



Converting to Christianity in Nepal

A Qualitative Study of What It Means for a Hindu-Nepalese to Convert to Christianity in the Context of Social Meaning and Legal Conditions in Nepal

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Abstract

What does it mean for a Nepalese Hindu to convert to Christianity? By using the method of Grounded Theory this qualitative interview study attempts to answer this question by generating a descriptive theory. The material of this thesis has been collected during a Minor Field Study in October to December 2011 by interviewing Nepalese Christians who all have converted from Hinduism to Christianity. By using a phenomenological and narrative analysis my theory is that there is a sequence of steps within the conversion process that Nepalese Hindus go through when converting to Christianity, a pattern I call "Nepali Ordo Salutis". This study identifies these steps as Stability, Crisis, Encounter, Solution, Conflict and Restored Stability. In the first step; Stability, Hinduism seems to provide a sense of religious stability before the crisis. In the second step; Crisis, the convert receives some kind of crisis, usually a sickness, and he or she is seeking a way to dissolve this problem. In the third step; Encounter, the convert now in some way encounters Christianity, which provides a different way to dissolve the crisis. In the fourth step; Solution, the convert's life-story is changed through a narrative turning point, the convert is now somehow experiencing a miracle; if they were sick they got healed and if they were depressed they received peace. When their crisis now is solved in a Christian context instead of a Hindu, they now make their decision to convert from Hinduism to Christianity. In the fifth step; Conflict, the convert now has solved the crisis but may in a worst case scenario gain two new, the first being an Informal Conflict with the family and the second a Formal Conflict with the Nepalese state. In the last and final sixth step; Restored Stability, the convert have resisted all attempts from his family or the Nepalese state to bring him back to Hinduism, and there now arises a state of restored stability in my informant's life-stories. By using a narrative analysis I have found that the *personal experience of God* is the most important turning point in the life-story of my informant's. Before this personal experience the informants have been seeking help from God and after this experience they do not go back to Hinduism. I have also found that according to Greimas actantmodel *healing* is given a central significance in the informant's retrospective conversion story.

Foreword

This thesis is based on data collected primarily through qualitative interviews with Nepalese Christians during a Minor Field Study (MFS) in Nepal during October-December 2011.

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Abbreviations

UMN	United Mission to Nepal
ATEN	Association of Theological Education in Nepal
GON	Government of Nepal
CPN-M	United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Accord
MFS	Minor Field Study

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In the contemporary global world many different symbolic universes come together, meet and interact, but also clash and confront each other. Nepal, which in many ways for long can be considered to have been a monocentric society, i.e. where only one norm system with practically no competition functions as an interpretative pattern for both the social order and the individual's perception of the world, have a history of being a closed Hindu state, but is now facing a growing Nepalese Christian community within its borders, from 0 in 1951 to 400.000 in 1991¹, native Nepalese who have moved from one symbolic universe to another, i.e. converted from Hinduism to Christianity.

Since there are so many people converting in Nepal, it is of importance to highlight article 18 in the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which declares that: "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."²

1.2 Purpose

It is my personal opinion that all Human Rights are linked together and that Freedom of Religion is as important as other Human Rights. In order to contribute more effectively to a holistic development it is relevant to understand the situation for the Nepalese Christian minority from their own perspective regarding their religious freedom and the ability to freely change religion.

The purpose of this thesis is therefore to study how the Nepalese Christians themselves perceive that the Nepalese state and society deal with this development and to ask questions such as: What kind of religious freedom does the Nepalese constitution provide for its people? Is Christianity considered a foreign Western religion not possible to combine with a Nepalese way of life? How does a Nepalese Christian describe the experience of a conversion? All these questions lead to my official Research Question:

1.3 Research Question

What does it mean for a Hindu-Nepalese to convert to Christianity in the context of social meaning and legal conditions in Nepal?

1.3.1 Definitions

For a suitable definition of "conversion" I turn to Andrew Wingate's definition of "ecclesiastical conversion": "The formal act of identifying oneself with a religious faith which has a set of values, attitudes, beliefs and practices other than those originally adhered to. It is a conscious moving from one organized religion to another."³

¹ See Chapter 3.3 "History of Nepal, from a Christian point of view"

² Internet: The United Nations, 2012.

³ Wingate, 1997, p236.

1.4 Limitations

I do not intend to study the Nepalese Christian life after the conversion, since that would make this thesis too large.

1.5 Research Background

1.5.1 Issues for pastoral care

Miss Mirjam Bergh is Managing Director of Bethesda International Language and Leadership Development Center. In 1993, Mirjam Bergh presented her “Issues for Pastoral Care: An investigation of the problems that present themselves for pastoral care in Nepalese churches” at the Örebro Theological Seminary in order to fulfill the requirements for a Master of Divinity. The objective of her research was to describe problems that commonly occur in pastoral care and Christian counseling in the Nepalese Christian community. The research method Mirjam Bergh used was to interview experienced church leaders.⁴

Mirjam Bergh found three categories of problems: related to conversion from Hinduism to Christian faith, related to the maintenance of the Christian faith and related to problems that any Nepalese might encounter. Regarding the conversion problems, Bergh has found that the conversion of an individual may lead to problems in the family and the Christian convert will be regarded as a traitor since he rejects many of the Hindu rituals and customs that maintain relationships in the family. If the convert is the eldest son, the thought that he may not take care of the Hindu funeral rites may be a major problem. If the family tries to persuade the convert to return to Hinduism but he refuses, it is possible that he will be expelled from the family or he himself chooses to leave because of the hostile environment. If the expelled Christian convert happens to be the eldest son, he may lose his inheritance as well as his status as a son. Not only does the convert lose his family, but also his financial support which then might lead to other problems. The oldest son is expected to perform the Hindu funeral rites of his parents and it may be very hard to resist because of the social pressure and the fact that he doesn't have so much time to think since the cremation is supposed to take place within 24 hours.⁵

In the Hindu society the emphasis is on family rather than on the individual and the individual is always seen in relation to other people. Loyalty to the family and fulfilling ones duties to ones parents are seen as a virtue.⁶

1.5.2 The Cross in the Land of the Khukuri

Norma Kehrberg has been associated with or working in Nepal for thirty years. Her professional work has been in education but she has also been Associate General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries for the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Kehrberg has degrees from the University of Michigan and the University of Hawaii.⁷

Norma Kehrberg has written a book called “The Cross in the Land of the Khukuri” where she describes her Nepali experiences from a Western and Christian point of view. In chapter 4 Kehrberg

⁴ Bergh, 1993, Appendix.

⁵ Bergh, 1993, pp16-19.

⁶ Bergh, 1993, p33.

⁷ Kehrberg, 2000, the back cover.

writes about her study of the dramatic growth of Christians in Nepal. Kehrberg has done a quantitative study where she gathers information from individuals using a standard questionnaire.⁸

When reading Kehrberg's study, one can conclude that healing, either of oneself or of someone in the family, is a major factor why Nepalese becomes Christians, actually 34% of the interviewed individuals refers to this. Other main factors are "to receive salvation", "find peace" and "find truth". Another interesting point of view is that 28% indicated that they had a dream in relation to their conversion to Christianity. When asked how they first heard the gospel 33% answered "friend", 22% answered family, 19% answered "pastor", 9% answered "mission" and 9% answered "reading". Of the informants baptized before 1990 51% answered that they had been persecuted but only 39% after 1990.⁹

Kehrberg concludes her presented research in chapter 4 with these words: "the most evident finding is that the responses by the first-generation Christians are responses from their hearts. There are none of the memorized answers found in the catechism studies in churches today such as "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever", as important as that response may be. The answers by the first-generation Christians may not find their way into the first Nepali theological text, but they indicate how the first-generation witnesses act and what they believe, providing evidence that the first-generation church in Nepal is a spirit filled church of those who are changed, who believe, who pray and act."¹⁰

1.5.3 Conversion to Christianity

In 2003, Ram Kumar Budhathoki published his thesis for his Master of Arts in Sociology at the Nepalese Tribhuvan University entitled "Conversion to Christianity: A Case Study of Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City."

In his studies, Budhathoki attempt to address problems like: Why are people attracted to this new religion? How is their social and professional status affected? How do they adjust with the larger society? What are the likely reasons for a person to convert into Christianity?¹¹

Regarding caste and ethnicity, an overwhelming majority of respondents were from *Matawali* (middle caste) groups, e.g. Tamang, Rai, Sunuwar, Magar, Gurung, and Sherpa. The reason for this was because the Matawali converts lacked strong and structured religious bonds of their own and this prompted them to take up the new religion. The higher castes, Brahmin and Chhetri consisted of only 12% of the sampling. Budhathoki found the first motivating factor to be "cost versus free salvation". In Hinduism, followers are judged by their merits, but in Christianity salvation is a free gift from God. The second factor was that the respondents were dominated and discriminated by the higher castes and were therefore happy to become members of a caste-free society. The third motivating factor was the fact that they had a hard time paying the money for different Hindu practices and rituals, while in Christianity no sacraments cost money or labor. Budhathoki also found that Christianity grew so rapidly because each new believer became an evangelist. A large number converted because of "healing" of either self or family members. Christians feel themselves as a

⁸ Kehrberg, 2000, pp131-135.

⁹ Kehrberg, 2000, pp149-155.

¹⁰ Kehrberg, 2000, p164.

¹¹ Budhathoki, 2003, p58.

religious minority and are persecuted mostly emotionally from the non-Christian members of the family, relatives and community.¹²

1.5.4 Summary

To summarize the research background we can conclude that in the conversion process, the individual may have problems with his family and may be regarded as a traitor since he rejects many of the Hindu rituals and customs that maintain relationships in the family. Nonetheless, there are many Nepalese who convert to Christianity and the biggest reason seems to be “healing”. Compared to higher castes, the middle castes seem to have a shorter road to conversion because they have a lesser bond to Hinduism. Now let’s start looking at the different perspectives I have chosen to work from.

1.6 Theoretical Perspectives

1.6.1 Phenomenological Perspective

The authors of the book *Den kvalitative forskningsintervju* (The Qualitative Research Interview), Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, adequately describe *phenomenology* as “a term used in qualitative studies to point to the interest of understanding social phenomena from the actors own perspective and describe the world as it is experienced by themselves under the assumption that the relevant reality is what people *perceive* it to be.” Phenomenology was founded as a philosophy by Edmund Husserl at around the year 1900 and has since, through its focus on the different meanings of the informant’s “lifeworld”, greatly helped to clarify how to understand a qualitative interview.¹³

The concept of the *lifeworld* is defined by the authors of the aforementioned book as “the world as it is encountered in everyday life and is experienced directly and immediately independently of and prior explanations.” The lifeworld of the informant is the subject of the research interview and it is the researcher’s task to strive to achieve an unbiased description of what is meaningful for the interviewed person.¹⁴

A semi-structured lifeworld interview seeks to understand themes in the lived everyday world out of the informants own perspective and tries to obtain descriptions of the informant’s world by interpreting the *meaning* of the described phenomena. The interview sometimes resembles an everyday conversation, but has a purpose; it is half structured. It is neither an open conversation nor a closed questionnaire. It is conducted through an interview guide that focuses on certain themes and may contain some suggestions for questions.¹⁵

The stories of the informants should not be considered as an exact recollection of what actually happened, but rather as a description of how *they* experienced what happened and what it *means* to them. From a phenomenological perspective it is irrelevant whether or not a miracle has actually happened or not, but what kind of *meaning* the interviewed informant’s put in the experience.

One must also keep in mind that the informants’ conversion stories do not necessarily have to be the truth and nothing but the truth, but rather their current perception and understanding of what

¹² Budhathoki, 2003, pp58-61.

¹³ Kvale, 2011, pp41-42.

¹⁴ Kvale, 2011, p44.

¹⁵ Kvale, 2011, p43.

happened at the time of their conversion. When the informants tell their conversion story they look back upon it from a new Christian perspective and worldview. In other words, their understanding of what actually happened may have changed during the years.

