According to the D. Wright's chronicle, 'History of Nepal,' Shankaracharyya is mainly responsible for the decline of Buddhism in Nepal. This Nepalese Chronicle says, "At this time the incarnation Shankaracharyya was born in the Deca... Shankaracharyya finding no clear Buddhargis with whom to argue, and hearing that the sixteen Buddhargis had fled to Nepal, pursued them, but could not find them. On his arrival he saw that there were no learned Buddhargis in Nepal... Buddhargis were soon defeated. Some of them fled, and some were put to death, some, who would not allow that they were defeated, were also killed...."

Then he ordered to do Hitas (i.e. to sacrifice animals), which is in direct opposition to the tenets of the Buddhist religion. He likewise compelled the Bhikshunias, or nuns, to marry, and forced the Grihasthas to shave the knot of hair on the crown of their heads, when performing the Chura-Karma, or first shaving of the head. Thus he placed the Brahmasthis (ascetics) and Grihasthas on the same footing. He also put a stop to many of their religious ceremonies, and cut their Brahmanical threads.

There were at that time 84,000 Works on the Buddhist religion, which he searched for and destroyed. Having thus overcome the Buddhists he introduced the Saiva religion, in the place of that of Buddha. Thus ends Shankaracharyya's triumph over the Buddhargis of Nepal...
Shankaracharyya thus destroyed the Buddhist religion, and allowed none to follow it.

Very few Buddhists were left in the country now, and the Bhikshus began to intermarry with the Grihasthas.

K.P. Jayaswal writes, "Vrischedeva about 660 A.D. made Buddhism again popular. But his son Sankaradeva, about 680 A.D. is regarded as a second Shankaracharyya for having revived Saivism at the cost of Buddhism. He has left his monuments at Pasupati and is universally credited by the Buddhists to have abolished monasticism in Nepal. Buddhism (Mahayana), forcing every Bhikshu to lead married life. There have been no wifeless Bhikshus in Nepal ever since; the Viharas are occupied by married Buddhist priests."

About Shankaracharyya Taranatha writes that his was the thundering voice. At his approach Buddhist monasteries began to tremble and the monks began to disperse pellmell.

Commenting on the statement of Wright's Nepalese letter chronicle about Shankaracharyya Dr. R.C. Mitra observes, "There seems to be no foundation for such later legends except the fact that Vrischedeva's son was named Sankara. Such facile explanation"

of the decline of Buddhism as an effect of the evangelical crusade of Shankaracharya is open to the mistake of putting the cart before the horse. In fact the decadence of Buddhism was more the cause than the effect of the success of Sankara. Ancient discipline had been very much relaxed. The name Shankaracharya serves here as a symbol to represent the fortunate war undertaken by Brahminism against its enfeebled rival. If Buddhism in Nepal declined during this period, it was not for lack of royal patronage, which it continued to enjoy for a long time. The following facts mentioned by Dr. R.C. Mitra, show that no special animosity against the Buddhists is betrayed in the writings attributed to Sankara or to his disciple or to his spiritual grandfather. Moreover, in a neighboring village under the authority of the Srisneri Matha there is a Buddhist image which is still worshipped by the devotees of the Srisneri Swami.

But according to the local tradition the buildings at Nagaramonda have been destroyed by the monks of the Order of Sankara. The lands adjoining the Nagaramonda are in the

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1. The Decline of Buddhism in India by Dr. C. Mitra, Visva-Bharati, 1954, Chapter VII, P. 91.
2. The Decline of Buddhism in India by Dr. R.C. Mitra, pp. 129-30.
possession of the monks of the Order of Śaṅkara up till now. According to B.C. Law, "The ruthless manner in which the buildings at Nagarjunikonda have been destroyed can not be explained as the vandalism of treasure-seekers." The Sringeri Matha is also supposed to have been once a Buddhist site. In the Sringeri Matha there are pillars of distinctly Buddhist design. 2

