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THE TALE OF SANTIDEVA AS DEPICTED IN SANSKRIT MANUSCRIPT ACQUIRED FROM  
NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

The matter in discussion relates to the story of Santideva as depicted in the manuscripts collected from Nepal. A very important role was played by him in the realm of spirituality in Eastern India before the end of 11<sup>th</sup> cent C.E. The spiritual transformation from an would be king to a Shidhhacharya is noteworthy. The story as depicted in the manuscripts and scholarly approaches to its establishment are considered here in this text. The relative characters of the contemporary Buddhist studies are also taken into discussion.

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Santideva the Siddhacharya was very prominent in the arena of spirituality of eastern India before the end of eleventh century. History of Siddhacharyas is very important to the religious history of India, dates back from the name 'Siddhartha' recurred. The author of 'History of esoteric Buddhism in India', Ronald M. Davidson had shown, from seventh century onwards the non-monastic Siddha systems faced various influences ,mainly of Mahayanist monastic Buddhists and Pasupata-kapalikas. The great scholar of eleventh century Abhinabgupta had stated that the siddhas, Gorakhanatha the celebrity preceptor of the Siddha system propounded the Kula system. There is another decision of Prof. Kantichandra Pandey, who stated in his book in 'Abhinabgupta', may be Matsyendranatha or Machchhanda propounded 'Kula' system on or about 5<sup>th</sup> century C.E in Kamarup. May it be 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E according to different traditions, it is clear that Yogacarins Siddhas who were in different traditions but were common on the basis of yogic system gave accreditation of sexo-yogic religious sadhana which is categorized as 'Yogini kaula' system in a broader term. Categorically we are on the position to say that Yoagacarins firstly accepted the consorts externally, to acquire sublimation and divided themselves into Purbakaula and Uttara Kaula system. Uttara kaula system gradually goes closer to Krama system which is not 'Tantrik' only, but also ' Sakta tantrika' or 'Saktikaravanavadins'. If we would look into the prehistory of present day ,prevalence of mothercult of Kashmira and Eastern India, we will find the theoretical history of Kauliki System emerging from Siddha system mainly ' Saiva' in nature and influenced by Mahayanist Yub-Yum or sexo-esoteric practices of 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E .

The life of 'Santideva' the author of ' Bodhi Charyabatara' corroborates with this theoretical discourse. M.M Haraprasada Sastri deduced in his introduction of ' Hajar Bacharer puran Bouddha Gyan O Doha' that author of ' Sikkhasamuchchaya' and ' Boudhicharjabatara' Santideva and poet of some of the ' Charyagitis' of Anuttaratantrika Buddhist Sahajayana Vusukupada were same person. Infact, the Siksha samnchchaya of santideva though a treatise of Mahayanist Madhyamikas contains some hints of Anuttara tantrism of Sahajayana. It was the time around 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E the Mahayanist monastic monks and Yogacarins

Buddhists and sainvaites were being gradually inclined to Tantrism, which will lead to Saktikaranavadin tantric system both in Kamrupa and Kashmir, prevalent till the present age.

Now let us see how Santideva of Mahayanist Madhyamika system transformed to Vusukupada of Sahajayani Charyagiti collection as depicted in palmleaf manuscript of G9990 in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata collection. The manuscript is of 'Prajna Paramita' acquired from Nepal and was noticed by M.M Haraprasada satri. In the 'Upodghata' of this manuscript the life of him was told in a balladic form in Sanskrit describing Santideva as a great interpreter of Prajna Paromita. The life of him was collected here from the collections of an unknown source book of the life of Siddhas based on orally scattered balladic histories of Sidhhacharyas.

Santideva was a son of a king. On the verge of his coronation to youvarajya his mother inspired him to take teachings from Boddhisatwa Manjuvajra. Santideva started the journey riding on a horse. On the way he met a flower of Bodhisatwa Manjuvajra and after twelve years of practice under Manjuvajra he attained salvation in the system of the Great Manjusri, the celebrated god of learning. After that, disguising himself as a 'Raut' or Horseman he started to go to Magadha. He gave out his own kingdom and took the name of 'Achalasena', but when his authority on sword started to express spontaneously from the grace of Manjusri the god with knowledge Sword, he again gave away the royal duty and became a Vikshu. He went to Nalanda, the greatest seat of learning and authored Shikshasamucaya and Bodhicaryavatara. At the time of eating i.e. Vojana, during sleep i.e. Supti and even in rest i.e. Kutigamana, on the collectivity of the three states he remained in the state of 'Samadhi' and so he was renamed as 'Vikshu' the profound Sahajayanist.

This story also corroborates with some of the motifs of Charyagitis used by Vusuku himself where he described the struggle with the pirates. Taranatha also described the history of Santideva- Vusuku in his chronicle named as 'History of Buddhism in India (MLBD2010) but it lacks this story. But Taranatha fixed his time on 8<sup>th</sup> Century C.E and place of birth as Saurashtra.

This is the story of Santideva- Vusuku and its importance as a chronicle of religious history has already been introduced by me. But its very importance is still unfolded. We may suggest here only on the point of our concluding part. You, the learned scholars must know the balladic story of Mayanmati and Gupichandra of Natha community scattered throughout the north India from Jalandhar to Chittagong, were also in manuscript version even more or less 15 years ago. There is astonishing similarity of both the stories of Santideva and Gupichandra. First one is of Buddhist Siddhacharya and the second one is of the Saiva Nath siddhas. There may be a comparative archetypal analysis of religious motifs and theories of a same storyline of two different lineages but very close to each other.

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