

NEPAL



Photo: Harihar-Indu Collection

A NOTEBOOK OF SOJOURN by Sylvain Levi

Presented by
Harihar Raj Joshi - Indu Joshi (Mrs.)

NEPAL



Photo: Harihar-Indu Collection

A NOTEBOOK OF SOJOURN by Sylvain Levi

Presented by
Harihar Raj Joshi - Indu Joshi (Mrs.)



Photo: Harihar-Indu Collection

Maharaja Dev Shamsheer Rana

*

The 144 Year of the birth day celebration of
Maharaja Dev Shamsheer Rana

*

The Nepal Studies: Past and Present
Kathmandu, Nepal
2006

NEPAL
A NOTEBOOK OF SOJORN

Original in French :
Sylvain Levi

English Rendering :
Anonymous Bengali Friend
(S. Mitra)

Compiled and edited with Bon Notes :
Harihar Raj Joshi – Indu Joshi (Mrs.)

Old and Rare Photographs inserted

Copy Right © 2006

First Edition 2006

Price Nrs. 1000.00

Book Layout :
NEW NEPAL PRESS

Printed at :
NEW NEPAL PRESS
Phone: (977-1) 4259032, 4434850

Published :
The Nepal Studies: Past and Present
Kathmandu, NEPAL
Phone: (977-1) 4359680

CONTENT

Preface :

**Michel Jollivet,
Ambassador of France to Nepal**

Postscript :

Himalaya Shumsher Rana

Letter From a Teacher to his Taught :

Lakshman Raj Joshi

Nepal: A Notebook of Sojourn :

Sylvain Levi

For Your Reference and Reflection please :

Harihar Raj Joshi – Indu Joshi (Mrs.)

Appendix A

Areas covered by Devasthan Inside Thapathali of Maharaja Dev Shamsher

Appendix B

Blavatsky and Theosophical Movement

Appendix C

English version of the writing by Sylvain Levi in French on the photograph on the cover page

Appendix D

English Rendering in French of writing by Sylvain Levi in his book

PREFACE



Liberté - Égalité - Fraternité
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE AU NÉPAL



L'Ambassadeur

Kathmandu, the 15th of May, 2006

I feel deeply honoured to have been chosen for a preface to the excellent rendering, written in English by Mrs Indu Joshi and Mr. Harihar Raj Joshi, of Sylvain Lévi's *Notebook of Sojourn*.

Sylvain Lévi first went to Nepal in 1898. This French orientalist compiled a three-volume historical and scientific survey of the Kingdom, published in Paris in 1905 under the title "*Le Népal: étude historique d'un royaume hindou*". This work is still considered today as being one of the most fundamental studies ever undertaken on Nepal. Lévi, who had by that time become a world renowned celebrity, went back to Nepal in 1922 and 1928.

Helped by a strong knowledge of the background of Lévi's research on Nepal, the translators have produced an accurate rendering of the French original pages. Sylvain Lévi's account is an academic study of the Kingdom, but it reads as lightly as a novel. Mrs Indu Joshi and Mr. Harihar Raj Joshi have found the right tonality in their English translation.

I am sure the Nepalese readers will deem extremely interesting and refreshing the following pages about their country. Moreover, it is my belief that this book found the exact time to be published in Nepal. In the fast mutations that this country is now facing, with a series of options open, it is indeed by throwing a glance at their past that the Nepalese people would be allowed to choose the most suitable reforms for their future agenda.

Michel Jolivet

POSTSCRIPT



Himalaya Shumsher Rana

Monsieur Sylvain Levi's A Notebook of his sojourn in Nepal is a fascinating chronicle of his arduous travel to Nepal, the captivating landscape of the then Kathmandu valley, sequestered but secure stay in the Residency compound, memorable meeting with acting **Maharaja Deb Shumsher** and persistent quest for ancient inscriptions and texts,

Fond memories came to light of my turtuous travels to India for graduate studies in the 1940's via Thankot and Bhimphedi — the same route as taken by the author but no longer used since the construction of the highway after mid 1950.

The author's factual accounts of his visits to various locations in the Kathmandu valley reveal that he possessed a deep knowledge of geography and history. His sensitive and scintillating descriptions of the sights, sounds and smells of Kathmandu may be truly termed as poetic. In the course of his quest the erudite professor was disappointed that the Nepali Pandits and keepers of the Vihars were not as learned as he expected.

The most gratifying episode of his sojourn was his call on the acting **Maharaja Deb Shumsher**, who provided substantial support for his mission.

As the surviving great grandson of **Maharaja Deb** and born in the Thapathali Durbar I was very curious about author's observation on the architecture of the Durbar complex and especially about the capacious reception room on the first floor where he was received and where I used to play around with my cousins in the early 1930's. The sofas, chandeliers, gilded mirrors and the paintings in gilded frames mentioned by the author were no longer there, probably taken away by those who conspired to exile **Maharaja Deb**.

It was a voyage in a time machine to note from the author's account that my great grandfather **Maharaja Deb** with customary red mark (*tika*) and sandal paste (from *Pashupati*) on his forehead wore a gilded toque and a long day gown while receiving the Professor. Furthermore, I was very impressed to note that during the interview **Maharaja Deb** quoted words in Sanskrit and spoke to the Professor, in French about **Sakuntala** (well known dramatic story in Sanskrit), and conversed as an intelligent and well-informed person. I am not surprised though because I was told by my father that **Maharaja Deb** was a student for some years in Dowson College, Calcutta and also that while in Kathmandu he used to spend many afternoons with poets and intelligentsia. It may be opportune to mention that **Maharaja Deb** is revered by many as the founder of journalism in Nepal having launched the first Nepali newspaper "**Gorkhapatra**".

I and members of **Maharaja Deb's** family greatly appreciate the initiative and hard work undertaken by Mr. Harihar Raj Joshi in bringing to light the hitherto hidden treasury about Nepal authored by Professor **Levi**. We are especially grateful that after more than a century we could have a precious glimpse of the eloquent personality of a son of Nepal, our great grand-father **Maharaja Deb Shumsher**. ■

A Letter from a Teacher to his Taught



Lakshman Raj Joshi

Modesty does not allow me to state more. This much must, however, be jotted down to keeping the record straight that as the **First graduate of Dhankuta**, and the First Nepali Head Master of **Gokundeswar High School** of Dhankuta a few students studying there reminded me then **Phatik Chakravarti** of **Rabindranath Togore's** character in his now almost forgotten essay entitled **Home Coming**.

If and when these **Phatik Chakravarties**, be they of any geographical contours of the globe, dedicate themselves unto study, learning and determination with due concentration they stand atop to come out that too with flying colours in relation to **Three Questions** of **Leo Tolstoy**, the famous Russian writer whose magnum opus **War and Peace** I had gone through during my student life with **Banaras Hindu University** of Banaras (now spelled out as Varanasi) in India.

Following my guidance **Harihar**, my younger brother and **Thahila** or the fifth among six of our brothers, used to write letters in English to me. I used to take a special care in going through his letters. Correcting his grammar and composition thereby should there be any, and I used to send them back to him for his understanding.

Unlike these days when our children are engaged in using **Internet** services with **email** facilities and comfortable telephone facilities the period was quite different then when letters used to take weeks to reach its destination. However, those days gone by had their own fun and frolic: satisfaction and suffering.

If I sent our younger brother **Harihar** to **Elphistone College** under **Bombay University** of Bombay (Mumbai) for his post graduation in English Literature, I was equally happy to send his wife and our youngest sister -in--law **Indu** to **Basanta College** situated at **Raj Ghat** in Banaras, Uttar Pradesh of India.

As I come to know later on that this **Basanta College** was founded with the lofty objectives of **Theosophical movement** by that famous and popular **Annie Besant** and she was there to look after it.

When **Mr. Himalaya Shumsher Rana** was the Finance Secretary of Nepal, I was then transferred to Calcutta as **Custom Liaison Officer** of Nepal Government. In Calcutta we we stayed at **Chakraberia Road**, which I have come to know now that that was arranged to be purchased by **Maharaja Deb Shamsher**.

As a person from **Dhankuta** we had heard about **Maharaja Deb Shamsher** in our family.

We look forward to going through their proposed monograph--

Maharaja Deb Shamsher: His Life: and His Time

by our youngest brother **Harihar** and our youngest sister-in-law **Indu** in due course of time.

Let me draw your attention and please join me too in order to go through **Ralph Waldo Emerson** who has thus to say----

**Donot go where the path may lead, go instead there
where there is no path and leave a trail.**

Yes, trail, the trail to ablaze. And **Harihar** and **Indu** are engaged in the identical path to enlighten the past for the benefit of the present extending to the future.



Nepal

A Notebook of Sojourn

Fort of Sisagarhi, Nepal, at an altitude of 1950 metres.

12th January, 1898

7-30 pm.,

Let us recapitulate. Left Calcutta on Saturday the 8th January at 9:30 pm. I travelled 685 kilometres interrupted by changing of three trains, at 5.30, 6.30 and 7.30 on Sunday the 9th or 19 hours of rail journey. I jump into a palanquin and roll another five or six kilometers on a very uneven road. Delightful evening with Colonel and Madam Wylie on Nepal. I dine with them with graceful formality at the neighbouring indigo factory. One of the guests arrives and was happy to say that he had just killed a tiger, an unexpected tiger, hidden in the jungle near his bungalow. On sighting the tiger he sent for an elephant and a rifle, and gave the animal his due. Everyone here has a tiger or tigers to his account. Colonel Wylie does not count them any more. At this very moment he is officially soliciting an authorisation in favour of a gentleman and a lady who are keen on hunting the tiger in the Nepal tarai. Very alluring beginning isn't it ?

In the morning the horses and the palanquin of the *raja* of *Bettiak* (*Betia*) takes me back to *Segowlie* (*Sugauli*) where my escort awaits me, palanquin, 'doly (mountain chair), 16 bearers for me, 8 for my boy Francesco, 7 for the baggages plus the sepoy in charge of these men. The entourage is not always easy. Sometimes the coolies leave their passenger in the middle of a jungle and get themselves free. Madam Wylie herself has been aware of this mishap. Fate has been kinder to me. The sepoy of Colonel Wylie, well bred Hindus, black

bearded, have all vied with one another as regards cares, good will and precautions. If I spoil myself in gratification, at least I am well served. The journey to Nepal is rather harzadous I reckon that it would cost me at least 400 rupees, (650 francs) as much as from Marseilles to Bombay with a little less comfort. The bearers are marvels of strength and of speed. The palanquin is a real wooden room, with a bedding, the provisions, the household goods and the lodger. The burden is well 100 kilograms and four men to carry it. They can easily travel at 8 kilometres an hour (5 1/2 miles). Impossible to walk with them. One must run or jump into the palanquin. The result of the forces is exactly represented by the distracted movemnts of the pendulum when a clock is violently pulled towards one, oscillates to right and left and violent projection forward and backward. Besides, the instructions are to go to sleep or at least to be motionless. The least jerk would break the equilibrium of the load and the effort of the bearers by degrees, and very soon disrupt all over.

At one o'clock stopping at *Hardia* where there is the last British factory on the road. The owner, M.F... advised by Colonel Wylie, awaits me for breakfast and dinner. He lives there, all alone, at one league from Nepal and two from the terrai, exploiting indigo. A gun always loaded keeps him company everywhere, a warning to the indigenes and dangerous beasts. My host is delighted as visits are rare on the road to Kathmandu and he attempts to keep me by the best and worst of reasons. I visited his factory. The year had been disastrous. Scarcity of indigo as well as of grains and the competition of synthetic indigo has brought down the prices. Here again (No need to close one's eyes), it is Germany that triumphs. The indigo buyers of Calcutta are German and they come from October to January to regulate the prices and then return to their country.

But Wylie has well cautioned me to avoid any possible delay. At 5 o'clock I was asked to dine as I had to proceed the next day on my journey. The cortege forms again. Night falls. The expedition has swelled by a *masalji*, a lighter who brandishes a long torch constantly so rayed over with oil. The precaution is not superfluous. The road is bad enough as it gets worst, cut up by bogs and quagmires in which the palanquin lightly touches the surface of the water. At *Raksaul* (*Raxaul*) we leave behind British territory and Nepal commences with *Gahawa*.

Orders have been despatched everywhere. No where I am stopped. In passing the guardhouses my bearers utter the magical word “*Sarkar*”, and that is enough. “*Sarkar*” means the Government and everything connected with it and all white men and even the servants of the white men. And everywhere the long band of white dust between the very flat fields, begins to light up, dazzling under the rays of the tardy moon. Cold settles down the damp, penetrating cold of the *terai* that freezes the bones before the skin. I bury myself deep in my *rezais* (blanket) and renounce the allurements of the lunar countryside. I close my doors and only half open them now and then in order to observe the road. The incessant movement of the load, cadenced by the panting of the bearers in which appears to mean a long slavery of toils with now and then heart-stirring syllables like our “*dodo, baby do*” It is: “*sleep baby, sleep baby.*” Unfortunate people who work so hard and who again lull their oppressors to sleep with their cadenced songs.

Here we are in the jungle, the dreadful jungle, strangely mysterious under the moonshine which illuminates the outskirts without penetrating the deep shadows. At midnight the cold is so intense that my coolies stop. They light up fires on the road and thoroughly warm up themselves. I profit by this halt to shake myself up. To the right and to the left two elephants tied to the trees keep noisily all night chewing twigs—supernatural silhouettes surrounded by a moving envelope of torn leaves. We are among the *Tharus*, the enigmatic *Tharus*. Behind a straw enclosure which symbolizes the wall of private life: a woman sings an endless melody and accompanies herself with a tambourine. At midnight, with such a cold, what is she doing? An adoration, an incantation ? How to find it out, enclosed in their room that nobody can transgress, These *tharus* do not engage themselves in the neighbouring factories. They live among themselves, hide even the secret of their language, address themselves to strangers in *Hindustani*, Suddenly without anything betraying it, without a rise in the ground without a stray rock, without a pebble in this white dust, we are at the foot of the Himalays. It is *Bhichakoh*, my first stage. It is 3.30 a.m. ■

Kathmandu,
13th January 1898
8 p.m.

Decidedly one arrives at Kathmandu; only that the time is required. But I again take up my account where I had left it, at *Bhichakoh*. Then, at *Bhichakoh* it is the mountain that suddenly discloses itself like a change of spectacle. The pass crosses already lofty hills on the outline of the mountains and descend in abrupt slopes covered with forests. The ground vanishes under pebbles and rocks fallen down from the sides or coming down with the torrents during the rainy season, which is dreadful here. The path or rather the track (trail), for there is no trace of a path left, crosses a vast stretch of water, river or stream. I ignore it. Night robs me of distant aspects. The pass narrows and strangles itself between imposing slopes, dripping with dew; between the vast extension of stones that rise in successive stages, the path ascends steeply on a soil slippery with damp sand. Solitary cottages cling here and there to the slope of the mountains, meagre shelter or two in which the shepherds warm themselves close to large fires. On this lane which crumbles to dust under foot, move procession of (carts) pulled by bulls; nearly all of them carry "tins" of kerosine. Decidedly I shall be able to see some light in Kathmandu. Day dawns so white that it mingles with the shine of the moon. But it grows quickly and penetrates triumphantly in the thickets that stop the moon.

I stop on the ground to relieve my bearers. After passing a few huts of *Chiriya*, the valley opens and the road, large, easy and sandy as desired, appears like a Park Avenue shaded with giant trees with heights of between 1500 to 2000 metres in the distance.

We cross a bridge thrown over a flowing river and limpid torrent which my bearers call the *Karra*. The bridge is only a light wooden footbridge. The bulls force against the torrent. We reach the *Dharmasala* of *Hetaura* (*Hetaunda*) where another sepoy relieves the one who had accompanied us *from Bhichakoh*. The coolies soon light up a straw fire. The straw is frozen with dew and we move again onwards. The path now crosses the *Rapti* and follows the middle of an enormous valley which the wooded heights seem to close in without any outlet. All along to the right and left, changing the path into a great road along the

shop of grain liquor, *hookahs*, cloth, grocery and pottery merchants. The Hindu *Bania* (traders) has disappeared. It's all finished with India. The men are now mountaineers, small, thickset, snub-nosed, with thick well separated lips disclosing large yellow teeth. Their hair is black and almost closely cut, the face flat, large and with protruding cheekbones, a little haircut, beard on the chin with a fairly good moustache, coarse and drooping at the corner of the lips. The women are smaller yet yellower again the arms and legs massive the bust splendidly opulent, the head uncovered, the ebony black hair shining with oil, carefully smoothed, falling in long plaits or raised in a twist on the top of the head, strangely Japanese looking and yet so close to the *Mayadevi*, to the *Sita* and to the *Damayanti*.

We come out of the area by the defile through which the *Rapti* flows and the path follows the course of the torrent, clinging to the mountain sides.. A halt on the banks of the *Samri* crossed again by the pretty footbridges. We separate on a flat surface and all along the stream, proceed with a summary toilet. I hurry on with my breakfast and at 10 a.m. again we resume the journey. The torrent reduced to its minimum yet thunders and makes a pretty noise at the bottom of the ravine. We have climbed already. *Bhichakoh* is only at a height of 990 feet, 330 meters. The bridge over the *Samri* is 1600 feet high, more than 500 meters. Hamlets are built on the edge of the road, hidden among the rocks on all flat surfaces. When the slopes lengthen, villages throng together all smiling surrounded by cultivations, and that climb higher and higher still, towards the 2000 metres (6500 feet). Always the torrent growls and foams and breaks against the lofty rocks that have fallen down. The sun is high up now. It penetrates into the ravines. *Oh the divine, the incomparable glow, prettier still than on the dry and dusty plains*. In this atmosphere so pure in which a thin vapour floats shading off the roughness of the outlines without robbing the horizon of its distinctness, illuminated deep in its shadows by the resplendence of the most beautiful blue sky. I found here again under different forms the intoxicating joys of colour which the *Red Sea* had made me feel once.

The path ends at *Bhimpedi* (3660 feet or 1200 metres) in a *cul-de-sac*; heights all around, descend everywhere perpendicularly. Goodbye to the palanquins. I settle them all -- *Kahars* (palanquin bearers), coolies and sepoy with gratifications and I place myself in the

hands of Nepali. The *Kahars*, coolies and a *sepo*y came from Kathmandu with a *dandi* for me and another *dandi* less commodious for the use of *Francesco*. My *dandi*, a *dandi* of great luxury, is very exactly a canoe; at the prow and at the stern poles are passed through — two men in front and two in the rear and for the rest let us reckon with the laws of stable equilibrium, *Francesco* has an ordinary jolly boat and again a cloth one, in the manner of a hammock or shroud with the same system of suspension, Here the people are Hindus.

The benedictions traced in red on the wall of houses and in the shop are adorations to *Ganesh*, *Krishna* and *Saraswati*. I learn as for two days I have only spoken Hindustani, that *Bhimphedi* owes its name to *Bhima*. The temple of the village ordinarily square shut out with walls, adorned the temple of *Bhimasena*. *Bhimphedi* has quite a small temple with certainly an ancient statue of *Lakshmi Narayana*. The god and goddess hold each other amorously and *Garuda* is at their feet. I partake of a summary meal in an empty shop and fully enclosed with the plank of cases in which is despatched from America (*New-York. N.S.*) the precious and economic kerosine oil.

Besides, half of *Bhimphedi* is built with these planks. The bearers, who from now replace the bull-chariots (carts), do not care to carry a useless load. From here to *Sisagarhi*, a tough climb on a rough and flinty road, constantly running perpendicularly. In two miles or three stiff kilometers, one climbs from 3660 feet to 5875 from 1200 to 1900 metres and under a warm sun of 35 centigrade without any appearance of shade. My bearers will not get themselves tired. I do the journey on foot. *Francesco* lies doleful in his hammock, crying out of fever.

And all along this rough climbing street-porters succeed one another; groups of between forty and fifty men, painfully drag canalization pipes destined for Kathmandu as this is the only road towards Kathmandu as the Nepali feign to make believe, they can sleep in rest.

One climbs under the canons of the fort of *Sisagarhi* (*Chisapanigarhi*) which dominates the valley of *Bhimphedi* and commands the pass. In the precincts of the fort, a small bungalow had been erected for the use of the *Resident*. The condition is very primitive, for, the bed is made of a plank, and the other pieces of furniture are a table and two chairs. On the express request of *Colonel Wylie* the



Photo: Harihar-Indu Collection

This is the car, Ford T, belonging to Dev Shamsher and being transported to Kathmandu.
This car Ford T used to be operated by kerosine.

bungalow is open for me. The Gorkha sentinel presents arms to me. The officers with jewelled badges fall in line and I take possession of my room, my cage or my prison cell. *Colonel Wylie* has well recommended me to remain in the bungalow. He had done so himself. The least curiosity, the least out of the way behaviour, will brand you as a spy.

It is 4.30 pm. The sun sets deep down the valley and disappears behind the heights. Clouds and light mists also descend on the summits and stretch out towards the branches. The forest climbs to the very pinnacle. Against the bungalow a plantain (*banana*) tree spreads its ample and delicate foliage. Night arrives, scintillating with stars, but

coldish. This morning at 7 o'clock my thermometer records 30 (centigrade) and I get numbness of the fingers while gathering flowers. Another night reduced to its simplest expression. This morning, I wake up when the day has already dawned. Hasty breakfast; each one takes his load and blowing on my reddening fingers, I climb at gallop the pass of *Sisagarhi*, 6500 feet, 2500 meters. O, unforgettable spectacle and all so sudden. In front of me, the flank descends vertically in the foliage; ahead scorched slopes (slopes that face the south scorched and parched by the sun are here without verdure); far below again the large and sullen torrent and what a view of the horizon. An enormous line of frozen summits. A precipitous descent covered at a gallop takes us to the bank of the torrent, the *Panoni*. The path follows the bed of the torrent turning and twisting (or meandering) round every rock-wall; the cultivations climb the slopes and the hamlets have pretty houses of one, two or even three stories with curved roofs and frames of doors and windows of sculptured wood. I can see specimens that would do honour to any museum, lost here in these mountains recesses.

Towards 10 o'clock, the path leaves the torrent, ascends in a steep climb alongside the *Chandragiri* and ends in the *cul-de-sac* of *Chitalang* at 6125 feet, 2000 meters. Halt at the *dharmasala*. A caravan of Tibetans! Tibetans from Tibet pass on their way to *Calcutta*, living and speaking tableau of these continuous pageant that history does not record. They would be hardly recognisable among the *Gorkhas* without their felt hats shaped like a cone all round with short and upturned brims. The women are almost identical to those of this place, features, deportment, opulence of flesh, hair, headgear, adornments but the complexion is of a deeper yellow, clearer, less tanned. Reached *Chitlong* at 11.30, a.m. We remained there only an hour and onwards again towards the pass of *Chandragiri* 1600 feet (500 meters) to climb on a perpendicular slope, but through the forest. At 2 p.m. we reached the summit, 7700 feet more and 2500 meters with 35 in the sun and a lovely verdant forest. The whole valley of Nepal lies at my feet. *Kathmandu*, *Patan* and *Bhadgaon* occupy the east. Everywhere at the further end and on the slopes are the villages and cultivations and east to west above the encircling mountains, a continuous lines, uninterrupted, without a breach of white snow peaks. Here they are quite close, three or four valleys to cross and beyond on the other side, Tibet, a piece of China, *C'est le Tibet, un morceau de la Chine*.

The descent into Nepal would be impractical without rough steps. from top to bottom on measuring of some 700 meters, to build rough steps. *Francesco*, the unfortunate *Francesco* himself must alight. The valley of *Thankot* is reached and 14 kilometers of even road lead to *Kathmandu*. I jump into my *dandi* and my bearers carry me at a run. I cross the *Bishnumati* and disdaining the road for the *Residency* that turns round the town. I cross through the bazar, the bearers shouting, elbowing, pushing and overthrowing in the narrow streets. At 4.15 p.m. I reach the *bungalow*. ■

14th January, Friday



The House where Sylvain Levi is said to have stayed while in Kathmandu.

Today compulsory meditation. All I saw of Kathmandu were the four walls of the garden surrounding the bungalow.

