

CHAPTER 6

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CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

As discussed in the preceding chapters, The *Mahayāna* and *Theravāda* Buddhism are an important component of Arunachalee culture. The Arunachal Pradesh has very rich Buddhist culture. It is worth mentioning that though Buddhism has perished in the main land of Indian peninsula where it is originated, still in the hills of western and eastern Himalayas, Buddhism is a living force. The North Eastern India including Arunachal Pradesh is the home of a number of *Mahayāna* and *Theravāda* Buddhist tribes. The *Mahayāna* Buddhism has contributed immensely in the field of art and culture, dances, festivals, tourism of Arunachal Pradesh. Whereas *Theravāda* Buddhism also equally contributed the development of the state in the field of art and craft, culture etc. The nicely decorated *Viharas*, *Stupas*, Monasteries, gateways, other minor Buddhist structures along with sculptural art, manuscripts provide an idea of Buddhist material culture of Arunachal where one can notice the influences from Myanmar, Thailand, Bhutan and Tibet. The *Theravāda* Buddhism has also its impact on the socio-political-cultural life of the people as reflected in the rituals, festivals, dances, songs, dramas, polity, traditional arts and crafts, etc. The *Mahayāna* Buddhism has its impact on the day today life and the socio-cultural life of the Monpas, Shredukpens, Membas, Khambas, reflects through their rituals, festivals, colourful dances, songs, pantomimes, traditional art and crafts, manuscripts, paintings etc. Infact, the material and non-material cultural heritage of *Theravāda* Buddhist tribes also throw light on the development of Buddhism in the eastern part of

Arunachal Pradesh among the Khamtis, Singphos and to some extent among the Tikhak-Tangsas.

With a general outline of the topic along with sources, Buddhist manuscripts, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research methodology has been discussed in chapter one.

The chapter two discusses the available literature source has been comprehensively discussed. In this chapter, literature survey was done from available primary and secondary sources such as books on Arunachal Pradesh, books on Buddhism in general and Buddhism in Arunachal Pradesh in particular, research articles and books on manuscript conservation and preservations. Here a sincere effort has been made to review the available literature in India and other parts of the world, with focussing on Buddhist manuscripts of Arunachal Pradesh.

In the third chapter, origin and development of Buddhism in Arunachal Pradesh is discussed. Here it may be mentioned that History of Buddhism reveal that Guru Padmasambhava, locally known as Lupon Rimpoche, sowed the seed of Buddhism in the Monpa-Sherdukpen area in modern Tawang and West Kameng districts sometimes in the eighth century AD and the *Nyingmāpā* and *Karmāpā* probably started the conversation of the Monpas to Buddhism must have a good number of followers among them even before the twelfth century to have made the three *Nyingmapa* temples of Tawang is the testimony to establish the fact. However, the history of *Gelugpā* sect goes back to the time of *Thangston Gyalpo*, a Tibetan Lama (1385-1462) who popularised the *Gelugpā tradition* in the Monpa areas. Subsequently, Tibetan Monks like *Tanpei Dronme*, *Lopsang Khecham*, who were contemporaries of second Dalai Lama, *Gedung Gyatso* (1475-1546) were

instrumental in the establishment of a number of *Gelugpā* sect introduced by Tanpei, Dronme in this part was sustained, consolidated and extended in a series of his incarnations. As a result, at present, one can locate dozens of *Gelugpā* monasteries in the Monpa-Sherdukpen area, of which the Tawang monastery of 17th century built by a monk Mera Lama is the biggest and most notable one. These monasteries are the storehouse of thousands of manuscripts throws light on India's cultural contacts with Tibet. The dances, festivals, rituals, traditional arts and craft, languages of these tribes also reveal similarity with those of Tibet. The Monpas and Sherdukpens live in the Tawang and the west Kameng districts, situated in the western part of Arunachal, adjoining Bhutan and Tibet as well. The traditions of the Monpas and Sherdukpens claim that Padmasambhava brought the message of Buddhism to them in the eighth century. Who helped the Tibetans to establish the creed in Tibet during the same period. Nahs, the Membas, the Khambas, the Meyors in the northern frontier of the state are following *Mahayāna* Buddhism. Infact, their Buddhism is influenced to a great extent by the Buddhist tradition from Tibet.

