Homa Variations

THE STUDY OF RITUAL CHANGE ACROSS THE LONGUE DURÉE

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Newar Buddhist *Homa* Ritual Traditions

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**INTRODUCTION**

In addition to the wealth of Sanskrit manuscripts from their private and monastic archives, which provided the textual foundations of modern Buddhist studies, the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley likewise perform a rich repertoire of rituals also originating in later Indic Buddhism. Among them are a large variety of *homa* rituals done in a Buddhist modality, each with its specific details of performance and purposes. This chapter provides an overview of this Newar Buddhist tradition, including a complete outline of the ritual that was performed at Harvard (by the co-author of this chapter) at the outset of the “Homa Variations” conference at which a brief form of this paper was presented. It will first situate this central ritual tradition in the characteristically complex sociocultural matrix in which Newar Buddhism exists today, discuss the basic features of the many extant variants, describe the details of practice, and then conclude with observations of how modern Newar Buddhists conceptualize the Buddhist identity of their *homa* practices.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The record of thousands of Sanskrit texts preserved in the Kathmandu Valley contain an archive that, when more fully studied, will clarify the emergence of Newar Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna tradition in the context of later Indic Buddhist history, a development that culminated and died out across the plains of the Indus-Gangetic region.
widespreadly adapting to Hindu cultural hegemony, their extensive development in the Newar Buddhist community in the context of early modern Hindu Nepal is doubtless due to the clear outward commonality with Brahmanical traditions.

While the Newar sangha in the later Malla era continued to have specialists whose focus was manuscript copying, it is evident that the performance of Vajrayāna rituals was of special interest to some who called themselves Bajrācāryas. Ritual priests in early Malla Nepal had the texts needed to devote themselves to adapting Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna religious understandings and ritual technology to every human context: to build temples, hold festivals, and serve the needs of Buddhist families. This pattern of development in ritual innovation may explain, in part, why Newar tradition lacks a strong scholastic dimension. What is carefully elaborated is the ritualism that expresses and intersects the Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna worldview into every conceivable juncture for relating successfully to deities, celebrating festivals, marking key moments in the individual’s life. Lacking a tradition of formal philosophical inquiry by a scholarly elite, the center of Newar Buddhism lies in its pervasive orchestration of Vajrayāna teachings and the rituals that channel blessings, well-being, and—for those householders willing to practice—movement toward enlightenment.

**Textual Sources for Newar Homa Rituals**

Contributors to and inheritors of later north Indic Buddhism, Newar tradition accordingly preserves many aspects of this now-defunct religious world. A broad range of tantric texts are prominent in both the archives and current traditions in the Valley. Since most Buddhist tantras include sections devoted to the homa practice, it is not surprising that these are cited or relevant to tracing the history of this rite in Nepal! Authoritative texts for homa in the Newar tradition are the Manjusrinimalakalpa, Guhyasamāja Tantra, Cakrasamudra Tantra, the Vasantatila, the Hesavajra Tantra, the Kriṣṇayamāvīv Tantra, the Samvardhaya Tantra, Kālacakra Tantra, and the Kriṣṇaṣṭambha by Kuladatta.

**The Ritualists: Members of the Bajrācārya Sangha**

The Newar sangha today is divided consists of two parts, Śāky and Bajrācārya. Males born into all of these families become Śāky and members of the Śāky sangha by obtaining the Buddhist ordination called pravrajya. Additionally, those born into the Bajrācārya families become members of the Bajrācārya Sangha by obtaining the acārya-abhiṣeka after the pravrajya. Thus, male children of a Bajrācārya family obtain the same first ordination as those who will remain Śāky, but then they alone do the second, the acārya-abhiṣeka in their father’s home monastery. After obtaining the acārya-abhiṣeka the new bajrācāryas are trained in performing the most common ritual, the Buddhist homa and from that time afterward they are empowered to perform it for patrons. Only a Bajrācārya man can perform the homa ritual in the Newar Buddhist community, either
Newar Buddhist Homa Ritual Traditions

The Newar tradition's adaptation to Hindu cultural hegemony demonstrates their extensive development in the Newar Buddhist community. In the context of early modern Hindu Nepal, it is doubtless due to their clear outward compatibility with Indian traditions.

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Along with the three, five, or more bhratāryas. Thus, the bhratārya sangha is defined as a group by the bhratu. Every new full member is taught to perform this key ritual at initiation, and each bhratārya boy must do the regular sāhāra bhruti (bhratu) rite himself in his own Bāhā (monastery) and then the mānābhu bhratu at a temple site associated with one of the eight mother goddesses (ānīmārrā kīṭa).

It will also be evident in this chapter that this ritual is woven into the fabric of Newar Buddhist life. We now turn to the characteristic forms this ritual takes today in the Kathmandu Valley and when and why bhratu is performed in Newar Buddhist settings.

OVERVIEW OF NEWAR TRADITION: NAMES AND TYPES OF BHRATU

This outline of all major actions in the Newar Buddhist bhratu is based on the printed ritual guidebook entitled Kalārāmanātā Homa Vidhāna-Pustakam that was edited by the Li. Pandit Atmegavāra Bajācārya, the greatest scholar-ritualist of mid-twentieth-century Nepal. This special master lineage holder in the Kathmandu sangha cites his primary source as a hand-copied manuscript that was dated 1550 C.E.

In conveying the parameters of this ritual tradition in Nepal, the diversity of forms, details, complexity, and options is striking. The patron has many choices to make in these facets: but some performances of bhratu are "compulsory" parts of life-cycle rituals and other occasions according to modern conventions; on the other hand, other esoteric bhratu rituals can be done only by or for those who have tantric initiations.

A review of these various possible options is instructive to grasp the flexibility and depth of Newar Buddhist bhratu rituals: the bhratu can be performed by the number of oblations (abhu) or Agni made, ranging from the minimum of one thousand (sāhāra, the most common by far), to those rare but more auspicious ceremonies that employ more than one bhratārya priest and granthi (four bhrutis or more) or even 10,000 (sāhāra-abhu). Newar Buddhist bhratus are based on the central objects that are to be burnt; most are based on one thousand or more oblations of ghee (srava-abhu, gahrē-abhu), but there are also those of an esoteric nature for which other items are central: the mānābhu (two × meat, Svāhā-abhu [x head], or the nāma-abhu [x human offering]. (These will be discussed below.) Then the bhratārya priest can offer to do a bhratu that varies by elaborateness/length of time: either a general form, or a "long form" bhratu.

The pīt (kundā) can also be modest or large, with a minimum of five unbaked bricks, the one arranged with thirty-two bricks, or the "half-deep fire pit" (ārthaśailī tivaśailāli) in the 100,000 oblation rite. (In practice, construction can utilize more or less than thirty-two bricks.) When by a river, the rite can be done simply on sand, but only with the symbol of the agni-kundā and the eight directional deities (see below) drawn in it. The bhratu kundā is popularly known as tivaśailāli but it is built. In Newar usage, there is also the category of the "half-deep bhratu kundā" (ārthaśailī tivaśailāli): it is bigger and higher than the typical one and resembles a square-shaped well. To make this kind of bhratu kundā requires a special pādabhṣāpana pūjā ("foundation ritual") that must be done beforehand. The same establishment rite must be done for any stone or metal square bhratu kundā that is fixed permanently, as can be found in many Newar monasteries and temples for the convenience of the community.

Finally, there is a Newar tradition that certain highly accomplished bhratārya masters can do a bhratu just by marking the ground with bhratu symbol (Agni Chintā, the symbol of fire) and then do the bhratu ritual.

All types of Buddhist bhratu kundā will be made with bricks set in the pattern of the "swatika shape." A vāra is drawn in the center, and symbols of the eight directional deities are drawn accordingly around the bhratu kundā. In both the arthaśailī bhratu kundā and the arthaśailī bhratu kundā, the icons of the deities are drawn. And in every bhratu kundā there will be a different "mouth" (Skt. uṣṇa) of Agni that is understood to be extended in each direction. All bhratu kundās are demolished a few days after the ritual; Newar Buddhists regard the bricks used in bhratus to be auspicious for the construction of permanent buildings. In the case of the performance of the lakṣa abhu and abhārābhu bhratu, there must also be a nāga pūjā ritual done before disposing of the remaining ashes (bhratuśavāra nāga) in a river.

