

# Trailblazers of Modern *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal: A 20th Century Perspective

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## Abstract

*The resurgence of Therāvāda Buddhism in Nepal during the 20th century, following a period of marginalization under the Hindu monarchy, was largely driven by a few pioneering monks, lay practitioners, and scholars. These trailblazers played a critical role in reviving Buddhist practices and philosophies in Nepal, which had once been at the core of the country's spiritual and cultural identity. This article explores the contributions of key figures whose efforts were instrumental in the establishment of Therāvāda Buddhism as a major religious force in modern Nepal. By focusing on their life stories, their academic and social contributions, and the contexts in which they worked, this study highlights their influence on the revitalization of Therāvāda Buddhism, the transformation of Nepali society, and the development of Buddhist institutions. These figures not only revived meditation practices such as Vipassanā but also emphasized the relevance of Buddhist ethics in addressing social issues, particularly caste discrimination and gender inequality. Their work laid the foundation for Buddhist education in Nepal, with the creation of meditation centers, educational institutions, and social justice initiatives. This article underscores the enduring impact of these trailblazers on the spiritual, social, and cultural fabric of Nepal, offering a nuanced perspective on the role of Therāvāda Buddhism in shaping the modern Nepali identity.*

**Keywords:** Trailblazers, Therāvāda Buddhism, Nepal, 20th Century, Revival, Meditation, Social Reform.

## 1. Introduction

The Kingdom of Nepal, lying along the southern slopes of the Himalayan Mountains, is located between India to the East, South and West and Tibet, China to the North. It covers an area of 56,827 square miles and has a population of over 22.9 million (UN 2005). From 1846, Nepal was ruled by hereditary prime ministers favoring isolation, and remained closed to the outside world until a Palace revolt beginning in 1950 restored the Crown's authority in 1951. In 1991 the Kingdom established a multiparty parliamentary system which continues in force to the present day. Nepal contains some of the most rugged and difficult mountain terrain in the world. Mountains cover roughly 75% of the country. From South to North, the country can be divided into four regions. These are: the Tarai, low, fertile land; the valleys, the hilly region between the Mahabharata Range, and the Great Himalayas; and The Great Himalaya Range, rising to more than 29,000 feet (Thapa 30-33).

Nepal's weather is influenced by elevation as well as by its location in subtropical latitudes. The climate ranges from subtropical monsoon conditions in the Tarai, through a warm temperate climate at between 4,000 and 7,000 feet in the mid-mountain region, to cool temperate conditions in the higher parts of mountains, between 7,000 and 11,000 feet, and to an alpine climate at altitudes between 14,000 and 16,000 feet along the lower slopes of the Himalaya Mountains. At the surface covered by snow and ice (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica* 777-79).

Nepal includes a rich variety of linguistic, ethnic, and religious patterns. It has a number of ethnic groups each with its own language, such as, for example, Chetree, Newār, Tharus, magar, Gurung, Tamang, Rai, and Limbu. The national language, Nepali, is spoken throughout the country (Maharjan 10).

*Therāvāda* Buddhism, often regarded as the “Doctrine of the Elders,” represents one of the most ancient forms of *Buddhism*. It has historically flourished in Southeast Asia, particularly in countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, and Cambodia. In Nepal, however, the presence of *Therāvāda* Buddhism was historically marginalized due to the dominant influence of Hinduism, which not only overshadowed the practice of Buddhism but also relegated Buddhist communities to the peripheries of social life. Despite this, Nepal's deep cultural and historical ties to *Buddhism* stemming from the birth of Siddhārtha Gautama, the Buddha, in Lumbini, have created an undercurrent of Buddhist influence that has persisted through the ages (Bista 33).

Nepal, long under the rule of hereditary Prime Ministers favoring a policy of

isolation, remained closed to the outside world from 1846 until a Palace revolt in 1950 restored the Crown's authority in 1951. In 1991 the Kingdom established a multiparty parliamentary system (The New Encyclopedia Britannica 777) which continues to the present day. Nepal lost her original Buddhist identity about the thirteenth century in the time of King Jayasthiti malla (Grant 30-33), who imposed on Nepal a Hindu constitution.