I am the prisoner by inducement. This morning, towards 9 o'clock, *Captain Sahib Bhairab Bahadur* sent a *havildar* to ask me at what time I would be able to receive him. *Captain Sahib* is, by right of heritage, as were his father and grandfather, the regular messenger between the *Residency* and the *Darbar*. I proposed 10 o'clock to him and he arrived at 11 a.m. The morning had been just lost waiting for him.

Charming manners, almost impressive of a gallant soldier. Well-known. "*Everything at your disposal. What do you want? Do not stand on ceremony.*" And what more? And I repeat to him what he knows already from my first request for a pass; then from *Colonel Wylie*, then again from the letter which *Colonel Wylie* gave me for him and which I addressed to him my intentions, my schemes, the haste with which I have to begin as soon as I had arrived.

"But certainly, I request you to consider me as a friend. A horse? You will have it. And also two sepoys to guide and help you (the pretty

disguise, the police assumes here'). *And I shall proceed to seek an audience with the acting Maharaja so as to arrange for an interview between him and you. You are tired of the journey, It is so arduous, of course, not. O yes, rest is essential. Rest for today. Tomorrow I shall arrange everything*". Tomorrow, the eternal tomorrow of the East. A word to the wise is sufficient. I only have to resign myself and to walk up and down in my little house and garden.

Fortunately, I have a companion in captivity, *Babu S. Mitra* who represents, alone at this moment, the whole personnel of the *Residency*. A Bengali, corpulent, chubby, with long hair and bearded, and member of the *Sadharma Brahma Samaj*, bachelor, freed from the prejudices of caste, educated in English, well-versed with "quotations from *Shakespeare* and who, by delegation, represents here, by *Providence*, in the name of the *Wylies*. He has, by order and also by personal friendship, managed my house quite tastefully— small dining room, bureau-hall room (*drawing or living room*), a writing desk with everything needed for writing; sleeping room, a cloth stretched on four wooden legs- the bed in its simplest form; bathing compartment. It is again *Mitra*, who sends me the vegetables and the preserves of the *Residency* which *Madam Wylie* has placed at my disposal. It appears that only mountains do not meet. I have come to doubt even this exception. In this semi-captivity at 4700 feet of altitude, in the heart of a valley, enclosed by the Himalaya, isolated between India and China, the solo representative of Europe. I meet an acquaintance. *Mitra* knows me, knows that I am versed in *Sanskrit*, that I am married, that I have at least a son, and what else does he not know ? What to do with much glory and fame! Only this! For six or seven years *Mitra* has been the agent of *Pratap Chandra Roy*. Whilst this honest man was travelling, great task of moral rejuvenation and as an ideal to the new generations, the old Sanskrit epic of the *Maha-Bharata* was propagated. *Mitra* wrote the letters signed by *Pratap*. He has written to me as to many others and he has naturally read the replies. He would willingly spend the day talking. Very curious of the West that he dreams to visit, keen observer, well informed on Nepal where he has dwelt for five or six years. In the garb of a pilgrim he has made the journey of *Muktinath* that I will not be able to do, My complexion being too fair.

The son of the *Pandit* of the *Residency* comes later on. He brings me an old *Pandit Todaraananda*. Both of them typical Newars, small,

very small, flat faced and flat nose. They are absolutely, totally, radically ignorant. These poor Buddhist Pandits know nothing, of Buddhist literature, not even the titles beyond those of the *Nine Dharma (Navagrantha)* which they have not even read. They promise me to make a search for manuscripts and to bring me a true Pandit who lives in *Patan*. The reputation has flown. There arrives on the spot the *Jemadar*, the actual officer of the *Residency*, a Hindu of the *Madhyadesh*, devoted *Vaishnavi*, who knows as much *Sanskrit* as I do *Hebrew*. I recite to him the *Gayatri* and his admiration knows no bound, then the *mantra* to *Krishna, Keshav*, and the whole litany. Here is a man who would fall at my feet. It is really moving to see his emotion in the presence of a *Sahib* who knows the sacred language. In short, he completely binds himself to serve me. *Mitra* cautions me that he is the most useful of auxiliaries. He has been attached to the *Residency* for the past twenty years

I spent the rest of the day in attending to my unlucky *Francesco*, badly depressed, very feverish and shivering. In a few days time he has been frightfully changed. He is distressed and so am I. I was compelled to employ cook temporarily to replace him. This second-hand cook has sworn to pull my stomach to pieces and to assist him he needed a *Khitmatgar*, helping hand, a server, a pawn of filth, an appose of dirt. The country is cold. If the Newars hardly wash themselves, he certainly never washes. The dirty clothes that he wears 'enrich' more again his filthiness with a repulsive appendage. I close by eyes and turn away the head when he brings the dish or attempts to clean a plate. ■

15th January, Saturday

I would have been entirely contented if I had not learnt to distrust the Nepali. I spent a whole morning awaiting till doomsday or more exactly under the orange tree since my garden is sown with orange trees and orange trees laden with oranges. It is not warm in the morning in the country where flourishes the orange tree. At 7 a.m. the thermometer fluctuates between 3 and 5 Celsius and till 10 A.M. One lives in a fine mist of a real vintage mist, The sun dissipates it only towards 10.30 a.m. It gets warmer immediately 25, 28, 30 and 32 towards 2 p.m. But the shade is lukewarm and nothing more. The thermometer hardly records more than 15, in the warm hours. It is cold for an old Hindu. I have ordered myself a Nepali costume, tightfitting breeches with very loose upper part, tunic with large flaps tightened at the waist by a belt (*Patuka*), the whole attire in a kind of stuff of the colour of wine and stuffed with cotton padding.

Decidedly the Nepali are right in closing the door. If they had opened it, it would very soon be removed. It would be so nice to live here, a divine landscape, the valley of *Gresivaudan* with *Greboble* and her circle of *Alps*, that are called Himalayas. The western peak is the *Dhaulagiri*; the eastern one is the *Gaurishankar*. An eternal spring always under a blue sky, the caress of a luminous vapour, the pine trees side by side with the orange trees and the banana plants. The birds below are chatterers, singers, warblers, a concert on all the trees. Instead of the solitude that reminds of the *Lazaretto* one lives here, even within the precincts of the *Residency*, with the natives. *The Post Office* is intermedia with the *Residency* and swarms with children who sing, laugh, play, fight, squall, live their lives. And the town is a marvel of picturesque uniqueness with pagoda of storied roofs, many coloured houses, the charming frames of the windows and doors where wood is sculptured with all the imaginations of a skilled mind and to what an extent, free the bazars where the oily and yellowish and filthy Tibetans, almost white of complexion, hustle to mingle with among the ferocious pets and filthy they are too. An infinite variety of types going from the *Aryan* Hindus with their long eyes, straight and strong noses, and clear complexions to the *Mongols*, altogether yellow, squat; the massive eyes bridled and obliquely shaped. In crossing the villages, one also sees the gentleman on the threshold garbed in *pyjamas*, and madam dressed in a petticoat and the tribe of children clothed in innocence.

And, as usual in military places, a perfume of gunpowder float on all this. At 3 o'clock in the morning a canon shot announces the opening of the gates. At 9 o'clock at night another canon announces the closing and alerts one who allows himself to be overtaken unaware later on in the streets. The Nepali police takes charge of him. And during all the day one hears the trumpets, the rifle shots of the parade; the dazzling rays of the helios play all night on the higher parts of the surrounding mountains.

Francesco gets better. I have taken in my employment a kitchen help, 8 rupees; a sweeper ready to do anything 5 rupees; a *dhobi* (washerman), 6 rupees. I have a Nepali sepoy who guards me and another from the *Residency* who serves me as post-boy. In short, the house is settled and on what a scale, in comparison to that of the Himalayas. All these people swarm in my compound without drowning the melodious voice of the birds. There are even sparrows in Nepal.

Captain Sahib asked me for a *rendezvous*. He arrives at the appointed time and informs me that the *Commander-in-Chief*, acting *Maharaja Deb Shamsher*, would be pleased to see me at 3 o'clock.

At 3 o'clock the royal *landau* comes to take me. *Captain Bhairab* is dressed in full-dress, a pretty costume strictly blue-black with a few gold braids and his cap is bordered with a filigree of gold and crowned with a gold plate. I put on my ceremonial gloves which will symbolize the "full-dress", the etiquette not imposing the costume. Very pretty, spacious *landau*, luxurious and comfortable. The amazed Gorkhas see me pass. *Deb Shamsher* lives in southeast corner of Kathmandu. The bungalow is in the northeast corner. We skirt the town, the *Champ-de-Mars* and he appears at the palace. An entanglement of constructions, all modern work of an architect of English schools, without character, with Greek porches, built in an admirable setting. The entrance meanders one door after another, sentinel after sentinel. It seems to me that I have found again the *darbars* of *Kattiawar*. A crowd of servants who serve at nothing, of courtiers who put in an appearance of officials, of *babus*, below the galleries on the steps, at the windows. I am the event itself, the talk of the day, They are waiting for me.

Captain Bhairab ushered me into a vast hall, forty or fifty meters long that occupies the whole length of the facade of the first storey, filled up with the necessary *bric-a-brac* of sofas, chairs, bracket-tables,

tables, armchairs, chandeliers, gilded mirrors on the walls, portraits, painted by English artists and by the indigenous artists, of the present *Maharaja* and of his predecessor, *Jang Bahadur*, *Bhimsen*, etc., life-size eminent men in entirely gilded frames and everywhere works of art in gilded bronze, the product pre-eminently that of Nepal. In short, pressed by the push of too curious an assemblage of attendants the *Commander-in-Chief* enters, small, broad, wearing a gilded toque, wrapped in a long day gown, the mouth red with betel-nut with the red *tika* and sandal mark on the forehead together with everything else connected with the daily *puja*, he invites *me* to take a seat next to him on a sofa and has sent for his son, a child of ten, or eleven years who is studying English, intelligent face and quite energetic dressed in the white tunic of the Brahmins.

Deb Shamsher is well informed and starts immediately. The debate or tournament begins.



Deb Shamsher: Commander-in-Chief (plus acting Maharaja)

A Pandit or so-called one, addresses me in *Sanskrit*, painfully, incorrectly, A second *Pandit* addresses successfully in easy. *Deb Shamsher*, attempts to articulate a few *Sanskrit* syllables: *Purvasmin....Kale... Judhithira... king... was... then.... Sanskrit bhakha...* fatigued under the strain. He speaks to me of the *Sakuntala* in French. He asked me if I believe in the *devas*. If to my knowledge the prophecies of the *Bhavisyat- Purana* are exact; then if *Sanskrit* is printed in Paris. I speak to him about the *Bhagavata* of *Burnouf*. The name of *Burnouf* could not be ignored in the country of the manuscripts of *Hodgson*. He asks me to read him the legend in French which accompanies an English engraving; the death of *Tipou-Sahib* and exclaims on the melody of French, *Ah, if I had a "golden voice"*). I bring the interview to an end which would never end and *Deb Shamsher* declares to me that he places himself at my disposal, that I may go where I wish to, that he would help me in the search of manuscripts and inscriptions. "*Such a learned man come from such a distance. Is it not our duty?*" Assuredly, your honour, but we shall see what the Nepali all are worth. Liberty of entry of working, of reading of having the manuscripts gathered at the *Darbar Library*, copied not tomorrow, naturally, day after tomorrow; things must be placed in order, always the same system. And he gives an order to *Captain Bhairab* to "drive" me through Kathmandu by two or three roads through which a vehicle can pass through.

After returning back I settled my household accounts. 2 fowls, 8 annas: 1 dozen eggs 3-1/2 annas: broom 1 anna: a pot for water 1 anna: sugar 2-1/2 annas: Butter 3 annas: a tin of petrol as a storage for water, 2 annas. Vegetables, 1 anna: Oranges, 1/2 anna: flour 2 annas. And in short the influential intervention of *Captain Sahib* and subsequently of the police have made it possible for me to purchase a sheep. It is true that I paid a lot, 2 rupees. To what an extent, and it is quite true.

Strangers in Nepal are exploited to their detriment. ■

16th January, Sunday

At last, I have begun to work. At noon the *mukhiya*, quite an ordinary soldier, in spite of the ambitious name he has been given, has come to inform me, on behalf of *Captain Sahib Bhairab Bahadur* that the horse promised would not be available for two or three days, the *Maharajah* having taken away all the dependable horses for his winter rounds in the country. At the same time he placed himself at my disposal. The *sepoy* given to me by the *Residency* awaited me at the door. I then started my trip with the vanguard the *Mukhiya*, a small Gorkha squat, ill-clad and stinking and for rearguard the *sepoy*, tall, bearded, truculent and simple, a child's nurse in uniform. I met *Mitrananda*, the son of the Pandit of the *Residency* who brings me his uncle *Bhivanananda*, a small old man with a rumped face who chews betel-nut. Will he turn out to be the desired Pandit ? I address him in Sanskrit. He babbles indignantly but adds in his almost indistinct dialect fifty per cent of *Hindustani*. He succeeds in explaining himself. His knowledge of the Buddhist texts does not go beyond the *Lalitavitsara*. I recite to him the title of the works translated into Chinese and which I am bent on discovering in their original form. He does not know a single one. He does not even understand. In short, half a loaf is better than no bread. I propose to him to accompany me in my rounds and in return he would have a salary. He would serve as a cover and as an introduction near the Buddhist sites of this place. He suffers from rheumatism, can hardly walk, lives in Patan. In short, he hopes to be cured by Tuesday and will then come and find me. As much as the Pandit is worth so much is the faithful (devotees) also. I got acquainted with the devotee of *Shakyamuni*. *O tempora! O mores!*

My *Mukhiya* is a fairly honest man. All were dazed to behold a *sahib* who knows Sanskrit. One must hear the tone of his praises for me to the crowd. In the afternoon, half the population followed me everywhere I go and I have not yet photographed or taken stamping anywhere. What will it be when I do start ? The *mukhiya* struck right and left in the crowd in advance and the *sepoy* did likewise. At the temple of *Narayana*, I met a Brahman who speaks Sanskrit fairly well. At the very moment when the horrified crowd shouts " *jutta! jutta!* as would shout at *Homer*— *Chapeau! Chapeau!* (*Hats off! Hats off*). My leather shoes had spoiled the floor of the temple. I turn round and face the disturbance, offering a Sanskrit dialogue in a raised voice. The Brahman

replies and the conversation is engaged in a public debate. No more protests. The crowd swells, advances, surrounds me and when I leave the temple, the Brahman follows me and shows me the inscriptions of the neighbourhood. My entourage interrupts the traffic. I have thus visited all the temples of Kathmandu, *Shiva*, *Visnu*, *Buddha*, *Ganesha*, *Bhimasena*, without any preference, drawing up a set of notes on all the inscribed stones I came across. They are legions. I have not found anything of great age but dating from the fifteenth century. How many stelas and what beautifully engraved stelas. Kilometers and the kilograms of paper would be needed. I would like to take in everything indistinctly without choice or method. It is impossible under the pressure of the crowd to decipher line by line and to separate the chaff from the wheat. The *mukhiya* has certainly received orders to assist me and it is a piquant spectacle to see the little Gorkha and the stalwart sepoy turning round the temple and striving to discover inscriptions.

I have gathered a poor experience from the Buddhists of Nepal. From the road I see or just catch a glimpse through the low gate in the rectangular compound of a house, a kind of *stupa*. I enter. I am stopped. Here stands a *vihara*. This premises is quite a store of *Pandits*, monks, and a library. Go and see. The Viharas of this locality serve as lodging for father of families surrounded by their progeny and who exercise some kind of profession or do nothing at all. They know nothing beyond the names of the nine "*dharmas*" of Nepal. In the court there are two inscriptions. I shall return with my old crippled *Bhuvananda* and if I am still stopped, he will take stampings. Buddhism is dying here. *Stupas* and *chaityas* are still to be met everywhere, but in the interior of the town they are abandoned and half of them are in ruins. The only devotees still attached to them are the low caste tribes expelled in the suburb and the unclean Tibetans. O, to be pushed along in a crowd of Tibetans, males and females, with their goatskins, their oily plaits, their thick and falling hair. One would really wish to lose one's sense of smell.

Besides, this is the domain of filth. The soil is poisoned. *Benares* is clean. The *Calcutta* of the natives is a real paradise if compared to *Kathmandu*. If one does not live here at a height of 1200 meters (3920 feet), if the wind of the glaciers do not blow, *Kathmandu* would be a cemetery. The narrow streets leave to the pedestrian, an irregular pavement between two quagmires of slush accumulated and this is the

enclosed field for bulls with enormous heads. They freely roam about in the town. *Benares* has her cows, the town of the *Gurkhas* should have its bulls. There is no longer dreadful wild animals with their sudden violent fits of temper and these amiable quadrupeds have as much sympathy for the *European* as the horse for the elephant. Thursday, while crossing the bazar at a run in my *dandi*, we, bearers and *dandi*, were suddenly thrown aside from the back, by strong shouts heard everywhere. Two bulls had engaged in a struggle and it is a general "*sauve-qui-peut*" (make best of your escape). We slip away by a lane where the *dandi* collides with the walls. Today I peacefully draw an inventory at the base of a temple. Yet another new shouts of "*backwash*", again a fight between two bulls. No sooner one is seen on the horizon then my *mukhiya* stands on my right, the *sepoy* on my left, both of them holding their sticks held up high as if threatening to attack.

Tomorrow morning, a peaceful distraction. I will go and examine the collection of manuscripts belonging to the *Maharaja*. And I will, perhaps, have my Nepali dress stuffed with padding that I am awaiting with impatience. The *darji* (tailor) who has measured me, disdains the progress of the French Revolution. Away with the centimeter, just a bit of twine which he relies on as a unit of measure between his forearm and fingers. This is the system of Nepali measurement. ■

Kathmandu, 18th January

Shakyamuni, by you I have been vanquished. All the doors of *viharas* have opened wide and in order to have advantages out of it I hasten to make a circuit, brush in hand, before visiting the Hindu temples the inventory of which I had drawn up. I employed four assistants, *Mitrananda* and new ones. Everyday a solemn procession that goes past through the vast avenues of Kathmandu. The *Mukhiya* goes ahead with the stick in hand, pushing, as much as is needed, the peaceful but every compact crowd, Then my horse, a horse belonging to the *Maharaja* if you please, a squat and heavy looking animal of Tibetan bred, strong and steady on his feet, valuable asset on this uneven soil. On the horse I daff with my hat, bowing to the few natives who bow. The great number of them stare at you with distrust and suspicion. Ahead of me a *syce*, behind my gallant and good *sepo*y, my child's nurse, then the small *Pandit*, small, small indeed, dressed in his white garments. And lastly, the coolie carrying on his shoulder, hanging from the two extremities of a pole like the pans of a pair of scales, the two baskets that contain paper, brush, etc. I must say that everything appears to succeed. I feel I am becoming popular. Thanks to a few bowing but especially to the few *paisa* (*pies*) distributed to the urchins and paupers.

The small crowd makes profuse '*salams*' to me and even yesterday one of them devoutly touched the brim of my hat. The first *vihara* where I attempted to enter yesterday, the *Tyekambahal*, (*Te Bahal*) at the entrance to the town incoming from the east, was rather reserved. It was necessary to start a discussion, then to manage without help and lastly to make a display without the least modesty of the deepest knowledge (Their ignorance is distressing) and then the whole population of the *vihara*, men, women, children, come out from these infectious rooms, surround me, guide me, help me, clean the stones, fetch water, and the *pujari* of the *vihara* who is an *Udas* (the second caste of the *Newar* Buddhist) goes so far as to bring his book of *mantras*, a collection of very anonymous stanzas in honour of the Buddha. The temple is opened and statues are exhibited to me, *Shakyamuni* between *Lokesvara* and *Maitreya*. Above the door a magnificent panel of sculptured wood shows in its centre *Maha-Vairocana* who holds in his multiple hands a *pustak*, (book) and then two hands joined in prayer above the head; above him in a small

frame also sculptured in the wood, *Nama Samgiti* carrying a book and I think, a rosary; lastly, small typical wood figures, the *Tiriratna*; the *Buddha* in the centre; *Dharma* and *Sangha* by his side. The *Viharas* are simple buildings erected around a rectangular court wherein live the families of the Nepali Buddhists. In the centre of the court is a *caitya* adorned with the four images of *Amoghasiddhi*, *Aksobhya*, *Ratnasambhava* and *Padmapani*, the four facing the square block which carries the copula each one in their niche. Several of these *caityas* even the most modern ones are surrounded with a "railing" which reproduces exactly in its arrangements that of *Ashoka* at *Mahaboudhi* and at *Sanchi*. But I have seen many that show sculptured medallions. Often *caitya* of smaller size are scattered around the central *caitya* and sometimes like *Matsyendranatha* in *Lagan-bahal*, pillars are also erected, quadrangular lat on which inscriptions are engraved. I have taken stampings of splendid ones of the reign of *Nripendra Malla*, masterpieces of epigraph. Lastly, facing the entrance gate there opens a temple of the devotees wherein the statue of *Shakyamuni* receives homage and hymns. The interior view of these courts is a ravishing. All the windows have sculptured panels that offer a surprising variety of adornments. The art of sculpturing wood is still preserved in the *viharas*. I have been shown today in the infant like fashion gods, goddesses, animals and flowers, which have to be despatched in a few days time to the temple of *Mahabodhi* as a token of homage. The art museum of decorative works would cover it with gold.

But if one's eyes are opened one's nose must be closed. Kathmandu deposits her filth in her courtyards instead of her sewers. The rainy season undertakes the washing; the human rejection then flows into the streets and accumulate in pestilential rubbish heaps. *Babu Mitra* who has travelled all over India assures me that he had never seen a dirtier place than Kathmandu. Fortunately, the atmosphere is bracing. Today, outside the sun that scorches the shade is scarcely tepid. This evening it registers 6, last night at 4 a.m. 3 only. Whilst I was working yesterday in the vast courtyard of *Matsyendranatha* where there rises a beautiful temple with roofs decreasing in size, surrounded by numerous *caityas*, I hear myself being spoken to in Sanskrit. It is a *Yogi*, living in the temple of *Tripuresvara* on the *Bagmati*. Rumour informed him of my arrival and he hastened to meet me. He speaks the Sanskrit exceedingly well like the true *Pandits* of *Banaras*. And he claims to

convert me to the *Yoga*. Perched on a *caitya* he recites or preaches with a flow of *Bengali* words, proclaims the uselessness of stampings and of history and extols the practices of asceticism. I promise to visit and see him in his temple. One can just conjecture whether a crowd, compact and pressing, had gathered. Good luck today, a Nepali officer, whom my visits to the *viharas* has moved, comes to me in the middle of the road, greets me in fairly distinct *Sanskrit*, offers to guide me and help me in other ways, follows me from stone to stone, from courtyard to courtyard (these are *viharas* like the *Lagan Bahal* with courts in a line communicating by narrow and overhanging gates) and the work completed he again offers me his services for tomorrow. Here is my battalion increased by an unit.

Besides, it must be admitted and proclaimed that I find these Nepali so malignant as the rumours mongers, I find the amiable and complaisant to a degree. *Babu Mitra* attributes it to my personal influence, but he is a *Babu*. One must rather thank the *Commander-in-Chief, Deb Shamsher* who gave most decent orders to facilitate my task. It is forbidden now to sell the old manuscripts without first offering them to the library of the *Darbar* which reserves itself the right of pre-emption. The rule is a dead letter in my favour. I have only to pay for the copy of manuscripts, the Government tariff and not the private tariff, namely, the days taken by the copyists; the ink, paper and nibs are not in my account.

This morning, *Captain Sahib Bhairab Bahadur* has sent me a basket of oranges. He has also accompanied me to the *Library* established in the new building of the *Darbar* School. The whole staff awaited me in pomp and four *Pandits* who are employed as librarians and copyists and the army of assistants and even a Tibetan employed in classifying the few Tibetan texts. The manuscripts are well classified, laid on shelves carefully enveloped and labelled. The *Buddha-Shastra* has been rather a deception, a few ancient manuscripts all or nearly all, already known. The only new one I found was the *Abhisamayalamkara*, a commentary of the *Astahasrika* by *Haribhadra* in 164 pages. I have ordered myself a copy which will cost about thirty rupees and also of the *Nepala Mahatmya*. Lastly, I have ordered a copy of the *Yavana-Jataka*. I have not in hand works of reference and will not find any here. But I do not believe I can recall that this *Yavana-Jataka* is known elsewhere and forgotten. The manuscript is ancient, on palm leaves,

complete, but many of the leaves are partly destroyed. Besides, I have placed it aside to take up its examination again.