1.6.2 Narrative Perspective

The narrative perspective is an interdisciplinary field of study and consists of many different theoretical traditions. Anna Johansson has written *Narrativ teori och metod* (Narrative Theory and Method) and in this book Johansson focuses on a specific form of stories: the life stories. A life-story is basically the story that a person tells about his life or chosen aspects of his life. A researcher can study a person's life-story from different aspects/themes/perspective how a person gives meaning to his life and creates identity. In order to describe the arguments for the study of life stories, Johansson quotes the feminist sociologist Laurel Richardson: "A story articulates our everyday experiences and creates order and meaning in our daily life. You reveal what you in phenomenological terms talk about as human's *lifeworld* – the rules and interpretative frameworks we routinely use to understand ourselves and others. Stories create a kind of order in our lives. When we ask people why they have developed a certain identity they often present a line of stories. These stories reveal how people experience their subjective lives. This is the *self biographic aspect* of the story. Through stories we get the opportunity to *understand other people*. We take part in people's life's, both those we have close in our lives but also others who we do not personally know."¹⁶

According to Johansson it is an important analytical tool in life-story research to identify "turning points". The concept of turning points is within narratology defined as an "act or event that marks if the target is within range or not. It is critical to the sequence, something that turns the plot." Johansson quotes the sociologist Norman Denzin who defines turning points in life-stories as "the crisis or critical events in a person's life when life is brought to a head and when an individual's character is revealed and exposed." These turning points divide life in "before" and "after".¹⁷

Denzin's definition of a turning point is according to Johansson a phenomenological/hermeneutic definition. It is the subjects own interpretation that is in the centre. These turning points should be seen as socially created and contextually bound. Turning points are constructed within a specific story and in a specific situation. The turning points can be common for a certain group's stories, but can also be individual.¹⁸

Johansson quotes the ethnologist Alf Arvidsson who has used turning points as an analytical tool. According to Arvidsson it is the statements about different events that are made in a chronological sequence that gets a status as turning points, events that in some way meant a change in the person's way of life and / or social status.¹⁹

1.6.3 Ordo Salutis and Greimas actantmodel

I intend to structure my first broader analysis with help of Owe Wikström's descriptive theory "Ordo Salutis" (Latin for "the order of salvation"), a method I will describe more adequately in chapter 4.1. The in-depth analysis will be made with Algirdas J. Greimas actantmodel which will be described in chapter 6.3.

¹⁶ Johansson, 2005, pp20-24.

¹⁷ Johansson, 2005, p319.

¹⁸ Johansson, 2005, pp319-320.

¹⁹ Johansson, 2005, p320.

2. Disposition

This thesis consists of three parts:

The first part; chapter 1-4, consists of chapter 1 with Background, Purpose, Research Question and Theoretical Perspectives, this chapter 2, chapter 3 with a description of Hinduism and the history of Nepal from a Christian point of view and chapter 4 where Method and a summarized version of Nepali Ordo Salutis is presented.

The second part; chapter 5-6, consists of chapter 5 where I present Dr. Ramesh Khatri as my key informant and chapter 6 where I analyze the material.

The third part; chapter 7-8, consists of chapter 7 where I discuss my material and chapter 8 where I present a conclusion.

3. Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

Since Nepal used to be the world's only Hindu state (it was abolished when Nepal became a secular state in 2006)²⁰, I consider it necessary to present background information about Hinduism and the history of the state of Nepal and the Church of Nepal in order to understand what it means for a Nepalese Hindu to convert to Christianity.

3.1 Map of Nepal

Map of Nepal.²¹



3.2 Hinduism

The very word that practitioners of Hinduism use of themselves; 'Hindu', reveals the close ties Hinduism has to the Indian subcontinent. The first reference to the word 'Hindu' is of late date though; it's from an Indian book from the eighth century A.D. where it is used of a certain people, and not the followers of any particular religion.²² The Hindus were a branch of the Aryan people, originally from Central Asia, which migrated into India, Nepal and other nearby countries. In fact, Aryanism would have been a better descriptive word of the religion than Hinduism.²³ The Hindu people got their name from the Persians living on the east side of the Sindu River, who pronounced the letter 's' as 'h' and therefore pronounce the word Sindu as Hindu. So the word 'Hindu' is of a quite late date, the old term in use was actually 'Arya dharma'.²⁴

In 1910 the Census Commission of India defined an Arya dharma convert like this:

²⁰ Internet: Daleke, 2011.

²¹ Map from Internet: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate_np.html (2011-09-16).

²² Raj, 1988, p128.

²³ Raj, 1988, p66.

²⁴ Raj, 1988, pp128-129.

*(1)Accept the supremacy of Brahmins, (2) receive mantra from a Brahmin or other recognized Hindu guru, (3) accept the authority of the Vedas, (4) worship Hindu gods, (5) are served by good Brahmins as family priests, (6) have access to the interior of the Hindu temple, (7) do not cause pollution by touch, (8) cremate their dead and (9) do not eat beef.*²⁵

However, one has to keep in mind that Hindus may have different ethnic origin, worship different gods and practice different rites, but are none the less called 'Hindus'. The different castes in Hinduism makes it even possible to say that Hindus from each end of the caste system, where the Aryan Brahmins represent the highest caste and the Dalits, the so-called Untouchables, represent the lowest caste, in reality have two different religions, due to the rules of untouchability which leads to the separation of high caste and low caste.²⁶ However, the Untouchables, who are non-Aryan by race and who historically were not allowed in the Brahminical religion,²⁷ are even though called 'Hindus'.²⁸

3.2.1 Hinduism in Nepal

Nepalese Hinduism is similar to Indian Hinduism; they have the same doctrines, beliefs, teachings and use the same Hindu scriptures. However, the Nepalese have their own national festivals and traditional customs, especially the different Nepali tribes. One of these nationwide festivals, which I myself happened to observe, is Tihar; the festival of light and worship of one another. At Tihar sisters worship their brothers, wives worship their husbands, etc.²⁹

3.3 History of Nepal, from a Christian point of view

On the 21st of February 1707, the first Christian missionaries arrived to Kathmandu. They were Catholic missionaries of the Capuchin order.³⁰

A few years later, in the middle of the 1700s, King Prithvinarayan Shah of the tiny citystate of Gurkha, decided to conquer the surrounding small kingdoms and citystates of the Nepal Valley. At the end of this successful 25 year long military campaign, the Gurkhas was about to conquer the city of Kathmandu where the Capuchin missionaries resided. The King of Kathmandu called on the British in Bengal to come and help him drive away the Gurkhas which, unfortunately for the Capuchin missionaries, failed and led to the unification of Nepal. If the British had not failed it is very likely that Nepal would eventually have become a province of the British Indian Empire. As a response to the British intervention, unfortunate but not completely illogical, the new Gurkha Governor in Kathmandu blamed the missionaries and tortured Christian converts because of the missionaries European origin. Under these circumstances the Nepalese Christians, all 60 of them, decided to evacuate to India. Today, King Prithvinarayan is remembered as "Father of the Country" and "The Great King."³¹

At the time of King Prithvinarayans death in 1775, he had realized a large portion of his expansionist vision, but not all of it. King Prithvinarayan and his Gurkhas had conquered and annexed more than 80 small kingdoms and continued to expand toward the land-rich plains to the south. In the 1800s,

²⁵ Raj, 1988, p130.

²⁶ Raj, 1988, pp66-67.

²⁷ Raj, 1988, p62.

²⁸ Raj, 1988, p91.

²⁹ Maharjan, 2002, p40.

³⁰ Lindell, 1979, pp2-3.

³¹ Lindell, 1979, pp35-37.

the British were similarly expanding and a military clash was inevitable. In the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16 the British eventually drove the Nepalese back and annexed about one-third of its territory. This left Nepal in approximately the size and shape which it has today. Even though the Nepalese were driven back by the British, the Gurkha soldiers became famous for their strong resistance against the powerful British Empire which resulted in the fact that Nepal still today is an independent state, never colonized by any European nation.³²

Still today, the Gurkha soldiers are famous for their fierce fighting skills and are, ironically, often fighting within the British Army, hired as mercenaries.³³

The war also led to a wall of isolation surrounding the Nepalese borders. The Nepalese decided to not allow any foreigners to come into their land. This policy was also supported by the politically influential Brahmins who wanted to see their country and society remain pure and free from the defilement of foreign presence. Regarding the Christian faith, this isolation policy forbade the sale or use of the Christian Bible and related literature. It forbade Christians, whether foreign, Indian, or Nepalese, to reside in the country. To the global Christian community, Nepal became known as a “closed land.”³⁴

But even if Nepal was a closed land, some Nepalese Christians, adhering both to their nationality and their Christian faith, gathered in India, on the border of Nepal and in the city of Darjeeling. There the Nepalese sang and prayed for God to open the doors of Nepal.³⁵

If we make an agile jump from the years of closing to the year of opening; 1951, there was, according to Kehrberg, no known believers in the land of Nepal.³⁶ In 1951, there was a revolution in Nepal which led to a new policy of national development that opened the country for foreigners. Mission agencies started coming into Nepal under an agreement with the government that no missionary shall engage in proselytizing. The national constitution of 2002 says:

The followers of Christianity, Islam and other religions should not preach or proselytize Hindus disturbing Hinduism which is handed down from ancient times. If someone tries to preach, he should be imprisoned for three years and if someone has preached, he should be imprisoned for six years. If a foreigner is found guilty of preaching he should be expelled from the country. If any Hindu changes his religion to any of the above mentioned religions, he should be imprisoned for one year, but if he is a foreigner he should be expelled from the country. If anyone tries to talk about or share the other religion except Hinduism and Buddhism he should be charged or fined one hundred rupees. If he has changed his religion he should return to Hinduism again.³⁷

However, when Nepal opened itself up to the external world, the Nepalese Christians who had waited on the borders in India were ready to enter their homeland. A group from Darjeeling in India met with some missionaries from the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala, India, who had joined with

³² Lindell, 1979, pp40-41.

³³ Kehrberg, 2000, pp51-52.

³⁴ Lindell, 1979, pp41-42.

³⁵ Kehrberg, 2000, p96.

³⁶ Kehrberg, 2000, p124.

³⁷ Maharjan, 2002, pp11-12.

Colonel Nararaj Shamsher Rana, the first Christian Nepalese to return to Nepal. They discussed how to start the Nepalese Church and whether it should be like the churches found outside of Nepal or if it should be an independent church. At the end of 1956, the group from Darjeeling established a church, located in Dilli Bazaar in Kathmandu, Nepal. The guidelines for the establishment was Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." In the Christian worship services in Nepal, the idea was to have different kind of people side by side; caste and casteless, villagers and city dwellers, rich and poor, young and old, sick and well. When communion is served, all drink from a common cup. The Nepalese Christians, just as Nepal previously had been an independent and closed country to foreigners, seems to have remained in this Nepalese tradition and decided that the church was to be separate from foreign mission groups. Two mission groups were invited to enter Nepal for medical work, but not for evangelism. This decision allowed the church in Nepal to develop its own theology and to identify its own leaders. The church of Nepal also made a decision to worship in an Eastern style, removing one's shoes and sitting on the floor with men and woman seated on opposite sides and the music was Christian words sang with Nepali folk tunes.³⁸

In 1961 Nepal became an autocracy under the rule of King Mahendra who banned political parties, officially declared Nepal to be a Hindu Kingdom and introduced Panchayat, a traditional Hindu form of local governing councils. Under Panchayat a lot of Christians were persecuted and at least 300 pastors and Christians were jailed. Many of them suffered police brutality, and at least one of them died because of it. During these years the Nepali church was an underground movement. In 1990, demands for reform triggered civil unrest on a massive scale, and the Nepali Congress Party gained majority control of the new parliament, which led to a new constitution and many democratic reforms.³⁹

In 1996, the Maoists got tired of the failing democracy and launched an armed struggle that would be called "The People's War" by the Maoists and "The Maoist War" by the government, a civil war that would last for ten years. During these violent years, nearly 15 000 people were killed, and the royal family was murdered by the crown prince.⁴⁰

In 1991, the church had grown to the estimated number of 400.000 members or 2% of the 20 million population.⁴¹ Based on conversation with my informants, it is my personal understanding that the number of Christians in Nepal as of 2011/2012 is approximately between one and two million.

³⁸ Kehrberg, 2000, pp99-100.

³⁹ Christianity Today, 2000, p58.

⁴⁰ Kunda, 2007, pp3-9.

⁴¹ Kehrberg, 2000, p124.

4 Method

I personally come from a Swedish and Pentecostal background and have worked as a Youth Pastor for almost six years. My background has undeniably provided me with a pre-understanding of the word “conversion”; *you leave your current religion for another religion in order to receive salvation*.⁴² Since I am well aware that Nepal is quite different compared to Sweden, I wanted to conduct my field study in an as unbiased way as possible, I did not want my own comprehension of the meaning of conversion stand in the way of a legitimate research.

