Tibetan Nuns: Reviving Saṅgha in the Land of its Origin

Debapriya Ghosh

Abstract: *The religion of Buddha, Dhamma-Saṅgha, which had declined from the land of its origin, is the most popular religion of the 21st century. With the decline of this religion in the past, the community of nuns also vanished from India. But incidentally, in the present day, the community is reviving through the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition in the land of its origin. In 1959, China occupied Tibet and ceased its connection with India. Being unable to practice their religion, the people of Tibet had to leave their country. Like the monks, keeping themselves at risk, nuns also escaped from Tibet and came to Dharamsala, home-in-exile of their religious leader, 14th H. H. Dalai Lama. The devotion to spirituality was the only motivation for them to sustain themselves with difficulties. In order to support the nuns, the Tibetan Nuns Project was then established in 1987, to provide the basic care for ordained Buddhist nuns. The main focus of this organisation was to preserve the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition and prepare the nuns as a teacher similar to the monks. In the present day, several nunneries are established to preserve the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition in Dharamsala. Aim of this paper is to understand the rising community of Buddhist Nuns. Research was done by interviewing the nuns in Dharamsala. Data was collected with the help of semi-structured interview schedules, prepared for the purpose.*

Keywords: *Dharamsala, H.H. Dalai Lama 14th., Nuns, Saṅgha, Tibetan Buddhism, Women Empowerment.*

Tibetan Nuns: Reviving Saṅgha in the Land of its Origin

India is the land of ancient Religions of the world and the religion of Buddha-Dhamma-Saṅgha is one of the popular religions holding a significant position for various reasons. One such recognized fact is the formation of the Order of Nuns. After establishing the first organized Religion Gautam Buddha permitted making the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha to Mahāpajāpatī Gautami and she is still remembered for securing equal status for women in the field of religious practice. But unfortunately, Buddhism declined from the land of its origin and simultaneously community of nuns vanished from India. But, in the 7th century, Buddhism went to Tibet from India and developed gradually as the extended form of Nalanda Tradition. Incidentally, in the 20th century through Tibetan Buddhism, the Sagṅha tradition started reviving in the place of its birth. Most importantly the female religious practitioners (nuns) again proved themselves to secure equal status with monks. The objective of this study is to provide an image of the Nuns community in Tibetan Buddhism established in Dharamsala.

Nuns in the Pre-communist Tibetan Era

The history of Tibet confirms that women spiritual practitioners were very much existent in Tibet, though the in-depth history of nuns was a missed part. On the other side, there is much information which is found on Monks. The reason could have been the number of educated nuns were very few, who could write on their lives (Havnevik 1989: 65; Willis 1987: 98–99; cited in Härkönen, 2016, 63). But it is also true that scholarly works on women also started in later times. As it is rightly said by Janice D. Wills in her article *Tibetan Buddhist Women Practitioner, Past and Present* that the case has changed in this modern time, where people are equally interested to know more about Tibetan women (Tsomo 2000: 147). Scholars became conscious after the rise of Women Studies that there is a lack of information on women in almost every field. Tibetan Buddhism was also not excluded from this. But now with all the available scholarly works, we can make an overview of Nuns in Pre-Communist Tibet under Buddhist tradition.

Historically the lineage of Bhikkhu, that is the full ordination of the monks were evident and the lineage is continuing with its pride still now. Although existence of nuns in historical Tibet is established by various pieces of evidence, the question of full ordination comes with no satisfactory answers. Tibetan novice nuns were first mentioned in the Blue Annals during the later period of Buddhism in Tibet in the Eleventh/Twelfth century, though the specific tradition is not mentioned (Das 2016: viii) and no confirmation found on highest