The hunt for manuscripts has not yet paid back, *Mitraanada* has brought me an ancient manuscript and ornamented with the *Astahasrika* and the *Pancaraksa* (*Mahamayuri-vidya rajni*, etc). I have been generously offered ancient manuscript (*palm leaves*) and very fragmentary and mutilated with the said *Astahasrika* and another of the *Pancaraksa*. I wish for something newer of, the unheard of or at least of something rare. I have also been offered a Tibetan manuscript in *white letters on a dark background*. It is quite simply a translation of the *Vajrachedika*. As the manuscript is of a beautiful palaeography, I shall take it if I can obtain it at a fair price, because each possessor of a manuscript believes himself, in principle, a possessor of a treasure. ■

19th January, Wednesday

Night falls. The sun sets here at an early hour toward 4-30 p.m., behind the *Chandragiri* and the sun takes away the beneficial heat. Splendid day, besides, of a clearness that revealed all the folds of the enormous glaciers on the horizon from the *Dhaulagiri* to the *Gaurishankar* very soft also, lukewarm even after a night of frost, The grass this morning was all powdered and a light crust of ice covered the pot of water. I profited by an idle morning forced upon me to visit the *Residency*. The "*Lines*" occupy the summit of a plateau to the north east of Kathmandu, separated for the time by a vast field where the *Gorkhas* indulge in horsemanship and where slumber the herds of cows. The plateau falls abruptly towards the north west facing mount *Nagarjun* on the large valley where the *Bishnumati*, too small for her bed, waters rich cultivation. A path of 5 to 6 meters wide only leads to the territory of the *Residency* enclosed on its whole length by walls and thickets and guarded at the entrance by a Nepali guard house. All the real kindness I meet here more compensates my prison like living. The *Residency*, a very modest cottage, is built in the middle of an English park. Then the house of the doctor is still more modest and reaches almost the hospital of the *Residency* which is also very modest and built for 8 or 10 patients. Less encumbered now that the *Darbar* has had erected a vast hospital under the care of a *Bengali* assistant, entrusted also with recording the meteorological observations communicated monthly to Calcutta. I have looked into his books and ascertained that the mean pressure of Kathmandu is 25 inches 650 (641/035). In the day season it constantly shows a pressure of 25 inches 550 (637,50) The mean rainfall is 56 inches (1,40). The highest figure I found is 74 inches 51 (1,862) in 1893; the lowest 47 inches (1,175) in 1896 year of famine. A line of group of Tibetans spread its stinking filth before the hospital. They were awaiting to be vaccinated. It appears that they are very zealous and they come every day, even from *Lhasa*. I have photographed a group. Besides, more Tibetans abound here, they are met everywhere and they are smelt before seen. They bring with them flocks of sheep and she-goats destined for the market. The *Gorkhas* (with the exception of the *Brahmans*) eat the flesh of these animals. The lowest castes even eat buffalo's meat but nobody dares naturally to taste the meat of the cow. I shall have to visit the doctor immediately afterwards.

Last evening I held a small *darbar*, The officials of the *Residency* attended. Postmaster, doctor and *jemadar* came to greet me with their *salams*. At no time I resumed my rounds surrounded by my cortege. The beginnings have been uninteresting. Entering by the north of Kathmandu, I reach the *Thamel-bahal* (*Vikrama Simha Vihara*). I was energetically refused entrance and there was not a single *Pandit*, not ever a *pujari*. Filthy women and stupefied men. Intolerance is truly the sister of ignorance. I depute *Mitrananda* who takes the stamping of an inscription. It is one of *Parthivendra Malla* as is also the sculptured panel above the entrance gate. The same type of reception at the *Gunakara Vihara* where old women and buxom yellow faced lasses, in tattered attire spread grain to dry in the courtyard. But at the temple of Kathmandu, some progress is made. The men come out of the houses that surround the *caitya* and the charm does the rest. I do not succeed in climbing on the platform at the base of the cupola, but I am free to move about elsewhere. The *caitya* is very large. It raises its gilded arrow to a height of about twenty metres (65 feet). It is entirely white of newly laid stucco, from the arrow descend and connect to four small surrounding *caityas*, strings on which dangle a long line of many coloured bits of cloth. A very small railings exactly at the foot of the staircase leads to the platform. In front of the staircase stands a recent pillar dated in 1010 *Nepal era* (1890 AD) crowned with a brass statue of the *Vajrasatvo*. The inscription which is engraved on it consists especially of a *stotra*, *prayer stanza* of the Buddha. In the north west of the *caitya*, a Nepali *pagoda*, in wood patiently sunk, surrounded by wreath of small flags, rattles and there are mirrors. The mirror seems an offering much appreciated. They are found hanging from the walls of *Hindu* and *Buddhist* temples. The *Kathesimbu* is much worshipped. Thus, it is that the surrounding courtyard is encircled by small monuments. Nothing ancient as regards to inscriptions. There are also two stelas of *Pratapa Malla* and *Nripendra Malla*. A small *vihara* is adjoining to the large one, to the south in a large square of slush and rubbish surrounded by houses. A pillar dated from 932 carrying on the summit two small statues in adoration that represent the donors and on the northern side a *Devistora*.

In proceeding towards the south, a large square covered with temple and is in ruin (*Thamri square*) in front of one of these temples a pillar carried the image of *Narayana* riding on *Garuda* and a hymn to

Narayana dated 783, without a king's names, the inscription being very badly mutilated.

From *Kathesimbhu* no more difficulties anywhere. The crowd who conveys me also conveys my reputation. At the *Karnakottama Mahavira* a stela, the fragment of a stela, buried in the wall like in almost all cases bears the name of *Kavindra Pratapa Malla* with an ordinary list of *danapatis* but the year is missing. At the *Harsacaitya Maha-vihara*, inscriptions of 905 and 931, about which the *pujari* states that the monastery owes its name to king *Harsa* who founded it, but nothing ancient. He promises to show me-one of these days the manuscripts he has. He does not know about it or he ignores what they are. I still expect a *Pancaraksa*. At last, I end the day at the *Dhoka Bahal (Henakra)* where there is a stele of 812 AD during the reign of *Bhupalendra Malla*. ■



Vaikuntha Nath Sharma (Age 34)
Brahman Pandit in the Service of Maharaja Deb Shamshar

Kathamndu 20th January, Monday

I began the day by a walk to *Svayambhunath*. The grass was still white with frost. The thermometer fell this morning at sunrise to 2 at 8.30 a.m. It rose to 3 and while returning I risked a sun stroke at 11. 30 a.m. Ordinary reconnoitring attempted in haste, helped only by the *mukhiya* and the *sepoy*. *Svayambhunath*, *Syambunath* as they pronounce it here, is to the east north east of the town, to the east south east of the *Residency* and beyond *Bishnumati* on a conical hill with steep flanks, ahead of the mountains and entirely clothed in verdure. The lofty brass arrow stands out alone and distinct above the skyline. The path meanders round the town, crosses the *Bishnumati* on a bridge and cuts across fields, arranged in graduations to protect the soil against the gulling of the rains. All along the sacred path, *caityas* succeed one another. At the foot of the hill, the path changes into a staircase. But what a staircase! Rough, uneven, ruinous, tottering, narrow and slippery steps. Sarcastic monkeys playing on the steps appear and disappear, look with an air of wicked pity on their human brethren who perspire in the climb. Caravan of Tibetans climb and descend, uglier, dirtier and less skilful than the monkeys. Between two lines of *stupas* under a real bower the platform is at least reached. A *vajra* of giant size, entirely gilded, laid on *socole* also of giant size, adorn a copper bell tower with an arrow, discloses at the four points of the compass, entirely gilded temples of the four *Badhisattvas*. The emotion, a religious feeling, captures one at the first step; the bells peal, rattle, chime, muffled voices under the vault of the temple sing hymns and discreet flutes accompany the voices. The spirit has undoubtedly changed but the exterior aspect of *Svayambhu* can scarcely differ from the temples that *Ashoka* knew. On the platform at the summit of the hill, on the sides and behind the *caitya* it is a real chaos of small monuments, *caityas*, stelas, statues of giant black Buddhas or entirely white Buddhas or again all red. I search in vain for a dated inscription. Here again it is the beginning of the history. At the entrance *Pratapa Malla* has had engraved on a high stela a *stotra* (hymn) of his own. An enormous stela engraved in the XVIIIth century is bilingual, Sanskrit at first, Tibetan underneath. Besides, Tibetan counter-weighs and eclipses India. The *Om mani padme hum* is laboriously inscribed in Tibetan letters every where. The line of Tibetans with their long greasy hair adorned with a circle (or band) that frames their head with a hat complete the circuit round the great *caitya*

with a piety as much enthusiastic as it is singular. They fall flat on the stone, the arms in front and murmur a few *dharani*, trace on the stone as far as the hand reach a chalk line. They rise and with their feet on the hand can reach a chalk line, they rise and with their feet on the line of chalk just traced and they prostrate themselves once again to begin again the same exercise. When passing in front of the four principal temples, they stop and address to the *Bodhisattva* a fervent prayer transfigured by a mystical faith that almost beautifies them. The *Newars* are contented with bringing, flowers, red lead, sandal wood, as would be performed to *Shiva* and *Vishnu*. Not a *Pandit* to be met at *Svayambhu*, not a “*Sanskrit bolewala*” (one who can speak Sanskrit). I would have liked to inform myself on the antiquities on the books kept by the temple. Not a soul. And yet how many centuries have written their history here. Where does it sleep ? Under the ground or in the temples ?

I went back to my home, a little disappointed at this negative result and after breakfast I pursued my habitual dignity of having the rounds of the *viharas*. I enter the *Mahabuddha Vihara*, undoubtedly ancient one. Only one stela of this century in the courtyard decorated by a *stupa* of stucco and two of stones. All of a sudden, I am spoken to in Sanskrit, in elegant Sanskrit. I reply. The dialogue begins. I learn that the *stupa* of stucco has been, according to the tradition, erected by *Ashoka*. That the *vihara* has inscriptions, copper plates, manuscripts, but that it is impossible to see them. These ignorant beings defend with zeal the treasures that they know not how to employ. One can read here, by way of text, the *Shatasahasrika Prajna Paramita*, the recital of the work, divided in uncertain sections, lasts exactly the space of one year. The person who talks to me calls himself, *Damaru Vallabha*, the honour of Nepal. It is the *Pandit* about whom *Haraprasad Sastri* had told me, as a superior. He gives me the library of the *Maharajah* as a meeting place He promises that if I remain here a month and a half or two months all the gates would then be opened. I take leave of him and guided by my pseudo-*Pandit* (an abyss of ignorance), I went my way towards the *Toho-bahal*.*

Right against the wall of the town, in a heap of ruins, I see one of those stelas that abound here in thousands, to the extent of discouraging

* *Te-bahal - Harihar — Indu*

one's curiosity. I approach to the road near the gate. It is of the reign of *Narendra Malla*. A statue of *Mahakala* is right against it. Even with the ground on the *socole*, I seem to be able to decipher archaic characters. Here is some antiquity. *Mitraananda*, quite calmly assures me that this is something of modern Newar work. I begin to clean the stone. '*Here you, Pandit, come and read your Newar.*' *Mitrananda* has nothing to say. The inscription is a dedication and the first words are: *Samvat 412 rajnah Sri Manadevasya*: the date and name are absolutely certain and clear. Once again the crowd gathers, fairly hostile at finding me handling the statue, where marks of red lead attest a recent *puja*. The *Mukhiya* begins to extol my knowledge and throws a challenge as who could dare to speak in Sanskrit with the *Sahib*? No body replies and that too for a reason. I wish to take a photograph of the statue. Ill-luck! The shutter refuses to click. I tried to screw and unscrew it and when I point it at the statue the whole thing gets out of place again. Bad luck. I can distinctly hear in the crowd that surrounds me that the God is defending himself against me. To put an end to it, I work with the camera any way, but with a triumphant air, bent on returning on another occasion, and I declare with satisfaction that everything has completely been succeeded. Then I sent for the *pujari* who gives to the statue the daily worship. I hand him half a rupee to perform a *puja* in my name. And thus flattered, I reveal to him the age of the statue that surpasses in antiquity, all that I had hitherto seen at Kathmandu. Visible change. My man demands precise explanations and swells with pride. His statue anterior to the *Nepala Samvat*. And now it happens that I am treated with regard and already the group that surrounds the *pujari*, speaks about erecting a temple over the statue. Unfortunate *Mahakala*! Will it be due to me that he owed the renewal of his temple. And always the same question, are you *German*? I repeat my eternal reply: *I am French, France is a great country and Paris, my city, is as large as the Ayodhya of king Dasharatha*. In short a small epigraphical discovery. ■

22nd January, Saturday

Today is holiday on account of an eclipse. *Captain Sahib* sent word to me that it would be better to give up my daily assignment. I had set out before him by giving yesterday evening a holiday to the whole of my staff. I also began to feeling of the need for rest. In the morning, always in great ceremony. I leave for *Harigaon*, a village situated at a distance of two miles east of Kathmandu and where *Damaru Vallabha* had mentioned to me of ancient ruins. I explore the temples, I scatter the debris from which emerge broken stones. Always the Mallas.

A stela leaning against a temple dates from the reign of *Narendra Mall*, *samvat 653 (1533)*. Another stela is dated from the reign of *Bhupatendra*, *samvat 819 (1699)*. But a man from the village offers to show me an old ruin. I descend with him a very rustic staircase which leads to a small tank at the foot of the plateau on which *Harigaon* is built, towards the east. In the middle of the tank there rises a statue of *Garuda* and from the bank there appears on the pillar a long inscription in characters manifestly archaic. The stamping is far from being easy. The water is fairly deep, the bottom or (bed) slimy and the *socole* of the pillar is just large enough to stand upon. The villagers throw stones and pebbles to make a very small pavement for me, and the *Pandit*, *sepo*y and I clinging to the pillar, under a blinding sun, take a double stamping. The inscription is composed of about thirty lines engraved with care, but the first lines have disappeared and the date is missing. The character of the writing in any case, leaves no doubt: impossible to take a photograph from a convenient distance, right in the middle of the tank, I was obliged to take up a position on a kind of platform facing the pillar and which carries a small temple in ruins dedicated to *Satya Narayana*. The fragments carry no inscriptions. The pillar seems to be of great interest to me on account of its date. The inscriptions deal with literary chronology, the pillar and the statue concern the chronology of art. I have only had time to see another inscription at the foot of an image of *Laksmi-Narayana* fitted in the eastern edge of the tank and which bears the date of 139 (1019) without a king's name. The inscription was buried, I have had it brought to the light again and I mean to take a stamping of it when I shall return to *Harigaon*.

In the afternoon I returned to the Library of the *Darbar* where *Damaru Vallabha*, at the head of all the staff, awaited me there for about

three hours. I examined the manuscripts. Lastly, to distract myself I looked at the eclipse. It was almost a total here. We were less than a 100 kilometers from the line of totality and at 2 o'clock and 8 minutes, mean time (1 o'clock 56 minutes, astronomical time) there only remained of the sun a thin crescent released like the new-moon, but this little sufficed to destroy the grandiose impression so it seems of the totality. The urchins were shouting on all sides: "*Rahu, let the sun go*". The dogs barked at the noise of the urchins but the bulls have continued to graze without manifesting any distress. Strange, however, if not grandiose, this progressive attenuation of the light under a cloudless sky; a sunlit landscape viewed through a smoked glass, no radiation, no resplendence; a dull brightness dim and dreary with opaque shadows, a sensation of something unreal. The moment of the almost totality is captivating. Streak of shadows overlap one another like those shivering of warm air that rise from the fields on summer days. A sudden and singular puff of cool breeze shake the branches. The thermometer which was registering 20 at noon, falls to 17 at the half eclipse and all of a sudden to 13 at 4 p.m. it had risen again to 28. Spring is approaching here. Whilst the garden orange trees are still laden with fruits, we find the apricot trees adorning themselves with an exquisite white efflorescence. Besides, my garden changes into a poultry-yard; two sheep browse in it, and a turkey-cock chuckles: The bungalow of *Lucullus*. ■

Kathmandu 23rd January, Sunday

Return from Patan. One hour's walk to the *Residency*, a little less than three quarters of an hour to Kathmandu. The path skirts the eastern wall of the town and the manoeuvring fields pass through the suburb of *Trilokesvar*, skirts the recently built temple of *Lasksmi Narayana* and then a garden whence there rises a group of *Dharmasalsa* peopled with *Sadhus*, priests and facing the *Thapathali* (the *Palace of the Commander-in-Chief*), turns suddenly towards the west to cross the *Bagmati* on a bridge of bricks. Lost in its vast sandy bed, the *Bagmati* would not be sufficient during the dry season to the piety of the faithful eager to bathe in it. A small rivulet has been canalized that runs along side the ghats at the foot of the temple of *Lakshmi Narayana*. Having crossed the river, the path takes another sharp elbow towards the south. Patan is a vision of fairy land still more enchanting than the too uniformed *Jaypore* (in north India). The roads larger than those of Kathmandu, often paved with large slabs and sheltered on both sides by the large Nepali roofs; not a house without sculptures and colours; the beams, the small beams, the lintels, the window-sash frames, are sculptured with a kind of divine inspiration. And everywhere temples, pagodas, *caityas*, combining all types of Indian architecture adapted by the most picturesque taste, red bricks, green bricks, gilded bricks profusely decorated of sculptured wood and crowned with a kind of *Chinese pavilion* with roofs rising tier upon tier; and on the square there are constructions of the most amusing disorder, *pagodas* with rattles and temples with colonnades and high bevelled pillars surmounted by copper statues.

My first visit has naturally been to *Pandit Kul Man* whom *Indrananda* had mentioned to me as the glory of Buddhist science. *Oh, the kingdom for the blind*. The honest *Kulaman* awaited me in ceremonial dress, yellow shirt with a kind of black overcoat; carpets had been spread on the ground of the court, near a *caitya* and there the conversation began. I was at first compelled to swallow the recital of a *Shakyasimha stotra* (hymn) completed by *Indra* with the Pandit's commentary, then a *Triratna stotra* with its glossary. I took up the same text, gave them a commentary of my own and at the same moment I became a very learned man. The road having thus been paved, I requested him to show me his manuscripts. He brings me

Gandavyuha, a *Bodhicaryaratra*, a *Pancaraksa*. I tell him that we people in Europe know these things to our finger tips. I need something new, something unheard of, something unforeseen. I revealed to him that he hardly expected it, all that Buddhist literature that has been produced and lost and he gives me his word of honour that he would begin a search and bring me what he finds. He follows me afterwards to the *Hiranyavarna Vihara*, the most important of Patan. In spite of the *Pandit*, I meet with a positive refusal and the good *Pandit*, a little vexed, explains to me then that the Buddhists are not the masters as they share the *vihara* with the *Shaivas* who are unmanageable. *Mitrananda*, the *mukhiya* and the *sepoy* then go inside and take stamping of the stelas. Only *Mallas* again. These wretched people conceal their antiquities. On my way back I take the inscription engraved on the royal throne and which dates from *Narendra Malla*. I come across an inscription of *Siddhi Narendra Malla*. I come across an inscription of *Siddhi Narendra Simha 757*.

(*No 17 of Bhagvanlal*) on one of the temples on the square of the *Darbar*. *Mitrananda* shows me on the square to the south of the *Darbar* a small *caitya* of bricks covered over stucco and which passes for a monument of *Ashoka*. But I vainly wander and search in the surrounding debris, nothing, nothing. At last, at the corner of a street, I see a stela that rises above the bricks of the pavement and on which I think I can discern archaic letters. To work on it we climb up, pull out of better in a hole of fifty centimeters without any regard for the department of roads and bridges and I find myself facing the inscription No 3 of *Bendall*, now buried.

I received this morning the visit of *Captain Sahib* who brought from *Deb Shamsher* two volumes of the '*Isis Unveiled*' of *Madam Blavatsky* (*See Appendix B*) and a *nataka* (drama) *Kushalavodaya*, published in 1897 and composed by the *Pandit Chubi Lal Sashtri*, favourite of *Bhim Samsher*, *General-in-Chief* and brother of *Deb Shamsher*. Further, as I express to him the desire to examine *Bhadgaon* at leisure, he proposes to place a house at my disposal thither, so as to avoid me an excessive loss of time, *Bhadgaon* being 7 miles from here. In short, he informs me that the Nepali suit (*labeda suruwal* or Nepali dress) including the belt (*patuka*) and a cap (*topi*) are ready to wear. They seem to take a pride in showing the spontaneity of their hospitality during the absence of the *Resident*. ■

25th January, Tuesday

Another lucky day. *Mangal var, Mangal-ka-din*. I took care to draw my escort's attention to it, Tuesday (*mangalvar*). It is a day of good luck (*mangal*) and it is certain that if I jested in saying it they took it very seriously. Their superstition goes together with their native simplicity. Now that I have donned my Nepali suit (*labeda suruwal: Nepali dress*), I have my 'letters patent' of Hindu conversion. I cannot resist against a feeling of affection to see them all— *Pandit, Mukhiya, sepoy* and even my humble *coolie*, explore the walls, shake the stones, interrogate the inhabitants, stir them up for the hunt extolling to them my Brahmanic science (*Oh, the brahma varcas*, I know now what it means) and their faces joyously brightening when the grateful cry escapes my lips; this is antiquity' And then questions are asked on the date on the antiquity on the by gone kings on the value of the letters and the good king *Vikramaditya* serves as a starting point to this chronology.

Yesterday another exploration through *Patan* of which I had only seen the splendours or at least the picturesque charms. What a reverse to the medal. The ransacking of the town by the Gorkhas which is a century old now seems to have been an event of yesterday, broken-down houses, temples in ruins, roads where the pavements disappear under a heap of filth, stupefied and anxious faces everywhere with the stink of putrefaction in the air. My first visit goes to the *Zimpi Tandu*, one of the four great stupas erected on the corners of the town and attributed to *Ashoka*. Tradition cannot be far from wrong. On a basement of circular bricks of about a meter in height there rises a copula of bricks covered with earth and turf, without any adornments. On the summit there rises a kind of scaffolding, made of wood, which supports the symbolic parasol on feast days. Nothing more. The diameter is about 12 meters. All round here like everywhere one sees small stone or stucco *caityas* surmounted as usual with the bell-turret of pointed roof and decorated with four *Bodhisattvas*. There is no *vihara* erected around this stupa. The *vihara* of *Zimpa* thus commands a beautiful view of the banks of the Bagamati and of the mountains. Picturesque *Patan* is standing against the southern border of the valley and the long white mass of the middle of the valley catches a glimpse of the glaciers through the passes of the first mountains. In spite of the name of *Ashoka*, in spite of the evidence of his ancient constructions, the stupa has no antique inscription. The most ancient stone dates from

the reign of *Shiva Simha* 734 (1614) and nothing can be derived from these ignorant beings, forlorn generation of a dying religion, The Pandit of the place is brought to me. He literally knows nothing, has read nothing and I predict to him. — that he would fall in hell. Have they in their folly allowed their antiquities to get lost? Do they conceal them by a sentiment of blind jealousy? The problem requires solving. The inscription of *Shiva Simha*, in Newari language gives the name of *Sthula-Caitya* to the caitya and the Pandit tells me that it stands for the Sanskrit name of *Zimpi Tandu*. And in this courtyard where the soil covers and conceals undoubtedly epigraphical treasures, inhabitants of the neighbouring vihara, in rags, spread to dry in the sun some grass the smell of which would make one swoon and that serves for their food. Who is it who has said; *Tell me what you eat and I shall tell you what you are.*

Quite close to the north is a temple of *Ganesh* where steles give the dates of 772: 789: 829: 930: but without any royal name. We move along to the neighbouring vihara, the *Aloku-Vihara*. There we find one of those washing-places that abound at Kathmandu and Patan. A fairly deep ditch where water pipes of brickwork divert the waters of neighbouring sources into it. Justice must be given to the Newars. I have seen some of them who wash themselves at least once in their lives. Men, women and children all clothed in very small wraps splash, rub and twist their hair and my presence scarcely perturbs them. I saw my first snake here. In front of me a pretty little reptile of about a meter and a half in length springs out. It's forked tongue darts out neatly and it amuses itself in the mossy fountain. A woman leans her bare back against the wall on which the snake is climbing. I think it is necessary to shout out in my simplicity: "*Sanpa*, a snake." No notice is paid. I failed in the attempt. As far as man can remember these snakes have harmed nobody and the place is seething with them. I was thankful for the advice. A large statue of *Shakyamuni* in the classical pose the legs crossed, presides over the bathing-place. On a very small stupa I read the date 535 (1415). Through the deserted and unclean streets we overtake another small *stupa* of bricks and stucco, 5m x 50cm high, attributed to *Ashoka*. Nothing but modern steles.