To achieve this goal I chose the method of *Grounded Theory*, which basically is a method to inductively generate new theories in a systematic and effective way. The idea behind the method is that if a certain theory is generated in the right way, and therefore is grounded in data, the researcher will have good reasons to believe that it describes the reality in a correct way.⁴³

To gather the data that could generate a theory I chose to conduct *semi-structured lifeworld interviews*. As mentioned in chapter 1.6.1 these kinds of interviews seeks to understand themes in the lived everyday world out of the informants own perspective and tries to obtain descriptions of the informant’s world by interpreting the *meaning* of the described phenomena. The interview sometimes resembles an everyday conversation, but has a purpose; it is half structured. It is neither an open conversation nor a closed questionnaire. It is conducted through an interview guide that focuses on certain themes and may contain some suggestions for questions.⁴⁴

When conducting an interview I started by asking the question: “Can you please tell me the story of how you converted?” The informant then started telling me about their conversion as a story with a beginning, middle and a more or less implicit end, a story that went on for approximately 20-30 minutes. During the interview I took notes on things that I did not understand or wanted to know more about which I afterwards asked the informant to develop. I had also decided beforehand that if the informant doesn’t himself raise the issues of “family”, “Hinduism” and “law” I will ask about this. I was curious how a conversion affects the Nepalese family. Nepal has also previously been an official Hindu nation with legal restrictions regarding converting from Hinduism.

All in all, I conducted sixteen interviews with fifteen different people; fourteen Nepalese and one Swede.⁴⁵ My informants come from a variety of caste, ethnicity, gender, age, location and profession. All of my informants have been informed about the purpose of my research and have consented to being a part of this thesis, anonymous or not, but due to the fact that it is illegal to convert in Nepal and because of a recommendation from a well-informed expert on Nepal, Mirjam Bergh, I consider it to be ethically correct to give anonymity to my informants and give them a substitutive name from the Nepali language. The Nepali words chosen as names on my informants are Bachan (Word), Ahshirbahd (Blessing), Sapanah (Dream), Barahbar (Equal), Swarga (Heaven), Jivan (Life), Hidnu (To walk), Satya (Truth) and Pratigya (Promise). The chosen words are all related to the Christian faith but have no other specific connection to the chosen informant. The only informant that is not anonymous is Dr. Ramesh Khatri. This is because I am using him as a key informant and he is a well known Christian in Nepal, an official person and a columnist in the Nepalese newspaper

⁴² The word “conversion” is not to be confused with “repentance” (omvändelse in Swedish).

⁴³ Hartman, 2010, p9.

⁴⁴ Kvale, 2011, p43.

⁴⁵ Twelve of these interviews were transcribed and used in my thesis due to their richness of meaning.

Republica. Another important reason is that he has already been arrested for being a Christian but released and therefore does not risk jail.

Already during my first two interviews I started seeing a narrative pattern in my informant's conversion stories gravitating around certain *turning points*. The concept of turning points is within narratology defined as an "act or event that marks if the target is within range or not. It is critical to the sequence, something that turns the plot." Johansson quotes the sociologist Norman Denzin who defines turning points in life-stories as "the crisis or critical events in a person's life when life is brought to a head and when an individual's character is revealed and exposed." These turning points divide life in "before" and "after".⁴⁶

When I interviewed my fourth informant; Dr. Ramesh Khatry, this narrative pattern was more or less confirmed. It became clear to me that there are several common turning points appearing in a particular order and that a certain character in the story, namely the father, was a big problem to many of my informants.

4.1 Nepali Ordo Salutis

Owe Wikström is Professor in Psychology of Religion at Uppsala University and is the author of *Det bländande mörkret* (The Blinding Darkness). In this book Wikström points out that "life is a journey. The Christian must break up, say farewell and leave. She meets various obstacles on the way but eventually reaches her goal. The goal that is looming is the union with God, the total life together with the Risen."⁴⁷

According to Wikström, different Christian traditions have different ways of describing this journey, for example; the Catholics speak of the "heavenly ladder", John of the Cross describe how the Christian climbs "an inner mountain", the Lutheran John Bunyan writes in his book *The Pilgrim's Progress* how Christian goes through different steps in his Christian life and the old Swedish preachers Henric Schartau and Lars Levi Laestadius used to talk about a particular "order of grace" (*ordo salutis*) that the Christian had to walk through. In the old Swedish Ordo Salutis God at first calls, then he enlightens you through the Law and thereafter he enlightens you through the Gospel.⁴⁸

With this as a background, my hypothesis is that there is a common pattern of steps that Nepalese Hindus go through when converting to Christianity, a pattern I call "Nepali Ordo Salutis". This study identifies these steps as Stability, Crisis, Encounter, Solution, Conflict and Restored Stability.

4.1.1 Stability

Since the conversion is most often triggered by a crisis, Hinduism seems to provide a sense of religious stability before the crisis appeared. Before the turning point, here defined as conversion, the convert is generally fine with his Hindu religion. As we will see in chapter 6.1.5.a, Hinduism plays a prominent role in the Nepalese society as well as according to family traditions. All of my informants are brought up in Hindu families and bound to Hindu rituals. To break with Hinduism without a good reason is rarely found and most of my informants do not describe that they had any problems with Hinduism before the igniting crisis.

⁴⁶ Johansson, 2005, p319.

⁴⁷ Wikström, 2007, pp93-94 (my translation from Swedish).

⁴⁸ Wikström, 2007, pp208-209.

Dr. Ramesh Khatri provides us with a good example of this; at first, Khatri had no other thought than to become a good Hindu. Khatri really believed that the gods and goddesses that he worshipped had power, so his philosophy of life at that time was that he should pick his favorite god and worship him or her all of his life and then do good deeds, such as giving money to the poor and the beggars, and in that way go to “heaven” when he dies.⁴⁹

4.1.2 Crisis

When the convert encounters some kind of crisis, usually a sickness, he or she is seeking a way to dissolve this problem. Since Hinduism is the closest religion at hand, many converts at first try to find a solution within their present religion; they sacrifice to the Hindu gods, go to a shaman, or go to what some informants term a *witchdoctor*.

A good example of this is Satya, who for some reason became sick and couldn't sleep at night and sometimes felt that her bed started shaking. Initially a shaman came to perform a magical ritual but this did not take her problem away. She then performed a Hindu ritual sacrifice, but this did not help either.⁵⁰

4.1.3 Encounter

In the hopeless situation of an unresolved crisis, the convert now encounters Christianity that provides another way to dissolve the problem. These encounters can consist of different things, such as suddenly hearing God's voice, reading the Bible or meeting a Christian friend.

Barahbar's problem was that he could not find any peace in his life and he even started thinking about committing suicide. Everything changed though when he got a Christian encounter whilst watching TV at home. Barahbar got stuck in front of a Christian TV show and through this God touched him and he got peace in his heart.⁵¹

4.1.4 Solution

Due to the often unexpected encounter with Christianity the convert is provided with a new way to solve the problem. The most common solution is that the convert prays to God and he consequently answers the prayer and solves the problem.

Pratigya, who had problems with severe headache and fainting, was himself a witchdoctor, but was not able to cure himself. Fortunately for Pratigya, he meets a Christian friend who brings him to church. There the pastor told all the sick to pray to God, which Pratigya did and became well.⁵²

When God has solved the convert's problem, he now leaves Hinduism and instead becomes a Christian.

⁴⁹ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p5.

⁵⁰ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

⁵¹ Interview 6, 2011-11-03, p1.

⁵² Interview 3, 2011-10-27, pp2-3.

4.1.5 Conflict

4.1.5.a Informal Conflict

When the convert has solved his problem he may now in a worst case scenario gain two new, the first being an informal conflict with the family and the second a formal conflict with the Nepalese government.

When the convert leaves Hinduism he is first of all confronted by his family who wants him to return to his previous religion. If you stand firm in your new religion and resist all attempts from your family, you might be considered an outcast with a very limited contact with your family.

When Satya had become a Christian she was confronted by her mother who did not allow her to become a Christian.⁵³

4.1.5.b Formal Conflict

Since it is, according to the constitution of Nepal, illegal to convert, there is a potential risk that you might have to go to jail if you have converted.

Dr. Ramesh Khatri, for example, was in 1984 arrested for converting from Hinduism to Christianity and was given a 6 month prison sentence.

4.1.6 Restored Stability

When the convert has resisted all attempts from his family and the state to bring him back to Hinduism, he has now restored the stability in his life and is able to lead others to convert to Christianity.

When Barahbar had become a Christian his parents tried to convince him to go back to Hinduism. They told him that they didn't want any Christian in their family, but Barahbar stood firm in his new faith and eventually they themselves also converted to Christianity.⁵⁴

⁵³ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

⁵⁴ Interview 6, 2011-11-03, p2.

5 Presentation of the Material

5.1 Dr. Ramesh Khatri as key informant

As mentioned above, during my first two interviews I gradually made up a hypothesis about a certain narrative pattern. When I interviewed Dr. Ramesh Khatri the structure of this narrative pattern became more visible. All remaining interviews seemed to confirm this pattern. I therefore decided to do a second interview with Khatri to enrich this preliminary theory with new and "thicker" material. This means that this informant is given the role within this study as key informant as well as a "test case" for my understanding of the overall Nepali Ordo Salutis structure. I might also give the reader a glimpse of the general culture context of a Nepali convert.

The rest of the material from the other informants will be presented in chapter 6.

5.2 The Conversion Story of Dr. Ramesh Khatri

Dr. Ramesh Khatri is born in Kathmandu in the year of 1952 and comes from the Chhetri caste.

Khatri's Christian story began when he was nine years old and his Hindu parents send him to the Roman Catholic High School in Kathmandu.

While studying there, we used to pray before meals and also pray at night. But the Roman Catholic fathers did not really say that Jesus is the only way to salvation. They said that if you are a Hindu, become a good Hindu and if you are a Buddhist, become a good Buddhist. That was the teaching.⁵⁵

At first, Khatri had no other thought than to do as the Catholic fathers had said; to become a good Hindu. Khatri really believed that the gods and goddesses that he worshipped had power, so his philosophy of life at that time was that he should pick his favorite god and worship him or her all of his life and then do good deeds, such as giving money to the poor and the beggars, and in that way go to "heaven" when he dies.⁵⁶

But things suddenly changed when Khatri was 11 years old and came home realizing he was being forced into a child marriage. When he asked why, his parents explained that many of the servants have left the home and if Khatri gets married, his wife can't leave the house. When Khatri refused, his parents told him that they have already done the ceremony so if Khatri doesn't marry this girl, no one else can and she will be like a widow for the rest of her life. Khatri felt that he had no choice; he had to go through this, because he didn't want an innocent girl be left as a widow for the rest of her life.⁵⁷

This child marriage caused Khatri to become both bitter against his parents but also depressed. Khatri could only concentrate on how he could be unmarried again, how he could become a normal child again. When he was in school, his fellow students found out that he was married and teased him for this. So this child marriage became a turning point for Khatri:

And, so, that made me rebel against Hinduism and right in that school I started praying to Jesus. I said, these Hindu gods are hopeless. And then I finished my High School, I passed the exams. Then I fell sick. I went to college; I was studying to become a medical doctor. But I felt sick and I got to a point where I

⁵⁵ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p1.

⁵⁶ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p5.

⁵⁷ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p1.

could not even read for 5 minutes. So I left college, I was staying at home, and my parents said: "You go and worship the gods and goddesses and they will help you." So I used to get up 4 o'clock in the morning and go to the temples and worship and give money to beggars. But after doing that for one, sorry, for four months, I gave up. And, so, here I am about 18 years old and I can't even read for 5 minutes. So I tell what, I have no future. So I, so I said, I'll kill myself.⁵⁸

But before taking these thoughts into action, Khatry remembered reading about Jesus:

Then that very night I remembered reading about Jesus in high school and I remembered that he healed sick people. He also made dead people alive. But then, the fact that struck me the most, was that he died and rose from the dead on the third day. Then I said, well, if this Jesus really rose from the dead he must be alive now, and he should answer my prayer. So then I prayed to him, I said: "In school I used to pray but I really didn't need an answer. But here, now I am desperate, because I am young man and I can't study for 5 minutes, I have no future. But if you heal me, I'll follow you for the rest of my life." And, so, after I prayed that, I felt very peaceful, and I slept. Next morning I got up, I really didn't feel any different. But then, a few days later, I realized that I could actually read for one hour. And if I rest for 5 minutes, after one hour I can read more. And gradually this, the time I could read improved. Then I realized, yes, Jesus has heard my prayer.⁵⁹

Then one day, when Khatry was out to buy some books for his studies, the only book store open was a Christian book store run by South Indian missionaries. He went in, bought a Bible and started reading, and the more he read he felt that he should follow Jesus. So he kept coming back to this shop and one day the South Indian missionary said: "if you want to know more about Jesus, my friend will tell you." This friend taught him more about Jesus and then took him to a pastor that baptized Khatry in the year of 1972.⁶⁰

When Khatry had been baptized he immediately went home and told his father who was an army man living in the military barracks. Khatry's father got very angry, he was so upset that he didn't sleep that whole night, he was just walking back and forth until the morning when he went to the temple. When Khatry left the barracks and came home to his mother, his father had already told her what had happened:

So in the morning I also went home and then, as soon as I went, my father had already arrived, he had told her what had happened and my mother, she, our house is three stores high and on the, on the third floor there is terrace and she ran to the terrace and she wanted to jump across and kill herself. Fortunately I went and grabbed her and pulled her back. My younger brother also came. So that was the first time my mother tried to kill herself.⁶¹

Now when Khatry was a Christian, he stopped putting all the typical Hindu marks on his forehead, because for him that means that you offer red powder to the god and put it on your forehead when you seek that god's blessing.