ordination. Dan Martin suggested, one should be conscious while reading the English translation of the Blue Annals, where the term "nun" is used generally for various Tibetan terms, which referred mainly to the ordained nuns, though doesn't confirm the full ordination (Martin 2005: 72–73). Mitra Härkönen has beautifully placed various arguments in this matter of full ordination in her thesis. She mentioned that the evidence gathered by Dan Martin (2005) on the full ordination for women at various historical periods, however, suggests that the lineage was not completely absent in Tibet. She also mentioned Martin's argument that the assumption on the Bhikkhunī order, that it might never been transmitted in Tibet has become "an article of faith with a life of its own" (cited in Härkönen 2016: 64). In this issue, Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo claims that there is no historical evidence that the Bhikkhunī Ordination was already transmitted from India to Tibet, and the probable cause, she said, is the environment of Himalaya which prevented the journey of the Bhikkhunīs from India and the result is the lineage never established (Tsomo 1996: viii). In support of the Bhikkhunī order in Tibet Kim Gutschow says, there are various shreds of evidence that show fully ordained nuns existed in the Indo-Tibetan borderlands, that is east of Kashmir until the eleventh century. She assumes that individual nuns may have travelled between Kashmir and Tibet. But on the other side, no record found for the minimum number of nuns required to establish a formal order (Gutschow 2004: 93). A 12th-century biography of Rinchen Sangpo has mentioned her sister who took the probationary nun-hood. She claims that this was the preliminary stage for full ordination. This text also provides evidence for fully ordained nuns in Western Tibet in the 11th century. While the full ordination of nuns, according to Gutschow, requires a full quorum of at least six nuns, it was occasionally given by monks alone. Like Martin (Martin 2005) she also mentions the Tibetan source from the 15th century, according to which Yeshe Ö established the practice of nuns' ordination. His daughter became a nun and founded a community of nuns. However, it is not clear whether this meant full ordination or if these nuns were ordained by monks only (Gutschow 2004: 95). The topic of full ordination for nuns is indeed historically unresolved. Buddhist Tradition holds two levels of ordination for monks and nuns, that is Novice and fully ordained. It is generally accepted that in Tibet full ordination for nuns was either never transmitted from India or wiped out due to various reasons (TNP W 2008: 2).

However, it is generally accepted that the nuns in Tibet were either Genyemas or female probationers or Jetsulmas, female novices. There were mainly three types of women ascetics in Tibet. First who used to live in the nunnery or Ani Gompa,

and second were those who lived at home with a special set of rooms and learned from the monks at home. The third one was those nuns who were individual ascetics who may or may not take monastic ordination and lived alone (Sangharakshita 1986: 66) or sometimes lived with one or two nuns as companions in mountain caves or the forest. Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo said about another type of nuns, stayed with relatives who provided them with the daily needs (Tsomo 1987: 88).

Leaving Homeland

1959 was the year when the Chinese occupied Tibet and ceased the connection between India and Tibetan Himalayan regions. Tibetans lost their monasteries and nunneries and they faced the challenge of their cultural existence. Tibetan Buddhism which formed with the other three Buddhist traditions of India lost the connection with the land of its origin. The people of Tibet had to leave their country because they were unable to practice their religion freely under China's communist rule. Like the monks, nuns have been expelled from their nunneries and wrongly imprisoned. They brutally tortured for participating in peaceful demonstrations against the Chinese government. Because of these reasons they indulged themselves in more risk for escaping from Tibet. The journey they took on foot, over the Himalayan mountains into Nepal. Most of them came to Dharamsala, situated in the state of Himachal Pradesh in India, home-in-exile of their religious leader, 14th His Holiness Dalai Lama. They came to India with nothing. The only motivation was their spiritual devotion for sustaining within the difficulties (TNP F 1998: 1).

Story of Dawa Dolma - A Nun's Struggle

A Tibetan nun shared her journey through an interview that her experience from escaping the homeland for practicing religion was terrible. She was born on 5th March 1982 and her ordained name is Jangchup Dolma and the previous name is Dawa Dolma, as her previous name is much easier to pronounce she prefers this name. However, she lived in Kham district, East of Tibet with parents and four siblings. In her childhood, she used to help her family with daily works, but at the same time seeing her grandmother going to the Temple (Gompa), she felt an attraction towards Religious practices. She started to visit Temple with her grandmother and met a Lama (religious teacher) there, who taught her the importance of life. She then decided to dedicate her life to worship and keep the Tibetan religious culture alive. In this decision, her grandmother was with her. Later on, the Lama advised her to escape from Tibet as the situation was not in