On the side, towards the west, there lies another ditch but abandoned, where stagnates a brackish and repulsive pool of water. A stela rises from it and allows one to perceive ancient letters. We build

a footbridges on the mephitic lime and work the brush. The crowd gathers at this unusual sight and the public voice tell me of the arrival of a *Pandit*, With the *Pandit* the dialogue begins before an attentive and curious audience. Here again a poor specimen of a *Pandit*. He says he has no practice in Sanskrit, he rather makes use of the “*Bhasha*”. And do you believe *Mr. Pandit-ji* that Sanskrit is commonly spoken in France. Impossible to convey to him the kind of curiosity that had urged me to come from so far into Nepal to gather bits of manuscripts and inscriptions. He concludes. “*Tatha svadeshee Svagunaprakaco bhavisyati*”. It is the “*ut declamatio fias*” translated into Sanskrit. And to think that after all he may be in the right. I will reply to him with *Manu*: “*Jadaval loka asharet*” “one must live in the world like a beast” In following the road to *Saugal tol*, I see on my way a stone used as a water pipe, but now serving no purpose, bearing traces of ancient inscription. And I reach the *Mahabuddha-Vihara* where lives the uncle of my *Pandit Bhivanananda*. The poor fellow is ailing with rheumatism which prevent him from walking and guiding me. The temple of *Mahabuddha vihara* shows off among the *pagodas* and the *caityas* being of pure Hindu style, crowned with a small *vimana* profusely sculptured and fairly recalls the temple of *Mahabodhi Vihara*. It deserves a particular attention, unfortunately it is pressed so closely between the houses of the vihara that it scarcely allows of a passage two meters wide. It is impossible to survey it at a glance. The poor *Bhuvananda* shivers with fever. It would be better to return. I end the day visiting the neighbouring vihara, *Unko Vihar (Rudra varna-vihara)* to the south of the *Mahabodhi*, a beautiful vihara two courtyards in depth, clean, well kept, well looked after, with pillars, *caityas* and ordinary temples but nothing but recent steles.

This morning I returned to *Harigaon*. In spite of the truly impressive complaisance of my assistants, viharas and temples disclose nothing and I begin to loose hope when on reaching the rustic staircase, which leads to the pillar in the tank. I discover a *stele* buried, but just peeping above a platform that carries a ruined and abandoned temple. I distinguish the traces of ancient letters. My *Mukhiya* digs out the soil with his large knife, the knife that all Nepali carry at the waist. The sepoy *Sri Ram Sing*, who looks tenderly after the *Mlecha* (barbarian), no, the *Sahib Pandit*” as they say, removes the stones, enlarges the hole. The *Pandit* washes the stone and an inscription of *Amshuvarman* sees

light again in a very good state of preservation: *Samvat 32*. At the other corner another stone almost buried only shows its head. The coolie digs and digs and it is a new inscription of *Amshuvarman, Samvat 30*. I wish to take a photograph. The *Mukhiya* goes and fetches or rather goes to request in the name of the law, strings, bamboo; we have the heavy stele outside its hole, bring it to the light and the operation completed. With the same ceremony and pomp we take back the stone to its hole where it will have to await a new resurrection. But God alone knows what kind of *pujas* they will now receive after the explanations given to the crowd of villagers, explanations expounded and amplified by the *mukhiya*.

After breakfast fresh look of *Pustakalaya* (Library). All those who can speak Sanskrit come to view the strange animal and if this impatience is flattering it is wrong to interrupt the reading of the manuscripts. These honest people confined in their *Shashtra* are especially surprised at the variety of our lectures. I have had the pleasure of revealing to them the name and works of *Bergaigne* and the revelation of this *Vedic* knowledge have filled them with admiration. ■

27th January, Thursday

Today, *Sri Pancami*. The winter has ended. A salvo of artillery (nothing takes place here without gun fire — the changes of ministries as well as those of the seasons follow the same programme). A salvo of artillery at 10 a.m. announced to us the beginning of the spring. *Vasanta* will be welcomed. Besides, it has managed for a sensational entry, an unexpected event. Yesterday we had precisely the most sullen day I had seen in India. The sun has not appeared for a moment and the thick mass of clouds descended and descended on the valley like a faked ceiling whilst the breeze generously scattered whirlwinds of dust. And what a breeze! My hands, deeply buried in my pockets, were numbed and I was obliged to give up the idea of photographing due to want of light and stability. The thermometer did not rise above 8. I vainly explored Patan under this biting breeze, I found nothing that was even worth noting down. And the evening was so cold that I buried myself inside the bed. My poor bed! I have had the curiosity to measure its depth: 7 centimeters by forcing the number; lashes of cloth cross-stitched on a framework of woods, a blanket on top, and to cover myself with, my covering of the journey and yet another *rezai*. Fifteen days to day that I am here. What a strange pleasure it is this dreadful seclusion and this icy cold when India offers everywhere a comfortable hospitality with her heavenly temperature. But since I am here, I am glad of having been sent here. India is too vast to be viewed at a glance and too closed to open her gates at the first stroke of hammer. The European can only live with Europeans and consequently apart from the natives. A justifiable anxiety of hygiene has everywhere been established — the dwelling of the *sahibs* far from the indigenous populace. To attempt a personal research in a few months would be to lose one's time. The Anglo-Indian officials are alone able to carry out a useful task. They have official quality. They are feared and their favour is sought after. They have the long practice of the country and of the language. To search for manuscripts behind furore is to spend one's time on a lottery ticket. Nepal, fortunately, contrasts to these disadvantages. The stretch of the country is closely limited too closely even, because beyond the valley the rest of the country is as exactly known as the North Pole. *Hodgson* and *Wright* have undoubtedly drained the manuscripts. *Bhagvanlal* and *Bendall* have gathered the inscriptions. But behind *Hodgson* and *Wright*, it is still permitted to search and glean, Of all the *Tripitaka*, how

many texts are there still remain to be discovered ? Further, as a *Frenchman*, I feel a bit suspicious. The Gorkhas can only proposes to France very distant schemes on Nepal. Lastly, it is the last region, still belonging to India, where Buddhism still lives and already very near from dying out or rather from blending with Hinduism, as it has been elsewhere. From the point of view of Buddhist archaeology, the valley is a complete museum from the stupas of *Ashoka* to Hindu temples and the Tibetan caityas. In short, particularly interested by my researches in relations to India with the Chinese world. I am here at the true crossway of these two worlds. Nepal is a vassal of China and sends her a periodical tribute. A Lama dwells here and a Nepali Resident at Lhasa. The communications between India and China are here a palpable fact, evident and material. The Chinese stampings mingle in the processions to the chromolithographs of Europe.

The good will of the authorities, however, unexpected it may appear, maintains and even increases itself. The *Commander-in-Chief Deb Shamsher, acting Maharaja*, sent word to me yesterday that he had given the order to serve to me the "*Pioneer*" daily, one of the best newspapers in India, and I received this morning a basket of oranges and lemons. The proverbial parsimony of the Gorkhas makes the present precious. *Deb Shamsher* has also expressed the desire to see my stampings and to have my explanations. Archaeological curiosity! It is to know them. He requested me to take a stamping and to explain if possible an inscription on the wall of the Darbar (*Darbar square in Kathmandu*) and which has, it appears, so far resisted the efforts of learned men. I have asked him for a precise indication but it certainly concerns the palaeographical inscription that the good pedant *Pratapa Malla* has traced on the wall of the Darbar and in which the French word "*HIVER*" (winter) goes by the side of *Tibetan* and *Arabic*. It is so he sent word to me that the people of this place affirm that the inscription denotes a hidden treasure". *Tenco lupim*. Thus, it is due to such belief that *Khadga Shamsher* the brother, has dug out the great stupa of *Kapilavastu* in order to hunt out the large sum, and they take leave of me with the hope that all this epigraphical treasure will end in treasures of resonant money. Impossible to make them understand our curiosity. The two essential factors of our researches, religion and history, have no equivalent in Sanskrit. Yesterday morning the *Jemadar* brought me a *Yogi* from *Haridwar (North India)*, on his journey for a pilgrimage,

knowing Sanskrit well, knowing well his *Yoga* and cursing the false *Yogis*, professionals or mendacity. Again he was one of those who asked me the fundamental question so often heard — which religion is the best in your knowledge. Old task of disparaging the belief of others and exalting one's own. I have my perpetual reply to *Sarvatra Satam acarah sadhuh dustanam dustah*. Everywhere honest people behave well and the wicked badly. "He has very naturally asked me if there were *Yogis* in France. He was convinced that there are *Yogis* in Germany.

Double effect of this distant sojourn (but is not nature a game of apparent contradictions). Jingoism (chauvinism) awakens at the same time when there develops a deep feeling of human solidarity. To see the other fractions of humanity at play, one perceives the appropriate role that is set aside for the motherland.

To day is a holiday. The town is made inferno by the beating of drums, its processions, its music and its chorus that move along from temple to temple. The *Sripancami* is the *Saraswati-puja*, the festival of the nib and inkstand. This morning under the direction and escort of my very faithful *Mukhiya*, I make a pilgrimage to *Balaji* to the north of Kathmandu at the foot of *Nagarjun*. Crowds gather to worship the statue of *Jalashayana Narayana* floating on water, reclining on the *Shesha* who raises its heads. Colossal statue in the middle of a tank of quite modern workmanship the real *Jalashaayana* is at *Budha Nilkanth*, 5 miles from Kathmandu. No temple is here erected to the god but a small Nepali temple built in Chinese style is consecrated to *Durga*. The daily he-goat has just been sacrificed to her and the head has fallen in the basket, whilst the body still quivers in the hands of the sacrificer. The crowd soon presses on all sides, women especially, and it is a continuous tinkling of bells that each visitor announces his journey to the goddess. The site is ravishing, shaded by tall trees. Limpid streams supply water to number of tanks, where the piety of the faithful feeds legions of carps and pour out from about twenty gargoyles on the lovers of devout bathers. The Tibetans, with their thick woollen boots or leather boots and their bewildered faces, burst out laughing at this spectacle.

They are evidently astonished at the cleanliness of the Newars. How everything is relative. The scale of altitudes marks here the degrees of human filthiness.

In the afternoon in my own way I made a *puja* to *Sarasvati*. I have prepared a complete transcription of one of the stelas of *Amsuvarman* and written a Sanskrit letter to *Pandit Kula Man* of Patan urging him in the search of manuscripts. ■



A Gorkha Captain

30th January, Sunday

Afternoon of rest. *Pandit* has even done so the whole day. It is the *astami* (the 8th) and further there is an *uposadha* (fasting) today in honour of *Avalokiteshvara*. I returned to Patan on Friday to see the *enquittant* the, respectable *Kula Man* whom my letter seems to have impressed. Very moved. The good *Pandit* and then I greeted him in the *Pandit* fashion with a real folded hands, *anjali*. And he swore to me on his great Buddhas that he would do his best utmost. I gave him the list of all the works classified by *Nanjio* and known by Chinese translations. I ask him at first to find me the *Sutra-lankara* of *Ashvaghosa*, which according to the Chinese version deals with both literature and history. He has not the text but he knows its title. Then I ask for the *Abhidharmakosha* of *Vasubandhu*, which I have laboriously restituted in part according to the Chinese version, and the Sanskrit commentary of *Yashomitra*. Then the whole literature of *Abhidharma*, *Jnanaprashthana*, *Prajnaptipada*, etc only one of these texts. And I am a happy man or at least a happy traveller. In leaving *Kula Man* I proceeded once again towards the *Mahabodhi Vihar*, as I wished to take a photograph of it. The temple was unique in its kind in Nepal. But it is so closely surrounded by its square of houses that I took a risk with my camera on the broken roof of a hut in ruin whence I was able to snap a characteristic feature— the details of one of the four small *vimanas* erected on the roof of the sanctuary at the four corners of the great *vimana*, the structure of which they reproduce. At *Mitrananda's* house I found a *Sabhararangini*, an anthology in the style of the *Subhasitavali* or rather again of the *Subhasitaratabhandagara* because the verses are set in it without the author's name. This is a large collection (67 leaves) composed by *Jagnanatha Mishra*, *Yugacaranrpasamkhya vatsare* (1654 AD). The manuscript is the work of *Amritananda*. I had no time to see the whole thing but shall return again to see it at some other time. I do not expect to find new and important works in the household that provides its *Pandits* to the *Residency* (namely quite an ordinary translator told to translate into Hindustani, documents in Newari that are addressed to the *Resident*).

Yesterday I paid a visit to *Harigaon* and thence to *Deopatan* where I took the stamping of an inscription of *Jayasthiti Malla* near the temple of *Vagishvari* (*Jaya Vageshwari*), in a *hiti* (one of those hollows

in which water flows from pipes). At *Pashupati* I found two fairly distinguished speakers who narrated to me with an imperturbable seriousness in the centre of a crowd that had gathered amazed and as seriously as we would state our system of chronology, the origin of the temple according to the *Nepal Mahatmya*, the flight of *Shiva* in the form of a gazelle, the vain search of the gods. In short, how they found him in the *Shlesmantaka vana*. The temple is situated on the bank of the *Bagmati*, squeezed in between two plateau in a picturesque pass and bordered by *ghats* where the faithful never cease to swarm, The *Bhotiyas (Tibetans)* and their associates, the monkeys are met with in crowds. As I am not a *Hindu* or a *Bhotiya* or a *monkey* I was obliged to view the temple from the usual spot, where rises a giant statue of *Nandi* entirely gilded as large as the *Lion of Belfor*. The principal temple of Nepali style (roofs rising tier upon tier) is surrounded by temples and smaller temples that cover a space of ground. In front on the left bank of the *Bagmati*, *Jang Bahadur* erected *ghats* crowned by a regular line of temples without distinctive features, a fairly similar to our monuments in the cemetery. Fairly thick woods, the remnants of the *Shlesmantaka vana* surround the temples. The fraternal concord of the gods is marked by a simple feature. All along the *ghats* on the right bank an inscription painted in large letters bears — *Sri Krishna*. In the main, in spite of the popularity of *Pashupati*, the real divinity of India and Nepal, as far as I know, is *Durga* the monstrous and sanguinary goddess. ■

31st January, Monday Evening

The *Commander-in-Chief* has sent me this morning a precise information on the inscriptions he desires me to study. It concerns really in fact the inscription on the wall of the Darbar (square of Kathmandu) by the good pedant *Pratapa Malla*, collector of alphabets. I then proceeded to town, but the inscription is so enormous (it covers 4 meters of wall space) that I gave up the idea of taking a stamping, the stamping paper being scarce here and very costly. All that is not an indigenous produce undergoes an enormous rise in price, because the transport of bearers back from *Segowlie (Sugauli)* to here is paid at the rate of 3 rupees for 25 kilograms. On seeing me at this time photographing the mysterious inscription, the crowd rushed, expecting the appearance of the treasure. The most amusing part of it was that the soldiers of the *Darbar*, equally convinced by the hidden meaning of the inscription, began pushing back the crowd with blows from their fists as if it was gang of thieves. Towards the end of the day, I spent two hours at the *Library of the Darbar School* and I was shown the provisional catalogue of the *Tantra* section. Certainly, such a rich collection will not be found anywhere else in India. More than 500 numbers and half of them are unknown to me. When the turn of *Tantric* studies comes round it will be necessary to have recourse in Nepal. I was returning on my horse at a canter when I hear a cyclone blowing behind me. A wave of dust is raised by about a hundred ruffians running who trace the area of a circle, pushing back violently the unfortunate passers by. I can see and hear blows from fists and shouts. Nepal is getting civilised and she knows how to use her police. A vehicle surrounded by a mounted bodyguard passes and behind this another human wave. It is the *Commander-in-Chief*, acting *Maharaja*, who is out on a promenade. I draw myself up to greet him. He sends me a greeting of "good evening" and invites me to come near his vehicle. The troop of *sepoys* opens out not without mistrust. Where on earth could such a beautiful collection of human beasts have been gathered? In this charming country the *Maharaja* gives an audience to his brothers only when guards holding naked swords in their hands surround him. This friendly *Deb Shamsher* had, in company with his two elders, killed with his little hand his old uncle who was wrong in showing an excessive goodwill in favour of the sons of *Sir Jang Bahadur*. Then the small hand without the least scruple slays as many as it can the too numerous descendants left by the same *Jang*.

And the eldest of the *Shamsher* has attributed himself the office of *Maharaja* and the rest of the *Shamshers* (they are about fifteen brothers in all) have distributed among themselves by rank of elderliness. (progeny) all the high posts and employment. *Khadga Shamsher*, the second of the family seemed disposed to promote himself. The stroke was soon carried. *Khadge* who was then *Commander-in-Chief* comes to the palace of the *Maharaja* to submit his report. Four men throw themselves on him, take him by the wrists and the *Maharaja* announces to his younger brother that by an overflow of affection he creates him governor of *Tansen* the district west of Nepal. Here we find a nice variation of the famous scene: "*Hear you, be then Marquis of Castellance, etc*". A palanquin is all ready; "Will you give yourself the trouble?". "And my wives ? And my children ?" "They will be looked after". And under a strong escort, through mountain necks and dells, they lead the Governor to Palpa in spite of himself. The caravan of spouses with the little *Shamsher* followed after a few days. And the day will come on the morrow, in a month, in a year, when another little hand will slay unerringly the *Maharaja* but this will only mean a change of ministry. The poor *Dhiraj* as they call him here, the *Maharajadhiraja* (the *King*) in whose name everything takes place, lives closely cloistered in his palace with women and flowers, without any other distraction than to change from one pavilion painted in blue to dwell in to another painted in yellow, sacred marionette always ready to make gestures without asking who pulls the string.

Then we skirt the tank of *Rani Pokhari*, vast stretch of rectangular water that *Jang Bahadur* has had surrounded with an ugly white wall. A rather narrow footbridges leads to a small pavilion erected in the middle of the water. The spot is safe, sentinels guard the whole wall. "*We shall be better able to talk if we alight*". "*At your Excellency's disposal*", I replied carefully to be polite. Without lowering myself I take care to alight at the very moment he alights and side by side we converse on the narrow causeway.

"*Have you seen the fish of this tank ? You have not ? You will see them.*" Dry grasshoppers are brought and it is the tank of *Fontainebleau*. He enquires for the news of the inscription and of my researches. A tomb was discovered at *Kapilavastu* containing a few scraps of gold.- *Ah congratulations!- I am very much afraid that if nothing serious will be found. Do you believe that this gold has a great*

value ? Wait. Kapilavastu was a city of temples. Pilgrims from all over Asia came thither. Then do you believe that a treasure could be found." I reply to him that the real treasure is the inscriptions. It is that which connects man to his past and expresses to him his present. A people without history is a tree without roots. Kings have their genealogy, of humanity." These considerations developed in an English which enthusiasm makes eloquent, impress the small Gorkha who requests me to come and speak to him in the palace tomorrow afternoon. We shall attempt to awaken him. ■

1st February, Tuesday

Another *Mangal-Var*. Refuse now to believe in the *Jyotisa* (astrology), doubled with the *Nimitta shastra* (science of signs). A stanza addressed to *Kula Man* has been fruitful. Flies are not captured with vinegar nor are *Pandits* with *durbhasitas* (ill words). The excellent *Kula Man* sends me a reply which I transcribe on account of the good news it conveys and because it shows the extent of the knowledge of Sanskrit among the Buddhists of Nepal. *Kula Man* is the *cudamani* (diadem).

*Crikulamanapanditena bhavatam crimatam
pranamaputrasahsarena prarthana krtam bhavatam uktam...*

This signifies in good French that he had procured himself at great pains a manuscript of the *Sutralankara* and that he hands me the copy. Decidedly it must be believed that Nepal is not yet exhausted by so many researchers. A rapid and very summary examination permits me to ascertain that it is not the *Sutralankara* of *Ashvoghosa*, but another works known under the same title that has for author *Bodhisatva Asanga* contemporary of *Vasubandhu* (Vth century). It is once again preliminary and must I wait for something better ? Vexed at the refusal of the pseudo Pandit of *Zimpi Tandu* at Patan (*Simpi-tandu* is credited with being very rich in manuscripts). I have again had recourse to the divine *Saravasti* and I dazed my man with this virulent reproach:

*budhuksitam vyaghrim drstva svacariram ayacitah
pacav api karunardra bodhistvah pura dadan
agatam apithim...etc.*

I had struck the sensitive cord. Immediately the following reply is received (again a sample of the local Buddhist Sanskrit).

*bhavatam crimatam pranamya bhavatam ajnapita pustakanam
madgrhe asti va na asti maya na juatam bhavatam krpa
cet tarhi likhitva anyagrhe maya gantum anyatpustakam
bhavatam agre yah pustakani samarpayami.*

Here is another promise of useful collaboration. I will go to Patan tomorrow and kindle this zeal that awakens. Such a long time is needed in this country like India to come to a result. But I would not like to leave Nepal before having exhausted every possible chance as I now know the men, and my luck of *shloka* has not yet spent. This morning

already under a burning sun (suddenly as it behaves here the heat has appeared, the heat of a *Parisian* summer), the *cortege* begins its journey to *Mount Nagarjun* that dominates Kathmandu towards the North and raises to more than a 1000 meters above the valley with its steep slopes richly wooded, rebounding towards the south-south-east in two billows (the latter carrying *Svayambhunatha*) and towards the southeast in a mammalian overlooking *Balaju*. I desired to visit the cave associated by tradition to the memory of *Nagarjuna* who is believed to have lived there and composed the *tantras* (Is this not here pre-eminently the domain of the *Tantras*) would there still remain there a few inscriptions as the caves of *Barabadur* have brought to light ? *Captain Sahib* and the *Commander-in-Chief* had put me on my guard; the slope of *Nagarjun* in the reserve of wild animals for the *Maharaja's* hunts. They had not lied. I had not lied. I had the pleasure of seeing a tiger which had just been shot and was bleeding on the ground. But that is all I met with. The grotto which is widely open and not very deep faces full to the south. It shelters a statue larger than life size and fairly in pieces of *Shakyamuni*; stelas as everywhere else among these people fond of epigraph (too fond, alas, because this one kills the other in order to made new stelas, they simply scrape the old ones), but nothing ancient, the oldest date is from the beginning of the XVIIIth century. The old *caityas* in ruins rise at a short distance invaded by vegetation. There also stelas of between 100 to 150 years. Nothing more. Lower down, at the entrance to the reserved domain stands a small temple of *Shiva* made ill use of by a classical *Sanyasi* all spattered with ashes the forehead decorated with sacramental signs, arrayed with a necklace of *rudraksamalas* and who lives here in company with beasts. I met on my way another type of *Yogi*, clothed in an overcoat which he carried under his arm, grinning roaming and perpetually in the mood for laughter. I have not had the time to ascend the mountain to the top where the Buddhists burn their corpses and disperse the ashes to the wind.

I have had to come down with great pains on these steep slopes covered with dry grass where the shoes hopelessly slip. The *Commander-in-Chief* had given me a prearranged place of meeting. I am now more than *persona grata*. An hour and a half of interview to day and on what a tone. I have further been obliged to put an end to the interview myself. *Captain Sahib* overtakes me on my way back and hands me in the name of the *Commander-in-Chief*, a magnificent

khukuri, the *yataghan*, that every Nepali carries at the waist, with a sashboard silver-plated; two small knives are part of the whole. They are meant for work of small importance and a case for the tinder and stone (tinderbox). Matches are not yet here a current object of consumption. Also a French letter come from *Paris* and which I am asked to translate. A gentleman *BC* writes to “*Sir Maharajdhiraj*” to ask him the collection of Nepali stamps. *Sacra fames*. I offer to undertake to despatch him his wants, but *Deb Shamsher*, in the mood for goodwill, prefers to despatch them himself.



