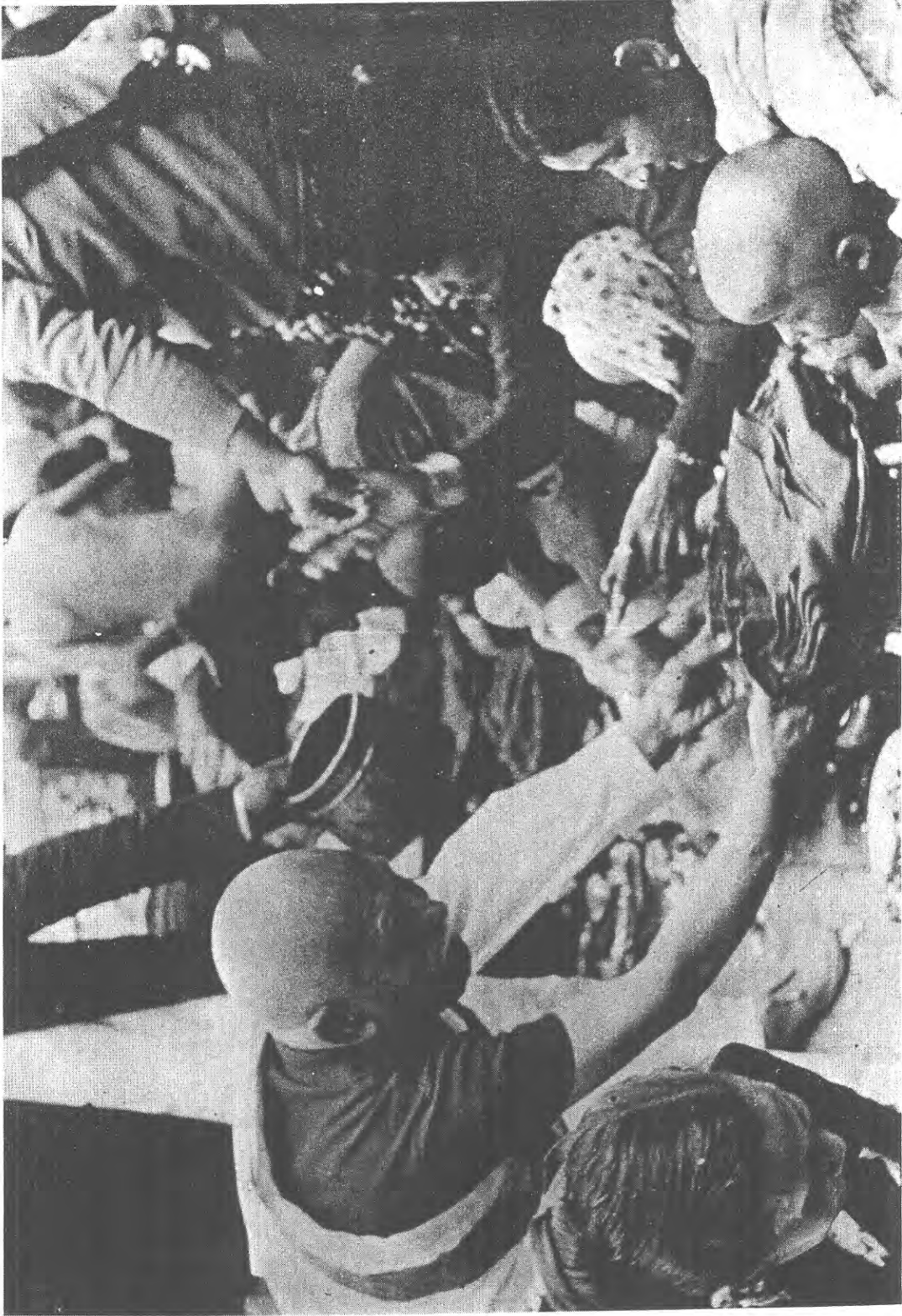
Next follows the actual ordination of the bhikṣu (pravrajyā-bhiṣeka). The text first requires the candidates to say: 'I of such and such a name reject the life of a householder; please give me the pravrajya.' The candidate is first stripped except for the loin cloth and then led to the front of the Kanaka Caitya. In front of the caitya is a shallow, rectangular hole in the ground called bāsiṅgā which is usually kept covered, and where flowers that have been offered to Avalokitesvara are thrown when the temple is cleaned. The hole is uncovered, the candidate steps down into the recession and stands upon an image of a nāga, with his back to the caitya and facing the temple. First, the thakālī cuts off his top knot with a small scissors one blade of which is silver the other gold.¹⁵ The hair is divided; the part with the white cloth is put on the brass plate and the rest is dropped into the bāsiṅgā. This cutting must be performed by the thakālī as the



The shaving of the candidate's hair; his father's sister catching the hair.



The consecration of the bhikṣu. (Pravrajyābhiṣeka)



5. Presentation of the monk's robes by the thakālī.

head of the saṅgha into which the boy is being initiated. Next, the Priest of Lokesvara pours water over the head of the candidate from a conch shell, followed by the thakali, the noko and the next two senior-most members of the saṅgha who pour water from the 'four seas' over the head of the candidate simultaneously. After this the thakali cuts off the loin cloth. At this point the horns are blown and the cymbals played again. The texts give nothing to be read or recited during these rites. The candidate then returns to his place in the line and waits until all the others have finished.

The significance of the rite is clear from the verse to be recited by the boys before the consecration: they are rejecting the state of the householder and embracing that of the bhikṣu. Further, the cutting of the top knot and the shedding of the loin cloth (the initiation symbols of the householder castes) signify the same rejection.

4. Investiture of the bhikṣu.

When all of the boys have completed the above rites, the thakali presents to each of them the basket containing his monk's robe and ornaments. Immediately they don the robes and put on the ornaments--two silver bracelets, a pair of ear rings, and a silver necklace.¹⁶ All of the robes were red except two which were saffron. Informants told me that red is the proper colour for monks who follow the mahayāna tradition. The texts speak both of civara (saffron) and kaṣāya (red). The boys will wear these robes and ornaments for the next four days.

