

BUDDHIST MONKS OR KINSMEN OF THE BUDDHA? REFLECTIONS ON THE TITLES TRADITIONALLY USED BY ŚĀKYAS IN THE KATHMANDU VALLEY

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1. Introduction¹

Together the Śākyas and Vajrācāryas of the Kathmandu Valley form the sacerdotal caste of Newar Buddhism. For other Newars they provide two principal services: as priests and as (married) monks. They provide family-priests (*purohit*) for Newars who do not use Brahmans. At the same time, like Brahmans, they act as a holy order, the recipient of auspicious *dāna* (alms) given by the Newar Buddhist laity, and they are the guardians of monastic complexes patronized by the Newar Buddhist laity. In other words, they act as monks. Only Vajrācāryas may become family-priests. But where the second function is concerned, the two groups, Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, are on an equal footing: both are members of monasteries (*bāhāḥ* and *bahī*, honorifically called *viḥāra*) and both equally act as monks, i.e. recipients of alms, on the requisite occasions (e.g. the festivals of Pañcadān and Samyak).²

¹ This article is adapted from my doctoral thesis (Gellner 1987a), which was based on two years' fieldwork in Nepal (1982-4) funded by a Leverhulme Trust Study Abroad Studentship.

² On the organization of Newar Buddhism see Locke (1980, 1985), Allen (1973), Greenwold (1974a, 1974b), Lienhard (1984, 1985) and Gellner (1987a, 1987b, 1988b). On Pañcadān and Samyak see H. Sakya (1979) and Gellner (1987a: 290-302).

Only Śākya and Vajrācāryas may be monks like this. Only the sons of Śākya and Vajrācārya men by Śākya and Vajrācārya mothers may become members of a Monastic Community (*saṅgha, sam*) by passing through the ritual of Monastic initiation in a Newar Buddhist monastery.³ The members of a Newar Buddhist monastery are therefore a patrilineal descent group, or a collection of such groups. By means of this controlling criterion -- initiation in a recognized monastery -- the role of part-time Buddhist monk within the institutional framework of Newar Buddhism is restricted to Śākya and Vajrācāryas. The role of the permanent, and permanently celibate, monk or nun is open neither to them nor to any other Newar. In the past those with a vocation for it joined the Tibetan monastic orders. Nowadays there is also the increasingly popular option of Theravada Buddhism.⁴ But the traditional institutions of Newar Buddhism provide for no such role.

This is perceived as a serious weakness by outsiders, many of whom have been overzealous in their denunciations of Newar Buddhism. For the most part such criticisms have ignored the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna ideological and ritual structure of the Newars' tradition.⁵ Nonetheless it would be quite wrong to suppose that the Newar Buddhist tradition itself reveals no awareness of a lack or a shortfall in its practice. In fact its myths are apologetic about the absence of monks, ascribing this to forced laicization by the Hindu reformer, Śaṅkara Ācārya.

In this context it is particularly relevant and interesting to look at the honorific titles traditionally used by Śākya, since such titles are generally an important indicator of ideological claims. Thus, we shall find that although descent determines the practice of Śākya and Vajrācārya self-recruitment, it plays only a partial and ambivalent role in their self-image.

2. Five titles used by Śākya

Those who today call themselves Śākya in the past used at least five different titles. Today apart from rare self-conscious archaism, these titles are used only in a

³ On this ritual see Locke (1975) and Gellner (1988a). In the liturgy it is called *pravrajyāvratā*, 'the Observance of Going forth'; very colloquially it is called *bare cyuyegu* 'beginning to be a Bare [i.e. monk or Śākya]'; most commonly Śākya and Vajrācāryas themselves refer to it using the euphemism *cūḍākarma*, 'tonsure'.

⁴ On the recently introduced Theravāda movement see Kloppenberg (1977), Gellner (1986: 129-37) and Bechert and Hartmann (1988).

⁵ I have outlined my view of this in Gellner (1987a, 1988b). Cf. Allen (1973).

liturgical context, i.e. when the family-priest of the person in question is reciting their name at the beginning of a ritual. The following traditional surnames are found (non-honorific equivalents are given in parentheses):

- (i) Śākyavaṃśa (Bare): 'of the Sakya lineage'.
- (ii) Śākyabhikṣu (Bare): 'Buddhist monk'.
- (iii) Brahmācārya Bhikṣu (Bhikhu Bare): 'celibate monk'.
- (iv) Bauddhācārya/Buddhācārya (Bare): 'Buddhist preceptor'.
- (v) Cailaka Bhikṣu (Cibhā Bare): 'caitya monk'.