WHEN NEWAR BUDHISTS PERFORM BHRATU

Since bhratu rituals are central to the lives of Newar Buddhists, the tradition is interpreted by the modern bhratārya priests who have identified moments in the individual life cycle, or occasions of religious donation, when they must be performed; there are also times when they are recommended, but not compulsory. The following norms and expectations do show some variation due to the individual family's caste and the patron's gender. The contexts of the various Newar bhratus can be cited here, without extensive commentary.

Occasion When Required by Tradition

Death and Mourning are major times when all Buddhists perform rituals to make merit for the deceased and ensure that the dead go to auspicious destinies. Among most householders, bhratu is performed at the end of the initial, intense mourning and impurity period, on the twelfth day after the Ghau (G.R. ghrī-tuddha, bhaṭa-tuddha) rituals. Among the Śākyas and Bajācāryas, this ritual is done on the seventh day after the death; and on this day, the bhratu rites are done in two places: inside the house where the person died and in the monastery (Ne. kāśā) where the household's patrilineage has membership. Ghrī tuddha is believed to be effective for purifying the house and satisfying the needs of the deceased who now exists in the antarābhava, or intermediate state, between death and new rebirth. Newar tradition
Overview of Newar Tradition: Names and Types of Homa

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Newar Buddhist homa ritual traditions usually begin in the early morning; the *bajra* priest(s) must fast until the completion of the ritual and there must be a patron family (jajamana) who appoints members to attend to the *bajra* ritual and ritual setup as bearers of offerings. The priest arrives with his usual ritual implements (nagri, narga-ganthesha [bell with vastra handle], narga, makha [crown of Five Buddhists]); he also carries the special *homa* implements (ulipā [special ladle with square shape], cavi [pointed ritual spatula], abhū [spoon ladle], yamkha [tripod with ghee vessel] with a hole for kusa-grass).

The patron family is also expected to provide the essentials for offerings:

- *kalasa* [water vessel], ghee (clarified butter), kusa grass, duma grass, a bunch/bundle of pieces of *sivina* wood, 32 pieces of *sivina* wood, *Homapi* bundle, pure water, flowers, incense, lamp, chalk, *vinha* fragrance, husked rice, puffed rice, taste items (food, fruits, cow milk, liquor), ball of five-strand thread, pankaga, yogurt, *bana* items, 32 kinds of grains [Skt. *pratama*].

Most *bajra* priests have a printed list of these items, although many householders know them by heart.

The work begins with ritual setup of the *homa kunda*, then a series of required preliminary rituals that set the stage for *homa* at the beginning, then close off the ritual—several hours later—to end the entire ceremony when completed. To denote the course of the *homa* ritual conveniently, the following abbreviations will be used for
Descriptive Studies

Newar Buddhist mourning also entails a year of special śuddha rituals done for the purpose of making merit for the dead. During each of twelve subsequent lunar months, on the monthly anniversary of the death, the family gathers for these rites done by the chief mourner and their bajrācārya priests. On the last of these months, that is, on the one-year death anniversary, a homa ritual is added to mark this moment.

Since it is regarded as the most distinguished Buddhist ritual, homa is often performed to mark the end of other cycles of ritual performances. This is the case for a one-year month of Buddhist months. Homas are performed on the full moon, and the most distinguished is the bhima-kā yajna homa, which is performed on the day of the new moon full moon. This ritual is open to only the highest Buddhist castes (Ura, Sākya, Bajrācārya); or upon the completion of a period of tantric meditative retreats (Parakārcita Cunug), which is also only done by this group.

Homa is also done at every step in the sequence of rites for the construction activity for the establishment of images, caityas, pilgrim's resthouses, and monasteries. After their formal consecration, a homa ritual should be performed to mark the yearly anniversary of the same structures, a ceremony Newars refer to as Bajāyana (Skt. varākhandana).

Homa must also be done as part of Newar Buddhist life-cycle rites. For example, homa is performed for members of the Jātūr farmer class at the completion of the coming of age rite called ala cōngk. Similarly, it is done by the head priest who officiates at the initiation of a new cohort of bajrācārya novices in the rite of passage called harr chīngk. For families that perform any of the three late life celebration rituals called Badhāmi Chak, homa is a central ritual of the second day.

There are a number of Newar festivals that are the object of community or guthi celebrations, whose perpetual endowments underwrite specific rituals. Examples are the annual homa ritual in the Bhadraśāla temple done by bajrācāryas of Sābal Bāhā during the spring Fāncār festival; and māmā abhi homa done by bajrācāryas of Jīvī Bāhā at the Indrāyani temple at Phushting Bāhā on the full moon day of Lhuni. There are many other such customs at the temples of the eight mother goddesses (ajumārēkā) throughout the Kathmandu Valley.

**Optional Homa Ritual Occasions**

The Newar Buddhist tradition regards the homa ritual as the highest form of ritual celebration, entailing the most effort and attracting the most prestige for the patron. Although not required by tradition, individual families may opt for the family priest to add it to a variety of ritual celebrations. This includes the early dāka karma or life passage rites done by Buddhist householders such as the cīndā karma, varākhandana, and

For pāti krama or wedding rites among high caste Newar Buddhists, homa is a sign of prestige; for Jātūr farmers, the most distinguished way of offering pindas to the ancestors is the bhima-kā yajna homa, and this requires homa. For high caste Newar Buddhists who want to do the special kāyā pindā rite, homa must be done.

Family and household rituals can be upgraded by including homa. This includes the harr homa or house protection ritual. The popular satāja piṭā is done at major shrines and when special needs arise, a homa ritual can be added to it; if so either the sahabha (1,000) or yajña (10,000) version should be done. A fire ritual to appease or remove obstacles from planetary deities is another Newar variant.

Perhaps the most unusual homa rite in the Newar tradition is that done twelve days after a dead cat or snake is found in one's house. For this, the offering place is circular and the homa kūnta is made of five bricks arranged in a circle, not the usual square.

**DESCRIPTION OF A STANDARD NEWAR BUDDHIST HOMA RITUAL**

**Preliminaries.** The homa performance usually begins in the early morning; the bajrācārya priest(s) must fast until the completion of the ritual and there must be a patron family (ajumārē) who appoints members to attend to the bajrācārya and ritual set-up as bearers of offerings. The priest arrives with his usual ritual implements (nag, nairag-ghantha [bell with vase handle], nag, makāsa [crown of Five Buddhists]); he also carries the special homa implements (sūlā [special ladle with square shape], cāgū [pointed ritual spatula], dābā [spoon ladle], yāmkāśi [tripod with ghee vessel with a hole for kūnta-grass]).

The patron family is also expected to provide the essentials for offerings:

- **kālā [water vessel]**, ghee (clarified butter), kūnta grass, dābā grass, a bunch/bundle of pieces of wūm wood, 32 pieces of sīmā wood, Homay bundle, pure water, flowers, incense, lamp, chalk, sūmā fragrance, husked rice, puffed rice, taste items (food, fruits, cow milk, liqueur), bull of five-strand thread, pākṣa-gāyla, yogurt, bāntā items, 32 kinds of grains (Skt. pīṭh).

Most bajrācāryas have a printed list of these items, although many householders know them by heart.

The work begins with ritual set-up of the homa kūnta, then a series of required preliminary rituals that set the stage for homa at the beginning, then close off the ritual—several hours later—so end the entire ceremony when completed. To denote the course of the homa ritual conveniently, the following abbreviations will be used for
the various "praxis units" according to which this and other Newar ritual traditions are assembled. The preliminary rituals are seven in number, including the guru-maṇḍala pājā. After the homa ritual commences and ends with the last or sesa abhūt oblation, the bajrācārya will do the closing of all the preliminary rites and homa ritual, which is called visarjana.