favour of the Tibetan people for practicing religion. Though her mother accepted her decision, her father became worried and didn't want her to move to India and become a nun as he was aware of the political problems of Tibet. Sticking with her decision, Dawa Dolma with a group of sixty-two members, (monks, nuns, layperson, children) took the journey by truck, where they were seated above the food, clothes, and luggage. All sixty-two members were in a single truck and covered with plastic. The journey was for seven days where they faced checking in the border, but, fortunately, the driver managed and escaped. After that, they came to Lasha where for two-three days they sat with the beggar and acted like them to hide from the Chinese army. They moved to Sacha from Lasha in two days by bus and then started the journey by foot to go to Nepal, which was again continued for two months. As it was very difficult for them to walk every day, they continued their journey on an alternative day. The security of the border area was also very tight and she had no idea whether the group of the military was Chinese or Nepalese. The most terrible incident she faced at that time was when the army shot seven people, and as a result, a Guruji died on the road and in front of her eyes. The army arrested the six people, but fortunately, Dawa Dolma escaped for jumping in the field with the rest of the people. After that, she met with a group of twelve people, who were also escaping from, Tibet. As she explains, they used to sleep in the morning and walk in the night to move to India. But unfortunately one day the army of Nepal arrested them and they were moved from one jail to another. In the meantime, she suddenly saw a Tibetan lady in jail one day, calling her in the Tibetan language. Dawa Dolma expressed the situation to her and the Tibetan lady managed to call the Tibetan Rescue Office and rescued them. For the next few days, they stayed in Nepal, and from Nepal, they came to Delhi and then Dharamsala.

She took a robe in her village from the Lama Tenzin Tinley, who is considered as her root guru. But she didn't come with a robe as the army of the border could have been recognized. She then went to Dolma Ling Nunnery, but as the nunnery building was not established at that time, she along with seven nuns stayed in a rented house for three years. The year was 1993 when she came to India. In 1996 she came to Dolma Ling Nunnery, where for the first three years she studied as a day scholar. After that, she got a room in Dolma Ling with a bed and studied for the next fifteen years. In 2010 she went to study Hindi in Benaras, where she studied for two years and came back to Dolma Ling Nunnery. At present, she is staying in Thosamling Nunnery and Institute for International Nuns, where she works as a teacher. She is also studying for Geshema Degree

from Dolma Ling. As she is working as a teacher she lives like her own. (Interview was taken on 27th March 2018, at Thosamling Nunnery, Dharamshala)

There are many real stories of a similar kind, which can make us imagine the situation of the nuns who travelled from Tibet to India for the sake of their religious belief and spiritual thirst. It is not at all easy for the women to live without family, but the real part of the story is, they live without family in search of spiritual bliss. The thing that made the present writer blissful is seeing the senior nuns speaking maturely being extremely happy form inside. They expressed their life of joy, though they do have feelings for their family and want to take responsibility that doesn't release the bliss from their life, cause they keep themselves engage through learning the Buddhist philosophy which makes them aware of the truth of life.

Tibetan Nuns Project: Empowering Women

It was the year 1984 when His Holiness Dalai Lama asked Tibetan Women's Association to support the Tibetan nuns and the journey started with the department of Religion and Culture of H.H. Dalai Lama to make a place for the nuns in exile in 1987. The first and foremost aim of this project was to support health, food, clothing, and shelter. In 1991, when a group of nuns arrived in Dharamsala, the existing nunneries were overcrowded and no facilities were available to receive them (TNP F 1997: 6). They were cramped along the sides of the road in extremely poor physical condition due to severe beatings in Chinese prisons and the journey across the Himalayas. To support them, Tibet women's Association organized emergency assistance to provide basic needs. In this course, they got help from many individuals and organizations. With the proliferation of nuns in exile, the financial resources became very less to match their needs. Thus, in 1991, they began to ask for world-wide support through the implementation of a sponsorship program that now continues to be successful. According to the report of 1997, the number of nuns supported by TNP was 400 (TNP F 1997:1), within one year the number increased and it was 500. (TNP F 1998: 1) and according to the report of 2017, the number increased to 800 (TNP W 2017: 1).