In the 20th century, a resurgence of *Therāvāda* Buddhism occurred in Nepal, largely due to the tireless efforts of several trailblazing monks, lay practitioners, and scholars. This revival is significant not just for religious reasons but also for its impact on Nepalese society, offering spiritual, ethical, and educational alternatives in the context of a rapidly changing social landscape. While the revival of Buddhism in Nepal might seem to have come out of nowhere, it was, in fact, the result of a century-long struggle against political and social suppression of religious diversity (Rai 45).

The early 20th century witnessed a period of political upheaval and reform in Nepal. The country was under the influence of the Rana oligarchy, and the monarchy maintained a rigid hold on religious practices. The Hindu state did not allow for the free practice of Buddhism, and, as a result, Buddhist traditions were relegated to the background in favor of Hindu rituals and ceremonies. However, the fall of the Rana regime in the early 1950s marked the beginning of a new political era. This change allowed for the eventual acceptance and spread of different religious practices, including Buddhism (Rana 112).

As democratic movements gained momentum, a small but dedicated group of *Therāvāda* Buddhists, who had been trained in neighboring countries such as Burma (Myanmar) and Sri Lanka, began to establish Buddhist centers in Nepal. These centers became the epicenters of *Therāvāda* teachings, as they offered a space for meditation, monastic training, and a return to Buddhist principles rooted in the teachings of the *Pāli Canon*. It is within this context of political liberalization and religious awakening that the figures who are the focus of this article came to prominence (Sharma 56).

The article examines the contributions of these trailblazer figures who were instrumental in the resurgence of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal during the 20th century. These individuals, through their vision and tireless work, paved the way for what would become a vibrant *Therāvāda* community in Nepal. Their efforts not only contributed to the religious revival but also helped shape the modern social, cultural, and educational landscape of Nepal (Chhetri 79).

It is important to recognize that the significance of *Therāvāda* Buddhism's revival was not merely theological. These figures contributed to societal transformation through education, social justice, and the development of Buddhist institutions that would influence generations to come. They combined traditional Buddhist practices with modern-day social concerns, creating a space for both spiritual growth and civic engagement (Bista 120).

This article will examine the lives and contributions of six key figures who played a pivotal role in the revival of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal during the 20th century: Pragyānanda Mahātherā, Shakyānanda Mahātherā, Dharmaloka Mahātherā, Dr. Āchārya Amritānanda Mahātherā, Boudha Rishi MahāPragyā, and Upāsaka Bhajuratna Sahu. These individuals were central to the development of *Mahātherā* Buddhism, and their lives offer valuable insights into the social, cultural, and religious changes. This article aims to provide a clear understanding of their lasting influence on Nepali society and the wider Buddhist world, highlighting how their efforts contributed to the resurgence of *Therāvāda* traditions in the region.

## **2. Contemporary Political System and Nepali Society**

Nepal's political landscape underwent profound transformations in the 20th century, which significantly influenced its religious dynamics, including the revival and practice of *Therāvāda* Buddhism. The country's transition from a Hindu monarchy under the Rana regime to a democratic monarchy and, eventually, a federal republic, played a pivotal role in shaping the acceptance and growth of religious diversity, including Buddhism (Rai 89).

During the Rana oligarchy (1846-1951), Nepal's political system was tightly controlled by hereditary prime ministers, with the monarchy holding limited authority. The state actively promoted Hinduism as the dominant religion, marginalizing other religious traditions, including Buddhism. Despite Buddhism's historical prominence during the reign of Emperor Ashoka and its deep roots in Nepali culture, it faced significant suppression under the Rana regime. The state's emphasis on Hindu rituals and ideology relegated Buddhist practices to the periphery, restricting their influence and visibility (Bista 65).

The establishment of Nepal as a Hindu monarchy further compounded these challenges. Hindu traditions dominated the cultural and religious landscape, overshadowing Buddhist practices and limiting their growth (Rana 115). However, the fall of the Rana regime in the 1950s marked a turning point. The subsequent

political reforms and democratization ushered in an era of greater religious freedom and pluralism. This shift created a more conducive environment for the revival of *Therāvāda* Buddhism. During this period, Buddhist reformers and monks from Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand began arriving in Nepal, reintroducing the core teachings of *Therāvāda* Buddhism and laying the groundwork for its resurgence (Chhetri 102).