**ABBREVIATIONS OF RITUAL UNITS THAT COMPREHEND THE NEWAR HOMA RITUAL**

**Āhutī**: Offering oblation to Agni in the homa kuṇḍa
**Bajra**: Bajrācārya; all acts done by him unless noted

\(\text{PsP} = \text{Pūsaḍi pājā} \) one complete pājā procedure (in this order): Bajra, visualizes deity, invoking, requesting divine presence, request for adhīṣṭhāna, offering fragrance, cloth, flower, food, milk, liquor, light, popped rice, rice and a flower with water, money and rice; requesting the celestial Buddha Vajrasattva to grant of all siddhis.

\(\text{PsP} = \text{Pāṇopaṭi pājā} \) sequential offering five items: flower, incense, light, fragrance, food


Pāṇopaṭi (above) → Latā → Ghantaśāla → Stuti → Tarpana → Latākara.

Latā refers to showing mudrās (sixteen types of hand gestures\(^1\)); Ghantaśāla stands for holding vajra and bell crossed at chest, then ringing bell and flipping vajra three times; Stuti denotes chanting verse praise; Tarpana means flicking liquid from vase; Latākara is chanting the Vajrasattva dhāraṇī, which has 100 syllables.


Paṇopaṭi stands for offering water from conch for feet, for cleansing month, and for argha; Abhavāna refers to inviting the deity using abhava (incense); and Nirātipana means removing any associated with the deity but unwanted enemies or problems.

**Bāli**: a set ritual, consisting of sections defined here:

Visualizing amṛtakundalī bāli inviting dikpāla deities using garuda-mudrā, akṣarasūla-mudrā, and the dikpāla-mudrā. After these gestures, there is the (aforementioned) Paṇopaṭi pājā, Latā mudrās (above), Ghantaśāla, Stuti, Tarpana, offering materials (rice, flower with water), offering liquor and Pūsaḍi pājā.

**Newar Buddhist Homa Ritual Traditions**

**THE ORDER OF THE SAHASRA ĀHUTI RITUAL**

**Mandatory Preliminary Rituals**

1. **Suryārgha (or gurupāḍārgha)**: Paying respect to Guru Vajrācārya
2. **Guru-maṇḍala Arcana**

Visualizing the unity of priest and patron (paritramaparivartana bhāvanā) water initiation affirmation of offering self-protection praising six perfections offering maṇḍala to Gurus sevenfold supreme offering (budhisattva practice) satisfying directional deities

3. **Paṇopaṭi**
4. **Sūharma pājā**
5. **Lakītabaḷi**
6. **Trīsamāṭḍī**
7. **Kalālāli Arcana**: Invoking the special deity\(^2\) into vessel (kalāla), and so on

**Homa Procedure**

Bajrācārya Priest (hereafter Bajra.) touches agni kuṇḍa three times with satva (= Homa-kunda adhīṣṭhā na) Jajamāna asked to put kuṇḍa grass in the susīkā shape in the center of the kuṇḍa (kuṇḍaśāla)

Pūsaḍi-pājā (hereinafter PsP) at the center of the kuṇḍa over susīkā

Sprinkle water on the wood with conch; Paṇopaṭi pājā (hereinafter PsP) to the 32 sosin (32 pieces of a specific wood)

Stack the 32 pieces of wood in specific shape in the homa kuṇḍa

Small pieces sintā (a specific wood) placed in a clay pot, PsP to it

Bajra, lights flame from lamp, places it under wood in clay bowl (= Bhūta Agniśāpāṇa)

1. **PsP** to the flame in clay bowl; bit of each of 32 grains dropped in clay bowl flame
2. Bundle of Sintā (wood) lit from the clay bowl flame, then put into homa kuṇḍa to ignite it (= Agni śāpana)
3. Place a flower into the homa kuṇḍa fire (= Samayāgni bhāvanā: visualization of samayā Agni)
the various "praxis units" according to which this and other Newar ritual traditions are assembled. The preliminary rituals are seven in number, including the gurumandala pāja.\(^4\) After the homa ritual commences and ends with the last or sei abhuti oblation, the bājācārya will do the closing of all the preliminary rites and homa ritual, which is called visarjana.

**ABBREVIATIONS OF RITUAL UNITS THAT COMPREHEND THE NEWAR HOMA RITUAL**

Abhuti: Offering oblation to Agni in the homa kunda
Bajra: = Bājācārya; all acts done by him unless noted
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Pp = Pañcapadā pāja: sequential offering five items: flower, incense, light, fragrance, food
Pp (above) = Lasyā + Ghantavādana + Stuti + Tarpana + latikārā.
Lasyā refers to showing mudrās (sixteen types of hand gestures\(^5\)); Ghantavādana stands for holding vaja and bell crossed at chest, then ringing bell and flipping vaja three times; stuti denotes chanting verse praise; tarpana means flicking liquid from vase; and latikārā is chanting the Vajrasattva dhāraṇī, which has 100 syllables.
Padya stands for offering water from conch for feet, for cleansing month, and for argha; dhupa refers to inviting the deity using dhupa (incense); and nirūṣijana means removing any associated with the deity but unwanted enemies or problems.
Bali: a set ritual, consisting of sections defined here:
Visualizing anurakundalā bali: inviting dikpāla deities using garuda-mudrā, akaraṇa-mudrā, and the digpāla\(^2\)-mudrās. After these gestures, there is the (aforementioned) Pañcapadā pāja, Lasyā mudrās (above), Ghantavādana. Stuti, Tarpana, offering materials (rice, flower with water), offering liquor and Puspadī pāja.

**Newar Buddhist Homa Ritual Traditions**

**THE ORDER OF THE SAHĀSA RĀ JUTI RITUAL**

**Mandatory Preliminary Rituals**

I. Suryārgha (or gurupādārgha): Paying respect to Guru Vajrācārya
II. Gurumandala Arcana

Visualizing the unity of priest and patron (paritapa参列之anstana bhāvanā)
water initiation
affirmation of offering
self-protection
praising six perfections
offering rāma-maṇḍala to Gurus
sevenfold supreme offering (bodhisattva practice)
satisfying directional deities

III. Paññagārīya
IV. Sihamānu pāja
V. Lankhabali
VI. Trisamādhi
VII. Kalakārī Arcana: Invoking the special deity into vessel (kalāla), and so on

**Homa Procedure**

Bājācārya Priest (hereafter Bajra) touches agni kunda three times with satā (Homa-kunda adhiṣṭhāna) jājanāna asked to put kuda grass in the snakā shape in the center of the homa-kunda (kistārata)
Puspadī pāja (hereinafter PsP) at the center of the kunda over satākā
Sprinkle water on the wood with conch: Pañcapadhāra pāja (hereinafter Pp) to the 32-som (32 pieces of a specific wood)
Stack the 32 pieces of wood in specific shape in the homa kunda
Small pieces sintā (a specific wood) placed in a clay pot. Pp to it
Bajra lights flame from lamp places it under water in clay bowl (= Bhūta Agniśāpāna)

1. PsP to the flame in clay bowl; bit of each of 32 grains dropped in clay bowl flame
2. Bundle of Sintā (wood) lit from the clay bowl flame, then put into homa kunda to ignite it (= Agni śāpāna)
3. Place a flower into the homa kunda fire

(= Samayāgni bhāvanā: visualization of samayā Agni)
Descriptive Studies

4. Bajra shows takkipāja mudrā, lights incense; does nirūjanā, offers water used for foot-washing and mouth purification, from conch to Samaya Agni
   (= samaya Agni-anubhava: Invoking Samaya Agni)
5. Sprinkle water from conch and patac-gațava from bowl with urvā grass
6. PSP offered to the Samaya Agni and eight directional deities (dikpāla)
7. Cooking ghee: jajamāṇa holds ladle; Bajra, touches ladle 108 times with ritual cattā
   (= grhita ladhana)
8. Jajamāṇa holding ladle, asked to take black sesame seeds in his right hand, touch his body all over, put them in the cooked ghee in the ladle; then told to look for his reflection in it.
9. Bajra, offers ghee from ladle three times to Agni
10. Bajra, touches all thirty-two grains in bowls and cattā and sulūpā
11. One piece of kusā grass dipped in ghee to Agni
12. One piece Hombi' dipped into ghee to Agni
13. Each sample of thirty-two grains (each with mantra)
14. In sulūpā, place cow milk, wave it three times over homa kunda
15. First ghee added to sulūpā, then Pp on this
16. All poured down to Agni (= Pratham Agni Abuti)
18. Pours water from kalā to conch, then sprinkles it to Agni
   (= jhāna Agni-agni bhāvanā: visualization of Jhāna Agni + visualization of the union of Samaya Agni and Jhāna Agni)
19. Pp to Jhāna Agni
20. One piece of Hombi dipped into ghee
21. Sample of each of thirty-two grains (each with mantra)
22. Ghee added to sulūpā, then Pp on this
23. All poured down (= jhāna abuti)
24. Offering boja-doja: boja dipped in cow milk, doja dipped in ghee; to Agni