Photo: Harihar-Indu Collection

Maharaja Dev Shamsher with his Maharani

I was received with the traditional reception at the palace. The crowd of attendants always in a hurry and yet doing nothing at present, distracted by the arrival of the *Sahib*. A *company* paid me honours. It is preferable here to have the white skin than red sash. *Deb Shamsher* has had erected a tent in the garden but changing his mind he awaits me in a small pavilion erected round a basin where water plays all round. I remember those water castles that amazed the Chinese travellers on their journey to Nepal. Many coloured glasses spread an amusing light and the water sprouts distribute a particularly beneficial coolness. He advances towards me and sends for his two sons of twelve and ten years of age. I speak to them about France and of her greatness, especially of *Paris* even in the remote valley of the Himalayas. I offer to teach French to the kids who look very smart. Then *Deb Shamsher* asks me to show him the photograph of my children. As a man well acquainted with Europe, he asks me: "*Undoubtedly their mother looks after them. How many madams Deb have ? Captain Sahib, ordinary subordinate having two houses, one at the gate of the Residency and the other in town or at a few hundred meters distant, has two collection of women to adorn his two households. And the Thapatali is not just one house or two, this residence of Deb, is a small town that certainly shelters several thousands of male and female inhabitants. "Our sons could be your friends,"* tells me the *Commander-in-Chief*, "*Would it not be a captivating idea to have them have correspond from Paris to Kathmandu ? May your son come here some day and they will be the guests of mine; may nine go to Europe, your sons would be their guide in Paris.*"

And I will have their portraits and that of the *Papa* and those of the *Maharaja* and the *Dhiraj*, and my children will send their photographs and it would be delightful. The land being well laid (now) I sow the seed. Could the authorities assist me in my search for inscriptions and manuscripts ? If they could send for my *Pandits*. The two *Pandits* in the service of *Deb Shamsher* enter, both of them accustomed to speaking Sanskrit and the conversation goes from English to Sanskrit under the amazed gaze of the attendants present there. I expose my wishes. I enumerate the works I desire to procure myself. The two *Pandits, Brahmans*, but yet better informed than their Buddhist associates, confirm that several of these works exist and that they would proceed to make a search for them. "*If they are found,*" says

Deb.” I buy them. If they refuse to sell them, I shall have copies made of them which I shall offer as a gift to the French Republic for the love of you”. (Oh, Oh, let us hasten, the Maharaja returns to take up his offices again in fifteen days and the good will of the other). And when I rise to leave, one of the two Pandits recites two verses that he had just composed in my honour:

*namani tam vidhim nityam yena decantarasthayoh avayour idrci
prithi karita suhakarini madhuryam vacasi namata svabhava
caturyam sakalacastraparametu yad drstam bhavati tat kadapi mitra
nanyasmin purvam api drstavanaham.*

I spare myself the trouble to translate and spare my modesty already so impaired. ■

4th February, Friday

Three days of no avail, without any result. Day before yesterday I went to Patan but *Pandit Kula Man* has found me nothing else and of that long list that I had handed over to him he does not even know the titles. He had received that very morning the visit of the two Pandits of *Deb Shamsher* who had come to gather information on the manuscripts that he possesses. “ *In truth my Prince, to crown your goodwill the promise given on the eve was held on the morrow. Who can now accuse the good faith of the Nepali.* Thence I proceeded to the house of *Mitrananda*, in the *Mahabodhi Vihar* to examine his family manuscripts. I saw the copy book large yellow leaves in which the first in date, to the *Pandit's* value *Amritananda* had gathered his notes on Buddhism at *Hodgson's* disposal who has well drained it. The collection of the *Avandana* is very rich and eclectic. The *Tantras* predominate in them as everywhere in Nepal, also a fine collection of *Avadanas* and the Nepali *Dharmas* worth mentioning also a manuscript of the *Bharatiya Natya Shastra* dated *Samvat 1884 (1827)*.

On Thursday I visited the temple of *Ichangu Narayana*, one of the four great *Narayanas* of Nepal to the north west of Kathmandu in a small secondary valley formed by two promontories of the *Nagarjun*. The path is fairly difficult. It outlines the hill of *Svayambhu*, then successively scales two lesser chain of the mountain called one of them as *Halchok* and the other one as *Ichangu*. Cultivation covers the bottom of the valleys as well as their slopes entirely shaped in graduated terraces as is the custom here. The lower side of the mountain presents the shape of staircases. In spite of its great sacredness, the temple of *Ichangu Narayan* is a fairly wretched, temple of Nepali style, without luxury or grandeur, even badly maintained. The *dharmasalas* in the vicinity falls in ruins. In spite of its so-claimed antiquity, nothing ancient. The stelas of the yard do not date back more than two centuries. On a brick platform that serves as a base to the temple a stela of more ancient appearance shows its first lines. The shape of the letters seems to indicate the XIth or XIIth century. But decisive refusal to allow it to be extracted from the brick-bed wherein it is fitted. While returning back I make the ascension of *Svayambhunath* once again and visit the temple and vihara of *Saravasti* built behind the *Svayambhu* on the other summit of the hill but all our researches under the wood in the chaos of stones serve to be of no avail.

On Friday I spent the day exploring *Kirtipur*, so proudly perched on the steep hill ahead of the *Chandragiri*, at a distance of three miles south southwest from Kathmandu. This “*town of people with noses cut*” has not recovered from the terrible blow given by the Gorkhas. She is putrefying in her stinking ruins. I carefully visited the great temple of *Bagh Bahirab, Bhairava* with the tiger adorned from head to foot and on all sides with bull’s horns spoils of those victims sacrificed there daily in the courtyard and quite a considerable number of secondary temples. The convent of *Mahabudh* has inside the interior one inscription of 700 of the *Nepali Samvat*. The great central *caitya*, all white washed rises on a vast two storied terrace overloading the houses of the *vihara*. The dwellers of this *vihara* are ignorant of the Nepali Buddhism, impossible to find out anything on the manuscripts they possess. On my return I visited the long series of temples graduated along the banks of the *Bagmati*, near the confluence of the *Bishnumati*. ■

6th February, Sunday

Yesterday a torrential rain with thunder like running fire, then the snow whitened the slopes around. This morning by an icy fog that limited perception to ten paces, I proceeded on my way to *Chobhar*. Today is the "*Magha Purnamasi*". I knew it too late to spot the beliefs of my escort. On entering the field that separates the *Residency* from the town I suddenly hear from I know not where, muffled symphonies and suppressed choruses through the dense mist. It is the feast of the full moon. The cold is intense and the Newars, little affected by cold yet cover their faces like *Musulman* (Muslim) ladies. And yet the pious Brahmins are there, stark naked, at the fountains at the washing places on the banks of the *Bagmati*, accomplishing with a minute punctuality all the detail of the rites—signs, meditations, etc. All those vague forms, I cross, carry in their hands brass trays on which are carefully arranged offerings of flowers and incense; the temple bells peal; the holy images have already the forehead adorned with a real hump of sandal wood or of red vermilion and on the foreheads of the faithful the remains of the offerings lines in white, yellow and red. At the temple of *Laksmi Narayana* on the *Bagmati* the *Yogis* grouped around their temple (each brotherhood has its *dharmasala*, its temple, its courtyard, its *ghat*, its water, its banner; *Vairgis*, *Sadhuis*, *Sannyasis*, etc...) make an infernal din, some beat the drum others shake the cymbals, another blows the trumpet, another proceeds to burn incense at the four corners of the platform.

Chobhar is to the south of Kathmandu on a rounded mamelon with rugged and steep slopes; the *Bagmati* to force an outlet which forcibly separated the mamelon from mount *Phulchoki* and has cut herself a deep gorge whence it flows out towards the south. At the opening of the gorge there rises the temple of *Bighna-Binaik* (*Vighna Vinayaka*), otherwise called *Ganesh*, one of the four doubly holy temples of *Vinayaka* in Nepal. The actual temple is entirely modern, of Nepali style without any character. *Ganesh* is covered with veil that discloses only the forehead of the god to the adoration of the faithful who come to please him. On top of the mamelon, undoubtedly commanding a beautiful view of *Kathmandu* in the north, *Patan* in the east, *Bhadgaon* in the northeast; and *Kirtipur* in the west (but still badly scattered mist has prevented me from seeing anything); the old *Vihar* of *Chobahal* in the centre of the courtyard at the usual place of the *caitya*,

there stands a temple of *Mahadeva* of Hindu style with colonnades and *vimanas*. The sanctuary of *Shakyamuni*, instead of being simply inserted in the periphery of the *vihara*, forms here a temple having its appropriate development in Nepali style. A curious feature is the abundance of copper utensils, vases, pots, plates, frying-pans, all hanging in the temple from top to bottom. In an adjoining courtyard there rises a stela corroded by time but on which there still appears the remaining of ancient letters. I return through the fields and this time under a strong sun, through the *Pulchu-Vihar* erected on a small hillock to the west of Patan and very close to the town. It is to this *vihar* that belongs the four stupas of *Ashoka* built to the west of the town, but the stupa is fairly distant. In the *Vihar* itself I find nothing and *caityas* of plaster and brick erected in front of the *vihar* fall in ruins.

On returning to Kathmandu, I find the streets lined with a row of spectators like during our *Lent days (carvinal)*. The women have attired themselves in immoderate sized skirts that swell up like ballons. They are waiting for the passing of the *Magha-Yatra*. And I shall see the *Yatra* also. In town yesterday's rain marinated the filth all along the causeways and in the crush of the crowd the stink is intolerable. Fortunately, it suffices for the *Mukhiya* in order to open for me a passage, with the shout, "*Ho, Sahib Pandit*" and the ranks open out. I manage to settle myself on a terrace facing the temple of *Annapurna* and at that very moment I become myself the *Yatra*, the spectacle, the universal object in view. A group of Brahmans approaches me, begins the conversation in Sanskrit and an amiable debate opens to which the crowd listens to with amusement. Here is the procession, naked children carrying sticks crowned with large balls bristling with gilded straw, most probably the sun. Above this are oranges. In the palanquins, naked lad also sitting and on their knees they carry lamps burning incense. On a large platform stands a young boy dressed with green and garbed in spangled tinsel, with the eyes encircled in dark rings, motionless and grave. He represents *Rama*. On his left we see a delicate *Sita*, an ideal type of childish beauty the eyes in ecstasy. Facing them a nude boy, elegant and harmonious like an ancient work of sculpture, has a bow slung over the shoulder. He represents *Lakshman*. With the large naked sword he holds in his hand, he cuts off the nose of an ugly looking giant doll its hair dishevelled and falling and with the face of a bird of prey. This is *Suparnakha*. Then on another moving platform stands

Hiranyakashyepu with a wild boar's face who winds red threads symbolizing his torn entrails, whilst facing him a motionless child, with hands joined represents *Prahlad*. And then it is a crowd of small temples and small statues carried on stretchers and choruses consisting of men, children, *vinas*, trumpets, flutes and drums. The whole ceremony was well over, when my friend *Deb Shamsher* presents himself to the acclamation of the populace. He sees me, gives the order to make room for me and the terrace on which I stand is emptied in a moment. We began to talk and pray on what ? Oh my manuscripts! He intends to send me five for examination and he will be pleased to give me and the *French Republic* any one of them I may choose. ■



Hiti (Stone Water tap) of Patan

7th February, Monday

I saw today a few things strangely expressive. I visited *Baudhanath* to the east-north-east of Kathmandu between the *Bagmati* and *Mount Sivapuri*, not far from *Pashupati*. *Baudhanath* is the largest of the Buddhist *stupas* of Nepal, larger than the four great *stupas* of *Ashoka* in Patan. The circular base of plastered bricks has all along regular niches wherein are fixed vertical bars with turn prayer boxes wherein are inscribed: *Om Mani padme hum*. Four circular terraces of bricks graduate from the base to the hemisphere of the *stupa*. The *stupa* is crowned with a kind of rectangular bell-ferret on which are painted on each side two large eyes and the edifice ends with a red canopy supported by copper rods. All around the *stupa* tracing an irregular rectangle stand one storied house wherein reside a few Newars. But these houses especially serve as a shelter to the Tibetan pilgrims. *Baudhanath* is the sanctuary of the Tibetans. The *Vamsavali* attributes its construction to *Manadeva* but the relics that are deposited thither are those of a Tibetan saint. A lama dwells thither and performs his ceremonies. *Baudhanath* (popular as *Baudha*) is without contradiction and the headquarters of human putrefaction. The ground is made of dung and what dung and the Tibetans swarm thither, spreading far and wide a stink of grease enough to disgust sheep a smell of he-goat enough to chase away the she-goats, disclosing between the partly opening of their filthy tatters, oily skins that have never soiled water.

Prohibition to enter in the precinct of the *stupa*. With my *Pandit*, my *Mukhiya* and the *coolie* who is a Buddhist, I explore the terraces and I settle myself to take photograph. The *Mukhiya* and the *Pandit* rejoin me. They found two inscriptions ancient in appearance but in the *Bhotiya* dialect. Granted for *Bhotiya*. And the stamping was taken. This time the *sepoy*, excellent "*impression taker*". accompanies the *Pandit* and the *mukhiya* remains with me. A Gorkha constable comes to assist him and it is not an easy task, because the ignorant *Bhotiyas* suffocate me with their greasy pushing and place themselves against the very camera shutter. All this mechanism puzzles them and one of them addresses me: *Buddhavatara*; another humble offers me a *pice* to make me *puja*. I must submit myself to the indiscreet worshipping of this horde who touches, alas with veneration, my sleeves and my trousers. I even feel myself touched on the hand. It is a *Lama* from *Darjeeling*, he wears mittens. Does he conceal some sort of leprosy ? As a fellow

member he does not release me, striving to convince me, that there are no inscriptions here below or above the ground. Give me back Kathmandu, the town of stench, because one can still breathe there a little. At last my *mukhiya* and his colleague decide to release me in Gorkha fashion. They swing their fists on all sides but suddenly a giant beast of a Tibetan spring forward with his chest half bare and his head encircled with long hair. He raises his arm like a club on the *mukhiya*: "*Hear, you Gorkha.*" And the ferocious Gurkha before whom India trembles, the eventual invader of India should England disappear, becomes very small and knuckles under.

My photographs taken, I assist to a Tibetan spectacle. A tall old man strangely resembling the statues of *Homer*, draped in a tunic that discloses his arm and left shoulder, greets with a bow shaped fiddlestick a three stringed mandolin and sings God knows what. Two young Tibetan beauties accompany him, two jolly girls with quite flat faces and rosy cheeks and uneven teeth, the head encircled with a disc in which are set all kinds of red, blue and green stones, the hair astonishingly dark and more greasy than black, plaited into two tight and straight tresses that stick on each shoulder. They pull down causing to tremble between their figures the facing of their large sleeves. Silver chains adorn their waist. The old man and the two *nautch*-girls wear rings of their ears, rings large enough to serve us as bracelets. They sing, roll their eyes as if on the verge of fainting, dance a kind of jig or *boree* whirl at times whilst the old man keeps on playing his screeching fiddle.

At last the *Pandit* and the *sepoy* return and spread their stampings. I take up one and examine it in the sun. Another beast of Tibetan snatches it from my hands and holds on to it, I believe it to be an indiscreet curiosity as I have the habit of meeting here. In short the *mykhiya* orders: "*Return that to me*" then the *Bhotiya* with a fearful expression of idiotic fanaticism crumples the paper in his hands throws it over the enclosure of the *stupa* springs in front of the *Mukhiya* greets him with an ironical salute by falling on his knees, his tongue protruding, his skirt upturned completes his demonstration in a sign of *Mouquette* fashion then feigning to brandish a weapon leaves at a run towards his den. The Lama then approaches and says softly: "*Believe me, depart at once.*" The good *Homeric* old man with the amiability of a man who has received two *annas*, insists: "*Depart at once, depart at*

once". And the anxious *mukhiya* tells me: *Ride your horse and let us go*. And the pale *Pandit* tells me: *Ah these Bhotiyas*". Our *cortege* glees. It is the exact term. I have seen the Gorkha routed by the Tibetan. And we are in Nepal at one hour from Kathmandu. What will it be in Tibet. There is something here that does not encourage me to visit *Lhasa*. And after all, it is for these people that *Shakyamuni* had turned the *Wheel of Law*. They have well realised the type of squalid ignorance. What would happen if these very hordes took the road to India or to the West. ■



Photo: Harihar-Indu Collection

Baudhanath (Baudha) of those days gone by when Levi paid a visit there

Bhatgaon

The *Maharaja* gives me a house and it is very kind of him. But though it is a *Maharaja's* house, yet it is not a comfortable house. From outside it is altogether a neat looking. It lies a little outside the town, right in the middle of a meadow quite close to the beautiful tank of *Siddkhapokhari*: in a pretty surrounding against the background of the valley. Attractive foregrounds with *villas* and gardens; above stretch the thick forests and as a crowning the inconceivable mass of glaciers. *Oh, to go to the pretty house and stand at the window.* It has less seducing charms to the dweller. The architect, who built it, is certainly a *Bengali* who had wished to follow the European style. He has planned large windows everywhere with real venetian glass shutters, The architect is of the day gone by. The glasses have cracked, broken glasses have gone to pieces, and one by one the framework of the windows has come apart. The poor venetian shutters have lost their blades and the wind that blows across the mountain blows across the room laden with *coryzas* and *odontalgies*. And suddenly the weather cools or at least it is colder in *Bhadgaon*. Kathmandu close to *Nagarjun* loses in picturesqueness but gains a shelter against the icy wind of the north. *Bhadgaon*-town is, fortunately, sheltered in a depression of the ground at the foot of the *Mahadeo Pokhari* but my house built on a very exposed plateau, generously offers itself to the indiscreet caresses of the breeze from Kathmandu to *Bhadgaon*, three sturdy leagues by a fairly good road on which those vehicles, not afraid of ditches or quagmires, can circulate. The path crosses by turn the *Dhobikhoka*, the *Bagmati* and the *Manahara* coming down from *Mount Manichur*.

The three rivers still swollen by the recent rains flow all three in a kind of deep trenches all widened now confined forming real gorges where the rice grows leisurely in a rich and moistened soil. The two sides of the trenches generally rise perpendicularly and extend in plateau on which the towns are built. Nothing else gives more precise a feeling of the remarkable density of the population of Nepal than the aspect of the roads that join Kathmandu to the rest of the valley. The *Darbar* has thought it useful to give me a second *mukhiya* as assistant entrusted to supply me with provisions. And this evening, in the kind of hall that comprises the ground-floor of the house, there lies, side by side, two *mukhiyas*, the *sepoy*, the *boy*, the *cook*, the *sweeper*, my personal *coolie*, the *syce* and the horse.

9th Wednesday

And my entourage is still increasing. The Nepali government has estimated that I was not yet sufficiently guarded and it has or rather the “*seat*” of Bhagaon has assigned to me a “*pulis*”, a police constable. If this continues I shall end in supporting the whole population of Nepal, because it is needless to mention that all these people are expecting their reward. In the afternoon the number of “*pulis*” has doubled but this evening I am reduced once more to one. And I have thus paraded through the streets of *Bhadgaon* with an imperial entourage. This imposing procession has done a considerable injustice to the procession of *Kashi-Jagannatha* which they were escorting with due *puja* forms, Today accompanied by great beating of drums and blowing of flutes, I attracted as many people as my divine rival. The Nepali being very prolific, the roads are crowded with idle urchins too glad to follow behind the procession. There was a good crowd of about fifty of them behind me when I returned. On the faith of my reputation the “*whole of Bhadgaon*” had come out in the street to see me. The sun alone did not have the curiosity to see me. He stubbornly veiled his face with a thick icy mist and to make my *bungalow* habitable. I was obliged to attend to my windows with sheets of paper.

My first day has been lucky. I found an inscription of *Shivadeva* in a good state of preservation in an old but ruined “*hiti*” (washing place) of the *Tulacchi Tol*. More so, even than at Kathmandu, more so even than at Patan, epigraphy spreads out at *Bhadgaon*. Magnificent stelas carefully engraved give the chronology of the *Malla*. The town is full of temples, majority of which are in ruins and are decayed. The market is still important, but one has the sensation of a life that is shrinking as has happened at Patan. Centralization carries on its work even in Nepal. Kathmandu absorbs, absorbs the valley. The principal temples are those of *Bhairava*, of *Kali* and of *Dattatraya*. Very few *caityas* and not one that is monumental. I have not yet seen the *viharas*. Here, like elsewhere in Nepal, the religion of *Devi* triumphs under all its forms. *Kali*, *Bhagavati*, *Guhyeshvari*, *Maha-Laksmi* have also a fairly good temple. The *Darbar*, smaller than that at Patan, is nevertheless picturesque in its grouping of pillars, of graduated roofs and of colours. It has, like Kathmandu, its “*gate of gold*”, (Golden Gate of Bhaktapur).

13th February, Bhatgaon

The icy blast has kept me in my house muffled up in vain to protect myself against the stings of the wind that sweeps my room. What a downpour ! The clouds clung to the trees, loosened themselves gathered in compact masses and melted in torrents. The whole of my entourage crammed in shelter in the hall, warmed themselves as best they could, whilst the bulls were fighting in the neighbouring meadow. *Bhadgaon* is the town of bulls. There are as many as inhabitants. Yesterday one of them had charged our entourage and it was a very rejoicing *sauve-qui-peut* (make best of your escape). And in spite of the dreadful rain, processions followed one another and the rattles did not cease from tinkling. Since the full moon morning and evening an entourage preceded by files of handballs and cymbals proceed to the temple of *Jagannath*, sings choruses, makes *puja* and returns to town.



Bhaktapur house belonging to Maharaja Bir Shamshar or
Commander-in-Chief Dev Shamshar where Levi stayed during his sojourn at Bhaktapur

A *Newar* carries on a tray a vase containing the water that has washed to god, and the good people on their way deposit on the tray the modest offering of one *pice* to receive in the hollow of their hand a little of the holy water. They swallow a portion of it and with the rest they touch the sacred points of their body.

Yesterday morning a pious procession of children, lads and lasses went past by on the road. Two small ones at the head also carried a brass tray with flowers and the children procession proceeded along singing a hymn to *Sarasvati*, before the beginning of the class. On the bank of the *Hanumanti* was another procession but less gay. Ahead four men carrying on their shoulders two poles supporting the body of a woman covered with a cloth. Behind a man, assisted by two friends, yells madly. A group of parents follow him moaning together. They reach the bank of the river, the wood is ready, whilst the family accomplish the religious ablutions the wood burns and the unfortunate corpse grills.

At last yesterday morning I was able to continue the course of my exploration. I visited the area of *Thimi* that stretches on a plateau between the *Manahara* and the *Bagmati*, halfway between *Kathmandu* and *Bhadgaon*. The area is densely populated and contrasts by its cleanliness relative to the towns of Nepal. I searched all the temples, *chaityas* and *viharas*. It is again *Kali* under all her forms who triumphs here. Their principal temple is *Bala Kumari*. With *Kali* and *Lakshmi*, especially *Ganesh* is popular, its temples infected by clotted blood and adorned by bulls horns speak enough of the sanguinary sacrifices with which the people honour the gods in Nepal. Here also the small steles generally of no importance abound but decorated by an embossment of grinning mask at the summit, with a long snake unwinding its links on either side. The *Newars* give them the name of *Brihaspati* and make them a daily *puja*. The *Gorkhas* do not keep an account of them. I was coming out disappointed at my failure when I noticed a deserted path. It is the old road, the *pulis-ji* tells me the old road is just of my concern. And at a hundred meters on the right I find a *hiti* in ruins with a half-worn stele. The top has disappeared but the base is very legible. The form of the letters, the wordings the exterior disposal clearly indicate a stele of *Shivadeva II*. I discovered another *hithi* to the left of the road. I run to it through the human rejections that always adorn the environs of an Indian village. Stretched on the ground a fragment of stele admirably traced with characters of the days of *Manadeva* and that shows the mark of quite a recent break. The *hiti* in question has just been repaired and in the course of the work, the stone was broken; and in the crowd that surrounds me, nobody knows where the fragment has gone. A *Timian* assures me, however, that he had been employed in the repairs of the *hitti*. My *pulis-ji* (because the *pulis* of *thimi* did not wish to lose the

opportunity and my entourage made a somersault), the *pulis-ji* attempts to extract the said stone from its fitting. But the only result is that one of the *pulis* fall backwards in a kind of mire which would envy the cleanliness of our manure ditches.