As soon as they are all dressed one of the assistants to the Priest of Lokesvara moves down the line and gives each of the boys a saffron tika. The ritual texts give the following verse to be recited at this time: 'You are now a bhikṣu; you must not hanker after the life of a householder, a home, or such things. You must lay aside your household name. I will give you a new name, the name of a bhikṣu.' The text then gives a number of names to choose from, all names of the early disciples of Gautama Buddha. Informants told me that in former times the boy would discard his name and henceforth be known by the new name, but this is not done now. Immediately after this another assistant moves along the line and paints a saffron swastika on the head of each of the boys. Informants told me that this is a blessing to insure a happy and prosperous life.

Next the new bhikṣus perform the pūjā of the maṇḍalas of the three jewels: the Buddha maṇḍala, the Dharma maṇḍala, the Saṅgha maṇḍala.¹⁷ As with the performance of the guru maṇḍala they perform the pūjā according to the instructions of the Priest of Lokesvara. At the conclusion of this the 'taking of refuge in the three jewels' is repeated, and the daśa śīla, ten rules of discipline are read out. These include the five rules mentioned above plus injunctions against eating after midday, attending the

theatre or musical shows, use of garlands, perfumes, cosmetics and jewellery, use of lofty and luxurious couches, and the acceptance of gold and silver. Next the new bhikṣus perform the puja of the maṇḍala of Amoghapasalokesvara. There is no reference to this pūjā in the texts I have seen, and it is obviously an addition peculiar to the Machindra Baha where this is a common devotional exercise performed by a large number of people on the eighth day of the bright half of each month.

As soon as this pūjā is finished one of the five elders of the saṅgha goes along the line and presents each of the boys with a begging bowl, and another presents each with a staff (khilkhilika), a short staff about two and a half feet long painted red and surmounted with a wheel signifying the turning of the wheel of the dharma. The ritual texts give a verse to be recited by the priest and one by the boy at the presentation of the robe, the begging bowl, and the staff. At the conclusion they are supposed to say: 'We accept from you these three which represent the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha; we will observe the vows (vrata) and the rules of discipline.'

Following this one of the assistants of the officiating priest moves along the line with a vajra (ritual thunderbolt) in his right hand which he dips into saffron paste and touches the boy on the forehead, throat, and heart reciting the mantra Om, Āh, Hum, symbolising body, speech, and mind (kāya, vak, citta).¹⁸

While this rite is in progress each of the bhikṣus is presented with a ritual umbrella. Attendants bring up the umbrellas and stand behind the boys with the umbrellas over their heads for the rest of the ceremony. At the presentation of the umbrellas the horns are blown and cymbals played again. This completes the rite of investiture. The ritual texts give a prayer to be recited at the completion of this: 'May all those who have undergone this rite of pravrajya in the presence of the Buddha ever be victorious by the favour of the gods and the power of fire, water, air, sky, and the vital spirit as long as Mt. Meru stands, as long as the Ganga flows, as long as the earth, the sun, and the moon remain constant.'

5. Ritual entering of the temple.

The purpose of the next rite is to introduce the new bhikṣu into the main shrine of the saṅgha, the shrine of the kwāpā deo. At Machindra Baha, however, the boys are brought into the temple of Avalokitesvara, which only the initiated members of the saṅgha may enter. As a preparation for this entry one of the assistants to the officiating priest draws seven lotus flowers along the passageway leading into the temple and then consecrates these with a verse and water from the silver kalaśa which was wet up at the base of the caitya. These, I was told, represent the seven steps which legend says the Buddha took at his birth. Each bhikṣu is



The new bhiksús adorned with their robes and ornaments.



Ritual entry into the temple of Avalokitesvara.



7. Drawing of the swastika on the head of the bhiksus.

brought up to the first of these lotus flowers by the thakālī nakiñ. He steps into a pair of wooden sandals and the upādhyāya then hands to him the golden kalaśa which had been set up near the caitya. He is then led into the temple carrying the kalaśa and taking care to step onto each of the lotus drawings as he goes. Those who were too small to carry the kalaśa merely touched it and then were led or carried into the temple.

By the time this rite is completed the ceremonies have been going on for four and a half hours, and there is a recess of about half an hour while the boys are given a snack of milk and bread. For this they remain sitting in their places in line.

While this recess is in progress the thakālī, the noko and the three other senior-most members of the saṅgha perform the consecration and 'sending out' of the deśa bali. The bali is a protection rite, or propitiatory offering made to protect the rites and those participating in the rites from harmful spirits, deities, demons, etc. A bali is offered in connection with every pūjā performed. The deśa bali, however, is larger and more elaborate than most. A large pot is filled with cooked rice; herbs and flowers are stuck into it, bits of meat are put in to represent the parts of the body, flags are put in to represent air and fire, and the whole is surmounted with a picture of Bhairava. Other decorations may be added. The deśa bali is consecrated by the five elders pouring rice beer (jāñr) from earthen pots over it. It is then sent out of the bahā with a procession of musicians to be offered to the deities in the area round the bahā, especially to the deities at the crossroads. The name comes from the fact that this bali is sent around the 'country' (deśa). The purpose of this seems to be to propitiate the deities in the area through which the procession of the bhikṣus will pass at the end of the ceremonies in the bahā.

6. Wa-dāñ cyuyegu--'ritual offering of rice and money'.

The bhikṣu must beg his food each day and the next rite is the ceremonial offering of the first alms to the bhikṣu. A low basket is placed in front of each of the bhikṣus and a procession of people come along and offer unhulled rice and coins. The first to offer alms to each boy must be his mother's brother who offers him not only rice but also a tray containing a new set of clothes which he will don four days later. After the mother's brother anyone else who wishes may join the line of donors. At the end of the line the five elders of the saṅgha, and the others who have assisted in the ceremonies, also sit and receive alms.