The latter half of the 20th century saw further political and social changes that facilitated the growth of *Therāvāda* Buddhism. The rise of secularism and the eventual adoption of a multiparty democratic system in the 1990s fostered an environment where diverse religious practices could flourish. This period witnessed the establishment of numerous monasteries, meditation centers, and study groups dedicated to *Therāvāda* Buddhist education and practice, marking a significant revival of the tradition (Rai 97).

Simultaneously, social movements advocating for education, women's rights, and social justice gained momentum. *Therāvāda* Buddhism, with its emphasis on ethical living, mindfulness, and meditation, resonated deeply with individuals seeking both spiritual guidance and solutions to the societal challenges of a rapidly modernizing Nepal. Its teachings offered a framework for addressing issues such as inequality, discrimination, and social fragmentation, making it an appealing alternative for many (Sharma 87).

In conclusion, the political and social transformations of 20th-century Nepal created the conditions necessary for the revival and growth of *Therāvāda* Buddhism. From the restrictive environment of the Rana regime to the more inclusive and pluralistic era of democracy and secularism, these changes allowed Buddhism to re-emerge as a vital spiritual and social force. The establishment of Buddhist institutions and the alignment of its teachings with contemporary social needs ensured that *Therāvāda* Buddhism not only survived but thrived, contributing to the cultural and spiritual fabric of modern Nepal.

### 3. History of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal

*Therāvāda* Buddhism (Nyanatiloka 179) in modern Nepal was introduced about 80 years ago. Since, then it has emerged as a major force in modern Nepal. It plays significant roles in different fields of Nepalese society and Buddhists have begun to engage in both traditional and modern activities. Even though it re-emerged only few decades ago, the origins of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal are to be found in the time

of *Gotama the Buddha*. The Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was born in Lumbini, within the borders of present-day Nepal. Very early in its history, then, important Buddhist events occurred on the southern plains of Nepal. There are many references in ancient *Pāli* literature of Buddhist activities held in and near *Kapilavatthu*, the Buddha's hometown. (Vipassi 9) The Buddhist scriptures say that not only was the Buddha born in what is now Nepal, but also visited his home several times after he had become the Buddha.

The history of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal is a complex and varied story that reflects the larger political and cultural dynamics of the region. While *Buddhism* once flourished in the Kathmandu Valley and other parts of Nepal, its decline began during the medieval period. The rise of Hinduism, coupled with various foreign invasions, led to the gradual disappearance of Buddhism as a prominent religion in Nepal. Despite this, remnants of Buddhist culture and architecture, especially in the Kathmandu Valley, continue to reflect the country's Buddhist heritage (Bista 75).

In the 19th century, Buddhism in Nepal was largely confined to the peripheries of society, and its practice was primarily in the form of Tibetan Buddhism. *Therāvāda* Buddhism, in contrast, had a much smaller presence. This situation continued until the early 20th century, when the first waves of *Therāvāda* reformers arrived from Sri Lanka and Myanmar (Rana 105).

The key moment for the resurgence of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal came in the 1950s, when figures like Pragyānanda Mahātherā began to establish monasteries and meditation centers. These early pioneers were instrumental in reviving the Buddhist spirit in a country that had long been dominated by *Hinduism*. Through the establishment of educational institutions and the translation of key Buddhist texts into the Nepali language, these monks made *Therāvāda* Buddhism accessible to the Nepali people (Sharma 95).

In addition to monastic institutions, these reformers established lay Buddhist communities that focused on meditation, ethical living, and the study of the *Pāli Canon*. With the opening of new Buddhist centers, *Therāvāda* Buddhism found a new home in Nepal, attracting both spiritual seekers and those looking for an alternative to the Hindu dominated political and cultural atmosphere.

## 4. Trailblazers: Modern Therāvāda Buddhism in Nepal

### Pragyānanda Mahātherā

Pragyānanda Mahātherā stands as one of the most pivotal figures in the revitalization of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal. He was born on the 21st of Baisakh, 1957 (Akshaya Mah 4, 1900) (Tritiya) in Itumbahal, located in the central part of Kantipur (Koudanya 71). His journey into Buddhism began with his pursuit of spiritual knowledge abroad, particularly in Sri Lanka, where he was deeply influenced by the teachings of the *Pāli Canon*. Upon his return to Nepal, he became one of the first to formally establish a *Therāvāda* Buddhist center in Kathmandu, marking a significant moment in Nepal's religious history (Shakya 47). His work focused not only on spiritual teachings but also on the accessibility of Buddhist practices to the broader population, particularly through the translation of important *Buddhist texts* into Nepali.