I also visited the neighbouring village of *Nagades* to the north of *Thimi* but to of no avail. This morning, always trailing behind me, the encumbering multitude of my fellow-labourers, I climbed under a burning sun that evidently desired to make good its three days of eclipse. The steep slopes that lead to 2000 meters of altitude among the terraces where spread cultivation as far as the temples of *Manjusri-Sarasvoti*. On coming from *Mahacina*, say the Buddhists of Nepal, *Manjusri* erected this temple, but there remains nothing of it. The actual construction of this temple is quite modern, of the beginning of this century, ordinary brick-built temple hugging the rock sheltered by an enormous stone that overhangs and that carries a small *caitya* on its summit. The rock penetrates the roofing and serves as a ceiling. The Buddhists venerate the sanctuary in honour of *Manjusri*, the Hindus worships thither with equal devotion as *Saravasti*, whom the Buddhists give as a wife to *Manjusri*. My *Mukhiyas*, two Gorkhas and also the *pulis-ji* prostrate themselves before the image and touch the ground with their foreheads. They also ring the visitors bell. My *Pandit* and my coolie devout Buddhists, accomplish the same rites with the same ardour.

In the afternoon I await a visit. The *Mahant* of the *Math* of *Valacchi-Tol* had sent words that he would call over and had sent me to examine a manuscript that nobody in the monastery is able to decipher. He thought the works to be Buddhist one, because at the beginning is written: "*namo buddhaya*". The writing is correct but the Buddhism of the text stopped there. It is a very long and cumbersome commentary on the *Malati-Madhava* of a certain *Dasaratha*. Now the *Mahant* sends me words that he is ailing and cannot call on me. But since he has half opened his door, I shall, perhaps, succeed in wrenching it off and I reply that since he is ill, I shall pay him the visit. And I proceed toward the convent. It is a *Math* of *Jain Margis* that rigorously closes its doors to one and all. Long discussions take place. At last the *Mahant* informs me that he would come and meet me on the causeway, outside the monastery. While waiting for him a distraction offers itself. On a

neighbouring platform, in front of the temple of *kali* and facing the temple of *Bhairava*, on one of those rectangular brick platforms that encumber the roads and crossways a compact crowd assists to the representation of a *nataka* or so called one. Men, women and children are there covered with brass rings, flowered with marigolds and wearing necklaces of large oranges. Their heads are hidden under a fantastic mask with large round eyes and flat noses. On the top of their ears protrude two oblique stems supporting large gilded lozenges. Their head-gears consist of masks with very large crowns from which falls a tufted and greasy head of hair in Tibetan style. The personages are *Kali*, *Bhairava*, etc. The masked actors begin presenting grotesque greetings to the circle of spectator, then express by dancing the various sentiments possessing them. At last the *Mahant* arrives, a tall old man with a long white beard, draped in the yellow robe of the *sannyasis*. I address him in Sanskrit. He admits to me that he does not know it. The kind of novice he escorts does not know any more. Here am I reduced to Hindustan and dame it, my *Hindustani* is not worth my Sanskrit. I ask to see the "*pustak*". The kind *Mahant* replies with calm that he has none. And he has sent me one for examination. The sin of lying does not worry them, at least as regard the *Mlecchas*. In short, he consents to tell me that the *Pandit* of the monastery, absent at present, is returning tomorrow and then matters would be looked into. The perpetual tomorrow.

At *Timi* a *Pandit* of one of the *viharas* possesses, so it is rumoured, a rich collection, but he is on his way and will return next week. What new obstacle will the next week give rise to? All that I was able to scrape at *thimi* is reduced to a medical *encyclopaedia* which is not known to me from elsewhere. The *Kalyana Samgraha*, stuffed with quotations from *Caraka*, *Kashyapa*, *Harita*, etc. My good man of *Pandit* who followed me to *Bhadgaon* employes his spare time in searching *viharas* and I have even found a benevolent assistant, a small *pujari* of about a dozen years who officiates with his father in the temple of *Suraj Binaik* (*Surya Vinayaka*). His intelligent face struck my imagination in the street. I asked him to join my entourage, which has made him fairly proud and just now he has brought me a friend whose father is a Sanskrit-speaking *Pandit* and proprietor (owner) of ancient manuscripts. I intend to pay a visit soon to the said collection. ■

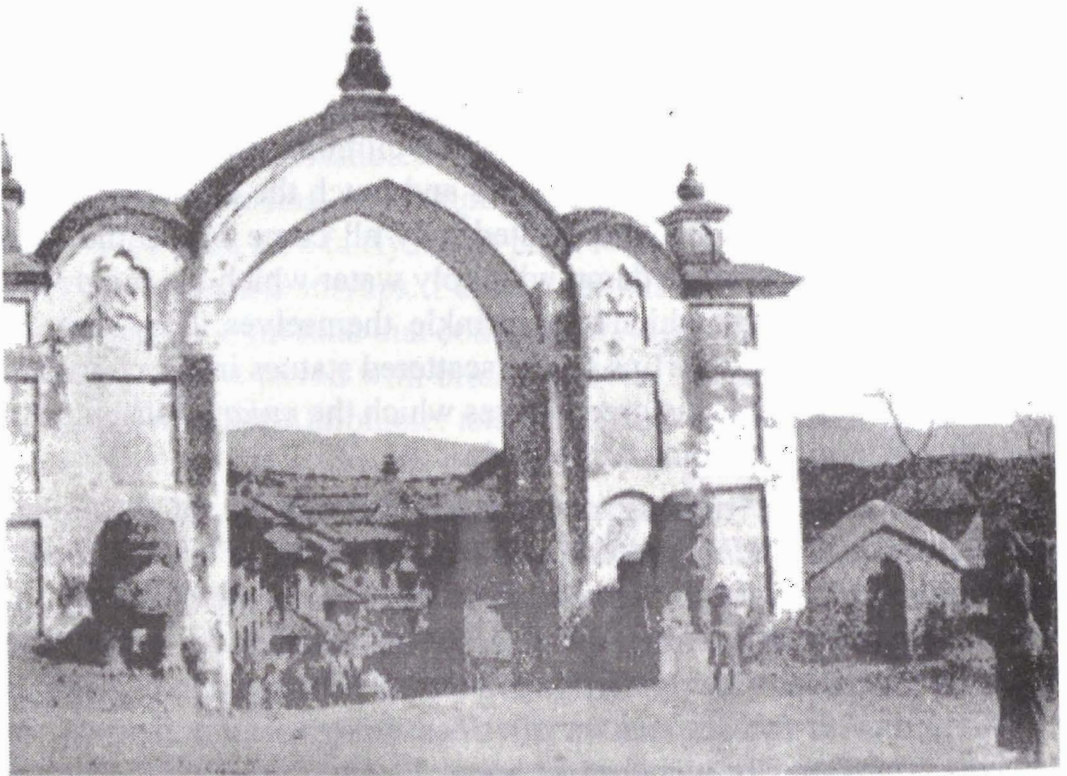
14th February, Bhatgaon

Twenty-six kilometer of mountains on foot and by what paths. I visited at one stretch *Changu Narayan* and *Sankhu*. I had my horse but simply as a companion and my feet alone have stood me in stead. The *Maharaja* returns on Monday from his winter rounds and my friend *Deb Shamsher* will, on that very day, resign his provisional powers. Will I find the same complaisance in the other? To avoid eventualities, I shall undoubtedly ask to go and greet him on his way at the time of his entry in the town. Suspicious as they are as regard to the Europeans they love to display in public their "*White connections*". The necessities of service have deprived me of my ordinary horse. It was sent in front of the *Maharaja* who was short of cavalry. It was an excellent *Bhotiya* horse fast and steady. There was no embankment of earth that serves as a protection to the flooded fields and at the same time as a narrow path to the pedestrians. We had made sudden dives, falling down with a lump of earth suddenly crumbled. The equilibrium roughly destroyed was restored while falling. My temporary horse is not *Bhotiya* and that is its fault. Yesterday, on a fairly rough path, it undoubtedly fell and I just had time to release the stirrups. I thought it wiser to trust only on my legs today, on the awful road that connects *Bhadgaon* to the town of *Sankhu*. The path at first paved with bricks, uneven full of holes and ruts is not more at the end of a kilometer and ends in a wretched runway at the foot of the first hill. The temple of *Changu Narayan* rises to the north of *Bhadgaon* on the summit of a lofty promontory which the *Mahadeo Pokhari* projects towards the west. In order to reach it one must first cross an enormous mass of alluvial sand, hollowed, corroded, ravaged, shaken by the rains, cut on all sides with steep fissures that compels one to climb and descend and climb again, jump and climb up. The village of *Changu Narayan* stretches on a narrow plateau at the foot of the mamelon that carries the temple. A long line of uneven steps leads thence to the temple. I hoped that, thanks to the complaisance of my staff, I would be able to extricate the pillar of *Mana Deva* from the soil and complete the fragmentary stamping of *Bhagvanlal*. Since his exploration the situation had modified. The pillar was then simply buried in the ground and only concealed its nine final lines on each facing. The piety of a devotee has now surrounded the base with *Nagas* stone the removal of which cannot be thought of and this has covered up another three lines. An idiotic "*Pandit*", preserver of the "*mandir*", has

advanced himself of his ignorance by showing me the door of the temple. I was only able to photograph from a distance the pillar with the lower frontage of the temple, adorned with a beautiful gate of gilded bronze. The temple is a large, two-storied one, with chappels erected irregularly around it and enclosed with a rectangle adjoining the *dharmasalas*. The small beams as well as the walls are carved with as much patience as with imagination; gods, goddesses, monsters, animals, flowers and especially representation of the practices of the *Kamasutra* are worked in the wood and enriched with lively colours where the blue and red predominate and which form a gay and harmonious whole. My *Pandit Mitrananada*, zealous Buddhist and much learned one for a Nepali, asks the *pujari* to open the sanctuary to make there his *puja*. The two *mukhiyas* and the *coolie* follow him. All three remove their head-gear and the *mukhiya* lays down their inseparable *kukhuri*. My usual *Mukhiya*, who is a *Kanyakubjiya* Brahman, sings *mantras* and *stotras* while climbing the steps. Before entering into, they prostrate themselves and touch the ground with the forehead. When the *puja* is completed they all come out to the loud sound of bells, Their hands damp with holy water which the *pujari* has distributed to them with which they sprinkle themselves. They sprinkle the drops from their finger tips on the scattered statues in the courtyard and place on their heads the green leaves which the *pujari* distributed to them after offering the same to the gods.

The *Manahra* rushing down from the heights of *Manichur* separates the hill of *Changu Narayan* from the plateau where *Sankhu* lies. Further up the stream the river even takes the name of *Sankhu*. It spreads fairly in a large valley which could be mistaken for a lake. The rice fields disappear under the irrigation waters. The surrounding slopes are covered with forests and on all sides noisy torrents descend in cascades. The valley of Nepal stops there, zigzag fashion on the slopes of *Manichur* climbing through the forest, the road to Tibet through the *Kuti* pass. The beautiful green between the river and the town is a real Tibetan encampment. They stop here in caravans before ascending the first slope. Man and woman, sturdy as beasts of burden, carry on their backs, piled up in baskets, crushing loads from which there often emerge a chubby and fat babe, real challenge thrown to all the law of hygiene. A leather strap that fits round the head bears all the load. *Sanhku* owes all her importance to these wandering *Bhotiyas*. The town

is small and carefully planned and the streets are remarkably clean. Everywhere along the causeway, there flows a streamlet of clear water. The temples of no importance, are tumbling down or and are in ruins. I only found the remains of an inscription on a broken water pipe, deposited against a small temple of *Shiva*. ■



Entry gate of Bhaktapur

16th Wednesday, Kathmandu

Now I am back to my house, to my familiar bungalow. Spring had preceded me. After an absence of eight days, I found the garden marvellously flowered with red and white. One cannot realise the divine harmony of the country side. A deep blue sky, immaculate, splendid, a warm sun but allayed by a kind breeze that still smells the glacier, the lukewarm shade, the young verdant sprouts in the darkened verdure of leaves that have stood the winter. A perfumed efflorescence that adorn the bushes and the tall trees, the gaiety of chirping spreads in the calm atmosphere, the song of familiar birds, flying through the house, the sonorous calls of the neighbouring cocks, the blue or lilac mountains just seen through the foliage, the silhouette of clearly defined pinnacles without roughness in the azure, the horizon fairly limited to be encompassed by the look, yet vast enough to give it free play, the transparent masses of rocks and the shadows bathed with light have transformed the country. Since day before yesterday Nepal is a paradise. The heat after these trying days was so strong that I felt myself on the verge of a sunstroke on my way up the long road . Leaving behind the twelve coolies with my usual servant, I intended to visiting the site of *Madhyalaku* where according to the *Vamshavalis* the *Thakuris* changed their capital. I had a fair amount of difficulty in finding the site. Neither the *Pandit*, the *mukhiya* nor the coolie knew its name. Fortunately, my *sepoy*, whose fervent devotion had made him familiar with all the temples of Nepal, was able to supply me with the indication. *Madhyalakhya* is on the right bank of the *Dhobikhola*, tributary of the *Bagmati*. In spite of the note in the *Vamshavali* I found no trace of ruins. They may have disappeared recently because *General Bhim Shumsher* had erected on the site of the *Madhyalaku* a vast palace surrounded by a large park. It appears that *Maharaj Bir Shamsher* saw with anxiety the fraternal friendship of *Bhim* and of *Chandra Shamsher*, so he “*induced*” his brother *Bhim* to leave *Thapathali* and to establish himself a little farther.

I had explored before this, the village of *Bole (Bode)* to the north of *Thimi*, The temple of *Maha Lakshmi* has its frontage adorned with chrome-lithographs where figure, the classical Italian brunette, and also a *Madonna* with the infant *Jesus*. Is she here to represent *Devaki* or *Krishna* ? But I found nothing ancient, in spite of the prayers of my escort. The hunt for inscriptions stirs them. In the evening at *Bhadgaon*

I heard *them* talking in the verandah, below my room and from 'pulis' to old 'mukhiya' from "coolie" to 'sepoys' it was as to who would claim the honour of having found or stamped the best "shilapatra". My honest coolie had addressed yesterday a fervent prayer to *Suraj Binaik* (*Surya Vinayaka*) in my favour. He had subjected himself to a preliminary fasting on his humble salary. He had bought grains and flowers intended for the god and he was careful to gather the flowers for the *puja* and to hand it to me as a guarantee of 'prasad' of divine favour. *Vinayaka* did not keep his word. This morning in crossing *Bole*, my *sepoys* points out a temple of *Bhimasena*, excellent patron of soldiers and with all the fervour of his heart addresses to him a simple but little used prayer: *O Bhimsen Maharaj, give us a shilapatra. Bhimsen* has not better succeeded than *Ganesh*. The gods are vanishing.**

And yet I had also made yesterday the pilgrimage to *Suraj Binaik*. The sanctuary of *Surya Vinayaka* one of the four *Vinayaks* of Nepal, hides in the forest to the south of *Bhadgaon* on the first slopes of *Phulchok*. The path rises in a steep slope and ends in a staircase. At the foot of the steps stands a small temple officiated by a woman. On the road from *Bhadgaon* to the temple there was a continuous line of devotees and especially female devotees in great pomp. They are properly attired before paying a visit to *Ganesh Maharaj* and the female devotees, the young ones especially, drape themselves with a skirt of flounces which seems to be held up by a crinoline or which recalls the basket-skirts. On their ebony black sari (some dyed with *henna*, the tress that stands stiff on top of the head) they all stick with a very conscious coquetry, marigolds of golden yellow. The temple is quite small, just a shelter above the idol but it is entirely plated over with sculptured brass. Facing the god there is a pillar bearing a large brazen mouse. As regards to inscriptions there is nothing, but a dazzling view on the line of glaciers that seem at each stage of the ascension to descend deeper down in the neighbouring valley, of unbearable brilliance in the setting of the luminous sky. In default of inscriptions, I found a manuscript. The *chota Pandit*, the small chap, with the cunning face, whom I had 'appointed' as a guide, gives but too much credit to my perspicacity. He is the most candid little scoundrel that *Bhadgaon* had

** Refer to the forthcoming monograph—
The Gods Are Vanishing intentionally
 By Harihar Raj Joshi : Indu Joshi

given birth to. His father has (he assures me and I have the proofs), an enormous collection of manuscripts. The father is wrong to absent himself and to close the door badly. My fellow tries the lock and discreetly borrows from the paternal shelves. He brought me a *Parashara dharma shastra* and a *Yoma dharma shastra* written on palm leaves. The episode of the *Gunadhya* inserted in the *Nepala Mahatmya* has given me to think that the *Brihatkatha* would be found here. I ask him if he has it and promise him, besides the price and gratification, to take his photograph. He brings me this morning an incomplete manuscript of the *Brihatkatha-shloka-sangraha*. I shall attempt to get out the rest of his. He brought me an associate equally reliable and who only asks for money. The difficulty lies in that, though not knowing exactly the manuscripts in their possession, they work at random. They brought me a *kalacakra tantra* a *Harishchandropakhyana* on *talapatras*. I refused giving them the list of my Buddhist desiderata and have promised them a penknife like mine (this penknife fascinates them), if they brought me five of them (Buddhist requirements). If only I had with me a stock of articles from Paris, the whole library of the papa would pass entirely into my hands. The brother of the said *chota Pandit* with whom I had the pleasure of conversing in Sanskrit has assured me with perfect candour that he possessed no manuscripts. But the proceedings “*ad majorem scientix gloriam*” continued and were transacted under the benevolent gaze of the authority. My *mukhiya* assists to these dealings. The rupees cross through him to the *chota Pandit* and I surmise that a few remains between his fingers. “*Captain Sahib*”, he says to me seriously, “*has ordered me to help you in procuring manuscripts*”. It is immaterial once in possession. I shall hasten to quit the country, I shall enjoy my forfeit more peacefully on the other side of the frontier.

And if *Belgium* was not so far distant from here. ■

18th February, Friday

Yesterday under a burning sun (the rains have brought us heat) I rode on horseback to *Patan*. My worthless haste to *Bhadgaon* was discarded and the *Majaraja* sent me a splendid animal. The *Pandit* solemnly declared to me that I would be admitted to view the inscription of *Narendradeva* in the temple of *Matsyendranath* on the condition that I came before midday. At the gate of *Patan* I find my *Mitrananda* depressed, as he had wrongly informed me, the inscription in the interior of the temple is from the IXth century of the Nepali era (XVIIIth century). All my journey, all my haste, all my pains for this result. I was obliged to practise the *Ksantiparamita* and show a happy mind in adversity. I went to the temple of *Matsyendranath* and I have at least assisted there to a curious spectacle. A chorus of old men in beautiful white fineries, broken, bent, toothless, shrivelled, crouched on the slabs in front of the temple, sang hymns, the glory of *Matsyendranath*, accompanied with a cadenced sound of cymbals, *songs*. countless and these cadaverous old men have continued for nearly an hour this musical exercise. The large and lofty temple is encircled by a rectangle of constructions, the usual *vihara*, but a public passage crosses the construction, nobody skirted the temple without devotedly stopping on the threshold and greeting the god with hands joined and the head bent. I photographed one of the *stupas* of *Ashoka* at *Lagan*. It is situated to the south of the town and then I returned with a gallop. *Captain Sahib* had informed me of the despatch of manuscripts collected by the order of the *Commander-in-Chief*.

Alas ! Alas ! Deception !

Abhidharmakoca vyakhya, Gandavyuha, Vidagdhaulkhamandana, Bhadrakalpavadana. Dvavimcatyavadana, Jatakamala :

Here are the results of fifteen days of official search. Yet I do not despair. The *Maharaja* had expressed the desire to see me in the afternoon and I intend to explain him on the pillar of *Changu Narayan* which must, however, be unearthed and on the inscription of *Narendra Deva*, which according to the people of the *vihara* of *Matsayendranath* is in the interior of the *Darbar* at *Bhadgaon*. *Captain Sahib* told me yesterday that I am known in the town as *Boudha Sahib*.

This week a priest who came from *Lhasa* went straight to the *Captain's* office to ask him if it was true that there lived at the *Residency*

a *Buddha Sahib*. Ah, if only I was the *Resident*! At the end of one year I shall have free admittance to all the collection of manuscripts and to all the temples. ■

19th February, Saturday

I come out of a fairyland or rather I fully live in it. I cannot help thinking of all the time of that poor '*Jacquemont*' who has known the same satisfaction and the same surprises. Yesterday *Maharaja Bir Shamsher* expressed the desire to grant an audience to me. I hastened to materialise it. *Captain Sahib*, according to the protocol, came in full uniform to escort me from the house. There was no vehicle this time. We proceeded together or rather separately.

There is nothing of a *Thapathali* character here. The houses show the different characteristics. The first courtyard is undoubtedly busy with subordinates and men in uniforms and Brahmans but once beyond the fence of the enclosure there is an absolute silence. There are no people. Just a servant who comes out at the noise of my gallop and introduces me inside the court of justice on the ground floor. It is right over there that His Highness, sitting on a mattress, leaning on a cushion decides the grave cases that escape to the competence of the court or the *Commander-in-Chief*. A huge tiger slain by the *Maharaja* in the *terai* and very cleverly stuffed greets me, perhaps to symbolise justice. With a discreet step, that draws not even resound on the slabs only followed by a General, *His Highness* enters: rather small, thin, the forehead pensive, the appearance of the face intelligent. He also wears a kind of day-gown. Greetings, then without any ceremony and with the same discreet step, we climb to the hall of the first floor, a vast gallery furnished in the English fashion and everywhere strewn with tiger skins. This is the *leitmotiv* here. He does not understand the interest that Nepal presents. I express to him that I have come to search for inscriptions and the texts of Buddhism. Nepal is the connecting link between the two worlds of the oriental thought. She still preserves, perhaps, the treasures of the Sanskrit literature. The thought of India belongs to humanity like a common treasure. Conclusion: it would be necessary to remove from the ground the pillar of *Changu Narayan*, stamp the inscription of *Narendra Dev*, if it is at *Bhadgaon* and invite the *viharas* to disclose their treasures. In the end the *Maharaja* invites me to join him tomorrow to the review of the *Shivaratri*.