Arunachal Pradesh is the home of a number of Buddhist tribes as discussed. It is to be noted here that Buddhism from Tibet (*Mahayāna* Buddhism) and Myanmar (*Theravāda* Buddhism) came to the western and eastern part of the state respectively with the migration of a number of Buddhist tribes to their present settlement. The Tikhak-Tangsas however are said to have migrated before the Khamtis. The *Theravāda* Buddhism prevailed in two districts namely Lohit and Changlang located in the eastern frontier of the state. As we understand, from early times, Arunachal Pradesh had trade and cultural contacts with Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand in the east. Autonomous region of Tibet (China) in the north and west, Bhutan in the west

and Assam in the south. Thus country to general perception that the state was isolated from rest of the world; the tribes of Arunachal had ethnic and cultural contacts with the people of neighbouring countries.

The Preparation of Manuscripts Technique in Mahayana Buddhist area has been discussed in brief in chapter four. Buddhist Monasteries and manuscripts of Arunachal Pradesh have been presented in brief in this chapter. Manuscripts are rich sources of tradition, history and culture. These are ought to be preserved organised and disseminated to make them available to the world at large. Ultimately, this heritage is part of the memory of the whole world. The western countries have taken a lead in starting digital initiatives to preserve the manuscripts but such initiatives in India are either poorly organised or in primitive stage of development. These rich treasures of our country distributed in private and public institutions in variety of medias such as parchment, vellum, palm leaves and paper, languages scripts, collection sizes and in different conditions. India has the largest collection of manuscripts in the world. They are spread all over the country and also abroad in different libraries, academic institutions, museums, temples and monasteries and in private collections. The rich manuscript wealth of India today faces a threat of survival. However, India has possibly lost a vast amount of this wealth. Sufficient information on them is not available today. Among the existing collection, most of them are in a state of decay and damage. Among the extant collection, only a very small portion has been surveyed and documented properly. Experts fear that almost all the manuscripts collection will perish in the near future due to decay, and wear and tear. The invaluable heritage of India in the form of manuscripts has to be documented, preserved and made accessible to us and to succeeding generations. The

sincere effort has been made to visit and survey available *Mahayāna* Buddhist Manuscripts in Monpa and Sherdukpen areas. Main and important monasteries (*Gonpās*) have been covered, surveyed and documented about the numbers and the conditions of manuscripts. Due to paucity of time and geographical conditions small monasteries and individual collection of manuscripts are not been able to cover. The rich collection of *Theravada* Buddhist Manuscripts also been covered in this chapter. All most all the villages have a *Viharas*, Buddhist *Stupas* and other minor structures such as *Kuti*, temple, rest houses in this area are the main hub and source of rare sacred books as well as manuscripts in very pathetic conditions.

Information technology has come with a promise to develop digital initiatives for manuscripts for preservation, dissemination and delivery. In chapter five, a sincere effort has been made to discuss the digitisation technique of manuscripts of Arunachal Pradesh. The pilot project has been initiated by the researcher without any funding sources. With great persuasion and convinces to the abbot and secretary of the Tawang monastery, the most valuable manuscript as a sample project was undertaken by the researcher, with the objective of better understanding on the different issue pertaining to the digitization of Manuscripts. An excellent Mahayāna Buddhist manuscript ten Gyetongpa folios were chosen for the sample project. The project was jointly envisaged and executed by The National Mission for Manuscripts took up the task of preparing *Kritisampada*, in order to document the wealth of Indian manuscripts lying scattered in different organisations and private collection in India and abroad. The National Mission for Manuscripts carries out the methodologies used in a long and effort-intensive process, the documentation of manuscripts through various means. The four important methods such as i) Survey and Post-Survey; ii)

Manuscript Resource Centres (MRCs); iii) Manuscript Partner Centres (MPCs); iv) National Informatics Centre and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. Information format for the data collection employed by the Mission and its partner institutes standardised so that the information made available on the internet is uniform, as complete as possible and there is no scope for confusion. The different hardware, scanners and cameras which are used in digitisation process has been discussed in brief in this chapter. The software used in this effort by the Mission, developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC), is *Manus Granthavali*. It updated frequently and has undergone several modifications with the addition of new fields and the possibility of multiple subject entries for a single manuscript. *Manus Granthavali* based on the Dublin Core Metadata Standards that are globally accepted and used in libraries everywhere. A state-of-the art software, it has been installed in almost all MRCs and MPCs of the Mission.

Objective 1.

To study present condition of the manuscripts, including those preserved scientifically as against those which are still under individual possession.

The conditions of manuscripts from different *Gonpās, Viharās and Stupās* are being surveyed. The present conditions of the manuscripts in many *Gonpās* are very pathetic. The comprehensive survey of these manuscripts helped the researcher to study and close scrutiny of fragile manuscripts. It certainly helps in curative conservation of these manuscripts. There is ample of scope for further study. The researcher's effort is just a humble beginning.