Śākyavaṃśa/Śākyabhikṣu/Bhikṣu Of these five titles only 'Śākyavaṃśa' emphasizes descent. 'Śākyabhikṣu' means 'Śākya monk' and hence 'Buddhist monk', the Śākyas being the ethnic group into which the Buddha was born. Śākyavaṃśa means 'of the Śākya lineage'. One of the most cited origin-myths of the (Newar) Śākyas says that they are the survivors of the Buddha's ethnic group who migrated to Nepal from Kapilavastu. This myth, and the name, Śākyavaṃśa, simply cash a metaphor going back to the time of the Buddha himself, according to which Buddhist monks (*śākyabhikṣu*) are the sons or kinsmen of the Buddha (*śākyavaṃśa*). In the Pali canon Buddhist monks are referred to as *samaṇa sākyaputtiya*, 'renouncer who is a son of the Śākyas'. Some of them were literally 'sons of the Śākyas', i.e. of the Śākya ethnic group, but many were not, and to them the title was extended as a metaphor. 'Bhikṣu', monk, is simply an abbreviated or unmarked form of 'Śākyabhikṣu', and it equally implies a Buddhist allegiance.

The Mahāvastu, originally a Lokottaravāda text and now part of the Mahāyāna canon, evolved a whole origin legend of the Sakya ethnic group, tracing their descent from five brothers, sons of the king of the Ikṣvāku.⁶ They are deprived of their rightful inheritance and settle down where they meet the sage Kapila. Hence their city, which soon flourishes, is called Kapilavastu, and they are called Śākya because of the teak (Skt. *śaka*) trees they use for building it. This tradition is used by local *paṇḍits* (Vajracharya A. K. 1977: 46-51) but its stories are known by few others today and do not form part of the popular explanation of the (Newar) Śākyas' identity.

There was a separate ancient tradition (preserved in several of the later Vinaya and Jātaka texts) that the Śākya ethnic group was massacred towards the end of the Buddha's life, and, in some versions, the survivors are said to have fled elsewhere. Bareau has summarized the evidence and he concludes that this story was invented at the beginning of the second century B.C.E. in order to account to Buddhist pilgrims for the poverty of

⁶ For a summary see Mitra (1971: 119-20). The myth is clearly an attempt to adapt the Rama story to Buddhism and ascribe his illustrious solar descent to the Buddha.

Kapilavastu and its surroundings (Bureau 1981:73). The Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins states that some of the Śākyas fled to the west, while others -- all those related to Ananda -- fled to Nepal. Levi (1905 III:184) thinks that the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya may well have been redacted in Nepal itself, some time after the third century C.E. It cannot be later than 700 C.E. when it was translated into Chinese (ibid. II:64), which shows that the tradition that there were Śākyas living in the Kathmandu Valley is at least 1300 years old.

During an optional performance of Pañcadān in Kathmandu a man of the painter (Citṛakār) caste who had come to make his own offerings, told me: "We worship the Vajrācāryas and Śākyas because they are the sons of the Buddha," a statement in which the ambiguity of metaphor and literal meaning is perfectly preserved. The Newari term, *bare*, itself derives from the Sanskrit, *vandya*, venerable, a term used to address monks (Hodgson 1972 I:51). The Vajrācāryas share this monastic status, but thanks to a further initiation, known as *ācāḥ luyegu* (Skt. *ācārya-abhiṣeka*), 'the Consecration of a Vajra-master', attain a priestly status in addition to it. This is why high-caste Hindus refer to Vajrācāryas and Śākyas indiscriminately as 'Bare'. Indeed, in contexts other than that of the priesthood, particularly in the running of monasteries, no distinction is made between Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, as we have already noted.

Brahmacarya Bhikṣu 'Brahmacarya Bhikṣu', the third term listed above, is used exclusively by members of the Lalitpur (Patan) *bahī* and emphasizes their self-image as the inheritors of the traditions of the last truly celibate monks of the Valley. This claim of the *bahī*, as well as the overall contrast between *bāhāḥ* and *bahī*, has been described elsewhere (Locke 1985:185-9; Gellner 1987b). The general adoption of this title in Lalitpur seems to have occurred only in the nineteenth century.