So the first thing I did was to stop putting that marks, which of course upset my parents. Then of course I stopped going to the temples, because I had realized they have really no power. Jesus healed me, I felt, and he answers prayer today, he is alive, because he rose from the dead. So I stopped going to all the

⁵⁸ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, pp1-2.

⁵⁹ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p2.

⁶⁰ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p2.

⁶¹ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, pp2-3.

*temples. But then, my father and mother was still worshipping the gods and goddess, in the same house, so that I felt, I just had to bear that, I cannot force others to stop their worship.*⁶²

One day however, this coexistence of religions abruptly stopped when Khatry's father entered his room and told him that he must get out of the house and that he is no longer his son. So, with a guitar and 5 rupees in his pocket, Khatry left the house.⁶³

Khatry didn't have anywhere to go, so he decided to visit a Youth For Christ worker. Fortunately for Khatry, this friend was a Christian and offered one of the rooms in his house to Khatry. Khatry's father sent Khatry's brother many times to try to convince him to come back, he answered: "no, I follow Jesus, so I really cannot leave him."⁶⁴

From time to time, Khatry's brother used to come back and visit him, and he also wanted to become a Christian:

*He also wanted to become a Christian, but my father applied a lot of pressure on him. And my father said: "well, you, if you become a Christian you will not get any land or property from me." So my brother sadly went back to Hinduism. And then my father, because he was in the army, he sent him on a military course, through the army, to England. And he came back as an officer and, but for 20 years he didn't get any promotion, he was just, he became a Major for 20 years, so he left the army. He was running a hotel, and Maoist came after money and evidently he was giving some money every month. But one day in his area the government soldiers killed about 11 Maoists and then the Maoists said my brother gave the information so they, they killed him in 20 October, 2002. So I, and when I heard the news that the Maoists killed him, one Bible verse came to me, Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life. Then I felt, well my brother tried to get life without Jesus and he could not even live his full physical life, he was four years younger than I.*⁶⁵

One day the Lord told Khatry that he should work full time in the church, so he and his family went to India and studied at a Bible College there.⁶⁶ In 1984 Khatry was running a one month Bible School in West Nepal in a hospital run by TEAM mission. At this time in Nepal you could be put in jail for converting, the penalty was one year if you yourself had converted and six years if you also have converted others, and so Khatry was consequently arrested. Fortunately hospital staff from TEAM Mission came and paid the bail money to get him out of the police custody after 10 days.⁶⁷ Later, in the district court, Khatry was given a six month prison sentence:

*They wanted to put us in for six years, because they said that six years for converting other people. So we really had not converted anyone there, some had come to faith, but they could not find these people. In the evening we used to have evangelistic meetings and, so, later on they changed the charge that we converted ourselves. And the one year prison sentence was maximum. The judge gave 6 months, just to please both parties. To please the police who arrested us, and to please us also, saying that you were kind to us, you gave 6 months.*⁶⁸

⁶² Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p6.

⁶³ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p3.

⁶⁴ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p3.

⁶⁵ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, pp5-6.

⁶⁶ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, pp4-5.

⁶⁷ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p1.

⁶⁸ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p2.

Since Khatri was in England studying for his PhD when he got this sentence, the police didn't bring him to jail. When Nepal got a new constitution in 1990, Khatri thought that this prison sentence was long gone history, and thus returned safely to Nepal; at least that was what he thought... When Khatri was in court 2011 for another reason, the judge found out that he still hadn't served his remaining five months and 20 days in prison and told him that he must be put to jail.⁶⁹

This actually happened when I did my research in Nepal so I could observe these events firsthand. One would have never thought that when I was in Nepal writing my thesis on what it means for a Nepalese to convert to Christianity, one of my informants, Dr. Ramesh Khatri, is actually about to be put into jail for converting to Christianity. The farewell we said to each other when he went to the prison is a memory that will never fade. But luckily, Khatri was saved by a paper. One of Khatri's friends gave him and the court a copy of a document from 1990 where the King of Nepal declares:

*"After the political changes in our country, according to the recommendation of the Prime Minister and according to the constitution of Nepal, all the people that are suffering prison sentences because of their religious beliefs, have been forgiven their prison sentence and also any other related cases for religion also have been withdrawn."*⁷⁰

When the officers saw this document, Khatri was immediately pardoned from his prison sentence.⁷¹

Today, Dr. Ramesh Khatri is living in the typical Nepalese joint family, taking care of his aging father. His mother is already dead; she committed suicide when Khatri came back from England.⁷²

⁶⁹ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p10.

⁷⁰ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p2. In Appendix 2 you can see a copy of this document.

⁷¹ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p2.

⁷² Interview 4, 2011-10-30, pp5-6.

6 Analysis

6.1 Nepali Ordo Salutis

6.1.1 Stability

The title of the first step in my theory is not necessarily to be considered as a description of the informant's life as "stable", but rather as a narrative description of the informant's life *pre-crisis*. According to my material, since the conversion is most often triggered by a crisis, Hinduism in my informant's life-stories seems to provide a sense of religious stability before the crisis. As we have seen in the case of Dr. Ramesh Khatry, this sense of stability is confirmed by the fact that he had no other thought than to become a good Hindu, until he was faced by a crisis.⁷³ This also becomes evident due to the fact that some of my informant's at first tries to solve the crisis within Hinduism, by, for example, worshipping the gods and goddesses in order to search help from them,⁷⁴ performing ritual sacrifices⁷⁵ or going to what some informants term a *witchdoctor*⁷⁶. This issue will naturally be discussed more in-depth in the next step; Crisis.

There is one informant that stands out in this step though. Bachan comes from an intellectual and thinking background and was already in a very young age interested in knowledge.⁷⁷ When Bachan got hold of a New Testament and started reading about the Good Samaritan, he liked what he read and started questioning Hinduism and the caste system:

When I bought the New Testament and read, I was very much impressed and actually New Testament got hold of me. Now, when I read the story about the Good Samaritan, you know, and it really touched me. Because in Hinduism, you know, there is the caste system with untouchables and high caste and low caste. Anybody who is intellectual, or those who think, they would not like to have this caste system, so naturally it really interested me.⁷⁸

Bachan did not like the Hindu cause and effect theory, that whatever you do will have effect in your later life. He also did not like the idea of transmigration of the soul, which you have to go through 840 000 times in order to be a man again. Instead he got fond of the forgiveness that is presented in the New Testament.⁷⁹ It seems as Hinduism itself was the crisis for Bachan and thus Hinduism did not provide stability for him. This issue is further discussed in chapter 7.2.

6.1.2 Crisis

When the convert receives some kind of crisis, usually a sickness, he or she is seeking a way to dissolve this problem. As we saw in the previous step, Hinduism is the closest religion at hand and many converts therefore at first tries to find a solution within Hinduism. When Hinduism is unable to help, the crisis deepens and thoughts of suicide are not far away. Here are a number of examples of this:

⁷³ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p5.

⁷⁴ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, pp1-2.

⁷⁵ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

⁷⁶ Interview 3, 2011-10-27, pp1-2.

⁷⁷ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, p4.

⁷⁸ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, p2.

⁷⁹ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, p4.

When Dr. Ramesh Khatri was eleven years he was forced into a child marriage which caused him to become bitter and depressed and eventually also got sick. Khatri was told by his parents to go and worship the Hindu gods and goddesses so that they would help him. He went to the temples and worshipped and gave money to the beggars, but this did not help at all and Khatri started considering killing himself.⁸⁰

Pratigya became a witchdoctor in his early teenage. A senior witchdoctor used to come to him and fill him with a spirit that would make him shake and answer certain questions. Pratigya was also invited to come and heal sick people in many different places. But when this spirit came into his body he got a severe headache and used to sometimes faint. Even though Pratigya was a witchdoctor, he could not cure himself.⁸¹

Satya for some reason became sick and couldn't sleep at night and sometimes she felt that her bed started shaking. Because of this a shaman came to perform a magical ritual. Satya was told by the shaman that she was possessed by an evil spirit and that she should put some ash on her pillow in order to get rid of the spirit. In the beginning she could sleep better but after a few nights it returned, so the shaman told her to go and worship different gods and to sacrifice to them.⁸² To perform the ritual sacrifice Satya brought a rooster, rice, fruit and flowers to a temple and gave it to the Brahmin, the priest. There the Brahmin poured water on the head of the rooster and then chopped it off. The Brahmin kept the head and gave the rest of the rooster back so that Satya could take it home and eat. But just as the previous attempt, this Hindu ritual sacrifice did not help and Satya was still sick.⁸³

Barahbar was suffering from depression and didn't feel any joy, peace or hope. He thought that there wasn't anything special in his life and sometimes he was thinking about killing himself.⁸⁴

Sapanah first became a Christian when she was 18 years old through her sister. But after this she got married to a Hindu man. She did not tell her new family that she was a Christian, but instead went back to Hinduism.⁸⁵ Sapanah's new family was worshipping Hindu gods and Sapanah started to also do this, because she thought that that would make her new family happy with her.⁸⁶ After the marriage she was surprised to see that her husband used to drink a lot. And if that wasn't enough problems, they also started quarreling every night and every day. All these troubles made Sapanah also started drinking.⁸⁷ She became so addicted to alcohol and drank so much that at one moment her mouth got paralyzed, she couldn't walk properly and her lungs and body started swallowing up. Finally she was forced to go to the doctor, but she was so addicted to alcohol that she couldn't stop drinking even when lying on the hospital bed and Sapanah's mother asked if she wanted to go to the witchdoctor.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, pp1-2.

⁸¹ Interview 3, 2011-10-27, pp1-2.

⁸² Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

⁸³ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp4-5.

⁸⁴ Interview 6, 2011-11-03, p3.

⁸⁵ Interview 7, 2011-11-05, p1.

⁸⁶ Interview 7, 2011-11-05, p4.

⁸⁷ Interview 7, 2011-11-05, p1.

⁸⁸ Interview 7, 2011-11-05, pp2-3.

Jivan did not have any specific problems of his own, but his brother had. When his elder brother had a son, from day one that little boy had problems. The doctor said that he must take his boy immediately to the city to transfer blood. So he got on a train and left for a long journey to the nearest town, but half way there, the train stopped for some reason. And if that wasn't bad enough, in the middle of the night the one day old baby's heart stopped and they all thought he was now dead. The train stood still for two, three hours and the brother was panicking, but could not do anything.⁸⁹

Hidnu was born in an important Hindu family and their house was the main house in the village. This house used to function as a temple and people would come and worship their idols there. During this time his family went through sorrows and distress because his father died and they had physical and economic problems. One thing led to another and Hidnu started drinking alcohol. Hidnu did not feel that there was any peace in the Hindu religion, but sometimes the alcohol could give him a short time of peace.⁹⁰ Since Hidnu's problems were just increasing, he one day decided to commit suicide. Hidnu pretended that he was going to fish in the nearby river, but his intentions were not fishing.⁹¹

As we have seen, the unresolved crisis has left many of my informants in despair with a religion that is unable to help and with thoughts of committing suicide. So where shall the help come from?

6.1.3 Encounter

In the previous step, many of my informants have unsuccessfully tried to solve their crisis within Hinduism. In this hopeless situation of an unresolved crisis, the convert now in some way encounters Christianity, which provides a different way to dissolve the crisis:

Dr. Ramesh Khattry first encountered Christianity when he was a young student at the Catholic Boarding School, so he had actually encountered Christianity before his crisis, but he did not consider Christianity until Hinduism had failed as a solution to the crisis.⁹²

Pratigya had a problem with fainting and this became a bigger problem when he later on joined the Nepalese Army. The encounter that eventually led to the solution of the crisis was in the shape of a friend who took Pratigya to church. At the church meeting, the pastor told all the sick or those who had been visiting a witchdoctor to pray.⁹³

Barahbar's encounter with Christianity emerged from his habit of watching Wrestling on TV at home. When sometimes turning channel he used to see a strange woman walking here and there while speaking. Barahbar became curious of this peculiar behavior and started watching. That strange woman was the American preacher Joyce Meyer, and she had a Christian faith show.⁹⁴

Sapanah's first encounter with Christianity was in her teenage when she first became a Christian, but since she returned to Hinduism when she got married, I want to highlight the encounter that made her a Christian today. This encounter occurred when Sapanah gave birth to a son and started taking

⁸⁹ Interview 10, 2011-11-16, p2.