At the conclusion of the alms-giving some of the rice is taken from each of the bhikṣus and thrown into the homa. Then follow the usual concluding rites of the kalaśa-homa pūjā. All remaining grain is offered in the fire. A five stranded string (representing the five transcendent Buddhas) is stretched from the main kalaśa on the dharma dhātu maṇḍala along the line to each of the

participants. This is followed by the chanting of mantras, showing of the light to each, blessing of each with a shower of flower petals, touching of each of the participants on the head with the instruments of the homa rite, and the offering of a stipend by the participants to the officiating priest. After this each of the bhiksús, is given a short five stranded string to tie round his neck. Finally, the noko performs the cakra pūjā, the offering of pūjā to all of the shrines and deities inside the bahā compound.¹⁹

7. Procession of the bhiksús.

As soon as the procession of the deśa bali returns, the new bhiksús get up to form a procession each carrying his alms bowl and staff, and walking under his umbrella. The procession is led by the Priest of Lokesvara and the bhiksús follow single file in seniority. Behind the bhiksús go the musicians and behind them relatives and friends. The procession goes round the temple of Avalokitesvara three times before going out into the street. On the first trip round, the Priest of Lokesvara offers a pūjā at each of the cardinal points of the compass (opposite the four doors of the temple). On the second trip around the temple he offers a similar pūjā at the corners of the temple.²⁰ At the conclusion of the third trip round the temple he offers a pūjā on the pavement just inside the door of the compound and another on a stone maṇḍala set into the pavement just outside the main door of the bahā on the street. The procession makes two left turns just outside the temple and proceeds straight to Bange Muda, from there to Indra Chowk and from there to Hanuman Dhoka by way of Makan Tole. At Hanuman Dhoka the procession enters the Nasal Chowk and each of the bhiksús offers pān and betel nuts to the throne of the king on the veranda in Nasal Chowk. This is a custom which goes back to the days of the Newar Kings and is a form of registration of the bare. This is a curious tradition as they were the only caste so required to be registered upon initiation. After the offering to the throne the procession returns to the bahā, where the bhiksús are welcomed with a ritual presentation of curds. This concludes the rites of the pravrajya and the boys are taken immediately to their homes. At the bahā there follows a feast for all those who have assisted in the rites. The feast is sponsored by the members of the saṅgha and specifically by the boys who have been initiated. However, their status as bhiksús does not allow them to partake in this feast so their place is taken by their mother's brother.

The boys are now bhiksús, and for four days they must live the life of Buddhist monks. They have to observe the regulations of diet, avoid contact with anything unclean and observe the ten rules of discipline. They have to go out each morning to beg their food. For this they must go to the houses of their mother's brother and their father's sisters. Beyond this they ordinarily go to the houses of any other relatives who call them. Usually they go to three or four houses each day.

IV Civara kote vidhi--'the rite of laying aside the monk's robe'.
2 March 1975.

Four days after the pravrajya rites the young bhikṣus return to the bahā for the ceremony of release from their state of monkhood and return to the state of the householder. The rite is called civara kote vidhi in Newari, 'the rite of laying aside the monk's robe'. In Sanskrit it is known as vratamokṣana, 'release from the vows'.

The rites of this day are all performed in the āgam of the Machindra Baha.²¹ Again the Priest of Lokesvara officiates. After the initial rites of the guru maṇḍala and the setting up of the kalaśa pūjā, the thakālī nakiñ ritually welcomes the young bhikṣus into the āgam. First they again perform the guru maṇḍala rite as on the previous two days. After this they address the Priest of Lokesvara and the upādhyāya, 'Oh guru, Oh upādhyāya, we find that it is too difficult to spend our whole life like this as sramaṇas.'²² The priest responds, 'If you find it too difficult to live as sramaṇas then live as householders. If you want heaven (svarga) you can obtain it by being a householder, but do not indulge in violence, do not tell lies, do not covet another's wife. If you avoid these things you will obtain heaven.'

They then put aside their monk's robes and don ordinary street clothes, the set of clothes presented to them by their mother's brother on the day of the pravrajya. Immediately the sisters (or father's sisters) of the boys come forward with the brass plate on which they have kept the hair which was cut from the boys on the day of the pravrajya. The priest blesses the plate with water from a conch shell, and they go out as a group to throw the hair in the Visnumati River.

There follow a series of tantric pūjās including the gana cakra pūjā, pañca śāli pūjā, tricakra samādhi, and the worship of Vajradevi. These are common tantric rites performed at āgam pūjās and are not specific to the rites of initiation. The only thing specific for the boys being initiated is the conferring of a mantra of Herukacakrasamvara. When the sisters return from the Visnumati River they are again taken up into the āgam to witness the ceremonies and receive prasāda. At the conclusion of the rites, which last most of the day, the now fully initiated bares receive a rice and red powder tika from the officiating priest.

With the completion of the 'laying aside of the monk's robes' the boys are now fully initiated members of the saṅgha of their bahā, and fully initiated members of the bare caste. This confers on them the right to take part in all the pūjās and gūṭhī feasts of their bahā, and to receive their share of income from the gūṭhī fund. Further, when the turn of their family comes round, they are entitled to act as deo pālā in the shrine of the kwāpā deo, in this case in the temple of Avalokitesvara (Seto Machindranath).²³ If a

boy should be the only surviving initiated male member of his family he must take his turn in the temple, or if too small to perform this function he can delegate the task to any other initiated member of the saṅgha. They are also entitled to act as priests during the annual chariot festival of Avalokitesvara. On the contrary, if they should fail to take the bare chuyegu they cannot take part in the life of the saṅgha, act as deo palā in the temple of Avalokitesvara, nor act as priests during the chariot festival. If a boy's father should die before the boy is initiated arrangements can be made by his mother for the initiation. Socially the initiation rite confers on a boy his caste status. He becomes a bare by caste with the full rights and privileges of his caste, most important of which is the right to marry a bare girl. If he should fail to take the initiation he becomes an udās, the caste of 'householders' ranked immediately below the bare. He cannot marry a bare girl and he is cut off from the society of the bares.