According to Dr. H.A. Oldfield, although Śaṅkaraḥārīya tried in vain to destroy the worship of Buddha in Nepal, Buddhism in Nepal has triumphed over all the persecutions of Śaṅkara and has continued to be the national faith of the Newars throughout the ages until the present day. He says, "Although Śaṅkara, in pursuit of the fugitives from Hindustan, penetrated into the valley of Nepal, and inflicted the greatest injury on the sacred literature and architecture of the Newars, yet he was unable to overthrow their religion." 3

The conquest of Nepal by the Gurkhas in 1769 A.D. was a heavy blow on great discouragement to Buddhism in Nepal. It has accelerated its decline. This is evidenced by Dr. H.A. Oldfield

3. H.A. Oldfield, Sketches from Nepal, Vol. II. Ch. IV.
in his "Sketches from Nepal" (1880). Here is an extract from the same: "The bigoted Gorkhas regarded the Buddhism which existed in their newly acquired possessions as a creed which was, at the same time, too contemptible to be feared, and too heretical to be in any way encouraged. . . . Their conquest of Nepal was a heavy blow and great discouragement to Buddhism. Under the Newar sovereigns, although a very decided preference had always been shown in favour of the Hindus, yet the Buddhists had come in for a portion of the good things of the state. But under the Gorkhas the Buddhists received nothing and lost everything; their temples were plundered and their church lands confiscated; no sympathy of any sort was shown to the low-caste heretics; and their only chance of obtaining any favour was by laying aside the little that still remained unchanged of their own peculiar practices and doctrines and adopting without reserve the creed and customs of the Hindus.

The fatal change was made with too much fidelity. Even had Buddhism at that period been in a state of purity, and had its followers been zealous to maintain its orthodoxy, they would soon have been starved into submission and apostasy.

But unfortunately, Buddhism had already been, for many generations, gradually sinking into such a state of corruption and decay that its downfall was inevitable, and the blow which it received by the Gorkha conquest of Nepal has only accelerated its
This is evidenced also by Dr. R.C. Mitra, who observes, "One century afterwards, their decline was precipitated by the Gurkha conquest. State subventions were withdrawn and heavy hands were laid on their property at frequent intervals, till they sank to a position of insignificance. In its state of weakness to-day, Buddhism seeks desperately to save itself by clinging more and more to Hindu customs and philosophical ideas."

In this connection Mr. S. Levi, in conquering the Newars, have changed the destinies of Nepal. Their Brahmanical zeal has decreed the death of Buddhism. They have not proscribed it, but, what is more serious and decisive, they ignore it."

According to Dr. H.A. Oldfield Buddhism in Nepal has sadly degenerated from the high standard of doctrine and discipline which was established by the Primitive Buddhist church in the early ages of its history. It will have died an natural death, from the effects of its own internal corruption and decay. Here is an extract from Dr. Oldfield's sketches from Nepal: "During the lapse, however, of more than two thousand years, in descending from ancient to modern times, Buddhism in Nepal has sadly degenerated from the high standard of doctrine and discipline which was established by the Primitive Buddhist church in the early ages of its history. Theoretically the religion

2. Dr. R.C. Mitra, The Decline of Buddhism in India.
The Buddhist scriptures now extant in Nepal, and which are still looked to as the only inspired authority on all matters of faith, propound the same orthodox doctrines as were preached by Sakyas between two thousand and three thousand years ago; but the church itself has become corrupt, its discipline is totally destroyed, and its social practices at the present day are in direct defiance both of the letter and of the spirit of Buddhist Law. Its monastic institutions, with their fraternities of learned and pious monks, have long since disappeared; the priesthood has become hereditary in certain families, and the system of caste, which was denounced by Sakyas and the early church as utterly repugnant to their ideas of social equality, has been borrowed from the Hindus, and is now recognised as binding by all classes of Buddhists in the country.

The reign of Buddhism is now over in Nepal. Though still nominally the national faith of the majority of the Newars, yet it is slowly but steadily being supplanted by Hinduism, and before another century shall have passed away, the religion of Buddha, as the creed of the Newars, will have died a natural death, from the effects of its own internal corruption and decay."