Objective 2.

Possibility, viability and feasibility of utilisation, restoring the same and the modus operandi to be followed.

There is possibility and feasibility to restore and digitise these valuable manuscripts, which are perishing away. The utilisations of these manuscripts are mainly by the custodians, care takers and other experts. During important festivals, rituals, occasions these manuscripts are being used. The proper handlings of such manuscripts are very important.

Objective 3.

Problems involving collection of manuscripts from diverse sources.

It is very difficult to convince the authorities of monasteries to access such manuscripts. The restrictions to access such valuable manuscripts may not be easy to study them in a proper perspective.

Objective 4.

To document the Buddhist manuscripts in Arunachal Pradesh.

With the help of National Mission for Manuscript, New Delhi, at least initial survey has been done. Still there are thousands of manuscript collection in every village and individuals. It has to be surveyed and properly documented. Before damaging further the proper survey, cataloguing and documentation of such manuscripts should be done.

Objective 5.

To suggest the ways and means of restoration.

The scientific and time tested methods of digitisation have been suggested to restore our heritage.

Objective 6.

To suggest a plan for digitisation of manuscripts available in Arunachal Pradesh.

Digitisation is the only remedy and permanent solution for restoring these manuscripts for this generation and prosperity.

6.2 Recommendations

- 1). The proper awareness and orientation programme on curative conservation has to be organised time to time to custodians, users and monks of the *Gonpās, Viharās and Stupās*.
- 2). Workshops are to be organised to custodians of the manuscripts on how to preserve and conserve the manuscripts.
- 3). Proper handling and utility of these manuscripts by the users are to be oriented in order to preserve these manuscripts.
- 4). Digitisation is the only ultimate time tested solution to preserve these manuscripts for the future generation. The proper hardware and software are to be recommended for the digitisation. The regular training on digitisation has to be provided to the curators, custodians of these manuscripts.
- 5). The external funding agencies are to come forward to help generously to preserve these manuscripts. Institutions are to be taken initiatives to tap the resources.

- 6). Information Technology is the boon to preserve and conserve such manuscripts. The awareness of such technologies change has to bring to the notice of the custodians, so that they should be abreast with nascent knowledge in the field of Information Technology.

6.3 Conclusion

Buddhism plays a major role in developing socio cultural, socio economic and socio religious life of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Buddhist manuscripts are the means through which people become aware of this culture, heritage etc. from generations to generations. With the passing of time, due to various conditions, these manuscripts may be lost, if precautionary measures are not taken. Moreover, due to fragile nature of the materials, paper, ink etc, the durability is minimised and custodians are reluctant to allow these manuscripts to use. People are also, apprehending early loss, stay away from using or consulting the manuscripts.

For the benefit of the society, to gather knowledge and expertise, these manuscripts need to be consulted. In the present context, such manuscripts can be used by digitising them.

Digitisation facilitates frequent use of such manuscripts, multiplying of copies, accessing from any location: offline or on line. The technique is developing regularly.

The manuscripts available in the state are to be preserved physically by applying scientific method of preservation. Once the content of these manuscripts are available in digitised form, demand for using such manuscripts in original will be lesser and society will be immensely benefited from the content available in digitised form. The valuable Indian heritage in the form of Buddhist Monasteries, Viharas, Stupas and thousands of manuscripts in such monuments are perishing day by day. It is need of

the hour to think and to take suitable steps, to restore and to conserve the Buddhist manuscripts for the future generation. Information technology has come with a promise and expertise in the field to develop digital initiatives for manuscripts preservation, dissemination and delivery. It is a sincere efforts on the part of the researcher to initiate such digitisation process for such valuable manuscripts collection of Buddhist monasteries of Tawang area of Arunachal Pradesh, and it is hope that the state government with the help of Archaeological survey of India (ASI), INTAC, NMM and IGNCA shall initiate long drawn process for preservation and conservation of Buddhist manuscripts of Arunachal Pradesh, which will go a long way to understand Buddhist cultural heritage of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and of India in general.

6.4 Further Research

There is ample of scope for further research in this topic. The present study is a just tip of ice burg. The research in such topic will help in preserving our heritage at large since these are the invaluable heritage of India in the form of manuscripts has to be documented, preserved and made accessible to us and to succeeding generations. The proper study and applying proper technology in proper time will go long way to preserve our heritage. Further study and research can be done on proper preservation of these manuscripts. The methods applied results from preservation do not ensure for a longer terms. They have their own limitations, whether physical or chemical.