The Tibetan Nuns Project tried to review the basic-causes of illness and other health problems linked to hygiene and sanitation, as well as prevention and treatment of minor injuries. They trained a few nuns as health care workers who are qualified to administer first aid, medication, and injections (TNP 1997: 2). The

Health Training programs for the nuns from different nunneries started in 1995 (TNP 1997: 1).

After establishing the organization of the Tibetan Nuns Project, the organizers tried to solve the inequality on higher studies with the basic problem of Health, Food, Clothing, and Shelter for the nuns. At the same time with the vision of H.H. Dalai Lama, the education for all children imposed. It was clear to the visionary H.H. that without providing education it will be impossible to sustain the pride of their culture. As the education for the whole community has put on the priority list, Nuns also got the opportunity to have monastic education like there counterpart. In the Tibetan Society, Monastic education for the monks was very prominent; whereas nuns had no opportunity. In this whole process, Rinchen Khando Choegyal took the leading role. She is the Director of TNP and worked as the Minister of Education for two terms (maximum tenure allowed by Tibetan law) in the Tibetan Government of Exile in India. She was also the first President of the Tibetan Women's Association and married to Ngari Rinpoche, youngest brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The maximum number of nuns who came to India from Tibet could not read and write. Although they appeared very strong physically as they took a long terrible journey to India for their religion and culture, they were not that much confidence in the matter of education (TNP 2001). But all they had was the passion to protect their religious culture. Tibetan nuns lived a spiritual life in their country where they had to concentrate on Dharma practice with chanting, meditation including study. The emphasis was on the memorization of texts. But the opportunity was very less for mastering the philosophical studies which were generally for the monks. In this matter of higher studies, there seems to have an uneven status for nuns. But still, few nuns qualified as an instructor of meditation. The majority of women who took the robe of nuns were engaged mainly in prayers and ritual practices in Tibet.

Tibetan Nuns Project has set out to assist nuns from all parts of Tibet and all the different Tibetan Buddhist Lineages without preference or distinction, though initially, their major thought was to help refugees from Tibet. Over the years they have been receiving increasing numbers of requests for religious education from nuns of the Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Zanskar, Spiti, Lahaul, and Kinnaur (TNP F 2003: 2). It closely works with the nunnery called Dolma Ling which is non-sectarian, Shugsep which follows Nyingma tradition, Geden Choeling, which is Geluk and Tilokpur which belongs to Kagyu tradition. It also supports nuns at the Sakya nunnery in Dehra Dun, Sherab Coeling Nunnery, in Lahaul-

Spiti, Dorje Zong in Zanskar and also offers sponsorship to nuns living in retreat on the hill above Dharamsala and provide a small monthly stipend to nuns who recently arrived from Tibet. Other nunneries also get help from TNP, like Dama Nunnery near Solo Kumbu in Nepal, Yangchen Choeling, which approximately accommodate forty nuns (TNP F 2009) and Orgyen Chokhorling Nunnery in rural Sikkim. The fact is a new era of prospect and scope for Tibetan Nuns began through the TNP (TNP F 1997: 1).

Voice through Debate

The debate has been a method for learning philosophy for centuries in India and Buddhism also included this method of learning. Jang Gönchoe is known for the Intra-Nunnery Debate in the Tibetan language, in which monastic from various monasteries get together and debate about a shared topic from their study area. For centuries it has been an annual program for the male monastic and women did not have the opportunity to participate, but in recent times they have got the chance to participate in this. It was the fall of 1995 when the first Jang Gönchoe session held for women. The next session in 1996 was an important step towards making it an annual program for nuns and monks.

A nun named Lhadron emphasizes that the debate is not a competition in which one nun emerges the victor but rather an opportunity for all nuns to learn the Dharma. The debate is a favoured method of learning within the Buddhist tradition because it provokes analytical and critical thinking. Students are instructed to question everything before they accept it as truth.