Bauddhācārya. 'Bauddhācārya' or 'Buddhācārya', like 'Vajrācārya', emphasizes learning and spiritual attainment. It is not a title found in Lalitpur. It is used by many, though not all, of the Śākyas of Bhaktapur and the nearby settlements of Sankhu and Panauti.⁷ In Kathmandu it is used by two groups who receive the Consecration of a Vajra-master but are considered by other Vajrācāryas not to be of the same status. These are firstly the members of Syaṅgu Bāhāḥ, who hold the rights to act as god-guardians of the famous Hariti temple next to Svayambhu *stūpa* (Locke 1985:397), and secondly the members of Makhan Bahī, who act as priests for the members of the Kathmandu Bahī. Thus R. K. Vajracharya (1980:18) writes that the Śākyas of Makhan Bahī in Kathmandu are known as 'Buddhācārya' because their elder has the right to perform Monastic Initiation for *bahī* members by carrying out a flask worship: "Those who are not Buddhācārya have

⁷ Locke (1985: 441, 451, 468, 472). He cites a manuscript colophon of the seventeenth century which shows that the title is not a recent one.

no right to perform rites using the bell and *vajra*" (cf. Locke 1985:375-6). The equivalent priest of the *bahī*-monasteries in Lalitpur, who also performs such rites with a Flask Worship (and without a Fire Sacrifice), is supposed to call himself a 'Bhikṣu-ācārya', though in fact, I believe, he now uses the title 'Vajrācārya' (Gellner 1987b).

Cailaka. The final term, Cailaka, actually derives from Skt. *cela* which refers to the monk's robe. It is interpreted nowadays to mean, as its Newari equivalent, *cibhā bare* does indeed mean, a 'caitya monk', i.e. a monk who was initiated at a *caitya*. The monks of Michu Bahah, immediately behind Kwā Bāhāḥ, are of this sort.⁸ But even traditionally they preferred to call themselves 'Śākyavamsā'.

The probable reason for this reluctance to embrace the name 'Cailaka' with pride is that the title has subtle connotations of inferiority, just as, in a rather different way, its colloquial equivalent, *cibhā bare*, also has (see below). In some of the local scriptures of Newar Buddhism, such as the Mañjuśrī Pārājika, several types of monk are listed: Cailaka, Śrāvaka (often confused with Śramaṇera), Bhikṣu, Arhat and Vajrācārya. Lists and schemes vary, but there is clearly meant to be a hierarchy.⁹ The relationship of these schemes to actual practice may never have been very close; but nonetheless they had sufficient authority for those whom tradition designated as Cailakas to avoid the term in non-liturgical contexts.

Śākya or Vajrācārya men who have sons by lower-caste women may arrange for them to be given Monastic Initiation at a *caitya* (since they will not be permitted to receive it in their father's *bāhāḥ* or *bahī*). They are also called *cibha barē*, *caitya* monk. However though the offspring of such a marriage may claim the status of a Śākya this is unlikely to be accepted and he will usually be absorbed into the caste of his mother. Although the members of Michu Bāhāḥ are also called *cibhā bare*, they are explicitly not of this sort. Nonetheless, they may feel, for this reason also, that the term Cailaka is to be avoided.

Recently there have been two new developments. Certain monasteries in Kathmandu, those in which it is not the custom to initiate all new boys together once a year, or once every few years, have started to allow sons of members to be initiated even if their mother is not a Śākya or a Vajrācārya. These boys, while allowed into the shrine

⁸ In fact Michu Bāhāḥ does possess a main deity like other monasteries but this was evidently established later than its large and impressive *caitya* (Locke 1985:52). For the myth of origin of Michu Bāhāḥ and its relation to Kwā Bāhāḥ, see Gellner (1987b: 37-8).

⁹ cf. Hodgson (1972^oI:69). He also noted the actual divisions existing in his time: "Vajra Achāryas, Bhikshukas, Śākyavamsikas, and Chivaha Bares" (ibid.: 145, fn.).

of the principal deity (*kwāḥpāḥdyah*), may not enter the Tantric shrine, nor may they become elders of the monastery. Those monasteries where new members are always initiated in a group have not permitted this practice. An alternative strategy has been to set up a new monastery for such boys, though this has been done only once to my knowledge.¹⁰ In Lalitpur, which is more conservative in such matters than Kathmandu, such moves have been much discussed but not as yet adopted.