According to Dr. D.L. Snellgrove, Buddhism in Nepal was doomed with the disappearance of the great monasteries of central

India. The decline of Buddhism in Nepal was mainly due to the adoption of caste by the Buddhist Newars, and the consequent decay of all the monastic institutions of Nepal. After the destruction of Buddhist institutions in India, Buddhism in Nepal was left to rely upon its own strength. Within a hundred years or so the monks had finally capitulated to Hinduism. This rapid collapse is not surprising, as Nepal means just one little valley. In India Buddhism was ruthlessly destroyed, whereas in Nepal Buddhism has been forced into conformity with other traditions, which represent the negation of all its higher striving. The monks in their monasteries were surrounded by lay folk who were Hindu in sentiment if not in name. The monks had no choice but to come to terms with society. They were regarded as respected members of society like the Brahmins. Thus they were assigned to the highest caste. Their caste system finally received official sanction in the mid-fourteenth century. Thereafter true Buddhism was a thing of past. Their last concession to society was the abandonment of celibacy. The theories peculiar to Tantric Buddhism may have helped to prepare the way for this. Married life was not at once universally adopted as some tradition of scholarship continued until after the Gurkha conquest. Possibly there were some monks in a few of the many Viharas. Thus Buddhism in Nepal has been dying slowly.

Dr. R.C. Mitra says that Buddhism in Nepal was dying a slow death, as everywhere in India, of inner exhaustion. Here is

\[1\] Buddhist Himalaya, PP. 108, 109.
an extract from his book *The Decline of Buddhism in India*

But Buddhism in Nepal died a slow death, as elsewhere in India, even though there was no persecution, nor external attack, nor revolting moral laxity. It was dying, as everywhere in India, of inner exhaustion. Of course, the old rules of purity and moral discipline could not be rigorously enforced. The exigency of a degenerate age came to be reconciled with the old rules of celibacy. A new usage developed, according to which the Bhikshu was required to observe celibacy only for four days after his vow by the Guru and simply enjoined to conform to the five moral sanctions against theft, murder, adultery, slander and alcohol. The vow of celibacy is respected only by the Gubhasjas or the Vajracharyas, who alone are authorised to conduct worship public as well as private, and to officiate in religious ceremonies. They are considered as constituting the real Holy Order, and in the event of their failure to qualify themselves properly for the religious exercises, they are liable to lose their sacred character and to be degraded to the ranks of the Bhiksu. The Bhiksu, on the other hand, living a family life, leans more and more to Hindu observances and disciplinary rules on occasion of birth, marriage, etc. Even a century back, Nepal was covered with monasteries, but these Viharas had long resounded with the hum of industry and the pleasant voices of women and children.

1. Dr. R.C. Mitra, *The Decline of Buddhism in India*, Cha. VII.
According to Mr. Charles Eliot a corrupt form of Buddhist still exists in Nepal. The Gorkha rule has favoured and accelerated the Hinduizing the Nepalese Buddhism.

According to S. Levi the lapse of the monks from celibacy was due, not so much to the oppression of Brahmins, as to the decadence of Buddhism itself. He has supported his view with evidence from Kashmir as well as Nepal. (Levi, Vol. II, P. 29). His view is that the married clergy, still living in their ancient convents, did not find their traditional religious calling sufficient for the new needs brought about by family life. So they had to adopt secular professions. In this way the Brahas formed into a clearly defined social class, which quickly converted into castes. The arts exercised in the convents, transmitted from father to son, attained a high degree of excellence, and the knowledge was kept a secret in the monasteries, became monopolies finally.

However, Mr. Percival Landon observes, "Most writers on Nepal assert that Buddhism is fading away there; and if by this is meant primitive and pure Buddhism, the statement is true—and has been true for a thousand years. But if Buddhism is meant in the sense in which Buddhism is regarded as the religion of Tibet, then the remark needs considerable modification."


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