

The Practice of Tibetan Buddhist Nuns

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Abstract

In the long course of human history, each area and nation has its own different religious Life-style and their different manifestation in different times. After Buddhism entered Tibet, it had chosen its existence in the process of Tibetization. As the religious females and women practitioners who acted as one of vehicle spreading and implementing Buddhism, they had set up their optimal value of life and religion behavioral pattern ,with distinctive individuality.

The paper will illustrate the practice of the Tibetan Buddhist nuns from 3 aspects.

1.Practice in Early Times

The practice of Tibetan Buddhist nuns can be traced back to the 8th century AD and the most representative figures are Yeshe Tsogyal and **Zhuosa khri gyal mo tsun** who were once the consorts of Trisong Deutsen. They actively promoted Tibetan Buddhism and made special contributions to the development of it. From their stories, we can learn about the early practice of Tibetan Buddhist nuns, whose practice life reflected very distinct features and characteristics.

2.The Practice Centered on Sects

In the 1st half of the 10th century AD, the Tibetan Buddhist nuns began its revival and development with the renaissance of Tibetan Buddhism. Especially with the rise of Tibetan Buddhist sects, the Tibetan nuns also shaped into various sects such as Nyingma , the Bka'-gdams , Sakya , Zhibyed , Gcod-Yulh , Kaggu ,

Jonang,Gelug and **Gogra , Zhalu or Bulu , Bodong** sects. Therefore, the practice of nuns was connected with their own sect and the sect-centered nunneries, organizational institutions as well as religious ceremonies were set up, which made their practice more organized, institutionalized and standardized.

3.The Variety of Practice

Tibetan Buddhist nuns observe the principles of their respective sects, and in the meantime construct distinct practice mode. The writer have made field investigation on Tibetan nuns and nunneries over years and divided the Tibetan nuns into several types as follows according to their different practice forms: female Rinpoche, the Buddhist practicing in monasteries, Buddhist ascetic, wandering Buddhist and nunnery community Buddhist, Buddhist practicing at home etc., so as to study their practice in all aspects..

To sum up, it is believed that the practice of Tibetan Buddhist nuns and their distinct practice pattern have been influenced by Tibetan Buddhism and constrained by individual choice and Buddhist qualities. However, socio-economy and geographical environment are the fundamental factors which diversified the practice of Tibetan Buddhist nuns and directly affected the practice pattern. Although the nuns differ from each other in the content as well as the pattern of their practice, with the same purpose they wish to satisfy the religious life of individual and community through the performance of these religious consciousnesses. This is their common psychological basis and the reflection of Tibetan Buddhist nuns' personal value orientation and life attitude.