Then to day it is the *Shivaratri*. A good Nepali as I am, I began my day by a pilgrimage to *Pashupati*. In a normal year, pilgrims come in myriad. They come from *Madras*, *Travancore* as well as from *Bombay* and *Calcutta*. But plague, that terrible plague, that comes along, has compelled the Nepali Government to close the access of the country to

the pilgrims. There are only Nepali then to come and at least they come in crowds. All along the steps that descend to the *Bagmati* they climb and descend. Men and women quietly unclothing themselves on the bank and plunging in that water which must be freezing. Each one, however, follows the customary *mudras* with his fingers and mutters the *mantras*. My '*thula babu*', the small *Pandit* of *Pashupati* soon learnt of my arrival. He comes and keeps me company and we converse in Sanskrit to the great surprise of the crowd. Intimate fraternity. The purificatory cows move along in the crowd. Monkeys clamber up the side of the temples, watch for the offerings and snatch them. One of them crosses the river carrying on his back, exactly in imitation of us, a baby monkey too weak to struggle against the current. The dogs, impure (unclean) as they are, also come to the feast and lick unconcernedly the greasy limbs of the idols, whilst birds freely plunder the grains. The beautiful ladies display attractive pyjama (*sari*), breeches out in the suave fashion so large that they prevent them from walking. It would be unworthy for a distinguished person to walk as an ordinary human being; one can see them on feast days crossing the streets and reaching the temples on the back of men. A *pauranika* reads or recites in a singsong manner a text that he does not understand and the *Yogis*, more or less professionals, display their austerities blowing their big couches and rattling their little bells to attract the crowd. In the afternoon my horse comes to fetch me and always in company with *Captain Sahib*. I enter inside the *Tundikhel*, the enormous field of manoeuvres that borders Kathmandu (eastern wall) and the palace of the *Maharaja*. A beautiful, long park grounds in what a beautiful setting on verdant mountains. To the west the *Dhaulagiri*, to the east the double throne of *Gauri Shankara*, gigantic and harmonious, rising in the spotless azure and so high that it dwarfs the neighbouring peaks in spite of their six thousand and seven thousand meters (19500 and 22700 feet). In the middle of the field a large solitary tree encircled with a circular terrace with two storeys. I cross the vehicle of the *Maharaja* which passes in front of the troops escorted by lancers and followed by a magnificent staff-officer. I hasten towards the central tree where the *Maharaja* almost immediately rejoins me with a crowd of *Generals* all trimmed with gold. Music, military salute and in this warlike setup and smell of powder, the *Maharaja* informs me that he has given the order to unearth the pillar of *Changu Narayan* and that I can go to that place at my own leisure (admittance being forbidden to me) along with my *Pandit* and *mukhiya* with brush and paper. He has also given the order to search the

stone of *Bhadgaon*. Long live Nepal, and this is not all. He has ordered to search for the manuscripts that I desire and he who will refuse to cede them, at least to have them copied, they will be forcibly borrowed. This is entirely the good despot. To attest to the firmness of his promises, I had the visit of the *Pandit* who cooperates for the research. *Mon. Shakyamuni*, would you believe it. What better pressure to discover Buddhist manuscripts ? *Shakyamuni-prasadayogat kim na labhyata ?* The good old *Shakyamuni* knows as much Sanskrit as I know Turkish. I have the permission to give him as assistants *Mitrananda* and the two associates duly trained and warned to go to undertake tomorrow a series of researches. But this eastern world is so slow to make a move. I often think at the story *Buhler* was telling me one evening; the long days of conversation on indifferent topics before tackling the purchase of an ordinary ancient coin. And I can see with regret the departure now near at hand, two and a half weeks at the most to spend here, when the seeds are so near from sprouting. Whilst *His Highness* gives me these good news the *Dhiraj* comes in a vehicle, the fine young man between 23 and 24 years of age, tall, strong, elegant, plated with diamonds, the feature insignificant. He does not speak English or rather he does not speak at all. The *Maharaja* presents me, explains the objects of my visit, praises my Sanskrit knowledge and the canons thunder all round and the rifle shots crack by the thousand. The king goes away in an open carriage in which also enter the *Maharaja* and the *Commander-in-Chief* and I remain with *General Chandra Shamsher*, a face with coarse hair on it and large protruding teeth but kindness in the look and in the manners. He tells me of *Alsace-Lorraine* with charming subtleties and invites me to choose myself the manoeuvres to be executed. And an improbable phenomenon takes place, mad phenomenon that it is, I who passes the review. The admirable troops so well trained to parade like automation that without words of command on a rhythm they keep up rhythm themselves by hitting the ground in turn with both their feet. They proceed with all the regulated movements of the rifle, with the precision of a machine. To obtain in the same afternoon an official order for the research of manuscripts an authorisation to unearth the pillar of *Changu Narayan* and to pass the review of Gorkha soldiers, is surely a day worth preserving in one's life. ■

21st February, Monday

Yesterday for the first time I was able to return to my residence alone. I had left the house in the early morning to proceed to *Thankot*. At five in the afternoon I had neither eaten nor drank, yet so that with explicit consent of my *mukhiya* I galloped off at full speed and proceeded in front. On the road as well as in town, the compact crowd made room with good will without compelling me to make a speech. I crossed the market, followed the *bazar* without difficulty. These brave people even chased the bulls and buffaloes that came too close to my security. The day had been very fortunate. I picked up no less than six ancient steles; two of them are, unfortunately, indecipherable the stone having decayed (corroded) to such an extent. But the remaining four are good and very important. I found two at *Thankot* and four in a small village named *Kisipidi*. *Thankot* is in the western extremity of the valley at the foot of the perpendicular slope that leads to the pass of *Chandragiri* and that houses a communication depot between Nepal and India at 16 kilometers from Kathmandu. *Thankot* has known more flourishing days. She has had her *Darbar* of which there remains no trace. The only temple in honour of *Maha Laksmi* is insignificant. The horn of bulls sacrificed adorn the inside and the outside of the temple. Standing against a particular house, separated from the causeway by a cluster of small *caityas* of brickwork and plaster falling in ruins, I found a stele in good state of preservation, to the north of these *caityas* in an old deserted *hiti* (washing place). I found another stele of the same epoch, but which only shows trace of characters. From *Thankot* I scaled the foot of *Chandragiri* to visit *Matatirtha* at about a mile southeast of *Thankot*. The *Vamshavali* places the neighbourhood of *Matatirtha*, the capital of the *shepherd* kings, the *Guptas*, consecrated by *Ne Muni*. *Matatirtha* is a rectangular enclosure encircled by the forest. At the foot of a terrace that supports a small sanctuary, five or six stone spouts pour out the water from the neighbourhood streams but alone among them has the title and value of a *tirtha*. The water that escapes from it, marvellously limpid, fills up a rectangular basin. It is there that homage is paid to the spirit of a deceased mother. A stela dating from the close of the XVIIth century, and that is all. The path that rejoins the road to Kathmandu from *Matatirtha* crosses the village of *Kasipidi*, at 500 meters north of *tirtha*. In the small enclosure of a small temple of *Ganesh*, first inscription; on a small square to the east, another very

large stele but entirely corroded; against a cluster of temples in honour of *Bhagavati*, two other steles. I have not had the time to examine them. I just had the time to stamp and photograph on the spot. ■

24th February, Thursday

I completed Monday with my journey to the *Darbar* of Kathmandu. I began to take the stamping of the epigraphical inscription of *Pratapa Malla* which awakens here so much curiosity and envy. It is engraved on a stone fitted in the western wall of the palace. On the temple facing it all the steps are also decorated with epigraphical inscriptions. Less in view, they have remained indifferent and I took care not to attract any attention on them. This old crazy *Pratapa Malla* costs me forty leaves of stamping paper. More than elsewhere my presence before the enigmatic inscription had brought a crowd. Police officers, coolies blows from fists and from rifle butts do not prevent them from overflowing the barriers and to feverishly press round me. The inscription is regarded as mysterious and a positive source to reach the hiding place of a fabulous treasure. Where is the treasure? Here is the hitch. And they envy me as the person, who can explain because a reward of ten lakha of rupees or more than a million and a half of *Francs* is assured to him who will give the translation. Here is something that humbles the most attractive and lucrative rewards for the Institute. Alas, one must lower one's pretensions. The crowned pedant who was *Pratapa Malla*, was pleased, according to what I have been able to read, to indicate his royal and literary titles in various writings and he has also dated the engraving. He has added the name of the writings employed. Unfortunately, the base of the stone is fairly corroded. The names are deciphered with difficulty and when they are legible, they are not always intelligible. The indication would, however, be indispensable in certain cases. There are characters here that remind of nothing unknown. I was only able to stamp one third of it but attendants will do the rest without me.

I had visited the temple of *Buddhanilakanth* day before yesterday. It lies at the foot of the *Shivapuri*. In spite of the name, the divinity of the site is *Vishu Narayana*. The temple is encircled as usual with a rectangle of *dharmsalas* with a rectangular basin also bordered by a narrow footpath and parapet. A giant stony *Narayana* is stretched on the surface of the water, sheltered under a canopy of snakes. The light foliage of bamboo swaying over the divine statue causes the light to vacillate on these stony limbs giving them an appearance of life. The impression is captivating. In the courtyard women and children of *Bhotiya* descent beg for a *bakshish* without the least shame. A small

group of *Yogis* rubbed over with the ashes, almost nude, reads the *yoga Vasistha* without understanding a word of it. Exactly, as in the Buddhist temples, a stone portico carries a large bell, against this portico is built a low masonry work in which are engraved a few inscriptions. The only ancient one was collected, and fortunately, by *Bhagvanlal*. It is no longer legible. *Budhanilkanth* is at a distance of two steady miles northeast from Kathmandu, directly at the foot of the mountain. The road that leads to it is fairly good and it covers the underground canal that brings the waters of *Shivapuri* into the reservoir of Kathmandu.

From *Budhanilkanth* I go and visit the village of *Chapaligaon*, that borders the path at about a mile south of *Budhanilkanth*, direction of Kathmandu, Against the small temple of *Narayan* there stands a stele the top of which has crumbled down but the base of it is quite clear and the date precise. From there, on returning towards Kathmandu to the right of the path but a small distance on a fairly narrow plateau eaten into by the *Bishnumati*, the old village of *Dharampur* with a few solitary huts in the vicinity exists. There again a half-buried stele which I unearth. The ground has fortunately preserved the stone the date is clearly legible. The stone faces a temple of *Ganesh*. The village has also a small miserable looking *caitya* of brick and plaster.

Yesterday, new excursion in the direction. I visited the village of *Tokha*, north of Kathmandu and built on a plateau that faces *Dharampur*. The soil of the valley is entirely made up of the same alluvial sand as that which constitutes the valley of the *Ganges*. The thickness of the layer is considerable. Many small streams that descend the mountain slopes and that furiously swell in the monsoon, dig into and cut their beds and end by flowing in a kind of gorge of sand. Towns and villages are perched on the plateau, thus, cut up in the mass of sand access by crossing from one bank to another, Even a narrow river like the *Bishumati*, that at this period of the year, flows as much water as the *Manzanares*. It is necessary to descend and climb the tracks that crumble under foot. *Tokha* has given me an inscription, a stele, also decorated with the conch and the *chakra*. The top has entirely worn away, the base preserved in the soil is clear and gives the date, unfortunately, of the three numerical signs. The second is confused with the stone. Photography will perhaps reveal what the paper, my finger and my eyes combined have not been able to see. At last, today, new meeting in the hall of the manuscripts of the *Dabar School*. I saw the

Natakas, the *Kavyas*, the *Nyaya*, but all this portion of the catalogue or more modestly of the list abounds with so many errors that it is impossible to guide one's self at first sight. I intend to mention an excellent manuscript of the *Bharatiya Natyashastra* of the last century. Further *Damaru Vallabha* points out to me a commentary of the *Bharaitya* composed by a *Nepali Raja* and the manuscript of which he intends to impart to me. My *sepoy* and my *mukhiya* have just returned with the stamping of the *Darbar inscriptions*. They are quite proud, because they have also brought me the stamping of two ancient inscriptions they had "discovered" at Kathmandu. I took care as being afraid of cooling down their zeal and not to tell them that both have already been published. Here they have passed as epigraphists. In any case they have been able to recognise in the lot two really very ancient inscriptions they are now 3 & 4 of *Bhagvanlal*. They have even recognised the mark of "Samvat". Decidedly I am a born professor. I have made students into archaeologists and what students again, two *tommies* (foot soldiers). This must not be taken as ridiculous as would say the poet *Francois Coppee*— *After my departure, my "students" will be able to continue my work.*

This very morning, *Captain Sahib* came to bring me information on the hot water spring mentioned by the Chinese. It appears that like *Wang Hiuen Ts'e* did it, all the Chinese and Tibetans, who descend into Nepal and India through the *Kirong* pass, the usual course for the outward journey, stop at this hot spring and cook their food in it. And all the details of the Chinese traveller are of exactitude to shame the modern geographers and topographers. It appears that, near this source, there are Chinese inscriptions. *Captain Sahib* has promised to send the *mukhiya* to take stampings. I should also like to have by the same means the *epigraphy* of *Nayakot* that must have as ancient inscriptions. What results would I not reach if my sojourn could be prolonged? The *Maharaja* has sent today four soldiers to *Changu Narayan* to unearth the pillar and the *Commander-in-Chief* has ordered the scribes of the hall of manuscripts to bring to him the copies that I had ordered in order that he might verify for himself the correction before imparting them to me. Is it this very country described by the tale teller of voyages?

26th February, Saturday

Heat has suddenly commenced and with it the days have shortened. Impossible to leave the house before 3 p.m. I have even given up working in the afternoon in the *veranda* to the northeast, the sparkling heat made my head feel heavy. I was obliged to seek the shelter of the thick walls of the bungalow. Yesterday I have again picked up something *epigraphical*. It was referred to me that a *Brahman* had come to inform *Captain Sahib* of the existence of a pillar with an old inscription. The good *Captain* took me himself to *Naksal*, a suburb of Kathmandu, exactly opposite the palace of *Dhiraj*; between the two is a large depression where flows a streamlet of canalised water and where stretch rice fields. The village stands between the road to *Harigaon* and that to *Pashupati* through *Deopatan*. In the centre a fairly high ridge looking like a *stupa* is seen. It appears as the site of the ancient steles one almost completely defaced the other in fairly good state of preservation, with the exception of the top. I then stamped and photographed them. We returned to the *Residency* through *Lajimpat*, which is an ordinary place with a small temple and *linga*. Near the temple is an image of *Vishnu* in a broken attitude, the left leg raised towards the shoulder and underneath a votive inscription in the style resembling that of *Mahankal* but in a worse state of preservation. Here the stone is absolutely bare and the image is contemporaneous to the inscription that seems to be of the VIth—VIIth century. Today *Pandit Shakyamuni* has brought me his booty. It is not without interest. To begin with an excellent manuscript of the *Candravyakarana* procured at *Bhatgaon* and which had the advantage of supplying a useful historical data. The colophon bears:

nepalabagate mrgankarasaynechaya (?)
 pancabanayudha...(581).
 cricripacupaticaranavavindarcannaparayanari
 purajadaityatripurasu
 ramanavinrjjitacrisam
 saratariningouricvara-crimahecva
 ravatarcrlaksminaryanacricir
 jayaksamalladevaanujaoricrijaya
 jivamalladevasshelvvijayararajye....

(*Jivamalla* is missing in all the lists).

I found a good manuscript of the *Prakṛita sanjivini* (*Prakṛit grammar*). A manuscript of the *Madhyamakavṛtti* (called here like always *Vinayasūtra*). Important commentaries of the *Kalacakra Tantra* the *Vimalaprabhā*, very rare works and of which it would perhaps be desirable to have a copy.

*Iti crimulatantranusarinyam
dvadacasahasrikayam
laghukslacakratan trarajatikayamvimalaprechyam
askalemaravighnavinacatahparams
tadevatasaumarganiyamoddecahparnms
tadevatasaumarganiyamoddecah prathamah
And so on.*

The manuscript has more than 300 pages. It seems to me as being important to the study of the *Tantric* doctrine. I also found the manuscript of another new text, written under the reign of *Rudra Deva*—works translated in Chinese by Fa-t'ien in the Xth-Xith century (*Nanjio* 864). It is interesting to observe, to the credit of Chinese exactitude, that the Chinese title translates exactly *ratna guna* (*pao-te*), whereas the title given in *Nanjio* simply shows-

Prajnaparamitasamcayagatha.

At lasts a manuscript bearing the colophon.
*iti paramitaparikatha, subhasi taratnakarandake simapta
krtir acaryacurasya granthapramanam; asya catam.*

It does not appear doubtful to me that *Arya-cura* must be restored. Lastly, there was a manuscript of the *Caturavargasamraha*. The hunt is not finished. I still hope for some more game. Regarding big game a tiger came down the mountain yesterday and walked through the streets of *Patan*, "*quaerens quem devoret*", and my friend *Deb Shamsher* went out bravely and shot it himself. It was the event of the day. ■

2nd March, Kathmandu

On Tuesday I made a distant and painful excursion to *Pharphing* but without result. *Pharphing* is to the south of Kathmandu at a distance of 16 or 18 kilometers, leaning against the mountains that close the valley on a plateau about 300 meters (975 feet) high or a real altitude of about 1500 meters (4875 feet). In fact *Pharphing* scarcely belongs to Nepal strictly speaking. In order to reach here one must make a fairly steep ascension on the slope of the mountain and afterwards a deep valley where spread in graduations cultivation and rustic houses whereas the higher slopes contrast with their barren raggedness of the wooded summits of the other mountains. The road to *Pharphing* detaches itself from the principal road between Kathmandu and Patan almost at the very gate of Patan, takes an oblique course towards the southwest, passes in front of the western *stupa* of *Ashoka*, crosses two *kholas* (this is the name given to streamlets), flowing in vast beds and almost flat plateau. Then a little before meeting *Bagmati*, it again bends to the west, descends towards the *Bagmati* and crosses a large (village) *Kokhona* (*Khokana*), where there are a fairly large temple and a *caitya* of no interest and without epigraphy. Then it reaches the *Bagmati* a little before its progress from official Nepal. The river in fact elbows almost immediately towards the eastsouth, and skirting the cliffs on which is built *Bagmati*, penetrates into as mysterious a defile as the north pole. The *Bagmati* descending directly from the *Ganges* must open a direct means of communication between India and Nepal. The Nepali do not trouble themselves to open to their invading neighbours a door that has no bolt or lock. At the mouth of the gorge on a vast field the *Darbar* has erected an asylum for lepers as a kind of scarecrow. By way of bridge between the tow banks, a line of small beams just as large as the bare foot too, and immediately afterwards, the path begins to clamber up steeply. *Pharphing* seemed to promise more results apart to escape the upheavals, rarely visited if ever by a traveller. There are the ruins of a *darbar* and two very popular temples; *Shesa Narayana* and *Daksina Kali*. *Shesa Narayana* (*Sikha Narayan* as they call it here) does not only attract the Nepali, the *Bhotiyas* also come to it. On my arrival a group of them has been living in one of the *dharmasalas* and a stone bears inscribed in relief in the Tibetan style,

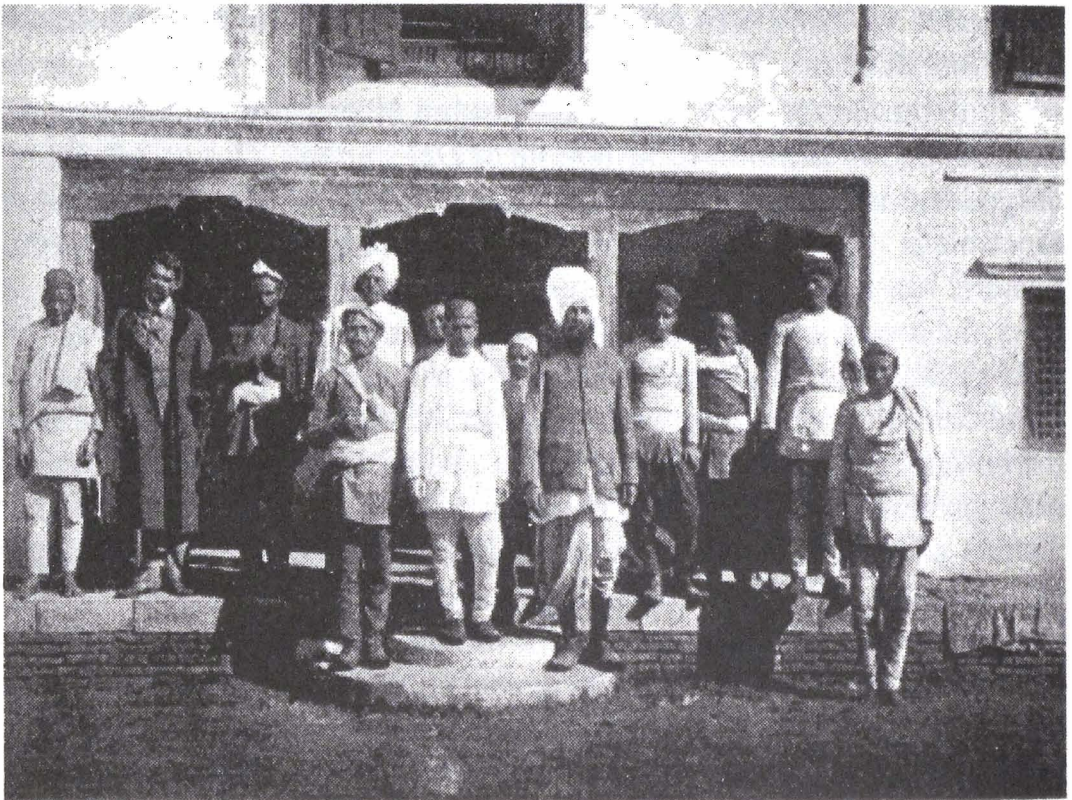
Om mani padme hum

is fairly unexpected here. No luxurious constructions here like in *Changu Narayan*. A few miserable and small temples stuck against the very rock and only accessible by a perpendicular staircase, the statue doubly holy. A fissure open above in the rock allows the escape, during four months in the year, of a white and limpid cascade. In *Switzerland* one would call it the *Pissevache*. Here it is Kathmandu where the holy cow and some animals are worshipped in real earnest. Besides, water spurts out here from everywhere, limpid and gay from floor to floor in basins where the piety of the faithful feed numerous fish. In the village, situated to the east of the temple, I stamped an inscription of *Jyotir Malla*, one of *Sri Nivasa Malla*, the name of which is unknown to me from elsewhere.

To the east of the village at the bottom of a narrow and deep gorge with wooded slopes stands the temple of *Daksinakali*. The popularity of the goddess is marked by the ornament she wears, Their reported value of jewels is five lakhs and the idol is fifty to sixty centimeters high. There is not even a temple. A square enclosure *dharmsalas* on three sides, the fourth an ordinary wall in which is embedded the statue of the goddess, sheltered under a kind of *Chinese* hat in copper, adorned with many coloured bits of cloth and rattles. The daily sacrifice of the bull (he-buffalo) is just completed. The blood squirts according to the rules of the profession on the idol and the head slowly severed is deposited at the feet of the goddess and the large decapitated body still convulses from the neck, legs, tail. It is still quivering flesh. They drag it outside, singe it like they would a fowl over a straw fire and then they distribute the portions to the staff. Only a modern stele for inscription. I must console myself with the site that is ravishing. A small torrent the *Kali khola* encased between forests rising perpendicularly flows through the rocks that encumber its meandering bed; shifted by bushy foliage softened by the breeze of the streamlet, the dazzling heat of the south is only a cool caress. Kali is not near from being deserted by her adorers. Yesterday evening I was talking with the small brother of *Babu Mitra*, a lad of fifteen to sixteen years emancipated by an English education. 'I', he said, "*I believe in nothing as regard to gods and supernatural things: all these are fables for the children. And after this profession of faith perfectly sceptic, without pose or pause, without any indisputable proofs.* And he relates to me the miraculous apparition of *Kali* that he has not seen himself with his eyes, but he has seen the people who saw

them and in what a state they were. Would you now doubt ? It seemed to me for a while that I was not in Nepal.

Today a torrential rain and quite cold which warns us of another rise in the thermometer. ■



Levi's personnels at Bhaktapur
with Mukhia Lalit Bam, Sepoy Sri Ram Singh and Pandit Mitrananda including soldier,
Sais (for the horse) Police and others

4th March, Friday

I was in the house busy with my manuscripts when I was asked to witness a spectacle of the *Holi*. The *Holi* is the great spring festival of India* and it is interesting to see how, after all, the human imagination is stretched, India has, even her *confettis* for eight days. The people walk about the streets carrying in sacks or small tubes a red powder and even if he was the *Maharaja*, whosoever passed by in white clothes, was pitilessly sprayed. Here also then takes place the festival of washerman, let us say *dhobis*. The cloth stained with red that resists to washing, and however valuable it may be, belongs by right to the *dhobi*. And it is in these narrow and swarming lanes a curious pushing of a reddish crowd, the powder sticking to the hair, beard as well as to the clothes. This nation of Nepal is a perpetual spectacle, such as I have seen it in the '*Lines*' today, or such as I had observed it everywhere in Kathmandu. A group of brick makers had lined up on a long mat. They were singing choruses, Those perpetual choruses of the East in which gaiety mingles with melancholy, all in mezzotintos, undulating and fleeting, simple and powerful evocation of the infinite. In the centre a small group of instrumentalists, kettle-drums, cymbals, gongs, rattles, tambourines, Two or three would rise by turn, play and dance with the contorsions of monkeys, entirely smeared with red the actors of *Thespis*. The chorus ceases. Three of the brick-makers go to a corner to disguise themselves. Music and there enters a shepherd lass of the *terai*, so it appears. I have found again my *Tharunis*. The *Tharuni* in question is quite simple, one of the three brick-makers who, this time, has smeared his face with ashes to soften the bronze glitter and who has also painted the eyes as they often do to very small girls. A large black ring gives to the look quite an enigmatic and voluptuous allurements. The shepherd lass requests the public indulgence. She will sing and dance to honour the divinity. A shepherd arrives clad in a rough overcoat knotted on his head that vaguely resembles the skin of an animal. He starts courting the shepherd lass, mingling with passionate appeals, ludicrous gestures and subterfuge. There appears a rival. In short, a pastoral scene, the classical and perpetual pastoral scene of love and I found here once again, longing and real, my hypothesis on the origin of the Indian drama. Yes, this idyllic country caressed by the sun and bathed in light,

* Like Shrove Tuesday or Lent or carnival. This is added in the translation to make it further clear. But it is not there in the original French version of Sylvain Levi— Harihar : Indu

the pastoral amiable and smiling, is as old as the world. And beneath this fortunate climate that allows the human form its free play, the body is so supple so easily graceful that these rough brick workman intended to mistake their role of women. I was obliged to leave the representation to ascend the *Dharahara* the lofty column erected by *Bhimsen Thapa* to the east of Kathmandu, quite against the precinct in which it penetrates and the manoeuvring camp. A hideous construction, that contrasts with the taste of the country. But this is a Gorkha whim, it is true. From the summit at a height of 40 old meters, one embraces a view of the whole valley. But to day again the horizon was misty and the splendid range of glaciers was hidden.