The offspring of the hypergamous unions of Buddhist men are also known, in Lalitpur, as *Urāy*. In Kathmandu this is the Newar name of the large and influential lay Buddhist caste, the *Tulādhar* et al., which has no equivalent in Lalitpur or Bhaktapur. It seems therefore extremely likely, as indeed certain informants assert, that some at least of the *Tuladhar* et al. caste descend ultimately from similar unions.

3. The gotra of Śākya and Vajrācāryas

It is instructive to compare Śākya's traditional titles to another term which has likewise been subject to tension between an achieved interpretation and an ascribed (inherited) interpretation, namely the *gotra*. The *gotra* is primarily a Brahmanical institution: every Brahman belongs to one of seven or eight exogamous *gotras* named after and supposedly descended from seven or eight ancient Indian sages, and Brahman priests prefer the Sanskritic idiom of *gotra*-exogamy for talking about all marriage rules.¹¹ However as Basham (1967:155) remarks, this institution was adopted only "rather half-heartedly by other twice-born classes."

¹⁰ Cunda Vajracharya records that in February 1979 thirty-four mixed caste boys from Kathmandu, the sons of Vajrācārya and Śākya fathers, were given Monastic Initiation "as *Cibhā Bare*" at a monastic shrine in Teku Doban, and a death association (*śi guthi*) was also set up for them. In the past, she says, they would have been initiated as *Tulādhar* [i.e. *Urāy*] or as *Walaḥ*, a term she glosses as 'Vajrācārya *lawat*' [i.e. the offspring of a Vajrācārya father and a lower-caste mother] (Vajracharya C. 1983: 10-11). *Walaḥ* or *Balaḥ* (Joshi 1987:416b) is evidently an abbreviation of the two words 'Vajrācārya' and *lawat*. Some observers have used the term 'illegitimate' for the offspring of mixed-caste unions. One should however bear in mind that what makes them 'illegitimate' (*mathāyapim*) is not absence of a state marriage, a concept unknown in traditional Nepal, but the caste status of their mother. Traditionally children by wives of the same caste had full inheritance rights, whether there was a full marriage ceremony or not, provided only that the bride had performed the ceremony of giving areca nuts to the husband's relatives, whereas children by lower-caste wives did not.

¹¹ The number of *gotras* encountered 'on the ground' is in practice much greater than seven or eight (Bennett 1983; 32 fn. 10).

In Nepal *gotra*-exogamy is normally observed by Parbatiyā Chetris (Bista 1972:39; Bennett 1983:17), but is ignored by Newars, including Newar Brahmins (Toffin 1984: 393). The reason why Newars ignore it is simply that all members of most endogamous castes belong to one *gotra*: its only significance is that it is included by priests performing a ritual specification of the patron's name and the intention of the rite (*saṃkalpa*).¹² Śākya and Vajracāryas are usually called *gautamagotrappaṇṇa* (born of the *gotra* of Gautama), the Josīs are 'of the Mānava *gotra*', and both Śreṣṭhas and Maharjans 'of the Kāśyapa *gotra*'. Gautama is one of the eight ancient Brahman sages, but it was also the *gotra* name of Lord Buddha. Members of Cikaṃ Bahī however told me that they are not Gautama *gotra* but Mānava *gotra* because they are descended from one of the Brahman disciples of Sunaya Śrī Miśra (Gellner 1987b:28-8). In practice these identifications have no importance; the idea that *gotras* should be exogamous is conspicuous by its absence.

Originally the term *Buddhagotra* was a metaphor, like 'son of the Buddha', for those who followed the Buddha's teachings. Later the term *gotra* has developed to mean the moral and spiritual inheritance from one's previous lives which determined whether one could achieve bodhisattvahood or not (Dayal 1970:52; Snellgrove 1987:111-12). Thus the stress was on descent from oneself in past lives. Evidently if Śākya and Vajracāryas are to have a *gotra* like all other clean-caste civilized South Asians, the Gautama *gotra* is most convenient; it can be read as thoroughly Buddhist and as a Brahmanical concept. At the same time it is consistent both with the claim of being descended from the Buddha's ethnic group and with the claim to be Buddhist monks.