Deity Puja

25. Bajra, does [Pa. A. Dha. Nā Adhye pramāṇā], then smața, dhāraṇāngala made, then offerings of red + yellow powder (sinha), thread, flowers, food, fruit, cow milk, liquor, ending with lamp offering to deity
26. Offering sample of thirty-two grains
27. Ghee added to sulūpā, then Pp on this
28. All poured (= devatā abuti)

Bali Puja

29. Tāyālāpa: Bajra, pours water, does pusa-nājana, then does
   [Pa. Lā. Gha. Stu. Ta.], Then chants mantra holding rosary in left hand, puffed rice in right hand
30. Puffed rice offered to deity
31. Dākṣāṇā offered to deity
32. Rice, water, flower offered to deity
33. Satākṣara chant
34. Kaśyupasthā (red scarf) and abuti affirmation (sankalpa) by jajamāṇa, then he hands it to the Bajra.
35. Bajra, ties on red scarf over one shoulder, offers abuti one thousand times
36. Ghee added to sulūpā, then Pp on this
37. All poured down to Agni (= sahasra abuti)

Bali Puja

39. Bajra, tells jajamāṇa to offer water from conch to big clay plate (bali) that contains many materials for offering
40. Bajra, shows garuda mudrā
41. Jajamāṇa offers water three times from conch to bali
42. Bajra, shows ākarsani mudrā
43. Bajra, offers flower, Jajamāṇa puts on bali
44. [Pa. Lā. Gha. Stu. Ta.]
45. Bajra, offers rice/flower/water in one hand; gives to Jajamāṇa to offer to bali; done four times but with different mantras chanted by Bajra.
Jajamāṇa is told to pour cow milk [and/or liquor] on bali from container
46. Pp to bali

Cakra Puja

47. Jajamāṇa does Pp to deities in all the directions

Sita-abhityāsana

48. Jajamāṇa sit in row, eldest closest to Agni, youngest at end; all hold string from the kalāta: female Bajrātārā assists; Bajra, puts piece of flower from offering plate on the heads of each person in row; does nirūjanā; lobā-Agni naked
49. Pour out phala-ābhiṣekha on each person's head
4. Bajra. shows takkriñjā mudrā, lights incense, does nirājana, offers water used for foot-washing and mouth purification, from conch to Samaya Agni (= samaya Agnīabhavana: Invoking Samaya Agni)

5. Sprinkle water from conch and patiśa-gastra from bowl with durva grass

6. PsP offered to the Samaya Agni and eight directional deities (dikṣāla)

7. Cooking ghee: jajamāna holds ladle; Bajra, touches ladle 108 times with ritual cānu (= gṛbha saḍhana)

8. Jajamāna holding ladle, asked to take black sesame seeds in his right hand, touch his body all over, put them in the cooked ghee in the ladle; then told to look for his reflection in it.

9. Bajra. offers ghee from ladle three times to Agni

10. Bajra. touches all thirty-two grains in bowls and cānu and sūlāpa

11. One piece of kusa grass dipped in ghee to Agni

12. One piece Hombi* dipped into ghee to Agni

13. Each sample of thirty-two grains (each with mantra)

14. In sūlāpa, place cow milk, wave it three times over homa kunda

15. First ghee added into sūlāpa, then PsP on this

16. All poured down to Agni (= Prātham Agni Abhi)


18. Pours water from kalāsa to conch, then sprinkles it to Agni (= Ṣāhā Agni-agni bhaṇḍana: visualization of Śāhā Agni + visualization of the union of Samaya Agni and Śāhā Agni)

19. PsP to Śāhā Agni

20. One piece of Hombi dipped into ghee

21. Sample of each of thirty-two grains (each with mantra)

22. Ghee added into sūlāpa, then PsP on this

23. All poured down (= śāhā abhi)

24. Offering hoja-dojā: hoja dipped in cow milk, dojā dipped in ghee; to Agni

Deity Pūjā

25. Bajra. does [Pa. A. Dha. Na. Adhye śaśī], then śaḥana, dharmamāndala made, then offerings of red + yellow powder (śīka), thread, flowers, food, fruit, cow milk, liquor, ending with lamp offering to deity

26. Offering sample of thirty-two grains

27. Ghee added into sūlāpa, then PsP on this

28. All poured (= devatā abhi)

Nevaś Buddha Homa Ritual Traditions

29. Tāyāḷāpa: Bajra. pours water, does puspā-ṇaṭā, then does

[Pa. Lā. Gha. Sū. Ta.]. Then chants mantra holding rosary in left hand, puffed rice in right hand

30. Puffed rice offered to deity

31. Dakṣiṇā offered to deity

32. Rice, water, flower offered to deity

33. Satakṣara chant

34. Kālyanastra (red sari) and abhi affirmation (sankalpa) by jajamāna, then he hands it to the Bajra.

35. Bajra. ties on red scarf over one shoulder, offers abhi one thousand times

36. Ghee added to sūlāpa, then PsP on this

37. All poured down to Agni (= sahasra abhi)


Bali Pūjā

38. Bajra. tells jajamāna to offer water from conch to big clay plate (bali) that contains many materials for offering

39. Bajra. shows garuda mudrā

40. Jajamāna offers water three times from conch to bali

41. Bajra. shows ākṣaraṇī mudrā

42. Bajra. offers flower, jajamāna puts on bali


44. Bajra. offers rice/flower/water in one hand, gives to jajamāna to offer to bali, done four times but with different mantras chanted by Bajra. Jajamāna is told to pour cow milk [and/or liquor] on bali from container

45. PsP to Bali

Cakra Pūjā

46. Jajamāna does PsP to deities in all the directions

Stūpa-abhisāmanī

47. Jajamāna sits in row, eldest closest to Agni, youngest at end; all hold string from the kalāsa: female Bajrarāya assists; Bajra. puts piece of flower from offering plate on the heads of each person in row; does nirājana; lobā Agni rākṣa;

48. Pour out phala abhiṣekha on each person's head
From the Newar Buddhist point of view, all types of homa performed by bףraçaţiyas are “tantric,” since they require their practices associated with sâdhana. This includes the most common homa performed in the Newar Buddhist community, which is the exoteric grain and ghee offering to Agni called chara abhút homa. This homa takes place in the day time, everybody can participate in it as patron or observer, and worldly benefits can be expected from taking part. For this reason, the texts refer to this form as laukika or “worldly” homa.

Just as this community has an esoteric realm of practice that is open only to the highest caste Buddhist communities, there are homa rituals that can only be done by, and even only be seen by, those individuals with tantric initiation. (This is a small minority even among these high caste groups.) These esoteric rites are called the Mânsa abhút (“near oblation”), Srî abhút (“head oblation”), Nîra abhút (“human oblation”) homas, as well as in the lokottara homa that can be added to the abhátra homa. Each can be discussed further here.

Abhátra homa (lit. “day and night homa”)

Performed in the home, it can be done for a whole day and whole night. In the daytime is the laukika (esoteric) form only at night is the lokottara (esoteric) homa done. It must be performed in the course of the establishment or restoration rituals at Svayambhû or other major stūpas as well as at prominent yogini temples located in the Valley, especially those in the towns of Pharping, Sansikhâ, Guhyësvari, and so on.