⁹⁰ Interview 12, 2011-11-18, p1.

⁹¹ Interview 12, 2011-11-18, p1.

⁹² Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p2.

⁹³ Interview 3, 2011-10-27, pp2-3.

⁹⁴ Interview 6, 2011-11-03, p1.

him to a kindergarten. At this kindergarten she met a Christian woman who brought Sapanah to church.⁹⁵

Since the Jivan family converted one after another, the encounter Jivan had with Christianity is tightly connected with his family. Jivan's brother had at an early age found Christian scriptures in a box floating in a river. When Jivan's brother's little son was acutely ill he had asked a Roman Catholic father to pray for the child. Later on Jivan's brother also called a Christian friend he had met in the army who came and talked about Jesus with the Jivan family and prayed for the boy.⁹⁶

When Hidnu was standing by the river side with the intention of committing suicide, he suddenly heard a voice saying: "you don't need to die, because you did not do anything to the other persons" and then another voice saying: "you need to do something for the other persons also."⁹⁷ Hidnu was astonished! These voices became a wakeup call for him and he returned back to his home. Three days later he went to Kathmandu, looking for a job. When he was out looking, he happened to find some Christian gospel tracts and when he read one of them there was a mention of Matthew 11:28-29⁹⁸. After reading this he started feeling hope and wanted to go to a church.⁹⁹

Satya had made several Hindu attempts to heal her sickness, but it did not help. At this time Satya was working at a Boarding School and one of her co-workers happened to be a Christian. Satya heard that there was prayer in her house and that they prayed for Satya. Satya asked her co-worker what she thought that she ought to do and she said: "you do not have to do anything, you should pray to God and he will teach you about this, and then you will be well again." She then gave Satya a Bible, but since Satya complained that she couldn't read, she told her to put it on her pillow and pray, and then she would be well again.¹⁰⁰

Since Bachan did not like the Hindu religion, he went to a Christian bookstore and asked for some Christian religious books. The man in the bookstore gave him a New Testament and Bachan started reading about the Good Samaritan:

When I bought the New Testament and read, I was very much impressed and actually New Testament got hold of me. Now, when I read the story about the Good Samaritan, you know, and it really touched me. Because in Hinduism, you know, there is the caste system with untouchables and high caste and low caste. Anybody who is intellectual, or those who think, they would not like to have this caste system, so naturally it really interested me.¹⁰¹

As we have seen in these examples, these encounters have a variation and can consist of different things, such as suddenly hearing Gods voice, reading the Bible or meeting a Christian friend. For the conversion process, *how* you encounter Christianity is different, but *that* you encounter Christianity is essential.

⁹⁵ Interview 7, 2011-11-05, p1.

⁹⁶ Interview 10, 2011-11-16, p2.

⁹⁷ Interview 12, 2011-11-18, p1.

⁹⁸ "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt 11:28-29)

⁹⁹ Interview 12, 2011-11-18, p2.

¹⁰⁰ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

¹⁰¹ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, p2.

6.1.4 Solution

In the previous step, my informants somehow encountered Christianity, and we are now going to see how their crisis was solved:

Pratigya had been told by the pastor in the church to pray for his problem with fainting and so he did. When Pratigya came back to the military barracks he prayed: “Lord, please deliver me from this sickness.” From then onwards Pratigya did not faint anymore and instead came to faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁰²

While watching Joyce Meyer’s faith show on TV, God touched Barahbar and he describes that he felt that he got peace in his heart.¹⁰³

Sapanah had become so addicted to alcohol and drank so much that at one moment her mouth got paralyzed, she couldn’t walk properly and her lungs and body started swallowing up. Finally she was forced to go to the doctor, but she was so addicted to alcohol that she couldn’t stop drinking even when lying on the hospital bed. When Sapanah’s mother asked if she wanted to go to the witchdoctor Sapanah refused! Instead she wanted to meet the pastor of the church she now used to go to. The pastor and many other people from the church came and prayed and fasted for Sapanah. After one week of prayer Sapanah felt that she had been healed in her liver and the rest of the body started to feel better. After this week, Sapanah started fasting and praying for 40 days. Sapanah confessed her sins and prayed for forgiveness for marrying a Hindu man. After four months Sapanah was completely healed.¹⁰⁴

Jivan’s brother’s son started breathing again, after the Roman Catholic father had prayed for him. They took the boy to the hospital and transfused all his blood, but the doctor said to them: “even if he survives, he will be like a vegetable, won’t do anything.” When they got back home again, the boy was alive, but not well. Jivan’s brother remembered that he had a friend who was a Christian, so he asked him to come and pray for the boy. When the friend had prayed for the child, the boy started to cry, which in this case was a good sign; the boy was getting better.¹⁰⁵ The Jivan family, as many other Nepali families, is a joint family; you can read more about this in chapter 6.1.5.a.1. They used to be fourteen people in the family and all of them worshipped a different Hindu god, but when the Jivan family saw this miracle, one by one started converting to the one God of the Christian faith. Jivan himself was actually the last one in the family to convert.¹⁰⁶ Jivan explains that his reason for converting was first of all the miracle that he saw in his family, and secondly, the peace and joy of the Lord.¹⁰⁷

When Hidnu had read the Gospel tracts he started feeling hope and wanted to go to a church.¹⁰⁸

Satya had been told by her Christian co-worker to pray to God in order to get healed. Satya did as she was told and after a few nights she was healed from her sickness. Because of this, Satya then decided to become a Christian.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Interview 3, 2011-10-27, pp2-3.

¹⁰³ Interview 6, 2011-11-03, p1.

¹⁰⁴ Interview 7, 2011-11-05, pp2-3.

¹⁰⁵ Interview 10, 2011-11-16, p2.

¹⁰⁶ Interview 10, 2011-11-16, p4.

¹⁰⁷ Interview 10, 2011-11-16, p7.

¹⁰⁸ Interview 12, 2011-11-18, p2.

Since Bachan did not know any Christians he wrote a letter to the Bible Society of India who helped him get in contact with a Nepalese pastor. Even though it was prohibited in those days, five days later Bachan got baptized.¹¹⁰

From a phenomenological perspective, the experience of a solution to the crisis is very meaningful for the informant when converting to Christianity; it becomes the narrative turning point, a matter I will discuss more in chapter 6.2.

In these examples we can see that many of my informants are somehow experiencing a miracle; if they were sick they got healed and if they were depressed they received peace. When their crisis now is solved within a Christian context instead of a Hindu, they now convert from Hinduism to Christianity. If this was a fairy tale, this would be an appropriate happy ending, but as we will see in the next step, even though the initial crisis is solved, the problems for the newly converted are far from over.

6.1.5 Conflict

In the narrative life-stories of most of my informants, to convert to Christianity do not only mean to simply become a Christian, it also means to go through a lot of conflict. When the convert has solved the crisis he may now in a worst case scenario gain two new, the first being an informal conflict with the family and the second a formal conflict with the Nepalese state.

6.1.5.a Informal Conflict

When I asked Dr. Ramesh Khatri why he thinks a father in a Hindu family wants to stop his children from becoming Christians, he answered:

Oh, that's, well according to, if he's really strict Hinduism, the Christian is the lowest caste. The person who becomes Christian descends to the lowest caste possible, so. The other, of course would be, such a person then would not be able to do the funeral rites for the father. And the belief in Hinduism is that actually the son, you know, sends the father to heaven, by doing all the funeral rites.¹¹¹

So, according to Dr. Ramesh Khatri, there are two major problems that a Hindu father gets if his children convert to the Christian faith; they will descend to the lowest caste possible, which leads to the fact that his children cannot perform the Hindu funeral rites that will make him come to heaven. So, to prevent his children from becoming Christian, the father might threaten to not give his inheritance to those who convert to Christianity.

In my interviews, I noticed that the experiences during this step were filled with a lot of meaning to my informants, so I asked many of them to further describe how they, from their own perspective, perceived these social phenomena. What I found was a chain of reactions that several of my informants were more or less forced to face. First I shall present how my informants describe a typical Nepalese family and the distribution of inheritance:

A typical Nepalese family and the distribution of inheritance

According to Dr. Ramesh Khatri, in the typical Nepalese family, the father is the head of the family. The father is the earning person while the mother stays home and takes care of the children. The

¹⁰⁹ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

¹¹⁰ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, p2.

¹¹¹ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p10.

children are supposed to bow down to their father and mothers feet every day. If the children somehow disagree or rebels the father, if they are still small, they will get a beating, but if they are older the father can say: “well, then you don’t have no (sic) inheritance from me.”¹¹²

According to Jivan, typical Nepalese families live with the joint family system, and are thus dependent on the father. When the children grow up, they cannot stand alone, so if they want to stay in their father’s house, they have to obey him. If they leave the fathers house, they must have money to support themselves, and this is very difficult, so they have to bow down to the father.¹¹³

When the sons reach the age of 18, the inheritance is to be distributed,¹¹⁴ and according to Dr. Ramesh Khatri, the inheritance is usually distributed equally among the sons. Until recently the daughters didn’t get any inheritance, because she will get her husband’s inheritance. But now the laws of Nepal have changed so that the daughter also should get something. The parents usually keep one piece of land for security, and the son that stays in the joint family with his aging parents and takes care of them, receives this final share.¹¹⁵

Christian, the lowest caste

So, according to Dr. Ramesh Khatri, the first reason why a father wants to prevent his children from converting to Christianity is that they will be considered Dalit, the lowest caste possible. If the parents are strict Hindus, this means that they cannot touch their own children or eat the food that they make. This will obviously become a major problem for the family if the children are supposed to take care of their aging parents.¹¹⁶

Hindu heaven

According to Dr. Ramesh Khatri, the second reason for the father to prevent his children from converting to Christianity is that he himself will not be able to come to heaven. If the children convert to Christianity, they will not perform the Hindu funeral rituals and thus; the father will not go to heaven. So, to prevent his children from becoming Christian, the father will probably threaten to not give his inheritance to those who convert to Christianity.¹¹⁷

From the father’s side, his children cannot perform his funeral ritual, but from the converted children’s side, they do not want to perform the funeral ritual, because they are no longer Hindus. This issue is especially highlighted in the conversation between Satya and her mother. Satya’s mother does not want Satya to become a Christian because then she cannot perform the Hindu funeral ritual that will bring her to heaven.¹¹⁸

Description of a Hindu funeral ritual

When a Hindu person dies, the Hindu funeral ritual begins. Usually the Hindu funeral rites are performed only by the sons, but according to Dr. Ramesh Khatri, nowadays the daughters are

¹¹² Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p9.

¹¹³ Interview 10, 2011-11-16, p11.

¹¹⁴ Interview 10, 2011-11-16, p5.

¹¹⁵ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p9.

¹¹⁶ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p10.

¹¹⁷ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p10.

¹¹⁸ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, p5.

allowed at the cremation site and are sometimes even performing the ritual.¹¹⁹ This is also confirmed by the fact that Satya's mother wanted her daughter to perform the funeral ritual when she dies.¹²⁰

According to Dr. Ramesh Khatri, the person is not usually allowed to die inside a Hindu house, so when the person is very sick, the family takes the person out of the house and put the person on a bed in the centre of the courtyard in the house. When the person is dying and taking its last breath, they try to put some holy water into the person's mouth. When the person is dead, they make a bamboo structure that they put the person on and then bind the feet and the hands unto the bamboo structure and cover the person with a piece of cloth that has the names of the gods written on it. After this preparation the dead person is to be carried on the bamboo structure to the cremation site at the river side. Upon arrival the person is put just next to the river with the feet touching the river while the Brahmin priest makes a ceremony. Then after this the body is taken to the pile of firewood and the elder son, or the surviving son, goes around the body three times with a fire in his hand, and on the third he puts the fire onto the firewood. And once the fire starts burning, the hands and the limbs are separated from the body. But the fire cannot burn the totality of the body, so at the end, there's a black piece of human body that will not burn. This is collected and the Brahmin priest do a ceremony and puts a small flag onto that last piece of flesh, and then throws it into the river. After this the family goes home and all those who have touched the body will have to throw away all the clothes that they wore and then wear white garments.¹²¹

According to Swarga, these persons also have to shave all their hair off, including beard and eyebrows.¹²²

For the next thirteen days the sons wear white clothes, sleep on straw mats and cannot eat salt or cook their own food. Every morning they will have to go the village tap, take a bath and let the Brahmin priest do a ceremony. On the 13th day, there will be a purification rite and then a fest. From then on, the main person taken part in the funeral rites can wear normal clothes, but he has to wear white only and this for one year. After these ceremonies, that same son has to remember, as long as he is lives, to call the priest and do worship on behalf of the deceased on the date when his father or mother die. And if that son dies, his younger brother has to continue doing this.¹²³

Conclusion

When converting from Hinduism to Christianity, your earthly father is replaced by your heavenly Father as the highest authority in your life. Since the Nepalese society is built around the family, it is quite understandable that this leads to friction within the family.