This concludes the initiation rites for all those of śākya caste, in this case thirteen boys. For those who are vajrācāryas one more day of initiation rites remains. However, for all of the rights and duties mentioned above, there is no differentiation made between śākya and vajrācārya. They are all equal members of the saṅgha of the bahā and all fully members of the bare caste. Office within the saṅgha of the bahā is conferred strictly by seniority irrespective of whether one is a śākya or a vajrācārya.

V Ācā luyegu--'the making of the [vajra] acārya.'

Ācā luyegu is a Newari term which means the making of the ācā (the Newari equivalent of the Sanskrit term acārya). In Sanskrit this rite is known as the pañcābhiṣeka, the 'five consecrations'. To understand the rites of this day and the way they are performed a word of explanation is needed about the vajrācāryas of Kathmandu.

All the vajrācāryas of Kathmandu claim ritual descent from one Santikar Acarya.²⁴ According to tradition he was the first man to receive the dikṣā (initiation) of a vajrācārya in the Valley of Kathmandu. He was initiated in a cave at Swayambhu and later turned that cave into a vajrayāna shrine where he erected a life-sized image of Herukacakrasamvara and his consort Vajravarahi. In this shrine (or āgam), which came to be known as Santipur in his honour, he initiated any others who wished to receive the dikṣā. Hence there grew up a saṅgha attached to this āgam. According to tradition he originally initiated anyone who had the inclination and was willing to undertake the study and yogic training necessary to receive the initiation. As time went on, those who had been initiated formed a higher sub-caste of bare, and it became the rule to initiate only sons of vajrācāryas. All vajrācāryas of Kathmandu are initiated into this vajrācārya saṅgha of Santipur and Herukacakrasamvara is the patron deity of all the vajrācāryas of Kathmandu.²⁵ Thus at present the vajrācārya saṅgha of Santipur (also

known as the saṅgha of the eighteen bahās) is made up of all initiated vajrācāryas of Kathmandu, about 2,200; and the governing body of this saṅgha consists of the thakālīs of the eighteen bahās in Kathmandu where there are vajrācāryas. In the case of a mixed bahā, such as the Machindra Baha, the eldest initiated vajrācārya fills this office. The eldest of these eighteen is the thakālī of the vajrācārya saṅgha. Once a year, on the eighth day of the dark half of the month of Caitra, (the day when Santikar is said to have received the dikṣā) there is a pūjā and gūṭhī feast for all the vajrācāryas of Kathmandu at Santipur. The eighteen thakālīs perform a pūjā inside of the Santipur āgam and all the other vajrācāryas and their families sit outside in the area around the shrine in bahā groups. Only the eighteen thakālīs are permitted to enter the āgam of Santipur. At the time of the annual gathering of the vajrācāryas all those who have been initiated within the last year are registered by presenting betel nuts and coins to the thakālī; and each of these new vajrācāryas performs a guru maṇḍala pūjā in front of the image of Aksobhya set into the Swayambhu Caitya.²⁶

It is the duty of the thakālī of the 'saṅgha of the eighteen bahās' to perform the ācā luyegu for all the vajrācāryas of Kathmandu. Since it is difficult for one old man (the present incumbent is over eighty) to attend all such rites he delegates this task to four others of the governing body. Each of these performs initiations in the name of the thakālī in one of the four areas into which the bahās of Kathmandu are divided. Machindra Baha falls in the central area and vajrācārya initiations there are performed by the eldest of these delegates.

On the day of the ācā luyegu all the rites are again performed in the āgam of the bahā. The officiating priest is the delegate of the thakālī of 'the saṅgha of the eighteen bahās.' The Priest of Lokesvara has no part to play in the rites of this day. To the left of the presiding priest sit the five elders of the saṅgha and to his right the thakālīs of five neighbouring bahās, the three mentioned above plus those from Makan Baha and Te Baha. They represent the five transcendent Buddhas. After the usual preparatory rites and the setting up of the kalaśa pūjā, the candidates are ritually welcomed into the āgam by the wife of the officiating priest. Once they are seated they perform the pūjā of the guru maṇḍala and the pūjā of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha maṇḍalas. Then they offer the maṇḍalas to the officiating priest and his wife, and offer obeisance (pādyādi) to the priest and his wife. There follows a meditation on Vajradhara and the candidates then formally request initiation of the presiding priest and his wife. Following this they are given the five consecrations (abhiṣeka) in order.

1. Kalasābhiṣeka (water-flask consecration), also called udakābhiṣeka (water consecration). The candidate is presented with a kalaśa as the priest recites a mantra. The kalaśa, of

course, is a basic implement for almost all of the pūjās the vajrācāryas perform. When this is finished the wife of the officiating priest presents the candidate with a pātra (a ritual bowl), such as is used in all tantric rites. She places it on his head and says: 'I consecrate you with the consecration of mahā-sukha of Vajrasattva.' This is called the pātrābhiṣeka (bowl consecration), though the two are taken together as one consecration.

2. Mukāṭābhiṣeka--the crown consecration.

The officiating priest next places the vajrācārya crown, surmounted by the images of the five transcendent Buddhas, on the head of the candidate, as he recites a mantra. The crown is worn whenever a vajrācārya performs any of the specifically vajrayāna rites.

3. Vajrābhiṣeka--vajra consecration

Next the candidate is presented with the vajra, or ritual thunderbolt, another implement used in all vajrayāna pūjās and the basic symbol of the school of Vajrayana Buddhism.