Mânsa Abhút and Srî Abhút Homa

This offering of mânsa abhút must be performed as tantric pathas, shrines that are usually situated at cremation sites along river banks or on hilltops. As noted, this is the rite that must also be done by a young bףraçaţiya immediately after he assumes his full status through initiation.

This esoteric homa is also an integral part of the other tantric initiations in Newar Buddhist tradition. The mânsa abhút homa is performed during the course of the Cakravatara initiation and the Srî abhút homa is performed during the course of the Vajrasattva initiation as the rite of purñà or completion of the initiation. In the performance of the secret Mânsa abhút and Srî abhút, bףraçaţiyas limit access to initiates.
78. Everything now dismantled, spent offerings, ash thrown in a river, and bricks used by the participants. Some keep ash as pressed and use it medicinally on forehead daily or occasionally.

**The Esoteric Newar Buddhist Homa**

From the Newar Buddhist point of view, all types of homa performed by bājraśrayas are "tantric," since they require their practices associated with sādhanas. This includes the most common homa performed in the Newar Buddhist community, which is the esoteric grain and ghee offering to Agni called chha abhāti homa. This homa takes place in the day time, everybody can participate in it as patron or observer, and worldly benefits can be expected from taking part. For this reason, the texts refer to this form as laukika or "worldly" homa.

Just as this community has an esoteric realm of practice that is open only to the highest caste Buddhist communities, there are homa rituals that can only be done by, and even only be seen by, those individuals with tantric initiation. (This is a small minority even among these high caste groups.) These esoteric rites are called the Māṃsa Abhūti ("near oblation"), Śīra Abhūti ("head oblation"), Nāra Abhūti ("human oblation") homas, as well as in the lokottara homa that can be added to the abhūtra homa. Each can be discussed further here.

**Abhūtra homa (lit. "day and night homa")**

Performed in the home, it can be done for a whole day and whole night. In the daytime, the laukika (esoteric) form; only at night is the lokottara (esoteric) homa done. It must be performed in the course of the establishment or restoration rituals at Svayambhū or other major stūpas as well as at prominent yogini temples located in the Valley, especially those in the towns of Pharping, Sālikhu, Ghyeyā, and so on.

**Māṃsa Abhūti and Śīra Abhūti Homa**

This offering of māṃsa Abhūti must be performed as tantric pītha, shrines that are usually situated at cremation sites along river banks or on hilltops. As noted, this is the rite that must also be done by a young bājraśraya immediately after he assumes his full status through initiation.

This esoteric homa is also an integral part of the other tantric initiations in Newar Buddhist tradition. The māṃsa Abhūti homa is performed during the course of the Cakrasamvara initiation and the Śīra Abhūti homa is performed during the course of the Vajraśrāti initiation as the rise of purṇa or completion of the initiation. In the performance of the secret Māṃsa Abhūti and Śīra Abhūti, bājraśraya limit access to initiates.
Near Buddhist Home Ritual Traditions

They sing *cirajugitā* at every main step in the ritual and these doubtless contain hints of the history of these practices in the earlier tantric tradition. Examples of the ritual use of these songs include when during the *Māma ahuti* the central figure of Samaya Agni is visualized, the priest sings a unique *cirajya giti* entitled "Triniloyana" by the Siddhā Karmapā; when in the course of the tantric *Sahuna ahuti* there are oblations given to Jāna Agni, the *bajrācāra* sings a *cirajya giti* entitled "Jvalāvajānāla"; and when *Māma ahuti* is offered to the Jāna Agni, the *bajrācāra* sings the *cirajya giti* entitled "Kolay" from the *Hṛṣva Tantra*.

Both of these boma rituals must also be observed on the occasion of the establishment of a new or restored *āgama dyāḥ* (Skt. *āgama devata*), the tantric shrines located in the upper storey of Newar monasteries and found in the homes of Sākyas, Bajrācāyas, and Uray.

The objective of *Māma ahuti* boma is to have the priest and initiates participate in the visualization of their five *śakti bhāsas* (physical body, sensations, perceptions, habit energies, consciousness) being ignited and burned completely away into a state of emptiness (*śunya*). It is the same principle underlying a tantric yogi burning the five *śakti bhāsas* through "śandali yoga," a practice of *amrita yogatāntara*, just as the Buddha said in the first noble truth that *pātika-ūpādāna-śandhīma eva dukkham* ("the five attached components of human life leading to suffering"); this practice as understood by Newar tradition seeks to end the fundamental components of a human being retaining their hold over us; it likewise accepts that since, as in the "Fire Sermon," all our senses "burn" into our awareness as if they are on fire, so does their esoteric boma ritual skillfully use this same fire as the basis of a spiritual practice to destroy, or burn off, attachment to the body.

The objective of the *Sūtra ahuti* boma likewise connects with the larger practices of Vajrayāna Buddhism. Just as in the *Mahābali arama* yoga practice, the initiated yogin visualizes sacrificing his own sense organs as an offering to various deities, so in the *Mahābali arama kriyā* practice the yogin visualizes sacrificing his or her own sense organs as an offering for various deities, as these are invoked into the fire of Agni. Because the five sense organs play a vital role for accumulating defilements, the tantric boma provides a time when initiates can exercise their practice promoting detachment. Similarly, offering one's five sense organs to others being promotes the perfection of generosity for those on the bodhisattva path.

HOMA AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BUDDHIST MONASTERIES AND SACRED OBJECTS

In the course of different stages in vihara construction, there must be Pratīṣṭhā rituals; for these, the "Dāsa Agni" (ten types of fire) are visualized, one by one, then each receives a Ghṛtā Ahuti (offering ghee) in the order shown in table 5.

In an Ayuṇa Ahuti (10,000) boma ritual, each Ghṛtā Ahuti is offered after each thousand Cari Ahuti offerings. Thus, Ghṛtā Ahuti is offered ten times in an Ayuṇa Ahuti boma ritual.

As part of the rituals consecrating images, *caityas*, other sacred objects, these objects must receive *dāsa karma rites*, as if they were human in both male and female forms. From

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They sing cārjugitī at every main step in the ritual and these doubtless contain hints of the history of these practices in the earlier tantric tradition. Examples of the ritual use of these songs include when during the Māmā abhiṣekha the central figure of Śaiva Agni is visualized, the priest sings a unique cārjugitī entitled “Triniloyana” by the Śādhya Karpī, when in the course of the tantric Sahāsa abhiṣekha there are oblations given to Śaiva Agni, the bhrīḍārāja sings a cārjugitī entitled “Jvalāvidyānala” and when Māmā abhiṣekha is offered to Śaiva Agni, the bhrīḍārāja sings the cārjugitī entitled “Kolayī” from the Hūjayā Tantra.

Both of these bhrīḍa rituals must also be observed on the occasion of the establishment of a newly restored śāga dyāh (Skt. agama devata), the tantric shrines located in the upper storeroom of Newar monasteries and found in the homes of Śākyas, Bhrīḍārāyas, and Usāyas.

The objective of Māmā abhiṣekha is to have the priest and initiates participate in the visualization of their five skandhas (physical body, sensations, perceptions, habit energies, consciousness) being ignited and burned completely away into a state of emptiness (śānta). It is the same principle underlying a tantric yogin burning the five skandhas through cārjugitī, a practice of anuttara yogamitra, just as the Buddha said in the first noble truth that pāka-upāya-skandha eva dukkham (“the five attached components of a human being lead to suffering”), this practice as understood by Newar tradition seeks to end the fundamental components of a human being retaining their hold over us; it is likewise accepted that as in the “Fire Sermon,” all our senses “burn” into our awareness as if they are on fire, so does their esoteric bhrīḍa ritual skillfully use this same fire as the basis of a spiritual practice to destroy, or burn off, attachment to the body.

The objective of the Sīra bhrīḍa abhiṣekha likewise connects with the larger practices of Vajrayāna Buddhism. Just as in the Mahābāli avanā systha, the initiated yogin visualizes sacrificing his own sense organs as an offering to various deities, so in the Mahābāli avanā bhrīḍa practice the yogin visualizes sacrificing his five sense organs as offering to various deities as these are invoked into the fire of Agni. Because the five sense organs play a vital role for accumulating defilements, the tantric bhrīḍa provides a time when initiates can exercise their practice promoting detachment. Similarly, offering one’s five sense organs to other beings promotes the perfection of generosity for those on the bodhisattva path.