In a worst case scenario, the person who converts to Christianity will be degraded to the lowest caste possible and expelled from his family. The reason for the expulsion is that the children are supposed to take care of their parents when they are old and send them to heaven when they die, and from a strict Hindu perspective, this is not possible if the children are of the lowest caste. The parents cannot be touched by their own children, they cannot eat the food they have made and the children cannot perform the Hindu funeral ritual. In order to prevent their children from converting, the

¹¹⁹ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p7.

¹²⁰ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

¹²¹ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, pp7-8.

¹²² Interview 9, 2011-11-13, p3.

¹²³ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, pp7-8.

parents sometimes threaten to not give their inheritance to their children if they convert to Christianity. It is obviously a major issue concerning young people's future prospects if they do not have a job or any other income opportunities.

This worst case scenario is a possible scenario for every Nepalese considering converting to Christianity, but not all go through all these problems. A good example for this is Barahbar, whose parents first told him not to become a Christian, but later on became Christians themselves. The one that stand out the most explicitly in this matter is Jivan. Probably this is because, first of all, he was the last in his family to convert to Christianity and secondly, his father had already passed away, so all the potential conflict areas were simply not there.

In my interview with Jivan I seized the opportunity to ask him why the father becomes a problem for the Nepalese Hindu who wants to convert. According to Jivan, since most Nepalese live with the joint family system, they all depend economically on the father and if they want to stay in the father's house, they then consequently have to obey him. If you for any reason want to leave your father's house, you must have enough money to support yourself, but if you cannot do this, you have to bow down to your father. For those who are scared to face their father Jivan had the advice that God is greater than any earthly father and if he sends you out of the house, you should go and instead start following Jesus. Some who wants to become Christians want to wait with their conversion until after their father is dead so they can perform the Hindu funeral ritual, but, as a reply to these kind of arguments, Jivan quoted Matthew 8:21-22: "Another of the disciples said to him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' And Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.'"

Examples

One week after his baptism, Bachan went to a Bible School. During one of the holidays, Bachan's father passed away and his family asked for him.

In 1969, when I came back for a holiday for two months, during that time my father passed away, and I didn't know, but I was living outside, and some of my friends told me that my family was asking for me, so after a week I went and I found that my father passed away a week before. So they almost forced me to go to the river and do all the rituals, but I learned that I didn't have to do that, because my mother she saved me and all the priests and my brothers, they were saying; "ok, let's go to the river and since Bachan is just a child, I was already more than 18, in the eyes of the family, I was still a child, and then my mother said, "no, no, let him go." So I came back.¹²⁴

Bachan did not participate in the Hindu rituals at his father's funeral and because of this his brother got all of the inheritance. If Bachan wanted to, he could have gone to court to claim his part of the property, but then he either would have to claim that he is still a Hindu, or confess in court that he is a Christian with the result that he would have been forced to go through prison, so he decided to not care about the inheritance.¹²⁵

Satya does not have a family of her own, no siblings and her father died early. When Satya had decided to become a Christian, she went to tell her mother about this. Satya's mother replied that: "I only have one daughter and when I die you are the one to bury me and because of this you are not

¹²⁴ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, p3.

¹²⁵ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, pp5-6.

allowed to become a Christian.” Satya then said to her mother: “do you want me well or do you want me to bury you?” and her mother replied: “no, I want you well.” Satya then decided to become a Christian and started going to church regularly. Two years later Satya’s mother also became a Christian.¹²⁶

6.1.5.b Formal Conflict

There seems to be two major turning points for my informants concerning the Nepalese Christians relationship to the Nepalese law; 1990, when Nepal had its democratic reforms and the King gave amnesty to religious prisoners, and 2007 when the Interim Constitution of Nepal changed Nepal from a Monarchical Hindu Kingdom¹²⁷ to a secular state.¹²⁸

The Constitution of The Kingdom of Nepal 2047 (1990) formally recognized Nepal to be a Hindu Kingdom,¹²⁹ but this changed when the parliament declared Nepal a secular state in the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007.¹³⁰

The new constitution also changed some of the text concerning the right to religion, but these changes did not really have an effect on the issues of religious freedom.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 declares that:

“Every person has the right to profess, practice and preserve his/her own religion as handed down to him/her from ancient times having due regards to the social and cultural traditional practices. Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another, and shall not act or behave in a manner which may jeopardize the religion of others. Every religious denomination has the right to maintain its independent existence, and for this purpose to manage and protect its religious places and religious trusts, in accordance with law.”¹³¹

The Civil Code of 1992 states that:

“No person shall propagate any religion in a manner likely to undermine another religion, or convert anyone into another religion. In case he has only made an attempt to do so, he will be punished with imprisonment not more than three years. In case he has already converted any one into another religion, he shall be punished with imprisonment for not more than six years. If he is a foreign national, he shall be deported from Nepal after completing such sentences.”¹³²

If I analyze these two law texts I see four important points; (1) you have the right to profess and practice your own religion if it has been “handed down from ancient times”, (2) you cannot preach your religion leading to conversion of “another person” because that might lead to imprisonment up to six years, (3) it seems to be legal if you yourself want to convert without any external influence from someone trying to convert you and (4) the constitution is not clear about your right to preach your religious belief among others if they do not convert.

¹²⁶ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

¹²⁷ His Majesty’s Government, 1990, p3.

¹²⁸ Acharya, 2008, p615.

¹²⁹ His Majesty’s Government, 1990, p3.

¹³⁰ Acharya, 2008, p615.

¹³¹ Acharya, 2008, p617.

¹³² Kehrberg, 2000, Appendix 1.

So, the Interim Constitution of 2007 still makes it illegal for Nepalese Hindus to convert into Christianity, but, since the King of Nepal gave amnesty to all religious prisoners back in 1990, the Nepali government, as we have seen in the case of Dr. Ramesh Khattry, can't enforce this law. Dr. Ramesh Khattry himself gives his own thoughts about this:

So, if I got put into jail he also will get put into jail and they would have to put all other Christians in jail. So I didn't think they can really put us into jail, you know, on that basis, because the king had already granted the pardon. But that's how ignorant our people in the law business are, because Nepal is already a secular state and, so they did not know that the king had granted pardon to religious prisoners. And the fact that they can even suggest that I go to jail when Nepal is secular state, you know, it just shows the ignorance.¹³³

In other words, the constitution declares that it is illegal to convert another person, but in reality it is impossible to put every convert into jail, and besides, the King of Nepal gave amnesty to all religious prisoners back in 1990. Since the current constitution is only an "interim" constitution and the fact that Nepal is currently in a peace process due to the People's War, my guess is that as soon as the situation stabilizes, Nepal will probably adopt a new constitution that makes it legal to convert "another person".

Bachan became a Christian in 1968 and he describes the situation like this:

Until 1989 Nepal was actually under a king, and Hinduism. Anybody who tried to convert or preach was against the law. And naturally people were afraid, used to be, even in the mountain, and outside Kathmandu valley, when we used to go and have conference, people used to tell us, you know, don't make noise, because nobody knows when police would come and arrest you, that kind of situation in those days. And up, in 1989 when we had a revolution, and, from that time onwards were a little bit free, but real freedom came when, when was that? It was four years back, when parliament declared Nepal as a secular state. And now, that, everybody know that we also have right to become Christian, whatever we do. Those days, those who became Christian, they counted the cost. They knew that they have to go through problems, but people didn't care about that. If they had to go; ok, persecution was no problem. People would suffer.¹³⁴

Bachan himself was lucky though, he did not get in trouble with the law even though the situation was very bad sometimes.

As I mentioned earlier, Pratigya was in the Nepalese Army when he became a Christian, and this would become a problem for him. First of all, there was no democracy in Nepal, so it was very difficult to be a Christian in the military¹³⁵:

If the government would know that they have been baptized or received Christ in heart or become Christian they would have been in prison for 6 years.¹³⁶

Pratigya didn't disclose his Christian faith to the Army administration, even though his officers knew. Pratigya had a kind of divided relationship to his officers because of this. His officers didn't give him the promotions that he was liable to achieve because they didn't want him to influence other people

¹³³ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, pp4-5.

¹³⁴ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, pp4-5.

¹³⁵ Interview 3, 2011-10-27, p3.

¹³⁶ Interview 3, 2011-10-27, p2.

as well, but they, on the other hand, didn't report him because he was very faithful in his job, whatever they delegated to him.¹³⁷

This, however, did not stop Pratigya from growing in his faith. When he had the chance he used to go to the church on the leave, but when he was serving, he used to go out in the jungle and find an isolated place to pray. He had to do this because there were no churches where he was serving.¹³⁸

So it seems as Pratigya's officers liked Pratigya, but not Pratigya's religion. Pratigya's company commander did not try to force Pratigya away from his Christian faith and tried to convince him to not marry a Nepali girl but instead a foreign girl, since Christianity is related to the Western world.¹³⁹

Swarga became a Christian in 1987 but was luckily not especially persecuted for his Christian faith, but when asked about this he mentions an incident that happened on a journey to Pokhara. Somebody on the bus started arguing and mocking Christians and called them "cow eater". Since Hindus worship the cow and regard it as the mother animal, he did not like that Christians eat the cow. He also accused Christians for marrying their sisters and other very bad things. The reason for these accusations seemed to be that the angry bus passenger considered the Christian faith to be a Western religion and not a Nepali religion.¹⁴⁰

Jivan became a Christian in 1989, but he explains that he has not had any problems with the Nepalese law concerning religion, because God has always saved him. Now when Nepal is a democracy, nobody has come to disturb him or his church. Jivan explains that if you are a fisherman you have to learn how to fish, you can't just go and jump into the river, the fish will go away. It is the same thing when Christians preach the gospel to Hindus, if they only talk about the bad things about Hinduism and say that it is satanic, the Hindus don't want to become Christians.¹⁴¹

Since Satya didn't have such a big family, she didn't have so much persecution within her family, but from the neighborhood community it was more difficult. Someone reported to the police that Satya had become a Christian and undercover police came home to her inspecting. The police didn't do anything so the community insisted that the police should come back and arrest Satya. The police came back but once again they did not do anything about Satya.¹⁴²

6.1.5.c *Concluding thoughts about the Conflict*

In order to remain in your new Christian faith when facing different types of conflict it seems important for my informant's to have had some kind of Christian solution to a crisis. For example, Dr. Ramesh Khatri's brother also wanted to become a Christian, but when his father threatened to not give him his inheritance, he returned to Hinduism. When I asked Khatri what the difference was between him and his brother, why Khatri could stand firm in his new Christian faith but not his brother, he answered that Jesus had done a miracle in his life and because of this, Jesus was

¹³⁷ Interview 3, 2011-10-27, p5.

¹³⁸ Interview 3, 2011-10-27, p3.

¹³⁹ Interview 3, 2011-10-27, p6.

¹⁴⁰ Interview 9, 2011-11-13, pp3-4.

¹⁴¹ Interview 10, 2011-11-16, pp7-8.

¹⁴² Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp6-7.

everything for Khatry. But his brother did not have this experience and thus lacked the means to withstand the threats from his father.¹⁴³

That Christianity is a Western religion, and therefore not suitable for Nepalese, is a recurring argument from Nepalese Hindus. I do not think it's a far-fetched conclusion that this nationalist argument has something to do with the proud and independent Nepalese history that I have described in my historical background in chapter 3.3. It also seems as the Nepalese Christians either have been aware of this, and thus tried to adapt Christianity to an Eastern culture, or the Nepalese Christians themselves are nationalistic in their meeting with Western missionaries and thus don't want to make Nepalese Christianity Westernized. After all, Christianity is actually an Asian religion from the beginning.

6.1.6 Restored Stability

After the convert have resisted all attempts from his family or the Nepalese state to bring him back to Hinduism, there arises a state of restored stability in my informant's life-stories. Regarding the conflict with their family, my informant's provide us with basically three different ways of gaining restored stability; reconcile with your family, move away from your family or convert your family.