Spiritual Urge or A Life to Sustain

Since the Chinese occupation of Tibet, thousands of Tibetan Buddhist nuns have escaped to India mainly to practice their religion. Leaving their families behind and risking imprisonment and torture, many of these women took the journey to Dharmasala, for the sake of spiritual aspiration. On the other hand, spiritual aspiration was not only within the Tibetan nuns, there were young women from the border region of India who were also interested in spiritual practice and Buddhist study. They reached out at the time when the Tibetans in exile in India are establishing a base of monastic education. Seeking admission in the Tibetan nunneries, they also proved the tendency towards the practice of Buddhism has not died in India. Especially it confirmed that women of India still have the urge to follow the ancient path. Nuns who came from the border regions to newly formed Tibetan nunneries expresses the condition of religious institutions of their part of the region, which were in poor condition and very few in numbers. Even

there was no opportunity to study. In a remote area like Zanskar, becoming a nun is very hard, as there is no equal opportunity like men. Generally, women remain in their family homes and receive no education. This is why many are prepared to take up the great challenge of learning Tibetan to join the nunneries in India and study Buddhist philosophy. In fact, for many nuns, they will be the first women teachers of their remote regions to introduce Buddhist learning for women (TNP F 2002). Another noticeable point is, shelter sometimes played a crucial role in the nuns of the border regions and most of them were illiterate and lacked the skills to sustain (TNP F 2003). In this matter, besides supporting the Tibetan nuns, TNP opened the door for the Indian nuns. The report says a hundred nuns from the border areas under the support of TNP, among them forty nuns live at Dolma Ling, twenty at Geden Choeling, forty at Tilokpur, and a few living on their own (TNP F 2002: 2). As a result, the Tibetan Nuns Project has witnessed the nuns gaining knowledge and confidence to pursue self-reliant lives of religious practice and community service (TNP F 2003). So, it will not be wrong to say that the women who are staying in a nunnery have the urge towards spirituality, otherwise, it is not easy to live a restricted life, but at the same time staying in a nunnery appeared as much better opportunity to sustain a peaceful life.

Living in the nunnery seems much secure to the nuns, once a nun has been accepted into a nunnery, she can stay there for her entire life. Even if she becomes ill and old, the nunnery will look after her. But sometimes nuns who become ill prefer to live with family and leave the nunnery. There is also the other side of reality, few nuns also decide to leave the robe and nunnery as they realize the ordained life doesn't suit them (TNP F 2004: 2). In Tibetan Buddhism one has the freedom to live her life according to her choice, there is no restriction for a nun to leave the robe, but once the nun leaves the nunnery and nun-hood, she'll not be accepted in the community again as a nun. However, the Tibetan Nuns Project's vision is very clear in its mission. Besides keeping the culture, they try to make an independent and efficient individual, who can sustain on her own. So, it can be said that the nunnery inherits the ancient Saṅgha system as well as in the modern sense works as an institute that produces productive and better humans, who can work with goodwill for the society.

Nuns for the Society

The question may arise that what is the role of the nuns in society? Are they only engaged with the study, meditation, ritual, and practices? Do they only work

towards the preservation of culture and religion? The answer is partially true. The fact is, they are very much connected to society. Sometimes the nuns work as the therapist in their society. They perform ritual worship for the society, work as a mentor for laypeople. The basic requirements for real altruism are care and compassion with a skill that they learn from the institutes. Everyone cannot be a teacher, but everyone can develop some skills so that they can serve the community.

Reviving of Saṅgha in the Land of its Origin

The history of the disappearance of Saṅgha from India is very puzzling. It was clear that the presence of the order of monks was flourishing still in 1198 A.D. though, Turkish invaders started raids and destroyed in the upcoming forty years. But on the other side, the order of nuns disappeared from the writings of the historians. Though I Ching was the one who traced nun in his writing and most probably nuns' order started fading gradually after that from the land of its origin. The last record speaks about the age of 550 A.D. when the existence of nun was found in the city of Mathura (Fleet, Gupta Inscriptions [Calcutta 1988: 70] Cited in Falk 1980) The Exact cause for the case of 'vanishing nuns'will remain sketchy. According to Meena Talim nunneries along with monasteries declined simultaneously in India, as both wings have stopped working as an innovative entity of Buddhism, in India. The merging process in Brahmanical cults perhaps was the main cause (Talim 2010: 115). This can also be said that women in the ancient period got the opportunity same as men to live an ascetic life where they worked for intellectual and spiritual goal, but the growth in the scholarly leadership was not prominent, which is why the order of nuns didn't move far in India.