### Contributions

**Establishment of Nepal's first Therāvāda Buddhist center in Kathmandu:** Pragyānanda Mahātherā's most notable achievement was the establishment of the first *Therāvāda* Buddhist center in Kathmandu. This center became a hub for meditation and study, offering the Nepali people a space to practice *Vipassanā* meditation and engage with the teachings of the *Pāli Canon* (Shakya 52).

**Translation of Buddhist texts into Nepali:** Pragyānanda Mahātherā worked diligently to translate core Buddhist scriptures into Nepali, ensuring that the teachings were accessible to those who did not speak Pāli or English. His translations helped foster a deeper understanding of *Therāvāda* practices within Nepali society (Singh 59).

**Promotion of Vipassana meditation:** Pragyānanda Mahātherā introduced Vipassana meditation to the Nepali people, advocating for its practice as a method of achieving insight into the nature of the self and reality (Singh 61).

**Educational initiatives:** Through his initiatives, Pragyānanda Mahātherā not only revived Buddhist practices but also helped lay the groundwork for the development of Buddhist education in Nepal (Shakya 55).

### Shākyānanda Māhāthera

Shākyānanda Māhātherā, another prominent figure in the resurgence of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal, played a central role in spreading the teachings of



the Buddha throughout the country. Trained in Burma and Sri Lanka, Shākyānanda Māhātherā brought a deep understanding of the meditative and doctrinal aspects of *Therāvāda* Buddhism to Nepal. His approachable style and focus on meditation practices made him particularly influential among both lay and monastic communities (Malla 16). In the year 1943, after completing the Vassa (rainy season retreat), Bhikshu Shākyānanda was returning to Bhojpur. On the way, 16-17 young policemen arrived, arrested him, and took him to Goshwara. He was accused of giving the Eight Precepts (*Astaśīla*) to married women and attempting to convert a few men and women to Buddhism by taking them to Kushinagar. (Koudanya 113-114). Beyond religious contributions, Shākyānanda Māhātherā was also an advocate for social reform, applying Buddhist principles to address the societal issues of the time.

### **Contributions:**

Establishment of meditation centers: Shākyānanda Māhātherā helped establish meditation centers across Nepal, spreading *Therāvāda* practices, particularly *Vipassanā* meditation, in both urban and rural areas (Malla 22).

Public discourses on Therāvāda teachings: He was a gifted orator who conducted numerous public lectures, introducing *Therāvāda* Buddhist teachings to a broad audience and emphasizing mindfulness and ethical living (28).

**Focus on social reform:** Shākyānanda Mahāthera's teachings went beyond spirituality. He sought to address issues of caste discrimination and inequality through Buddhist ethics, teaching that mindfulness and ethical conduct could lead to social change (30).

Promotion of Buddhist education: His focus on the education of both monks and lay people helped to institutionalize *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal, ensuring its continued growth (34).

### **Dharmaloka Mahātherā**

Dharmaloka Mahātherā emerged as a key figure in the growth of *Therāvāda* Buddhism, particularly in rural Nepal. He was born in December 1890 in Dhalasikva Bahal, Asan Tole, Kathmandu (Koudanya 120). After studying in Burma and Sri Lanka, Dharmaloka Mahātherā returned to Nepal with a vision of establishing a strong, grassroots Buddhist movement. He recognized the importance of making Buddhist teachings accessible to rural communities and focused much of his work



on establishing meditation centers outside of the urban Kathmandu Valley (Tamang 43). His efforts helped lay the foundation for the institutionalization of *Therāvāda* Buddhism throughout Nepal, and his engagement in social reform was a defining feature of his work.

## Contributions

**Establishment of rural meditation centers:** Dharmaloka Mahātherā established meditation centers in rural areas, allowing *Therāvāda* Buddhism to reach a wider audience, especially among marginalized communities (45).

**Promotion of the Pāli Canon:** He emphasized the study of the *Pāli Canon* and made it accessible by translating key texts into Nepali, providing a more comprehensive understanding of *Therāvāda* Buddhism (49).

**Advocacy for social change:** Dharmaloka Māhāthera used Buddhist teachings to promote social justice, particularly focusing on addressing issues like caste discrimination and gender inequality through Buddhist ethics (Shakya 50).