Nāra Abhiṣekha Homa.

This bhrīḍa is an essential part of the rites designed to affect an initiate’s own death process. Soon after the death of a Bhrīḍārāya, Śākya, or Usāya who has taken tantric initiation(s) and who has requested them, a bhrīḍārāya priest performs tantric akṣariṇī rituals and yoga proximate to the dead body. At the end of these tantric rites, a sahasra

Abhiṣekha is performed using a large, round clay bowl. This whole ritual takes place around midnight. It is the completion ritual for the ukṣitaṇī yoga.

On the next morning this same round clay bowl (agnikūṭa) is taken with the funeral procession after the dead one’s body has been placed on a bier and the body arranged in the seated position. At the cremation ghat, the corpse still in the seated position will be put over the pyre and another bhrīḍa will be conducted. In the course of this final bhrīḍa, the bhrīḍārāya ritualist will instruct the chief mourner to put the first stick of firewood on the lap of the dead one” using the flame taken from the round clay bowl that served as the agnikūṭa. Here it is assumed that the dead human’s body is being offered to Agni.

As lokottara bhrīḍa is a higher and rare practice, initiates are taught not to make wishes for worldly benefits for taking part in this rite. The spiritual center is to use the outward gestures of bhrīḍa to transcend habitual mundane conceptual patterns by visualizing the burning up all of one’s own flesh, head, and sense organs, the practitioner can burn out all of one’s own defilements and attachments to mundane knowledge. To use this practice is to seek freedom from the defilements and to develop the supramundane knowledge that leads to the realization of Buddhahood. In this sense, Newar Buddhist teachers see bhrīḍa as an important application of the ideal of upōya kauḍā, a practice classified under kriyā tantrik in the standard division of Vajrayānic traditions.

HOMA AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BUDDHIST MONASTERY AND SACRED OBJECTS

In the course of different stages in vihara construction, there must be Pratisthā rituals; for these, the “Dāsa Agni” (ten types of fire) are visualized, one by one, then each receives a Ghrta Abhiṣekha (offering ghee) in the order shown in Table 1.

In an Ayūr Abhiṣekha (1,000) bhrīḍa ritual, each Ghrta Abhiṣekha is offered after each thousand Cari Abhiṣekha offerings. Thus, Ghrta Abhiṣekha is offered ten times in an Ayūr Abhiṣekha ritual.

As part of the rituals consecrating images, caityas, other sacred objects, these objects must receive dāsa karma rites, as if they are human in both male and female forms. From

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the Jātaka stage to Pāṇḍūraga, karma stage. āhūti is given to the Agni after the name of seven different āgni following each karma stage.

CONCLUSIONS

**Newar Hindu and Buddhist Homa Traditions.** The co-existence of Buddhist and Hindu traditions was described in the earliest accounts of the Kathmandu Valley by Chinese pilgrims. Although these are vague beyond noting that temples to the great Hindu gods existed alongside Buddhist monasteries, it is certain that this small mid-montane Himalayan settlement was a periphery frontier of all Indic traditions, from Sanskrit text to sacred art, from architecture to ritual practices. Just as the Indic arrived changed over time to add to the cultural mix, so did the shaping of innovative cultural forms from priests, monks, scholars, and pilgrims also became altered in the hands of the local Newar virtuosi. That a Hindu-Brahman cultural formation in Nepal has for many centuries co-existed with a Buddhist-sangha/virtuoso formation suggests that there were commonalities due to their mutual Indic origins, as well as reasons for their remaining distinct in local traditions of interpretation and praxis. Homa traditions are one case study in this complex religious field.

It is clear that Nepal preserves forms of brahmanal homa practice that may have nearly disappeared elsewhere in South Asia. Although no in-depth study has been done to survey Newar Hindu rituals, what can be stated is that today the homa rituals are done by Newar Deo Brahmins who serve as the purohits for Newar Hindus. These Brahmins have no corresponding concept of the Newar Buddhist philosophical underpinnings such as Bhat Agni, Jīnā Agni, Samya Agni, and so on. In the modern Newar Hindu homa, Agni is just a vehicle for the similar set of offerings made to the fire. As we have seen, the bājārārya ritualist specifically invokes this deity from water into the fire; and his visualizing an entire mandala into the fire itself is central to the Newar Buddhist practice today.

One other point of interest is the renown that the Buddhist homa practice has commanded outside the usual boundaries that separate Hindu householders (Shresthas) from their Buddhist neighbors. As mentioned above, bājārārya perform a special āhūti buddha-bastasuddha homa on the seventh or twelfth day after the death of a family member.4 It has been true that for at least a century and likely longer that Hindu Newars call a bājārārya to do this ritual that includes homa; it is thought to ensure that the home is fully purified and that all living there are protected from any harm. Newar Deo Brahmins do other homas, but not this one any more. Since Newar Hindu families want it, but neither of the Newar Hindu ritualists—Deo Brahmins or Karmācārya—do it, many Hindu families that can afford the expense call bājārārya after a death in the immediate family.

**Newar Buddhist Homa Ritual Traditions**

The procedures of early homa ritual (creating primal fire, offerings of grain and glue into fire) may have been the root aspect of homa discipline. That the procedures of homa ritual differ from each other in later Buddhism and Buddhism reflects divergent developments in their philosophies as well as the needs of their respective householder communities. After three thousand years, this cultural divergence led to the identification of the source of their homa to be either a god or the tantric Buddhist masters, respectively. Today, both traditions regard homa performance as one of the vital instruments for achieving both worldly blessings for humanity as well as supramundane benefits for individual human beings.

Regarding Tantric Buddhism and Homa (Bālya-homa)

Having presented the homa with attention to all its detail, and after noting the time and expense involved in the performance of this Newar ritual tradition, it is instructive to ask: **Why did homa become part of the Indic Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna tradition that was exported to China, Japan, and Tibet?** Here we provide the explanations prevalent from the history of the Newar Buddhist community.

The concept of upāya-kauśalya ("skillful means") is seen as underlying the integration of the Indic homa ritual technology into Buddhism in the same way that yoga discipline, mantra discipline, jñāne discipline, ayurveda cultural forms were similarly adapted. The cause of doing what alleviates suffering and is useful for the welfare of all beings (Skt. Satya-prakāramam jahvahita ya) is incumbent on those wishing to be bodhisattvas. To this foundation can be added a pillar of tantric philosophy: since what is bound by the pañca-skanda (five constituents of a human being) and material elements lead to beings' suffering, then there is no being—fire can be used to foster release also.

**APPENDIX I**

**NOTES ON VAIRAYĀNA SOURCES ON HOMA FROM NEPAL**

The following works, with brief commentary, are known to be authoritative in modern Newar praxis. This section is necessarily impressionistic, drawing on Dr. Bajrārya's examination of works related to the performance of a variety of homa ritual.

1. **Manjusirimalakalpa.** In chapter 14 of this important text in local tradition are discussed the Bāhya or Lāndika homa, including the places for performing the ritual, construction of the fire pit (Agnikunda), the types of wood and other materials to be used, number of oblations, the sources of the mantras, and the range of results obtained, from worldly to supra mundane.

2. **Gyanaamayā Tantra.** Here also is treatment of the Bāhya homa, and especially the deity to be invoked, qualification of a person who will do homa.
CONCLUSIONS

Newar Hindu and Buddhist Homa Traditions. The co-existence of Buddhist and Hindu traditions was described in the earliest accounts of the Kathmandu Valley by Chinese pilgrims. Although these are vague beyond noting that temples to the great Hindu gods existed alongside Buddhist monasteries, it is certain that this small mid-montane Himalayan settlement was a periphery frontier of all Indic traditions, from Sanskrit texts to sacred art, from architecture to ritual practices. Just as the Indic arrival changed over time to add to the dominant culture, so did the shaping of innovative cultural forms from priests, monks, scholars, and pilgrims also become altered in the hands of the local Newar virtuosi.