If we start with looking at my key informant, we can see that he had conflicts with both his family and the Nepalese state but that he now enjoys some sort of stability in his life. Regarding the conflict with the Nepalese state, it was very close that Khatry was put into jail for converting, but he was freed in the last day.¹⁴⁴ Regarding his conflict with his family, Khatry is now taking care of his aging father in his home.¹⁴⁵

In this step I also would like to highlight Ahshirbahd, who provides us with a good example of how you can reconcile with your father and in that way gain a restored stability. Ahshirbahd comes from a Brahmin background where his father was a Hindu priest. Since Ahshirbahd was the eldest son, the intention of his father was to make his eldest son like him. Ahshirbahd was sent to a Hindu school, but started questioning why there were so many gods in Hinduism and he wanted to know who the real god is, who the creator of the universe is. Even though Ahshirbahd's teachers and gurus tried to silence him, he could not stop himself and he kept on asking, so his teacher started persecuting him; tied him up in the classroom for hours. That was the turning point for Ahshirbahd who forsake his teacher and returned to his father at home. But when Ahshirbahd returned without his graduation his father was very upset and started hitting and abusing him. Ahshirbahd started hating his own father and decided to join the communist movement.¹⁴⁶

When Ahshirbahd later on became a Christian he was reading in the Bible: "Unless you forgive, your sins will not be forgiven" and also remembered that Jesus taught us to pray to God calling him *Father*. This was very difficult for Ahshirbahd since he hated his earthly father and to overcome this he decided to write a letter to his father asking for reconciliation. Ahshirbahd's father was positive to this and was ready to reconcile and thus the relationship was restored.¹⁴⁷ One day they started

¹⁴³ Interview 4, 2011-10-30, p8.

¹⁴⁴ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p3.

¹⁴⁵ Interview 11, 2011-11-17, p10.

¹⁴⁶ Interview 2, 2011-10-26, pp1-2.

¹⁴⁷ Interview 2, 2011-10-26, p6.

talking about the Hindu funeral ritual that Ahshirbahd as the oldest son is supposed to do when his father dies. Ahshirbahd's father asked if he really had forsaken those things:

And I said: "Not really." So, I twisted that idea. And what I told is: "Father, you know, there are so many people, so many rituals, so many religions. And different people do differently. Even in regards of funeral and those last ceremonials of a person, even for father and for others. There are so many rituals right?" And he said: "Yes." And I said: "I have some! I will do my way. What the Bible say." He didn't say no to that, he was kind of agreeing to me. And for me, personally, I am really thankful to God.¹⁴⁸

So Ahshirbahd tried to reconcile with his father and succeeded and thus shows us one way of gaining restored stability.

For Bachan the situation was different and he gained his restored stability in another way; after Bachan's father died and his elder brother got all the inheritance, he took his mother and younger brother with him to live separately.¹⁴⁹

As we saw in the Conflict step, Satya's mother did not want Satya to become a Christian but when Satya insisted she later on also became a Christian.¹⁵⁰ Also Barahbar had a conflict with his parents who did not want him to become a Christian, but when he insisted, they also later on became Christians.¹⁵¹

So, as we have seen, there are different ways to gain restored stability; you can move away from your family and lose your heritage, you can reconcile with you family or you can try converting youre family into Christianity.

6.1.7 Summary

Through a phenomenological and narrative analysis of my transcribed interviews I have found that there is a common pattern of steps that Nepalese Hindus go through when converting to Christianity, a pattern I call "Nepali Ordo Salutis". This study identifies these steps as Stability, Crisis, Encounter, Solution, Conflict and Restored Stability.

In the first step; Stability, Hinduism seems to provide a sense of religious stability before the crisis. In the second step; Crisis, the convert receives some kind of crisis, usually a sickness, and he or she is seeking a way to dissolve this problem. In the third step; Encounter, the convert now in some way encounters Christianity, which provides a different way to dissolve the crisis. In the fourth step; Solution, the convert's life-story is changed through a narrative turning point, the convert is now somehow experiencing a miracle; if they were sick they got healed and if they were depressed they received peace. When their crisis now is solved within a Christian context instead of a Hindu, they now convert from Hinduism to Christianity. In the fifth step; Conflict, the convert now has solved the crisis but may in a worst case scenario gain two new, the first being an Informal Conflict with the family and the second a Formal Conflict with the Nepalese state. In the last and final sixth step; Restored Stability, the convert have resisted all attempts from his family or the Nepalese state to bring him back to Hinduism, and there now arises a state of restored stability in my informant's life-stories.

¹⁴⁸ Interview 2, 2011-10-26, p8.

¹⁴⁹ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, p5.

¹⁵⁰ Interview 14, 2011-12-16, pp1-2.

¹⁵¹ Interview 6, 2011-11-03, p2.

6.2 In-depth Analysis: Finding the narrative “turning point”

From one point of view you could say that the *first decision to convert*, i.e. when you decide to go from one religion to another, in and of itself is a turning point, but when using the tools for narrative analyze that Anna Johansson presents in her book *Narrativ teori och metod*, I would like to argue for another event as the most important turning point. When I am analyzing my informant’s conversion stories, I see that it is when the informant has a *personal experience of God* that everything really changes. From this point onwards, you can start talking about a “before” and “after” as Denzin puts it. Before this personal experience the informants have been seeking help from God and after this experience they do not go back to Hinduism. This personal experience can consist of different things such as God answering a prayer, hearing Gods voice, reading the Bible, but most often, according to my informants; a healing.¹⁵²

My first argument for choosing this as the turning point and not the more obvious first decision is the difference between Khatry and his brother. Both of them became Christians but only Khatry remained one. It seems as before this personal experience there is a possibility that the convert will go back to Hinduism if the pressure from the family is too strong. Khatry had a personal experience of God; he had been healed from his sickness, and he was because of this able to remain a Christian when his father threatened to not give him his inheritance if he did not go back to Hinduism, but Khatry’s brother didn’t have such an experience of God and he could not withstand his father.

My second argument I gather from the conversion story of Sapanah. Sapanah actually became a Christian when she was 18, but went back to Hinduism when she got married. Her first decision to become a Christian can obviously not be the major turning point of her Christian life if she went back to Hinduism when getting married. The turning point can instead be found when God healed her from her alcoholism, i.e. her personal experience of God.

My third argument is that most of my informants became Christians *after* they had had a personal experience of God. They did not even decide to become Christians before they were healed. Since most of my informants personal experience is a healing of some kind, the healing process is in and of itself a turning point in their lives. They seek healing from different sources but the conversion story *turns* when God heal them.

6.3 Greimas actantmodel

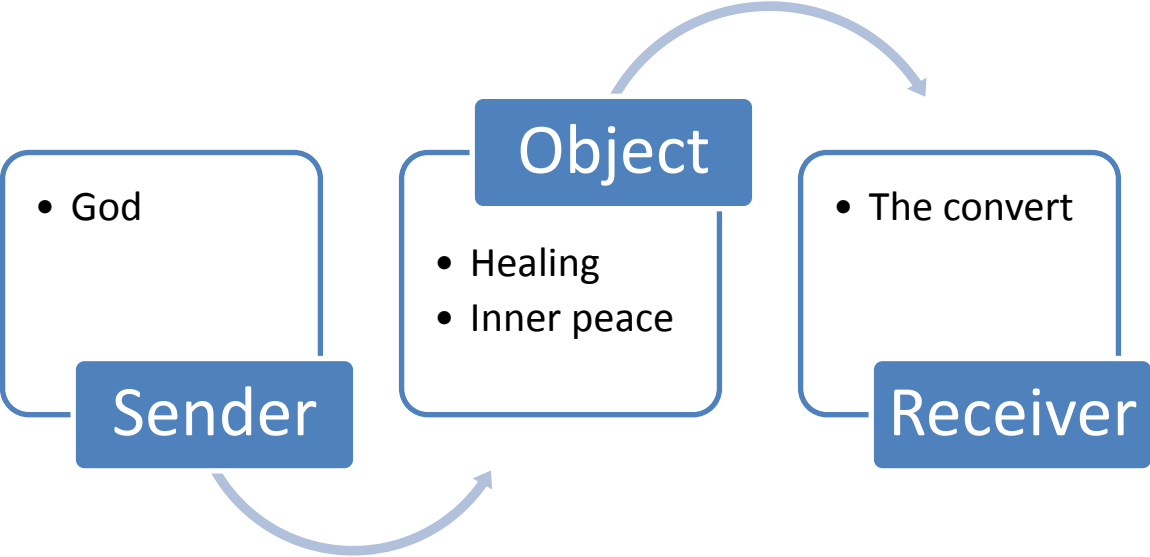
A useful narratological model is Algirdas J. Greimas *actantmodel*. According to Greimas every tale is structured around six plot functions that he calls *actants*. Greimas arranged these actants in opposites linked to a semantic axle. On the *project axis* you always find the *subject* that strives to reach something – an *object*. It is the subject’s desire, its project, which triggers the plot. It could be a lack of or a desire for something. For the project to succeed there must be a receiver and a transmitter in each end of the *communication axis*. Something is delivered from a sender to a receiver. During the plot the subject will meet a helper and an opponent, which is found during the *conflict axis*.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Johansson, 2005, p319.

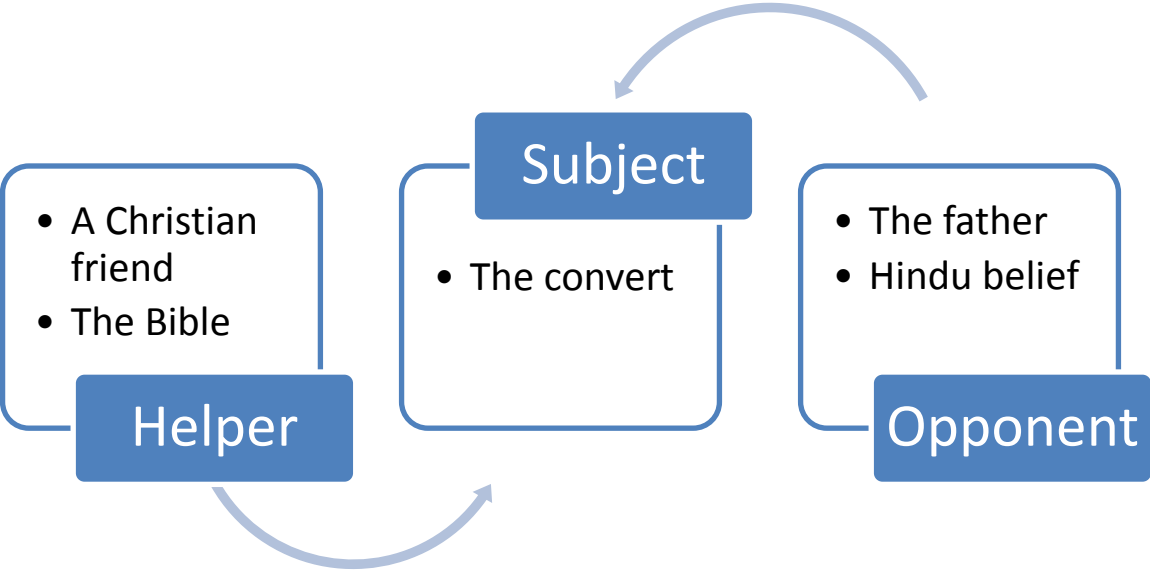
¹⁵³ Johansson, 2005, p158.

When inserting my gathered research material into Greimas actantmodel, a surprise unfolded before my eyes; the convert is not necessarily seeking *salvation*, which I as a Swede perceive as the obvious reason to convert, but rather *healing*.

Project axis:



Communication axis:



This is a simple yet illustrative figure of how I analyze the typical plot of how a Nepalese Hindu becomes a Nepalese Christian. In this actantmodel we find the convert as the obvious *subject*, who is in need of a healing, which then is the *object*. God is the *sender* of this healing which then in turn makes the convert a *receiver* of this object. The convert’s Christian friend is the one who leads the

convert to God which then makes him the *helper*. The *opponent* is found within Hindu belief in the convert's family, represented especially by the father.

To put Greimas theory into action, let's insert my informant Satya in this model: Satya herself is the subject, healing is the object, a Christian co-worker is the helper, her mother with her Hindu belief is the opponent, God is the sender and she herself is the receiver. The turning point in the plot is when Satya tells her mother: "do you want me well or do you want me to bury you?" and her mother changes her mind and replies: "no, I want you well." Satya's object is to be healed by God but her mother opposes this because she then will become a Christian and thus won't perform the traditional Hindu funeral ritual that will send her to the Hindu heaven.