However, at this present age, the community of Buddhist nuns is again reviving, through the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition in India. Tibetan Buddhism shaped through three traditions. The second religious king Trisong Detsen whose period can be considered as the second phase of the development of Tibetan Buddhism included three schools within it. He accepted Sarvastivada School (a branch of Theravada Tradition) for following the Vinaya or the monastic discipline. To follow the monastic code of conduct both nuns and monks had to follow the Sarvastivada tradition. Secondly, he accepted Mahayana tradition to follow Buddhist philosophy and metaphysics and for meditation, he considered the Tantra or Vajrayana path (Sangharakshita 1986: 22). This is how the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism formed unifying these three schools. It is the nearest form of Indian Buddhism which is living with continuation. Here the important thing

is to note that the monastic code of conduct for the nuns and monks are followed by the Sarvastivada Tradition, which is originated in India. Nuns under Tibetan Buddhism normally receives thirty-six precepts to practice their whole lives as novices. In recent times His Holiness 14th Dalai Lama announced his full support to introduce the full Ordination of nuns in Tibetan Buddhism. However, the Saṅgha within Tibetan Buddhism is keeping the age-old tradition of Indian Buddhism and fortunately, the motherland is having the strong establishment of the nuns' community through the nuns in exile. Dr Edward Conze argues that Tibet is closer geographically to the motherland of Buddhism, Therefore Tibetan Buddhism is the nearest spirit of Indian Buddhism (Sangharakshita 1986: 123). Finally, it would not be wrong to say that with the Tibetan Buddhist Nuns, the Saṅgha is re-establishing in the land of its origin.

Reference:

Life-story interview

A nun interviewed in Dharamsala in March, 2018.

Books:

Bell, C. Sir. 1992. *The Religion of Tibet*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Bell, C. A. 1992. *The People of Tibet*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Cambell, J. 2003. *Gender, Identity and Tibetan Buddhism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Dreyfus, G. 2003. *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*: University of California Press.

Havnevik, H. 1990. *Tibetan Buddhist Nuns: History, Cultural Norms and Social Reality*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press.

Horner, I. B. 1975 [1930]. *Women Under Primitive Buddhism: Laywomen and Alms Women*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Gutschow, K. 2009. *Being a Buddhist nun*. Harvard University Press.

Mills, M. A. 2003. *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism.* London: Routledge Curzon.

Gross, R. M. 1993. *Buddhism after Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Samuel, G. 1993. *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Talim, M. 2010. *Life of Women in Buddhist Literature.* Buddhist World Press.

Articles in Edited Volumes:

Barnes, N. 2000. The Nuns at the Stūpa: Inscriptional Evidence for the Lives and Activities of Early Buddhist Nuns in India. In: Ellison Banks Findly (ed.), *Women's*

Buddhism, Buddhism's Women: Tradition, Revision, Renewal, pp.17–36. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Falk, N. A. 1980. The Case of the Vanishing Nuns: The Fruits of Ambivalence in Ancient Indian Buddhism.In: Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives in Non-Western Cultures, N. Falk, and R. M. Gross (eds.), 206–224. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Harris, E. J. 1999. The Female in Buddhism. In: Karma Lekshe Tsomo (ed.).*Buddhist Women Across Cultures Realizations,* pp. 49–65. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.