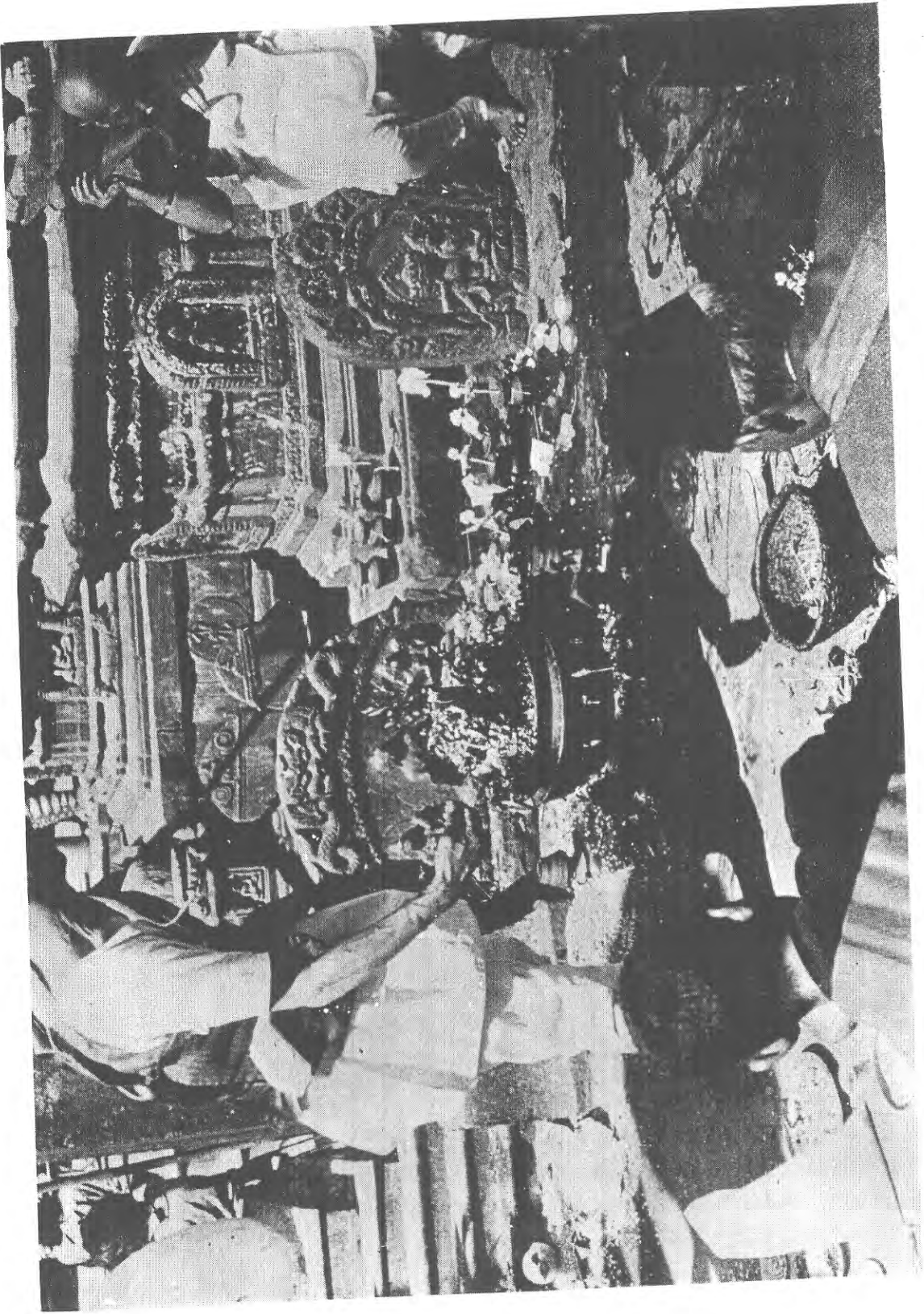
4. Ghaṇṭābhiṣeka--bell consecration.

Next the candidate is presented with the ritual bell, surmounted by a vajra. In all vajrācārya rites the priest uses the vajra and bell together, holding the vajra in his right hand and the bell in his left.

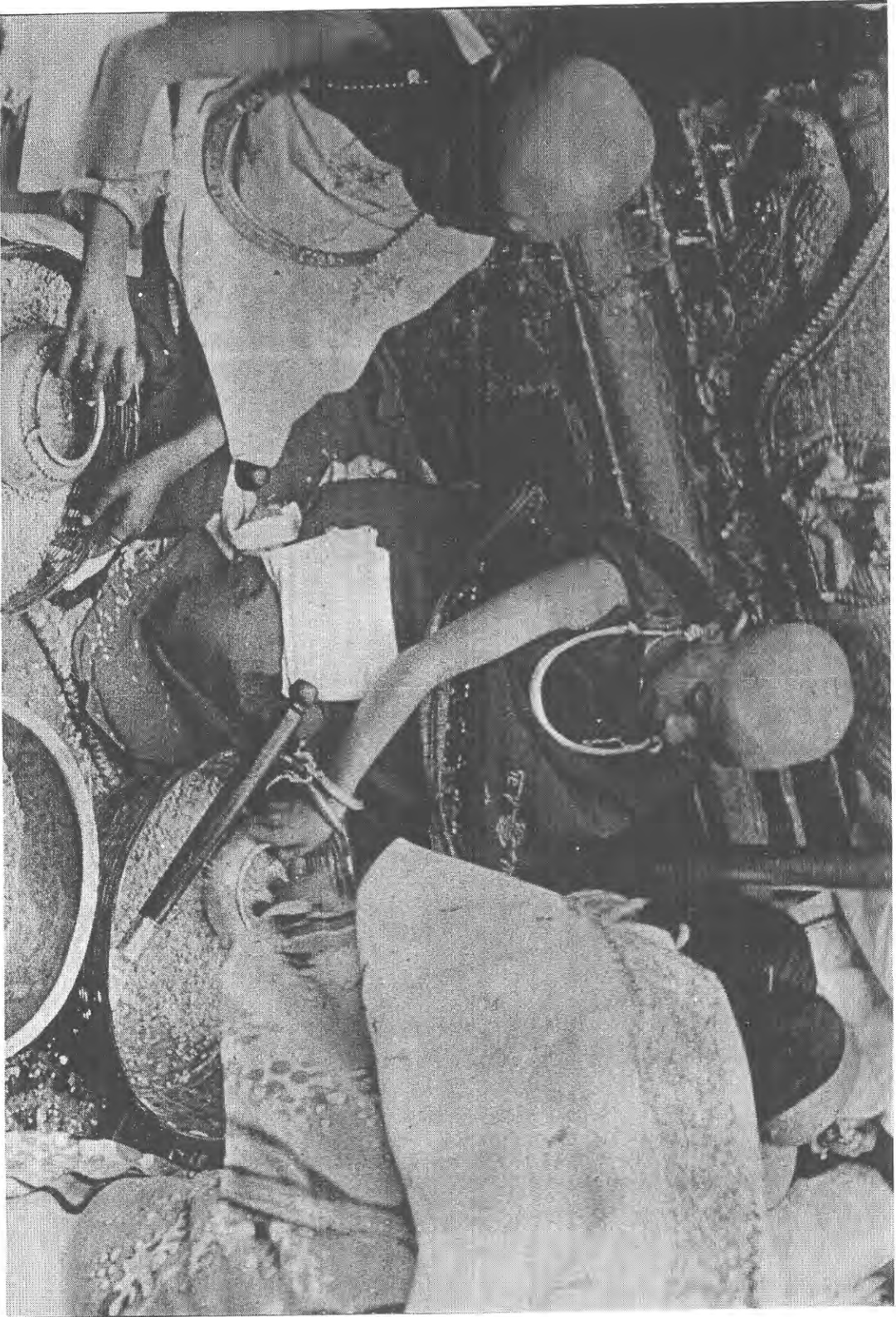
5. Mudrābhiṣeka--wisdom consecration (also called mātrābhiṣeka--mother consecration; prajñābhiṣeka--wisdom consecration; gūḷyābhiṣeka--the secret consecration).