4. Historical evidence about Śākya titles

When the five Śākya surnames given above were all in use, 'Śākyaṃśā', and 'Śākyaḥikṣu' were by far the commonest. Unfortunately present-day informants, apart from explaining what the terms mean, cannot say what their significance was: did some families use one, and some the other? Did they refer to different stages of life? Burleigh (1975:39) records an inscription of 1673 from I Bahī in which the grandfather is called Śākya, his son Brahmācārya Bhikṣu, and his son Bhikṣu. Burleigh confines himself to the -- by now hackneyed -- conclusion that this shows the corruption of local Buddhism. But do these different titles in different generations reveal some systematic spiritual and/or social progression? A general review of the inscriptional evidence permits some preliminary answers to these questions.

¹² With Newar Brahmins, the reason is different. They have different *gotras* but are so few in number that if they observed *gotra*-exogamy they would be unable to marry at all (Toffin forthcoming).

Table I shows the caste names given in eighty-three inscriptions collected in Kwā Bāhāḥ.¹³ The first thing which it shows is that, even in the Malla period (i.e. before 1769), castes other than Śākya and Vajrācāryas only made one third of the donations. Secondly, however, in line with the decline of support for Buddhism ushered in by the new regime, this fell after 1769 from one third to less than one sixth of the total. This is certainly an appreciable decline, but to my mind it supports the hypothesis that Buddhist decline did not represent a radical break but was rather a gradual process reflecting the new, more centralized political conditions under the Shah dynasty.

	1409*-1768	1769-1985
Neither Vajrācārya nor Śākya (Bhāro, etc.)	15	6
Vajrācārya	5	9
Śākya	9	8
No caste name given, presumed Śākya	7	8
Large group, no cast name, presumed Śākya and/or Vajrācārya	9	6
Others	0	1
Total	45	38

*of these all but two are post-1600

Table I: Numbers of inscriptions before and after 1768 in Kwā Bāhāḥ according to caste of donor.

¹³ My collection includes all the stone inscriptions that were legible (but not that over the main entrance) and all the copper-plate inscriptions hung on the walls. Of the rest -- those on deities, tympana, banners, inside shrines etc. -- only a few to which I had access are included. Kwā Bāhāḥ possesses numerous copper plates and birch-bark land documents, as well as some other lists which record donations to the monastery. When these have been studied and published by local scholars such as Hemraj Sakya it may be necessary to revise the tentative conclusions presented here. In the inscriptions and records discussed here it is clear that Śākyas and Vajrācāryas do not normally call themselves 'Bhāro': those who do so have personal names, such as Rām, Kṛṣṇa and Gopāl, which are never used by Śākyas and Vajrācāryas. Rajvamshi (1983:35) has published one document, dated N.S. 660 (1540) from Kathmandu in which the name, Bhikṣuvamśa Vandhavasimha Bhāro, occurs. Such a conjunction is however clearly very rare; in this case it is possible that *bhikṣuvamśa* refers to the son of Śākya by a lower caste wife, just as *pātravamśa* used to be used as a title by the sons of similar unions on the part of noble families. The equivalence of Bhāro and Sreṣṭha is explicitly stated in one of the documents preserved in Hodgson's Papers (Vol. 60, p. 135): "Bhāro bhani Sreṣṭhako vevastā".

Other conclusions one may draw from Table I are as follows. The level of Śākya and Vajrācārya support has remained constant; not surprisingly, members of Kwā Bāhāḥ have remained loyal to it. On the question of surnames, not a single instance of 'Śākyabhikṣu' is to be found: in about half the cases the name 'Śākyavaṃśa' is used, and in the other half no caste name is given, but the context, particularly the name and *twā* (locality) of the donor, suggests that he is a Śākya. Another group of inscriptions consists of those made by large groups; in these no surnames are given but we may presume that both Vajrācāryas and Śākyas were present.

It seems that Śākyas -- but not Vajrācāryas -- frequently omitted to use their title, 'Śākyavaṃśa', even when making an individual or family donation. Fortunately one of the inscriptions, dated 1885 (N.S. 1005) and listed in Table I as 'others', provides confirmation of this: it records the establishment of a *guthi* of seven men to perform a yearly Fire Sacrifice and Tantric rite in Kwā Bāhāḥ, and to feed the ten elders. The seven men are named: one is a Vajrācārya, two are Josis, one a Śreṣṭha; three have no caste name but they are probably Śākyas. This suggests that Śākyas felt, even in the past, a degree of ambivalence about their caste identity which other castes did not and do not share.