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It is clear that Nepal preserves forms of brahmanical homa practice that may have nearly disappeared elsewhere in South Asia. Although no in-depth study has been done to survey Newar Hindu rituals, what can be stated is that today the homa rituals are done by Newar Deo Brahmans who serve as the purohitas for Newar Hindus. These brahmans have no corresponding concept of the Newar Buddhist philosophical underpinnings such as Bhatta Agni, Jñāna Agni, Samya Agni, and so on. In the modern Newar Hindu homa, Agni is just a vehicle for the similar set of offerings made to the fire. As we have seen, the bājāra rita specifically invokes this deity from water into the fire; his visualizing an entire mandala into the fire itself is central to the Newar Buddhist practice today.

One other point of interest is the renown that the Buddhist homa practice has commanded outside the usual boundaries that separate Hindu householders (Shresthas) from their Buddhist neighbors. As mentioned above, bājāra rita perform a special geha-buddha-bustevathda homa on the seventh or twelfth day after the death of a family member. It has been true that for at least a century and likely longer that Hindu Newars call a bājāra rita to do this ritual that includes homa; it is thought to ensure that the home is fully purified and that all living there are protected from any harm. Newar Deo Brahmans do other homas, but not this one any more. Since Newar Hindu families want it, but neither of the Newar Hindu ritualists—Deo Brahmans or Kārmācaīras—do it, many Hindu families that can afford the expense call bājāra rita after a death in the immediate family.

Regarding Tantric Buddhism and Homa (Bālyā-homa)

Having presented the homa with attention to all its detail, and after noting the time and expense involved in the performance of this Newar ritual tradition, it is instructive to ask: Why did homa become part of the Indic Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna tradition that was exported to China, Japan, and Tibet? Here we provide the explanations prevalent from the history of the Newar Buddhist community.

The concept of upaśaya-kauśala ("skillful means") is seen as underlying the integration of the Indic homa ritual technology into Buddhism in the same way that yoga discipline, mantra discipline, āyurveda, and āyurveda cultural forms were similarly adapted. The cause of doing what alleviates suffering and is useful for the welfare of all beings (Skt. Satva-prakāśana samākhābhiya) is incumbent on those wishing to be bodhisattvas. To this foundation can be added a pillar of tantric philosophy: since what is bound by the pañca-skandha (five constituents of a human being) and material elements lead to beings' suffering, these same things, Agni—fire—can be used to foster release also.

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NOTES ON VAJRAYĀNA SOURCES ON HOMA FROM NEPAL

The following works, with brief commentary, are known to be authoritative in modern Newar practice. This section is necessarily impressionistic, drawing on Dr. Bajāra rita's examination of works related to the performance of a variety of homa rituals.

1. Maṇjūśrikīvyākṣa. In chapter 14 of this important work in local tradition are discussed the Bālyā or Lōteika homa, including the places for performing the ritual, construction of the fire pit (Agni), the types of wood and other materials to be used, number of oblations, the sources of the mantras, and the range of results obtained, from worldly to supramundane.

2. Gālitaḥbālita Taurā. Here too is treatment of the Bālyā homa, and especially the deity to be invoked, qualification of a person who will do homa.
Descriptive Studies

4. In this chapter, we follow the Newar tradition's usage of spelling the name as "Bajracarya" and the classical Indian-originating Buddhist ritualists as "bhairavas." There has been a preference for Buddhist Newars to write Sanskrit words as they are pronounced, not as in the written texts.

5. Symphoa of the philosophical focus of modern Buddhist studies, there has never been a systematic study of Mahayana ritual or even homa as found in the major tantric works. See, e.g., Schopen 1991.

6. In Appendix I, there is a note on textual sources of homa found in archives by Dr. Bajracarya in Nepal.

7. New bairavas begin their priestly acarya career performing a maha abhiseka at pithas, sites where a temple to the aghora goddesses are found.


9. This source is not identified by its title by Amoghapuja, but only with a brief comment on page 24 of a book citing the manuscript's colophon. Thangjuk Jhampa Ne Sam. 80 salsas, kuulukhabhaya Bajracarya Srimat Gopalam carya tagalmun maya pi kuskha pi. "This ritual manual was copied by one Srimat Gopalam Bajracarya of Kathmandu Baha, now Baha of Kathmandu, in 1515 CE."

10. For those in the Manandhar case (traditional oil pressers), this site is done only on the twelfth day, as well as on the forty-fifth day, as well as after the third, sixth, and twelfth months, for the Tandekar case (traditional rice makers), it is only done on the twelfth and forty-fifth days.

11. Note that the Kalachakra Tantra calls for doing homa before the diksha, but Newar tantric practitioners always do it afterwards. This may reflect how this text is not as important in Nepal. However, there is an oral recollection of a senior bairavas that the Kalachakra Initiation was once done in recent times in Baha, one of the eighteen main monasteries of Kathmandu city.

12. The sixth, seventh, and eighth life-cycle rites: Passages of life.

13. The saptaudvarasatakaya ("sevenfold supreme offering") for which patrons make 108 or 1,088 offerings of seven substances, and the vaikira priests perform the bojitra and Avallalar tritya to receive them.

14. Regarding the symbolic associations of water and fire in Indo-Iranian ritual, see Holly Geelhoed, "The Ritual Interplay of Fire and Water in Hindu and Buddhist Tantras," in this volume.

15. What follows is the tradition that is normative for Kathmandu city, based on the authoritative texts produced by Amoghapuja. There are slight variations in homa performance in Patan and Bhaktapur.

16. Eighteen types of wood sold especially for homa, tied up in ready-made small bundles.

17. From a clean, flowing river.

18. Red and yellow powder, used for painting, is made by the people.


21. Although it is called "grains," the ingredients also include fruits such as sugar cane, aruda ("Himalayan fruit"), and pomegranate.

22. The details of these common Newar Buddhist rituals are described in Locke (1980) and Gellner (1993). The normal order is: surya argha, gopalam nandana, bairava, homa puja, baha puja, bairava puja, kalche puja, then the conclusion of the homa proper.

NOTES

1. By 1850, this left only the local Tibetan sanghas where Newar could seek ordination into celibate monastic life; from the nineteenth century onward, modern Theravada monastic traditions added to this diversity (Levine and Gellner 2003). Lewis and Bajracarya have recently authored a long chapter to begin the task of writing the history of Newar Vajrayana Buddhist traditions. It will appear in the volume edited by David Gray and Ryan O'Bye, Tantra on the Move (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).


3. From the Sanskrit term vanda as vandana, an ancient Indic term of respect for monks.
Descriptive Studies

In this chapter, we follow the Newar tradition's usage of the case name as "Bajrakarya" and the classical Indic originating Virajya rituals as VaJaryaka. There has been a preference for Buddhist Newars to write Sanskrit words as they are pronounced, not as written.

Symmetrical of the philosophical focus of modern Buddhist studies, there has been no systematic study of Mahayana rituals or even home as found in the major tantric works. See, e.g., Schopen 1991.

In Appendix I there are notes on textual sources of home found in archives reviewed by Dr. Bajrakarya in Nepal.

New Bajrakaryas begin their priestly acarya career performing the main abhis home at pithas, sites where temples to the ajamati goddesses are found.

Kalaclara Jatika, A Traithi Pothakach, 2nd ed. (Kathmandu: Sanatana, n.d.).

This source is identified by its title by Amoghabaja, but only with a brief comment on page 35 of his book citing the manuscript's colophon: "Buongchhita sapha Ne. Sam. 650 salana kastubhika BajraJatri, Sri Lum Cogapanam adaya tagalitnam adaya pi STATA pis. "This ritual manual was copied by one Sri Lum Cogapanam BajraJatri of Kathmandu in 1950 [CE]."

For those in the Manadhar case (traditional oil pressers), this is done not only on the twelfth day, as well as on the forty-fourth day, as well as after the third, sixth, and twelfth months; for the Tandukar case (traditional rice makers), it is only done on the twelfth and forty-fourth days.