This rite was originally the consecration of the tantric yogin with his consort, and symbolises the union of prajñā and upāya (wisdom and means), the female and male principles of vajrayāna philosophy. The candidates are presented with a flower garland and shown a picture of Herukacakrasamvara in union with his prajñā.²⁷

Following these five consecrations the candidates are given a mantra of Herukacakrasamvara, different from the one given them on the previous day, and told to recite it 108 times. Then the candidates are enjoined to strict secrecy about the details of the last consecration. If they break the secret they will meet destruction; if they keep it they will be defended by Vajrasattva. Informants tell me that since so much has now been written about the details of such tantric initiations, the injunction to secrecy is taken to refer to the mantra. The mantra is always passed from guru to disciple by word of mouth and never written down even in the ritual texts.



The desá bali.



Ritual offering of alms to the bhiksús.

On this day the candidates are also given a new name. First it is ritually determined to which of the families of the five transcendent Buddhas the candidate belongs, then a name is chosen for him from among the troupe of deities associated with that Buddha.²⁸

The ceremonies are brought to a close with the same series of tantric rites as on the previous day. A procession is then formed and the new vajrācāryas are taken in procession to Hanuman Dhoka where they make ritual offerings to the king as on the day of the pravrajya. Following this the new vajrācāryas are taken back to the Machindra Baha where each of them officiates for the first time at a kalaśa-homa pūjā in the courtyard before the temple of Avalokitesvara. Each of the boys performs the rites individually with an adult vajrācārya sitting across from him to instruct and guide him. In the case of small children some woman from their household sits behind them to guide them or perform the actions for them as with the guru maṇḍala rites on the previous day. Later at some convenient day the young vajrācārya is taken to one of the tantric pilgrimage places (piṭha) within the Kathmandu Valley to perform a kalaśa-homa pūjā there. He will be registered at the next annual gathering of the vajrācāryas at Santipur. Today not all vajrācāryas function regularly as priests; many have taken up other occupations or are in government service. However, they perform at least these few pūjās and share in the annual pūjās and gūṭhī feasts proper to vajrācāryas.

The whole of this rite of the 'five consecrations' is a much shortened form of the acārya dīkṣā rite which comprises fourteen consecrations and confers the full initiation into the secrets of tantric Buddhism. This initiation may be taken later in life by adult vajrācāryas, and many still do take the dīkṣā, but it is not compulsory. The purpose of the 'five consecrations' is twofold in the present context of Newar Buddhism. It ordains one a vajrayāna priest and gives him the implements of vajrayāna pūjā as well as the power to perform these rites. Secondly, it confers on him the caste status of a vajrācārya. Thus, the 'five consecrations' make one a member of the vajrācārya saṅgha of Santipur and confer on him the power and the right to act as a priest for the Buddhist families of the Newar community. The vajrācārya priest performs the life cycle rites for all of these people and can be called upon by them to perform such rites as the kalaśa and homa pūjās at their homes or at the various Buddhist shrines around the Valley. For example, if a family wishes they can call upon their priest to perform a kalaśa-homa pūjā at a shrine in any bahā if they have a special devotion to that deity. This is a common occurrence in such popular shrines as the Machindra Baha and the Hariti shrine at Swayambhunath. They are further empowered to perform the secret tantric rites in the āgam of their bahā or in their own home if they have such a shrine. There are, however, a few tantric rites, such as the acārya dīkṣā itself, which can only be performed by a

vajrācārya who has taken the full acārya dīkṣā. Socially the 'five consecrations' confer on one the caste status of a vajrācārya. Though this further restricts those from whom he can take food, it does not have the same full implications as the bare chuyegu, since vajrācāryas and śākyas freely intermarry. If the son of a vajrācārya should take the bare chuyegu but fail to take the 'five consecrations', he remains a śākya by caste. Though he retains full rights as a member of the saṅgha of his bahā, he may not act as a priest for others nor perform tantric rites in the āgam.

The whole complexus of these initiation rites presents a summary of the history of Buddhism in India and Nepal and an outline of the social structure of the Newar Buddhist community. The young vajrācārya is first ordained a bhikṣu in a rite which dates to the earliest times of Buddhism. He is introduced, however briefly and perfunctorily, to a number of the principal Mahayana texts and to the rites and rituals performed in the ancient Hinayana and Mahayana monasteries of India and Nepal. Finally he is ordained a Vajrayana Buddhist priest. Sociologically the young vajrācārya passes from the status of the uninitiated through the states of the 'householder' (or lay Buddhist) and that of the śākya to that of the vajrācārya.