Johansson is quoting the literature scholar Suzann Keen who emphasizes that it is extremely useful to fill in this kind of chart; it can be helpful to clarify the core conflicts that the plot is constructed around. When doing this, as I mentioned, I surprisingly found that *salvation* does not seem to be an apparent object for the Nepalese Hindus on their way to Christianity, but rather *healing*. In my own personal thought, salvation is the most important reason to become a Christian; I can live with a sickness, but I cannot live without salvation. Here I think we possibly have an interesting illustration of different mindsets; an Asian vis-à-vis a European.

7 Discussion

7.1 Validity

Although the personnel at ATEN assisted me with great effort in providing me with suitable informants to interview, I decided to find some of my own. If I exclusively had interviewed people who all know each other, there had been a risk that they had spoken to each other and thus come up with a similar conversion story and I therefore could have missed something important without being able to know what it may be. I though found that there were great similarities in the interviews independently of how the informant's were recruited.

Initially it was very easy to get an interview with a particular kind of person: "a male pastor from Kathmandu with a high caste background". In order to interview people from other regions I travelled to both Eastern and Western Nepal and I put a lot of effort in finding informants from a variety of caste, ethnicity, gender, age, location and profession.

In order to check the intersubjective validity of my key informant story, Dr. Ramesh Khatri read chapter 5.2 "The Conversion Story of Dr. Ramesh Khatri" and corrected my interview transcription.

To further validate my theory I decided to show a preliminary outline of my research to the Swedish missionary Mirjam Bergh, who has been living in Nepal for 15 years, all together. Mirjam Bergh possesses invaluable information since she is familiar with both the Swedish environment I come from and the Nepali environment I study. After reading a summary of my research so far, I asked her if she recognizes the typical pattern that I have found that Nepalese go through during their conversion. Bergh answered that "yes, this is true for many people." But she also reacted that I had written "the Nepalese Hindu is fine with his religion until he meets a problem he cannot solve within Hinduism." Bergh did not agree that all Nepalese Hindus are "fine" with Hinduism, not all are satisfied with their religion and thus do not need a particular triggering crisis in order to consider converting.

First of all I would like to emphasize that I do not consider it to be strange that my research and Mirjam Bergh's opinion seems to point in different directions, after all I have only been researching in Nepal for nine weeks while Bergh have a total of fifteen years of experience which would provide her with a lot more variation.

On the other hand, I would like to argue that my theory *is* mainly in accordance with Mirjam Bergh's experience! For example, it would seem as my informant Bachan did not have any particular crisis before wanting to convert and thus, just as Mirjam Bergh says, wasn't fine with Hinduism pre-crisis, and thus did not need a particular crisis in order to convert. But I would like to argue that from Bachan's intellectual point of view Hinduism itself was a major problem inflicting the crisis. Bachan did not have a crisis in the shape of a sickness or something similar and thus did not pray to God for healing. Bachan's crisis was with Hinduism itself and he therefore searched for something else. In other words; Mirjam Bergh is right that not all Nepalese Hindus are fine with their religion before a crisis, but I would like to suggest that this could be because an informant like Bachan perceived Hinduism globally as a matter of conflict and thus also (in my theory) the problem inflicting the crisis.

7.2 Additional Findings

As I mentioned in chapter 1.1, Nepal can be considered to have been a monocentric society. Since I come from a country that without a doubt is a pluralistic society, i.e. a society where many different symbolic universes exist side by side, I can look upon my research from a Swedish perspective. From this aspect there are some additional findings in my research that I would like to discuss in this chapter.

7.2.1 Persecution from a Swedish perspective

As we have seen in chapter 4.1.5 and 4.1.6, the price of converting to Christianity could be very high in a worst case scenario; you could end up being forsaken by your family and imprisoned by the state. Since religion in Sweden is considered to be a private matter your family will most likely not forsake you if you change religion and the Swedish state will under no circumstances put you in jail for this. That my informants still wanted to become Christians is therefore from my point of view impressive, and I would like to discuss a few aspects that I consider to be of relevance in order to understand why the Nepalese Christians were willing to endure these negative consequences of the conversion.

To understand why the convert sometimes has to go through different kinds of conflict, it is important to keep in mind that we have a “clash of authorities” for the convert. On the one hand, the father in the convert’s family has a prominent role; he is responsible of upholding the traditional idea of a family and to retain the convert within the family’s Hindu belief. On the other hand, from the convert’s perspective, the earthly father has been replaced by a heavenly Father as the highest authority. This clash of authorities is avoided in Sweden since religion in most cases is considered to be a private matter, but in Nepal religion is not a separate part of life, it is highly integrated within the family, the community and the state. When changing religion, you are not only changing positions in your inner self, but also in a wider sense and this is not only considered to be a private matter, it also affects your family, your community and the state.

When interviewing Bachan, I believe I found the key to understand why the Nepalese Christians managed to endure the persecutions:

*Those days, those who became Christian, they counted the cost. They knew that they have to go through problems, but people didn’t care about that. If they had to go; ok, persecution was no problem. People would suffer.*¹⁵⁴

Bachan refers to one of Jesus metaphors, where he calls his potential disciples to “count the cost” before they decide to follow him; to think through if they are ready or not.¹⁵⁵ The Nepalese Christians had in other words already thought this persecution through and were willing to suffer. The difference to my Swedish perspective is that we know that we most likely will not be persecuted and thus do not prepare our self for any suffering. It is my opinion that if Swedish Christians also would think this through, regardless if there is any risk for persecution or not, it would most likely create more devoted Swedish Christians.

¹⁵⁴ Interview 1, 2011-10-26, pp4-5.

¹⁵⁵ Luke 14:28-33

7.2.2 An Unreasonable Constitution

As we have seen in chapter 4.1.6, according to the Nepalese Constitution, it is still illegal to convert in Nepal. I consider this law to be unreasonable for three reasons, firstly, this law violates article 18 in the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, secondly, the Nepalese state doesn't seem to implement this law anymore, and thirdly, it is unreasonable to put more than 400.000 Christians in jail.

It is thus my suggestion to the Nepalese Government to change the Nepalese Constitution so that it complies with the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

7.3 Further studies

My research has given me answers to my questions, but has also opened up for more questions, but unfortunately it was not possible to answer these within this thesis. Due to this, I would like to recommend interested students three potential subjects; first, How does the Nepalese Christians understand the Hindu caste system based on Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."? What happens to the different castes when they convert from Hinduism to Christianity? Are there still traces of the caste system within the Christian community? Secondly I would like to recommend studying the dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity regarding conversion. Does the Christian son really have to perform a Hindu funeral ritual for his parent's behalf or can there be some kind of compromise? Both these subjects have a potential of further assisting the development of Nepal. Thirdly, I would like to recommend the study of gender issues when converting. Are there differences between a male and a female conversion to Christianity?

8 Conclusion

By using the method of Grounded Theory this qualitative interview study has attempted to answer the question of what it means for a Nepalese Hindu to convert to Christianity. Through a phenomenological and narrative analysis I have found that there is a common pattern of steps that Nepalese Hindus go through when converting to Christianity, a pattern I call “Nepali Ordo Salutis”. This study identifies these steps as Stability, Crisis, Encounter, Solution, Conflict and Restored Stability.

In the first step; Stability, Hinduism seems to provide a sense of religious stability before the crisis. In the second step; Crisis, the convert receives some kind of crisis, usually a sickness, and he or she is seeking a way to dissolve this problem. In the third step; Encounter, the convert now in some way encounters Christianity, which provides a different way to dissolve the crisis. In the fourth step; Solution, the convert’s life-story is changed through a narrative turning point, the convert is now somehow experiencing a miracle; if they were sick they got healed and if they were depressed they received peace. When their crisis now is solved within a Christian context instead of a Hindu, they now convert from Hinduism to Christianity. In the fifth step; Conflict, the convert now has solved the crisis but may in a worst case scenario gain two new, the first being an Informal Conflict with the family and the second a Formal Conflict with the Nepalese state. In the last and final sixth step; Restored Stability, the convert have resisted all attempts from his family or the Nepalese state to bring him back to Hinduism, and there now arises a state of restored stability in my informant’s life-stories.

Since it is still illegal to change your religion in Nepal I can conclude that Nepal still has laws to change if they want to be in line with the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

By using a narrative analysis I have found that the *personal experience of God* is the most important turning point in the life-story of my informants. From this point onwards, you can start talking about a “before” and “after” as Denzin puts it. Before this personal experience the informants have been seeking help from God and after this experience they do not, according to their life stories, go back to Hinduism. This personal experience includes phenomena such as God answering a prayer, hearing Gods voice, reading the Bible, but most often; a healing.

I have also found that according to Greimas actantmodel *healing* is given a central significance in the informant’s retrospective conversion story.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Nepalese Constitutions Concerning Religion

9.1.1. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1959

Part 3 (FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT): Section 5 (Religion):

Every citizen, having regard to the current traditions, many practice and profess his own religion as handed down from ancient times.

Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person to his religion.¹⁵⁶

9.1.2. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1962

Part 1 (PRELIMINARY): Section 3 (The Kingdom):

1 Nepal is an independent, indivisible and sovereign Monarchical Hindu Kingdom.¹⁵⁷

Part 3 (FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES AND RIGHTS): Section 14 (Right to Religion):

Every person may profess his own religion as handed down from ancient times and may practice it having regard to the traditions.

Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another.¹⁵⁸

9.1.3. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2047 (1990)

Part 1 (PRELIMINARY): Section 4 (The Kingdom):

2 Nepal is a multiethnic, multilingual, democratic, independent, indivisible, sovereign, Hindu and Constitutional Monarchical Kingdom.¹⁵⁹

9.1.4. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2047 (1990)

Part 3 (FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS): Section 19 (Right to Religion):

1 Every person shall have the freedom to profess and practice his own religion as handed down to him from ancient times having due regard to traditional practices:

Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another.

2 Every religious denomination shall have the right to maintain its independent existence and for this purpose to manage and protect its religious places and trusts.¹⁶⁰

9.1.5. Civil Code, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, 2049 (1992)

Section 3, A

1. No person shall propagate any religion in a manner likely to undermine another religion, or convert anyone into another religion. In case he has only made an attempt to do so, he will be

¹⁵⁶ Dahal, 2001, p331.

¹⁵⁷ Dahal, 2001, p379..

¹⁵⁸ Dahal, 2001, pp383-384.

¹⁵⁹ His Majesty's Government, 1990, p3.

¹⁶⁰ His Majesty's Government, 1990, p12.

punished with imprisonment not more than three years. In case he has already converted any one into another religion, he shall be punished with imprisonment for not more than six years. If he is a foreign national, he shall be deported from Nepal after completing such sentences.

(B) 1 (a)

In case any person does anything which undermines any religious place or religious function, he may be punished with imprisonment of not more than three years, or with a fine of not more than Rs. 3000 or with both.¹⁶¹

9.1.6. Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007

Right to religion: Every person has the right to profess, practice and preserve his/her own religion as handed down to him/her from ancient times having due regards to the social and cultural traditional practices. Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another, and shall not act or behave in a manner which may jeopardize the religion of others. Every religious denomination has the right to maintain its independent existence, and for this purpose to manage and protect its religious places and religious trusts, in accordance with law.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Kehrberg, 2000, Appendix 1.

¹⁶² Acharya, 2008, p617.

9.2. Appendix 2: The Kings document of Amnesty



नेपाल राजपत्र

श्री ५ को सरकारद्वारा प्रकाशित

खण्ड ४०) काठमाडौं, जेठ २६ गते २०४७ साल (अतिरिक्तार्क १४)

भाग ४

श्री ५ महाराजाधिराजका प्रमुख सचिवालय राजदरवारको सूचना

श्री ५ महाराजाधिराजबाट देशमा भइरहेको नयाँ राजनैतिक परिवर्तनको परिप्रेक्ष्यमा प्रधानमन्त्रीको सिफारिसमा नेपालको संविधान अनुसार घनसम्बन्धी मुद्दाना फसलाबमोजिम हाल कैदको सजाय भोगिरहेका वा कैदको सजाय तोकिएका व्यक्तिहरूको कैदको सजाय माफी बस्नेको छ। साथै घनसम्बन्धी अभियोगमा हाल कानूनी प्रक्रियामा रहेका सम्पूर्ण मुद्दाहरू फिर्ता लिन श्री ५ को सरकारलाई निर्देशन बस्नेको छ।

हुकुम बस्ने बमोजिम,
रेवतीरमण खनाल
श्री ५ महाराजाधिराजका सचिव

मुद्रण तथा प्रकाशन विभाग, सिंहदरवार, काठमाडौंमा मुद्रित ।

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