Other inscriptional evidence supports the conclusions that in Lalitpur 'Sakyavaṃśa' was the usual surname for Śākyas but that in many cases it was not used. It also suggests that before the nineteenth century the members of *bahī* in Lalitpur were usually known simply as 'Bhikṣu', whereas in Kathmandu all Śākyas used either this term or 'Śākyabhikṣu'.

Thus one of Hemraj Sakya's books (1980) records ninety-eight dated inscriptions from begging bowls (*piṇḍa pātra*, *pimpā*) donated to the main deity of Kwā Bāhāḥ. These are displayed in Kwā Bāhāḥ during the month of Gūmlā, filled with rice brought by the descendants of the original donor. (In 1983 slightly over half of these were still being filled.) While the bowls are dated from 1525 to 1893, all but five of them were donated before 1789. Of the ninety-eight, fifty-two were donated by castes other than Śākya or Vajrācārya (thirty-six of these claimed the status of Bhāro). Two were donated by 'Bhikṣus', two by 'Śākyavaṃśa', five by 'Śākyabhikṣu' (four of these latter were donated by two men in 1585). Thirty-seven inscriptions do not state the donor's caste, but it is plausible to presume that in all these cases the donor was a Śākya since the donors lived in Nāg Bāhāḥ, Hakhā, Nyākhācuk, Jhātāpol, Thyākā and Pulco, all places either wholly or largely inhabited by Śākyas. It is striking that not a single one was donated by a Vajrācārya, unless some of those without caste name can be ascribed to them.

Another of Hemraj Sakya's books (Sakya and Vaidya 1970) contains sixty-six inscriptions from the period 1380-1768. Twenty-one had Śākya and/or Vajrācārya donors; two of these had multiple donors mentioning two different caste names, giving a total of twenty-three mentions which break down as shown in Table II. All three of the inscriptions using the surname 'Śākyavaṃśa' are from Lalitpur, while all three using 'Śākyabhikṣu' are from Kathmandu. Of the five using 'Bhikṣu', two are from Kathmandu and refer to members of *bāhāḥ* and three are from Lalitpur and refer to members of *bahī*. All seven of those which may be presumed, from the locality of the donor(s), to be Sakyas come from Lalitpur.

Vajrācārya	5 (Nos. 9, 13, 32, 38, 69)
Śākyavaṃśa	3 (19, 39, 63)
Śākyabhikṣu	3 (13, 29, 48)
Bhikṣu	5 (17, 19, 37, 43, 62)
No caste-name (presumed Śākya)	7 (15, 24, 30, 42, 57)

Table II: Breakdown of twenty-three references to Śākyas and Vajrācāryas in inscriptions from the Malla period from Sakya and Vaidya (1970)

These findings are further confirmed by the birch-bark land documents (*tamsūk tāḍpatra*) published by Rajvamshi (1983). There are 50 documents relating to Lalitpur, dated from 1383 to 1702; references to Śākyas and Vajrācāryas are summarized in Table III. Once again the overwhelming popularity of 'Śākyavaṃśa' as a caste surname in Lalitpur is clear. The same book contains fifty documents from Kathmandu for the same period containing seven references to Bhikṣus and one to a Bhikṣuvaṃśa and none to Śākyavaṃśa or Śākyabhikṣu at all. Only two of these can definitely be identified as members of *bāhāḥ*, but given the numerical preponderance of the *bāhāḥ* over the *bahī*, and the absence of the name Śākyavaṃśa, it is likely that most, if not all, of the others also refer to *bāhāḥ*-members.