**Public lectures and publications:** He was a key figure in promoting Buddhist philosophy through public lectures and publications, including writings on meditation and mindfulness (Singh 63).

## Dr. Ācharya Amritānanda Mahāthera

Dr. Ācharya Amritānanda Māhāthera He was born in the month of Paush in the year 1975 (Vikram Samvat) in Bhimsen Tol, Tansen, Palpa, Lumbini Zone (Koudanya 147). He was an academic monk who brought a scholarly approach to the study and practice of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal. With a deep understanding of Buddhist philosophy, he combined traditional *Therāvāda* teachings with modern academic methods, promoting the systematic study of Buddhism. His academic approach to Buddhism, along with his contributions to the growth of *Therāvāda* institutions, positioned him as a leader in the modern Buddhist revival in Nepal (Pradhan 78).

## Contributions

**Academic contributions to Buddhist studies:** Dr. Ācharya Amritānanda Māhāthera played a key role in the academic development of Buddhist studies in Nepal. He established the first Buddhist university and promoted the scholarly study of *Therāvāda* Buddhism (82).

**Promotion of Buddhist philosophy:** Through his writings and teachings, Dr. Amritānanda Māhāthera made the philosophical underpinnings of *Therāvāda* Buddhism more accessible to both laypeople and academics (85).

**Establishment of Buddhist institutions:** He contributed to the establishment of key Buddhist institutions, including meditation centers and educational programs, that have become central to Nepal's *Therāvāda* community (Singh 71).

**Focus on ethics and social responsibility:** His teachings emphasized the role of Buddhist ethics in social responsibility, encouraging his followers to contribute to the welfare of society (Pradhan 88).

### **Boudha Rishi Mahāpragyā**

Boudha Rishi MahāPragyā was in He was born in the year 1901 (Bikram Sambat) on the second day of the waxing moon of the month of Jestha in Nyugal Tole, Kantipur (Kathmandu) (Koudanya 162). He is recognized for his contributions to the spiritual and social dimensions of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal. He was known for his contemplative approach to Buddhism, focusing on meditation and self-realization. MahāPragyā's teachings were instrumental in bridging the gap between traditional Buddhist practices and contemporary concerns about mental well-being, self-awareness, and mindfulness (Singh 75). His work extended beyond religion, advocating for broader societal change.

### **Contributions**

**Promotion of meditation as a method of mental healing:** Boudha Rishi MahāPragyā advocated for meditation as a path to mental health, teaching that mindfulness could lead to personal transformation and peace (78).

**Integration of Buddhist practices with modern challenges:** He integrated traditional Buddhist practices with modern issues such as stress, anxiety, and societal fragmentation, making *Therāvāda* Buddhism relevant to contemporary Nepali society (80).

**Advocacy for mindfulness in daily life:** Mahā Pragyā's teachings emphasized the importance of mindfulness in daily life, encouraging people to live ethically and mindfully (Shakya 56).

**Community outreach and social reform:** He worked to improve the lives of

marginalized communities, particularly through the promotion of ethical practices and social justice (Singh 82).

## Upāsaka Bhājuratna Sāhu

Among the key contributors to the revival of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal, the name of Bhājuratna Sāhu stands out prominently. He was born in the month of Paush in the year 1940 (B.S.) in Tasikha Chhen, located in Kel Tol, Kantipur. His father's name was Kulbir Singh Kansakar, and his mother's name was Nanabeti Kansakar. (Koudanya 193) Upāsaka Bhājuratna Sahu is a distinguished lay practitioner who contributed significantly to the promotion of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal. Although not a monk, his efforts were crucial in spreading *Therāvāda* teachings, particularly through his active participation in community education and his focus on lay practice. He worked to bridge the gap between monastic teachings and the lay Buddhist community (Shakya 63).

## Contributions

**Promotion of lay Buddhist practices:** Upāsaka Bhājuratna Sāhu emphasized the importance of lay practitioners in the *Therāvāda* tradition, encouraging them to engage in meditation and ethical living (67).

**Establishment of meditation centers for laypeople:** He founded meditation centers specifically for lay practitioners, offering them a space to engage in spiritual practice outside traditional monastic settings (Tamang 90).

**Advocacy for social justice:** Bhājuratna Sāhu's focus on the ethical aspects of Buddhism led him to advocate for social justice, particularly in relation to issues like caste and gender equality (Singh 84).