Even such a brief survey of these rites shows their authentically Buddhist character. Some scholars have shied away from a study of Newar Buddhism claiming that it is a confused mixing of Hinduism and Buddhism. This is a totally erroneous impression. The rites and rituals described here all have their roots in the liturgies of Indian Buddhism. Even the tantric vajrayāna rites were developed and practised in the great Indian monastery-universities such as Nalanda, Vikramasila, and Odantapura. The religious and social life of the Newar Buddhist centers round the ancient bahās and a complexus of authentically Buddhist rites and rituals such as these initiation rites. The Newar Buddhists are as authentically Buddhist as were the clergy of the late medieval monasteries of India and their lay followers who practised the same rites and rituals. The vajrācāryas of Nepal, especially those who have made some study of Mahayana-Vajrayana Buddhism beyond the round of rituals they perform, have a clear understanding of their Buddhist tradition; and the laity, especially the udās, are Buddhist in their religious practice and devotions. Some of the laity, especially the farmer castes, do frequent temples of such deities as Durga and Bhairava, and have a number of Hindu or purely local festivals in their villages; but this too was surely the practice of the laity who patronised the Buddhist monks throughout the 1700 year history of Buddhism in India.

What is true is that both Hinduism and Buddhism share a common religious and cultural heritage which is shared alike by the Jains and the Sikhs--in a word by all the religious sects and movements which were born and have developed in the cultural milieu of the Indian subcontinent. Indian Buddhism was always a part of the



The Priest of Lokeshvara performs the last pūjā as the procession prepares to leave the bahā compound.

religious and cultural milieu out of which it grew and where it was practised. Throughout its history it adapted itself to its milieu, adopted new forms of worship and artistic expression, and developed new schools of philosophy to give these a distinctive Buddhist interpretation. The same was true in Nepal and the Newar Buddhists have further adapted their tradition to the milieu in which they live, most notably by the formation of a clergy that is a hereditary caste. The fact that Buddhism has survived among them for some 800 years since its disappearance in the rest of the Indian subcontinent is a testimony to the strength of Buddhism in the Valley of Nepal and the deep roots it has struck in its people.

Footnotes

1. I would like to express my gratitude to the bares of Machindra Baha who have been always helpful and unfailingly courteous to me over the past four years when I have been a frequent visitor to their rites and rituals. Most of all, though, I must express my gratitude to Manabajra Bajracharya whose comprehensive knowledge of the vajrayāna tradition and patience have enabled me to understand something of what was going on.
2. I have seen three manuscript copies of the rites of the bare chuyegu. One is undated, but about two hundred years old. The second, written in Newari Script, is dated NS 881 (1761 AD), and the third, written in Ranjana Script, is dated NS 825 (1705 AD). In all of these manuscripts the readings, recitations, mantras, etc. are written in Sanskrit with a Newari translation provided for the parts the candidates are supposed to recite or understand. The rubrics are written entirely in Newari. Though I did not have a chance to examine closely the texts actually used by the presiding priest, they appeared to be about the same age and were written in Newari Script.
3. Bare is the spelling of the term used in the texts, and, informants tell me, is the correct form of the word. The spelling (and pronunciation) bāñde, or bāñḍa seems to be a Nepali corruption of the term.
4. Michael Allen, 'Buddhism without monks: The Vajrayana Religion of the Newars of Kathmandu Valley,' South Asia, No. 3 (August, 1973) p. 1-14.
5. The image housed in the temple is a painted, two-armed image of the Bodhisattvā Avalokitesvara (or simply Lokesvara). The name Machindranath is never used by the Newar Buddhists associated with the temple. They refer to him as Lokesvara or, more commonly, as janabahā deo (or jamabahā deo), the god of Jana Bahā. The name jana (or jama) derives from the tradition that the image was found in a field by a farmer

(jyāpū) near Jamal Tole, roughly in the area where the new statue of King Mahendra stands. The jyāpū consulted his family priest about what to do with the image, and it was decided to house it in the Kanaka Caitya Mahavihara. The present 'Priest of Lokesvara', mentioned below, is supposed to be a descendent of this jyāpū 's priest, and to this day the descendents of the jyāpū (referred to as the jamalis) have a ritual part to play in the main festivals of Avalokitesvara.

6. The number eighteen is something of a fiction. According to tradition there were eighteen families originally attached to the bahā . Over the years some families have died out and their rights have been assumed by other families related to them. Other families have increased and now consist of several households, however they are still counted as 'one family' for ritual purposes. Thus some small families may have two or more 'turns' in the temple in an eighteen month period, and other large families may have only one. This also accounts for the discrepancy between the proportion of śākya and vajrācārya 'families', and the actual proportion of initiated members of the saṅgha .
7. On this day, and on all succeeding day, when the rubrics require that the candidates recite something, it is read out in Sanskrit and Newari by the upādhyāya or another assistant.
8. The kalaśa pūjā is the basic rite of worship used by the vajrācāryas . A kalaśa is set up on a maṇḍala , the deity to be worshipped is generated in the kalaśa by means of incantations, and then is worshipped with a series of offerings and recitations. The deity generated in the kalaśa varies depending on the occasion and the place where the pūjā takes place. However, the meditation (samādhi) at the beginning of the rite is always that of Herukacakrasamvara. Avalokitesvara was the deity generated in the kalaśa for all of the initiation rites which took place in front of his temple. The more elaborate form of this pūjā also includes the homa pūjā , the ritual fire. The entire text of this rite has been recently published in Sanskrit-Newari, Kalaśarcanādi-Homa-vidhāna-Pustakam , Amogh Bajra Bajracaryya (Ed), (Kathmandu, NS 1093--1973 AD).
9. The gurumaṇḍala rite has also been recently published by the Vahracarya Sangha of Kathmandu, Gurumaṇḍalārcana-Pustakam , (Kathmandu, NS 1092--1972 AD). To my knowledge these are the only two such ritual texts to have been published; the others exist only in manuscript form.
10. The pañca śīla of the Hinayana monks contains only an injunction against sexual pleasure for this rule. The rest of this is obviously a later addition and derives from the sahayayāna tradition. Confer, Buddhism, An Outline of Its Teaching and Schools , Hans Wolfgang Schumann (London, 1973), p. 164.