Härkönen, M. 2010. Some Remarks on Understanding the Motives of Tibetan Nuns. In: R. Gothóni, (ed.). *Pilgrims and Travellers in the Search of the Holy*, pp. 273–298. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Gutschow, K. 2000. Novice Ordination for Nuns: the rhetoric and reality of female monasticism in Northwest India. In: Ellison Banks Findly, (ed.). *Women's Buddhism Buddhism's Women: Tradition, Revision,* Renewal. pp. 103–118. Boston: Wisdom Publication.

Gyatso, J. and Havnevik, H. 2005. "Introduction." In: Women in Tibet, J. Gyatso, and H. Havnevik, 1–25. New York: Columbia University Press.

Martin,D. 2005.The Woman Illusion? Research into the Lives of Spiritually Accomplished Women Leaders of the 11th and 12th Centuries. In: J. Gyatso, and H. Havnevik, (eds.) *Women in Tibetpp*. 49– 82. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gombrich, R. 1984. Introduction: The Buddhist Way. In: H. Bechert, and R. Gombrich, (eds.) *The World of Buddhism. Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture*, pp. 9–14. London: Thames and Hudson.

------ 2005. Gender and Religion: Gender and Buddhism.In: Encyclopedia of Religion, L. Jones.(ed.). 2nd ed. Vol. 5. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005, 3330–3335.

Sponberg, A. 1999. Attitudes toward Women and the Feminine in Early Buddhism. In : José Ignacio Cabezón, (ed.). *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender,* pp. 3–36. New York: State University of New York Press.

Shneiderman, S. 1999. Appropriate Treasure? Reflections on Women, Buddhism, and Cross-Cultural Exchange.In: Buddhist Women Across Cultures Realizations, K. L. Tsomo, (ed.). 221–238. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.

Sørensen, P. K. 1984. Tibet: the Rise and Fall of a Monastic Tradition.In: The World of Buddhism. Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture, H. Bechert, and R. Gombrich, (eds.) 253–270. London: Thames and Hudson.

Thonsur, T. N. 2003. Women Emancipation in Exile. In: Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora, D. Bernstorff, and H.V. Weck, (eds.) 322–341. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Tśomo, K. L. 1999. Change in Consciousness. Women's Religious Identity in Himalayan Buddhist Cultures. In: K. L. Tśomo, (ed.). *Buddhist Women Across Cultures. Realizations*, pp. 169–189. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.

———2003. Tibetan Nuns: New Roles and Possibilities.In: Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora, D. Bernstorff, and H.V. Welck (Des.). 342–366. Orient Blackswan.

Articles in journals:

Aziz, B. 1987. 'Moving Towards a Sociology of Tibet'. *The Tibet Journal,* 12(4), 72-86. Retrieved April 30, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/43300269

Gyatso, J. 1987. 'Down with the Demoness: Reflections on a Feminine Ground in Tibet'. *The Tibet Journal*, 12(4), 38-53. Retrieved April 30, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/43300266

Willis, J. D. 1984. 'Tibetan Ani-s: The Nun's Life in Tibe't. *The Tibet Journal*, 9(4), 14-32. Retrieved April 30, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/43302196

Gutschow, K. 1997. 'Unfocused Merit-Making in Zangskar: A Socio-Economic Account of Karsha Nunnery'. *The Tibet Journal*, 22(2), 30-58.

Tśomo, K. (1987). 'Tibetan Nuns and Nunneries'. *The Tibet Journal*, 12(4), 87-99. Retrieved April 30, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/43300270

PhD dissertation:

1. LaMacchia, L. 2001. Songs And Lives of The Jomo (Nuns) Of Kinnaur, Northwest India: Women's Religious Expression in Tibetan Buddhism, University of Wisconsin-Madison. PhD Dissertation
2. Härkönen, M. 2016 Tibetan Nuns between Oppression and Oppurtunity: An Intersectional Study. University of Helsinki, PhD Dissertation.

News Letter:

Tibetan Nuns Project News Letter From 1997-2017.

Website:

http://www.tnp.org/ access date: 25th Aug, 2018

Bio Profile of the Author:
Research Student
Dept. of Philosophy and Comparative Religion, Visva-Bharati
& Former Guest Faculty
Department of Philosophy
Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda
Email: ghosh.debapriya88@gmail.com