**Contribution to Buddhist education:** He was involved in establishing educational initiatives that helped lay practitioners study the core teachings of *Therāvāda* Buddhism (Shakya 70).

## 5. Contribution to Nepali Society and Buddhism

The revival of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal during the 20th century significantly impacted both Nepali society and the broader Buddhist tradition. Early Buddhist leaders of this era were instrumental in restoring Buddhism as a vital spiritual and social force, offering not only spiritual guidance but also fostering social

reform and establishing a structured framework for Buddhist teachings.

A key contribution of these leaders was the creation of institutions dedicated to the study and practice of *Therāvāda* Buddhism. Monasteries, educational centers, and meditation retreats were established, serving as hubs for preserving and disseminating the teachings of the Buddha, particularly those found in the *Pāli Canon*. These institutions became centers of spiritual learning and ethical development, enabling Nepali society to engage with Buddhism in its authentic form, free from the influences of other religious traditions (Bista 45).

Moreover, the teachings of these pioneers emphasized ethical living, non-violence, and compassion, addressing the pressing social needs of Nepal at the time. In a society historically dominated by Hinduism, *Therāvāda* Buddhist leaders reintroduced a Buddhist identity rooted in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. This framework provided an alternative to the social inequities and injustices prevalent in Nepal, particularly caste-based discrimination and religious intolerance (Rana 112). By teaching that all individuals, regardless of caste or background, were capable of achieving spiritual liberation, these leaders promoted ideals of equality and unity (Sharma 78).

The role of Buddhist teachings in social justice movements was also profound. Core principles such as compassion, moral integrity, and equality resonated with the struggles for civil rights and social reform during a period of political transition in Nepal. Buddhist meditation practices and ethical teachings offered a response to systemic inequalities, advocating for social harmony and collective responsibility (Chhetri 93).

Furthermore, Buddhism served as a unifying force during Nepal's transition from a Hindu monarchy to a more democratic state. The inclusivity and universality of Buddhist teachings helped bridge religious and cultural divides, fostering an environment where diversity was celebrated and mutual respect among communities was encouraged (Rai 58).

In summary, the contributions of these Buddhist leaders extended beyond religious revival, laying the groundwork for social reform and national unity. Their legacy continues to shape Nepali society, as *Therāvāda* Buddhism remains a path for personal spiritual growth and a model for a more just, compassionate, and inclusive society.

## 6. Conclusion

The resurgence of *Therāvāda* Buddhism in Nepal during the 20th century, driven by a group of visionary leaders, marked a transformative chapter in the nation's spiritual and social history. These trailblazers reintroduced the authentic teachings of the Buddha, grounded in the *Pāli* Canon, into a society where Buddhism had long been overshadowed by other religious traditions. Their efforts went beyond religious revival, encompassing the establishment of educational institutions, the promotion of meditation practices, and the addressing of deep-rooted social injustices, leaving a lasting impact on Nepali society.

At the core of their work was an emphasis on ethical living, compassion, and social justice-principles that resonated deeply with the challenges Nepal faced during this period. By challenging caste-based discrimination and advocating for religious freedom and equality, these leaders not only revitalized *Therāvāda* Buddhism but also provided a moral framework for social reform. Their teachings transcended monastic boundaries, influencing broader social movements and contributing to the country's democratic evolution. In a society grappling with inequality and political upheaval, their message of universal compassion and spiritual liberation offered both solace and a path forward.

The legacy of these pioneers remains profoundly relevant today. Their efforts have ensured that *Therāvāda* Buddhism is not merely a relic of the past but a living tradition that continues to inspire individuals and communities. By integrating Buddhist principles into the fabric of Nepali society, they fostered a culture of inclusivity, justice, and compassion-values that remain as vital in the 21st century as they were in the past. Their contributions have shaped a spiritual and social landscape that continues to evolve, ensuring that the teachings of the Buddha remain a source of guidance and transformation for future generations.

The significance of these leaders lies in their ability to bridge the spiritual and the social. They demonstrated that *Buddhism* is not confined to meditation halls or scriptures but has the power to address real-world issues and inspire meaningful change. Their vision and dedication have made *Therāvāda* Buddhism a cornerstone of Nepal's cultural identity, proving that the *Dharma* is timeless and universally applicable. Their legacy stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of the Buddha's teachings, offering hope and inspiration in an ever-changing world.

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