Note that the Kalaclara Tantra calls for doing home before the dhaik but Newar tantric practitioners always do it afterwards. This may reflect how this text is not as important in Nepal. However, there is an oral recollection of a senior bajuaka that the Kalaclara initiation was once done in Thai Baha, an early messianic monastic of Kathmandu city.

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The svapadati bacakarapakhi ("sevenfold supreme offering") for which patrons make a 1 10 of offerings of seven substances, and the vaJaryaka priest summons the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara to receive them.

Regarding the symbolic associations of water and fire in Indo-Iranian ritual, see Holly Geetche, "The Ritual Interplay of Fire and Water in Hindu and Buddhist Tantras," in this volume.

What follows is the tradition that is normative for Kathmandu city, based on the authoritative text published by Amoghabaja. There are slight variations in home performance in Patan and Bhaktapur.

Eighteen types of wood sold especially for home, tied up in ready-made small bundles.

From a clean, flowing river.

Red and yellow powder, used for punicis on tika, jhad, and dana equipment, people.

Five cows produce milk, ghee, yoghurt, dung, urine.

Fruits, flowers, medicinal herbs, sweets, akh roti, special incense, betel leaf.

Although it is called "12 grains," the ingredients also include fruits such as sugar cane, aruna ("Himalayan fruit").

The details of these common Newar Buddhist rituals are described in Locke (1980) and Gellner (1991). The normal order is: sarala arun, garvanenduda, patangaya, sibharam pahila, bhandhali, kalaclara adaya pahila, then the commencement of the home proper.

NOTES

1. By 1970, the local Tibetans sangas where Newars could seek ordination into celibate monastic life; from the twentieth century onward, modern Theravada monastic traditions adjoined to this diversity (Levin and Gellner 2005). Lewis and Bajrakarya have recently authored a long chapter to begin the task of writing the history of Newar Virajya Buddhist traditions. It will appear in the volume edited by David Gray and Ryan Overbeek, Tantra on the Move (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).


3. From the Sanskrit term vandita or vandana, an ancient Indic term of respect for monks.
23. Mudra are done in order: Bhūta, Varama, M涧ang, Marupāja, Lākṣa, Maža, Gith, Nīrya, Parabha, Dhiṣtā, Dhipā, Gardha, Āgara, Rāma, Svātar, Dharmanātharāgambarha.


25. For the Hindu ritual on October 1, 2016, this deity was Maṇjuśrī. It could be any bodhisattva on other occasions.

26. Eighteen types of food dipped in Ghee, placed one by one in fire kunda (each with mantra) in text, not done today, replaced by step no. 20.

27. hojō-dōji: pair of objects made of flattened rice, boiled rice, or fried wheat grains, solid and oblong in shape.

28. At this time, all in attendance who wish to offer the tika to the priest can come forward to receive the tika, giving ḍaṅga (payment) is customary in return.

29. The mānasa abhiṣeka is also called "pāthā maṇḍalābhiṣeka" in local parlance.

30. Tantric songs which originate with the supposedly spontaneous expression of awakening by early figures known as the Mahātarahūla. See recently, Jackson (2004).

31. It is believed in Vajrayāna that one who passes away practicing "uṣkriṇa yogā" successfully will obtain apravatputra bhumi (the "formless realm"), from where final emancipation is possible. On the basis of this idea, "uṣkriṇa yogā" is performed by a bājakārya for the deceased.

32. More technically, proximate to the navel, where the nirmanakāya is located.


34. This is popularly known as the "Ghau-Jagā/jagha" in Newari.

35. For this article, Prof. Bājakārya consulted the *Kriṣṇapānaka* manuscript, with the colophon date of N.S. 781 (1666 CE), now in the library of Subha Bājakārya, in the Pānakajāl neighborhood of Kathmandu.

REFERENCES


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In October 2010 a conference entitled "Homa Variations: From Vedic to Hindu and Buddhist" was held at Harvard University. For three days, a dozen scholars presented their work as it relates to the homa ritual. Over the course of that time, about two dozen others were in attendance as well. One of the high points of the conference was the performance of a Newari homa by Naresh Bajracharya, one of the conference participants. Following the conference, additional papers were solicited to provide greater depth to this collection.
Contributors

Naresh Man Bajracharya is the founding Chair of the Central Department of Buddhist Studies at Tribhuvan University and was the first Nepali appointed as Professor of Buddhist Studies. In addition to completing his PhD in Buddhist Studies at Delhi University in 1998, Bajracharya is also a tantric lineage holder and one of the leading priests in the Newar Buddhist sangha of Kathmandu. Author of many articles and books on Newar Buddhism, he was a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2009-10. Professor Bajracharya over the last decade has played a pioneering role in introducing the discipline of Buddhist Studies to Nepal and in revitalizing the spiritual traditions of Newar Buddhism across the Kathmandu Valley. He is currently engaged in organizing the construction of a Vajrayana Monastery in Lumbini. In late 2014, he was appointed Vice Chancellor of Lumbini Buddhist University in Lumbini.

Nawaraj Chaulagain is Assistant Professor in religious studies at Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois, where he teaches courses such as Religions of the World, Hindu Religious Traditions, Asian Religious Practice, Islam from Mecca to Malcolm X, and Peace & War in the Modern World. His research interests include Hindu kingship rituals, yoga and meditation, and comparative religions and literature in South Asia. He is particularly interested in the questions of how religions and politics intersect and interact, and how they influence the ways people construct their religious worldviews.

David B. Gray is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Santa Clara University. His research explores the development of tantric Buddhist traditions in South Asia, and
their dissemination in Tibet and East Asia, with a focus on the Yogini tantras, a genre of Buddhist tantric literature that focused on female deities and yogic practices involving the subtle body. He is the author of both The Cakrasamvara Tantra: A Study and Annotated Translation (2007) and The Cakrasamvara Tantra: Editions of the Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts (2012).

Holly Grether currently serves as an Assistant Teaching Professor at Montana State University. Her teaching interests include Buddhism, gender and religion, and theories of sacrifice. She received a PhD in Religious Studies from University of California, Santa Barbara, with specialties in South Asia and History of Religions. Under the tutelage of David Gordon White, her dissertation traced historical origins of various elements of boma sacrifices in South and Central Asia. Other research interests include religions of the Silk Road, Hindu and Buddhist tantra, religion and law, and ritual studies.

Georgeos T. Halkias obtained a DPhil in Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford and is currently an Assistant Professor at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, the University of Hong Kong. He specializes in Tibetan and trans-Himalayan Buddhism and history and has held research posts and fellowships in the United Kingdom (Warburg, SOAS, and Oxford), Germany (Ruhr University), and Japan (Otani-ha Foundation). His publications include Luminous Bliss: A Religious History of Pure Land Literature in Tibet. With an Annotated Translation and Critical Analysis of the Orgyen-ling Golden Short Sukhavativibha-suttra (University of Hawai’i Press) and several articles on Tibetan and Central Asian Buddhism, Himalayan history, and interdisciplinary studies of religion.

Todd Lewis is the Murray Distinguished Professor of Arts and Humanities in the Religious Studies Department at the College of the Holy Cross. His primary research since 1979 has been on Newar Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. He is the author of many articles on this tradition, co-author of World Religions Today (5th ed., 2014), and editor of the new course book Buddhism: Understanding Buddhism Through the Lives of Practitioners (2014). His most recent translation, Sugata Saurabha: A Poem on the Life of the Buddha by Chittadhar Hridaya of Nepal, received awards from the Khyentse Foundation and the Numata Foundation as the best book in Buddhist Studies published in 2011.

Timothy Lubin is Professor of Religion at Washington and Lee University. He has degrees from Columbia and Harvard, and earlier taught at Harvard and at the University of Virginia. He publishes on a wide range of topics in Sanskrit religious and legal literatures and epigraphy, teaching courses on Asian traditions, the comparative study of religion, and the Sanskrit language. His research deals with Indic legal traditions and Brahmanical Hindu ritual codes, the connections between them, and their reception in modern India. He co-edited Hinduism and Law: An Introduction (2010) and is at work on a study of Brahmanical authority in the history of South and Southeast Asia.