11. The rubrics require the investiture of the loin cloth (mekhala) here, but, as a matter of fact, those who wore it had put it on before they came. Some of the babies did not have a loin cloth at all
12. The meat placed on the plate was a bit of buffalo lungs. Informants insist that it must be lungs, but I was unable to find any explanation for this insistence.
13. This rite is not mentioned in the texts and no one could offer any explanation for it. Some speculated that the grinding stone symbolises the life of a householder and that by stepping on it the candidate signifies his rejection of the life of a householder. If so, the rite is a bit out of place at this point.
14. The texts make no mention of this rite of keeping the hair and informants could offer no explanation other than the popular belief that if the hair is not kept, the boy cannot reject the life of the bhikṣu and return to the state of the householder. Contrary to what Greenwold found at Bungamati, there are no pūjās to be performed to the hair. She merely has to keep it safe. (Confer 'Monkhood versus Priesthood in Newar Buddhism,' Stephen Greenwold, in The Anthropology of Nepal, Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, Ed. (London, 1975), p. 136.)
15. Actually the thakālī only touched the top knot with the scissors, it was then shaved off by an assistant with a safety razor.
16. There seems to be some confusion about the ornaments. These are the ornaments I saw given. However, informants told me there should be two more, a crown and a girdle, and that the five symbolise the five transcendent Buddhas. The texts merely state that ornaments are given.
17. This pūjā of the three maṇḍalas is not part of the pravrajya rite proper, but a rite common to many pūjās and devotional exercises. Each maṇḍala contains the names of nine 'deities'. The Buddha maṇḍala contains the names of the five transcendent Buddhas and the consorts of all but Vairocana, who occupies the centre position in the maṇḍala. The Dharma maṇḍala contains the names of the nine works that all vajracāryas recognise as their fundamental texts (called in Sanskrit the navavyākaraṇa): Prajñāpāramita, Gaṇḍavuyha, Daśabhūmisūtra, Samādhirājasūtra, Laṅkāvatārasūtra, Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra, Tathāgataguhyā, Lalitavistara, Suvarṇaprābhāsaśūtra. Except for the Tathāgataguhyā (i.e. the Guhya-samāja Tantra) which is one of the earliest of the Buddhist tantras, all the others are standard Mahayana treatises. According to tradition it used to be necessary for one to master all of these

texts before presenting himself for the vajracārya dīkṣā mentioned below. The Saṅgha maṇḍala contains the names of nine Bodhisattvas.

18. This is the rite used to bring life into an image in the pratiṣṭha vidhi, confer Tibetan Painted Scrolls, Guiseppe Tucci (Rome, 1949) Vol 1, p. 315. It is also used in the kalaśa pūjā when the priest places the vajra on the kalaśa and recites the mantra 1,000 times. For an explanation of these three terms as systematic analogies confer The Buddhist Tantras, Alex Wayman, (London, 1973) pp. 30-31, and 36 ff.
19. These concluding rites as well as the nirāñjana, the pūjā of the guru maṇḍala, the three maṇḍalas of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, the maṇḍala of Amoghapasalokesvara, the kāya-vāk-citta rite, and the deśa bali rite are all vajrayāna rites common to all such ceremonies. Everything which is specific to the pravrajya rite derives from the Hinayana tradition and duplicates the initiation of the Hinayana bhikṣu.
20. Free standing temples such as the temple of Avalokitesvara are an architectural representation of the maṇḍala of the deity, and this rite is obviously a maṇḍala pūjā to the deities of the maṇḍala of Avalokitesvara.
21. Since the rites of the last two days are performed in the āgam where entry is forbidden to all except the initiated bares of the saṅgha and their wives, I was not able to witness these rites. The information here I have obtained from informants and from the ritual texts used for these rites.
22. Sramaṇa is a term used from the earliest days of Buddhism as a synonym for bhikṣu. It indicates an ascetic and was used in contradistinction to brāhmaṇa.
23. Each of the 'eighteen families' sends one of their initiated members to serve for a month at a time in the temple as deo pālā; there is thus an eighteen month cycle of turns of service.
24. Santikar is said to have been a prince named Pracanda Deva from the kingdom of Gaur, now within the Nepal terai. Santikar is his initiation name. He is said to have received his initiation from one Gunakar Acarya who was a siddha and who had thus by his own yoga attained all the powers of a vajracārya.
25. Though Herukacakrasamvara is the patron of all vajracāryas of Kathmandu the deity enshrined in the āgam of a bahā may be another tantric deity such as Hevajra. The deity enshrined in the āgam of Machindra Baha is, in fact, Herukacakrasamvara.

26. Kathmandu vajrācāryas tell me that originally all vajrācāryas of the Valley belonged to the āgam of Santipur, but after the division of the Valley into three separate kingdoms those of Patan and Bhaktapur drifted away. Whether this explanation would be accepted by vajrācāryas of Patan and Bhaktapur, I do not know; but there is no similar āgam sañgha in Patan or Bhaktapur.
27. The texts relate each of the five consecrations to one of the five transcendent Buddhas. Each of the consecrations is thus supposed to confer on the candidate the type of knowledge associated with the respective Buddha and protect him from the evil associated with him. The arrangement of the transcendent Buddhas in this rite, however, is different from that used for the Buddha maṇḍala where Vairocana occupies the centre place. Here Aksobhya occupies the centre place, an arrangement derived from the Guhya Samāja Tantra, cf. Guhyasamāja Tantra, Benoytosh Bhattacharya, Ed., G.O.S. # 53 (Baroda, 1967) p. 7.
28. The rite for determining the family one belongs to seems to differ from bahā to bahā. At the Machindra Baha the family is determined by the colour of the boy's skin, thus if he is dark Aksobhya (blue), if very light Vairocana (white), etc; and this is, in fact, the method described in the Hevajra Tantra, cf. Hevajra Tantra, D.L. Snellgrove (London, 1959) Part I, p. 118-19.