Brahmacarya Bhikṣu	1 (No. 27)
Bhikṣu	2 (2, 42)
Vadeju	1
Śākyabhikṣu	2
Śākyavaṃśa	19
No caste name (presumed Śākya)	6 (11, 13, 15, 21, 29, 41)
Vajrācārya	6

Table III: References to Śākyas and Vajrācāryas in land documents from Lalitpur from the Malla period published by Rajvamshi (1983)

Kölver and Sakya's (1985) collection of land documents provide many examples of the use of these surnames. The last occurrences of 'Sākyabhikṣu' and 'Bhikṣu' are in a document of 1190 (N.S. 310). The first occurrence of 'Sākyavaṃśā' is dated 1616 (N.S. 736). This suggests that the latter surname suddenly became popular at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Sakya and Vaidya (1970:97) give an example of this surname from 1614 (N.S. 734), but I have been able to find none earlier than this. The surname 'Sākyabhikṣu' for members of Lalitpur *bāhāḥ* lingered on: it is used on two begging bowls offered in Kwā Bāhāḥ as late as 1764 (N.S. 884) (Sakya 1980:17-18), but both of these were repairs to bowls offered originally in 1585 in which the same term had been used. The last time it is used spontaneously is on a begging bowl offered in 1613 (N.S. 733) (Sakya 1980:22).

On the basis of these historical data, the following tentative conclusions can be put forward; no doubt they will have to be refined in the light of further research. (a) From about 1615 Sākyas in Lalitpur who were members of *bāhāḥ* usually called themselves *sākyavaṃśā*. After that date they used the title *sākyabhikṣu* only rarely. Frequently however, they refrained from using any title at all, other than the honorific prefix 'Śrī'. (b) In the Malla period members of Lalitpur *bahī* usually called themselves simply *bhikṣu*; in the nineteenth century the title *brahmacarya bhikṣu*, till then only occasionally used, became universal in the *bahī* of Lalitpur. Members of Kathmandu *bahī* continued to call themselves *bhikṣu* or *sākyabhikṣu*. (c) In Kathmandu Sākyas rarely used *sākyavaṃśā* but called themselves *sākyabhikṣu* or simply *bhikṣu*, except for those few, noted above, who styled themselves *bauddhācārya* or *buddhācārya*.¹⁴

5. Concluding remarks

All of these groups nowadays call themselves simply 'Sākyā'. Part of the reason for this is a modern tendency towards homogenization, a decline of the pride in family traditions which set one off even from caste fellows. This is particularly operative in the case of the members of the *bahī*, whose traditions are markedly in decline (Gellner 1987b: 33-4). Another reason is that in the modern period, perhaps directly due to the establishment of Theravada Buddhism in the Valley, Sākyas have come to feel embarrassment about the title 'Bhikṣu', monk. If I am right in my historical conclusions the latter consideration cannot apply to the Sākyas of Lalitpur; presumably they have

¹⁴ Dharmacharyya (1928:215), writing at a time when Sākyas had not yet taken to shortening their surnames, reported that "the majority bear the title of Sakyabansas and Sakyabhikshus, the former dominating at Asoka Pattana [=Lalitpur] and the latter at Manjupattana (Kathmandu)."

simply followed the lead of their Kathmandu confreres in this case. Another possibility -- not incompatible with the historical conclusions given above -- is that 'Śākya' existed in the past too, as a spoken and colloquial form alongside 'Śākyavaṃśa' and 'Śākyabhikṣu', since it appears twice (in the form 'Sakya') in a document from Kathmandu of 1379 (Rajvamshi 1983:28).

It is an interesting, though possibly unanswerable, question why at one given period Śākyas in Lalitpur began to call themselves 'Śākyavaṃśa' whereas Śākyas in Kathmandu continued to use 'Śākyabhikṣu' with its monastic connotations.¹⁵ Apriori one might have expected the reverse, since it is Lalitpur, rather than Kathmandu, which is the stronghold of Buddhism. This question of geography apart, it should be clear why 'Śākyavaṃśa', stressing descent, should develop as the name of householder monks. It is simply the final step in a process of domestication or laicization of the Monastic Community. Buddhist monks are metaphorically 'sons of the Buddha'. Now, instead, householders claim descent from his kin; but the original meaning is retained, so that they are both monks and kinsmen of the Buddha simultaneously.

¹⁵ Could there be some connection with the reforms, i.e. rationalization and Hinduization, of the Buddhist monasteries undertaken, presumably some years later, by Siddhi Narasimha, who was king of Lalitpur from 1619 to 1661? I have discussed these reforms, which we know about from the chronicle published by Wright as *The History of Nepal*, in Gellner (1987b: 31-4). Nothing in the chronicle's account relates to the question of titles. It is clear from it that in the time of Siddhi Narasimha all Śākyas, including the members of the *bahi*, were householders.

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