While visiting me this morning *Captain Sahib* brought his eleven years old son, his ten years old daughter, and a nephew of seven years, an orphan whom he had provided shelter, love and care. They were in their best dresses, the boys in a combination of the collegian and the soldier with a great coat and a hat with the visor gold-laced, the little girl whom a bearer brought was dressed in large skirts and the head embellished with the ceremonial gold plate. I was distressed for not being able to give or show anything to this little world but the photographs of my kin were things of a great curiosity to them. ■

7th March, Monday

The Nepali *Darbar* has kept its word. I have a complete stamping of the pillar of *Changu Narayan*. Not less than four soldiers and three days to attain this result. The pillar is now fitted into a kind of sculpture stone ring that gives it the appearance of a base. It has been necessary at first to lift this much heavy ring and to erect a wooden framework to support it a system of props that allowed the approach to and the stamping of the stone. I leave out here a list of the ancient Buddhist works known by Chinese translations and the *Darbar* has promised me to pursue its search. My searchers have pointed out to me two very important texts; to all requisitions, even official, the holders have replied that there was a mistake and that they did not possess the manuscripts in question. But the least knowledge of India teaches the worth of these categorical replies that from an express 'no' proceeds along very slowly by small stages to a final 'yes'. The possessors of these manuscripts are Brahmans and it is a matter of conscience with them to make known a traditional works. I am also awaiting a reply with regard to an old text in the possession of an old Brahman, dwelling in a house of the mountain and who without refusing to hand over the text replies to all the notices by the perpetual eastern inertia. The *Commander-in-Chief* has sent him a *Pandit*, the *Captain Sahib* has sent him a *mukhiya*. He is out. He is ill. He will bring it himself. And I get mad with anger on seeing approaching of the day of my departure and this rogue of a Brahman who does not stir. I promised him yesterday evening by a messenger 5 rupees reward if he comes to-morrow. *Five rupees*. This savours of the whim of the American multimillionaire. There is a great deal to bet on, however, that the resistance by inertia will prevail on the inclination for lure.

In default of new Buddhist texts, *Pandit Shakyamuni* brought me a treatise on veterinary matter

*iti cri Rupanaryanetyadima bahajadhirajecriman
Madanondrasena
Krtan Sarasamgrhe Calibotram Amaaptam.*

In the first clock there is a different name.

*Crimatsuryam namaskrtya reventam turagadhipam
crimad Devendrasenena kriyate sarasamgrhaah*

(each *shlok* is accompanied by a vernacular translation)

verse 2 : uddrty calihotrani balanam bodhaetave mandarendrendraserena
kriyate sugamo vidhih-

The *Vidagdhavismapana*. a collection of charades, engmas, etc. —
in verse with partial translation in *Parbatiya*.

In the evening I was invited to visit the “*Lines*” of the *sepoys* to witness a “*show*”, a *nautch* (*Dance*) managed by the *Jemadar*. On the greensward of manoeuvres a few poles are erected and cloth stretched above them. All around benches and a few chairs for people of importance. No *nautch* (*Dance*) girls. The type is rare in Nepal and during this week of the *Holi*, they are invited everywhere. And then the body of *nautch* girls has suffered vicissitudes. The queen of *nautch* girls expiates in prison, the sin of having pleased too many admirers. She was known to have granted her favours to a very few *Brahman* or *Kshatriya* gentleman and to have enticed them to lose their castes. The Hindu law severely punishes this offence. She was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment and all the *Brahmans* implicated to one year each. It has been the great scandal of Nepal. In default of *nautch* girls, the people have dancing boys; the biggest, a lad of sixteen or seventeen years representing *Krishna*, wears a high crown on the head, a kind of cloak on the shoulders and a long blouse of a beautiful blue colour tightened at the waist. Another boy smaller still resembles *Radha*, the lover of *Krishna*. Lastly, boys of eight and twelve years represented the shepherd lasses, companions of *Radha*. In the beginning after a chorus and symphony or orchestras, a large curtain is unfolded which displays the images of *Krishna* and *Radha*. Incense is burnt, lamps are swung, and hymns are sung. Then the real spectacle begins, from nine at night to four in the morning; it is the same subject repeated. *Radha* sings his distressed passion and moans on his forlornness. *Krishna* only thinks of playing on the flute, the friends of *Radha* come to console him and one of them begs of *Krishna* to satisfy his mistress. Weary at last, he gives in for a while. The shepherd lasses hasten forward and *Krishna* leads a dance of the “*Ras Lila*”. Then he returns to his flute and the whole thing begins again. The monotony of this tune is a little changed by the whims of the *Vidusaka*, dressed in Nepali style, among all of these whimsical personages. He is knocked about like a ball scoffed, mocked, beaten, peppered with blows from fists then tripping and begging for *bakshish* he receives kicks on his behind. The *sepoys* in their trousers and white turbans, motionless, burst out laughing at these ludicrous farces; but

they gaze with intense religious emotions at the eyes of *Krishna* and those of the shepherd lasses. It is so sacred a thing, tells me *Captain Sahib*. Sacred or not at midnight, I felt sleepy and return to the *bungalow*. ■

8th March, Tuesday

This morning, visit of *Captain Sahib* for my arrangements for departure. I must regulate diplomatically my visit of farewells to the *Majaraja* and to all the *Shamsher*— *Deb Shamsher*, *Commander-in-Chief*, *Chandra Shamsher*, the real generalissimo; *Bhim Shamsher*, General. I completed them in the vehicle of the *Maharaja* placed at my service. Leaving the *bungalow* at one o'clock, I only returned at five, namely that the visits were not an interchange of ordinary wordings. I attempted to induce the *Maharaja* to create a museum of Nepali archaeology. He was impressed and allured by the idea and has on the very spot asked for essential information.

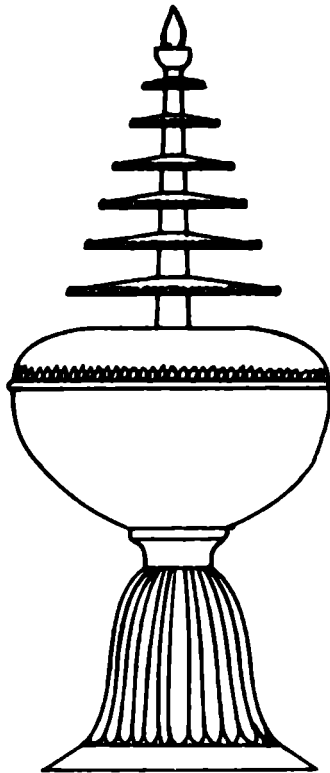
Deb Shamsher offered me in perfect preservation a manuscript of the *Prajnaparamita* adorned with paintings and written during the reign of *Vigrahapala*, then old of about a thousand years for the French Republic and to me personally a manuscript of a commentary of the *Vidgadhavismapana* written in the IVth century of the Nepali era or in the XIIIth or XIVth century. He asked me the photograph of my children that I left him in exchange for his. And all the *Shamsher* vied with one another in kindness and in promises, placing themselves at my service for all researches that might interest me. In returning to the *bungalow*, I find the compound crowded with people the *sepoys*, the musicians, the dancers come to entertain me with the clatter of the *holi*; symphonies, songs and dances. I still have provision of red powder, I throw it on them. I receive the same in return. It is a real battle with *confettis*. ■

9th Wednesday

Eve of departure. Each one comes by turn to bid farewell. My *Pandit* brings me an ivory comb. *Pandit Shakyamuni* brings me a letter from *Vaikuntha Nath Sharman*, *Pandit* of the *Commander-in-Chief* and sends me a walking stick of *areca* with an ivory handle (the *areca* nut is a guarantee of happiness according to the *Shastras*) and *Mitrananda* hands me a few Nepali paintings. Lastly, *Captain Sahib* arrives and in the name of the *Maharaja* he gives me a Nepali dress, a *khukuri*, a small cap and small sticks of incense despatched from *Lhasa* and reserved for ceremonial worships. Lastly, the supreme rarity, pre-eminently the bearer of good tidings receives a gold coin. He also informs me that the *Maharaja* through a particular favour, places his open carriage at my disposal to carry me as far as *Thankot* where ends the road practicable for carriages. ■

At last on 10th Thursday

I leave Nepal. My *Mukhiya*, my Nepali soldier, who have served me for so long as a guide and companion, after having been my *peon* and my *gaoler*, *Lalitbam*, the Gorkha who wished to follow me back in company with my *Resident sepoy*, *Sri Ram Singh*, as far as *Bhimpedi* at the foot of the mountain, beyond the pass of *Chandragiri* and that of *Chishagarhi* are all here and when I shook hands with them at the hour of departure, on the square at *Bhimpedi*, crowded with my coolies, *Kahars*, *dhuliwalas*, *palkiwalas* and the crowd of villagers who had hurried to the spot to see me, the *Sahib*. *Lalitbam* and *Sri Ram Singh* were sobbing like children and I hastened to jump into the palanquin as my eyes were getting wet. ■



Nepali Vase in the form of Stupa

For your reference and reflection, please

This is not the biography of *Maharaja Dev Shamsher*. Nor a biographical sketch of *Maharaja Dev Shamsher* it is.

It is the English rendering of the daily diary, *carnet de sojour*, **Deux mois Au Nepal**, Two Months in Nepal , January through March of 1898 of *Sylvain Levi* in Nepal where he had his study and research and field work during January through March of 1898 for his study, research and field work in Nepal in which *Maharaja Dev Shamsher*, then the *Commande-in-Chief* had lent his assistance, help and all possible cooperation to *Sylvain Levi*.

It provides a brief account of the commitment and the contribution of *Maharaja Dev Shamsher* of Nepal. And it is the account of the co-operation of *Maharaja Dev Shamsher*, then the *Commander-in-Chief*, that helped the famous French scholar *Sylvain Levi* to write his oft quoted book *Le Nepal*, which many people have heard about it and some had seen it being referred to by earlier scholars and copied them blindly. And a very few to be counted in the finger have gone through it.

Le Nepal, original in French, is said to have been translated or rendered into English by a certain Bengali gentleman, may be S. Mitra (Samir or Subrato) into English under the supervision of Levi himself for the handy reference of those who were then interested to have the French version of that history of Nepal.

We have taken the liberty in keeping modern nomenclatures within brackets for the handy reference of those who are interested.

Interesting it is to note herein that *Dev Shamsher's* contribution and commitment were adopted and followed with religious fervour by his 'successor' who is said to have *adopted 'all conceivable tricks and traps'* to usher the power and be the *Maharaja* then or to put himself on his head the popular *teena chande sripeca*, *the crown with three moon shaped tiara of diamond*.

After *Maharaja Dev* was driven away to Dhankuta he was then popular as Dhankute Maharaja or the Maharaja of Dhankuta. The residence where he stayed was popular and famous as Darbar constructed in the midst of pine tress. Lateron this place came to be popular as Gauda, having the

headquarters of the district then. And I am, Harihar, from Dhankuta wherein my father Krishna Raj Joshi had worked under Maharaja Dev, states one oral tradition.

Yet another oral tradition is there that states that Maharaja Dev arranged a regular pooja or worshipping of Nisan Bhagawati in Dhankuta and Maharaja Dev entrusted Krishna Raj Joshi to continue it, which he did throughout his stay in Dhankuta and till he breathed his last in Kathmandu in the same area of Putali Sadak now Ram Shan Path which once covered the area belonging to Maharaj Dev Shamsher.

After his sojourn in Dhankuta Maharaja Dev went to Darjeeling via Illam as Chandra Shamsher had his 'trusted eyes' planted amidst the people of Maharaja Dev. After a few days at Illam he stayed for a short while in Darjeeling at the vicinity of Herbert Hill, so popular now as Birch Hill, where young hearts mingle together observing or even celebrating the Valentine's Day each and every day. It was here in Darjeeling that we had seen the inception, development and formation of the Gorkhaland movement.

He then left for Dehra Dun and went towards Moussourie, where my eldest son, Tanoj, had gone there as a child along with my wife Indu and her father the noted Nepali literatuer Purna Das Shrestha and mother Krishna Devi Shrestha. And it is this very area of Moussourie diversion road where there is the famous Pestlweed College where my grandson Tushar studies now.

After a short stay at Moussourie Maharaja Dev came to Jharipani area where he had his lovely and lively residence popular as Nepal Darbar and popular as Fairlawn Palace. He was popular there as the Maharaja or even Raja of Nepal..

It is *Maharaja Dev Shamsher*, who thought of renewing the old ties with China in the new context. He had, thus, planned to having diplomatic relationship with China and accordingly a plan was chalked out to send a high level delegation to China.

This idea of *Maharaja Dev Shamsher* was later on, religiously followed and implemented by *Chandra Shamsher* when he came to be the *Maharaja* and sent his son, Krishna Shamsher, to the then China, the *Republic of China*.

Krishna Shamsher, the son of Maharaja Chandra and special envoy of Nepal, had then visited Peking wherein he met and exchanged views with *President Chiang Kai Shekh of Republic of China*.

General Krishna Shamsher also visited *Hang Chao* wherein he was received by the top brass of *President Chiang Kai Shekh* government.

As there was no direct flight to Nepal *President Chiang Kai Shekh* had then offered his personal aircraft that carried *General Krishna Shamsher* back to Calcutta on his way to Kathmandu, Nepal.

Interesting it is to make a bon note herein that Maharaja Dev had also planned to have official ties with America, the United States of America, from where had come a person, the First American to visit Nepal, who had had the audience with Maharaja Ranauddip . General Dev Shamsher was present there during the course of that interesting audience. It should be also noted down that Maharaja Dev had his education at the Dowson College in Calcutta, then the power place of the British India.

Still interesting it is to know that the practice of gun fire to announce the mid-day was also introduced by Maharaja Dev.

It is again Maharaja Dev who introduced the system of parole to be used by trusted persons if and when he/she is a bit late in the night. This parole would have then entitled the one having the parole to be excused as people were not allowed to walk on the road after a certain fixed hour.

Maharaja Dev also arranged to purchase a plot of land in Calcutta so that an office could be established in order to cater and full fill the need of the ruling Rana and other high officials. Accordingly a plot of land nearby Bhawanipur at number 62 of Chakraberia Road in Calcutta was duly arranged, purchased and had established on office to buy various commodities to cater the need of the then ruling Rana circle and other high ranking officials. This was named as *Buying Agency*. This very *Buying Agency* was further modernised by Maharaja Deb. This *Buying Agency* is the forerunner of the present day Royal Nepal Consul General Office in Calcutta now.

In order to deal with growing trade yet another outlet with an office was established in Patna of Bihar. This was known as *Alaich Kothi*.

Unfortunately both of those places have now been 'sold out'. Many materilas of hisrorical importances there have now been lost. Had the materials there, documents and other related materials, been taken out we could have come across many things pertaining to Nepal and her relationship and activities of the past that would have enlightened us in the present.

One oral tradition has it that *Maharaja Dev Shamsher* used to visit Godavari by his chariot and used to inspect the places around.

Maharaja Dev used to have diamond bottoms in his waist coat and

also in his *Kurta*. We have been told that he was, thus the first and only one among the Rana to use such diamond buttons.

Maharaja Dev had also fascination in keeping English lap dogs. Those lap dogs used to be of white colour. Nevertheless he also had one lap dog with some light brown spots.

We like to express our sincere thanks to *Mr. Himalaya Shamsher Rana* for writing the *Postscript* in this monograph. We appreciate his interest and cooperation in bringing out this monograph. Like *Maharaja Dev*, his great grandson *Mr. Himalaya Shamsher* is also the First Governor of the First State Bank of Nepal, the *Nepal Rashtra Bank*. *Mr. Himalaya Shamsher* is also the First Finance Secretary of Nepal.

We also like to express our sincere thanks to the Ambassador of France to Nepal *Mr. Michel Jolivet* for writing the *Preface* that can be taken as a symbol of **Nepal France friendship and cooperation**. And we do appreciate his due cooperation and look forward to having it in future too.

We take it as a blessing from our elder brother Lakshman Raj Joshi for his write up entitled *A Letter from a Teacher to his Taught*. We cherish his guidance that has left so imposing impact on our life and style.

We are planning to bring out a new volume entitled

Maharaja Deb Shamsher : His Life and His Time

It will be published based on the original sources and oral tradition in due course of time if everything moves as planned.

We have inserted in this volume some rare photographs that we hope may further illustrate the writings of Professor **Sylvain Levi**.

We had a plan to publish two volumes of **Sylvain Levi's** Nepal into English in 1968 when **Mr. Jean Francois** was the Ambassador of France in Nepal. But it could not see the light of the day due to so many reasons, varied as well as colourful.

Last but not the least, we like to express our thanks to all of those persons who have directly or indirectly rendered their cooperation during our study, research and field study and, nevertheless, the field trip, in bringing out this monograph.

Au revoir !

Harihar Raj Joshi
Indu Joshi (Mrs.)

APPENDIX A

During our study and research we have come to know that the territory covered by the compound of Maharaja Dev Shamsheer was popular as Devasthan within Thapathali.

This **Devasthan** inside Thapathali covered the following areas:-

SOUTH:

There was an embankment or **Bhakari** as it is so popular in Nepali language, right on the bank of the river Bagamati.

This **Bhakari** was constructed out of mud, bamboo and paddy husks, dust made out by crushing the red bricks, cow dung and molasses.

This very **Bhakari** was, however, later on swiped away, unfortunately, by the flood that had occurred in 1954 (2011 Vikram Era) devastating quite a lot even in other parts of the Kingdom.

NORTH:

Debasthan covered the present day **Singh Darbar**, the present **Anama Nagar** and **Kuriya Gaon**.

Maharaja Chandra Shamsheer, however, constructed the present day **Singh Darbar** on the land belonging then to **Maharaja Dev Shamsheer**.

Further, we have also been told that the present day **Babar Mahal** area was also within **Devasthan** of Thapathali, the area belonging to **Maharaja Deb Shamsheer**. The present **Babar Mahal** was constructed later on the area belonging to **Maharaja Deb**.

EAST:

Maharaja Deb's area covered the territory lying on the other side of present day **Kuriya Gaon**.

The present day **Kuriya Gaon** is the corrupt form of **Unmulana Gaon** of those **Amalekha Karia**, that is the village or the settlement of the slaves lately liberated by **Maharaja Deb**.

And in due course of time this very **Karia Amalekha Gaon** came to be popular as **Kuria Gaon** from **Karia Gaon**.

Maharaja Dev Shamsheer began the liberation of the slaves right from his own Palace. And when those liberated slaves approached Maharaja and put down their plight, as they had no places at all where they could stay or settle themselves down.

It is then that Maharaja Deb purchased this area popularly known as *thane bun* or the field of this side of the area, and handed over this very area for the settlement those slaves thus liberated.

It was then popular as **Karia Gaon**, which in due course of time came to be popular as **Kuria Gao**.

WEST:

Maharaja Deb's area here was right up to the present day bridge over **Tukucha** stream.

(Later on **Tung Shamsheer** (great grandson of **Khadga Shamsheer** sold the same area to one **Mr. Chipalu** who is said to have constructed his residential building there.)

Four big Gates used to be there that were used to enter inside the Palace compound of **Maharaja Deb Shamsheer**.

They were —

NORTH GATE:

On the side of the present **Babar Mahal** where there is an entry gate now to enter inside **Singh Darbar** Secretariat.

The entire compound of present day **Babar Mahal** and the area used by the then **Moonlight Cinema hall** of yesterday were also within the compound area of **Maharaja Deb Shamsheer**

Now there is a temple of **Hanuman** here and the house belongs to **Bhisma Shamsheer** and his descendant. We had once met **Shubha Shamsheer** right over here after our visit back from Japan in late 1970.

His descendant is using it now.

EAST GATE:

On the northeast corner of the present day **Panchayan**. One can now see the area where stands V.S.School, former **Brihaspati School** there. Quite by the side of **Vinayaka Sudha Niketan** (school) at Thapathali there is a **Lakshmi Narayan Temple** (also popular as just Narayan Temple) that was constructed completely on the style of South Indian pattern, or **Shikhar style**.

There used to be a beautiful building popular then as **Char Burja Building** where stands there today **Nurses' Quarter** of the Maternity Hospital, so popular as **Prashuti Griha**.

Char Burja Place of **Bahadur Shamsheer** at Kantipath of Kathmandu was constructed and named, as it is said, after the same **Char Burja Palace** of **Maharaja Deb Shamsheer**.

It would be interesting to note that this **Char Burja Palace** of Thapathali had belonged earlier to **Generai Mathabar Singh**.

And after the assassination of General **Mathabar Singh** by **Jung Bahadur**, this very building was occupied and was then used by **Jung Bahadur** and it then became to be popular as Thapathali Durbar.

WEST GATE:

Adjoining to the present day **Singh Darbar** compound right on the present entrance to Singh Durbar from the south.

SOUTH GATE:

This gate was there quite by the side of that big **Bhakari** on the bank of the river Bagmati.

The origin of the name of Thapathali

One interesting point to ponder over is this that this place was known as Thapa Thali, the place where the Thapa had the settlement, as majority of people living there were THAPA.

Hence the settlement of THAPA as THAPA Thali. The place or a bit of the upper part of the place where there used to be settlement and lower part being used for agriculture and cultivation like paddy, maize, millet and vegetable.

- a. It is said that this area was made suitable for settlement by **Nani Rao** and **Bani Rao** who were brought here by **Jung Bahadur** after that famous or notorious Lucknow episode that many people prefer to label it as Lucknow plunder or *Lucknow Loot*.
- b. Even the present day **Panchayana** at Thapathali where there is the office that looks after the Rana interest, was within the Palace area of **Maharaja Deb**.

There is also a temple of Dola Ajima, which is popular these days as **Kumaristhan**.

The oral tradition has it that after the war between the Devil (*Danava*) and the deity (*Deva*) there was a heap of skeletons and on that very spot a temple was constructed consecrating it to the deity.

The Malla kings also used to pay visits to this place and used to pay due homage by bowing down their heads right on the feet of the deity.

When my grand daughter Neha, just back from Florida, the United States of America, was admitted at Norvic Escort hospital for general checkup, and while visiting there we came across a person who addressed himself as **Amatya Thapa** who narrated to us some interesting oral traditions in relation to Thapathali.

Right over this area where there is the Nurses' Quarter of the Maternity Hospital popular as **Prasuti Griha**, there used to be a pond, full of various breeds of fish and the local kids (may even the grown up grandpas used to go for fishing and have enjoyment there.

Amatya Thapa ?

Will it not ignite our academic curiosity when we come across the term like **Amatya Thapa** belonging to the Newar community ? Yet another book would have been written by **Dr. Gopal Singh Nepali** had the icy hands of death would not have touched him tight.

Amatyathapa and then a Newar !

Interesting it is to know **Amatya** and then **Thapa** also but the Newar, the Newala of the Rg Veda.

It has this very Past that needs to enlighten the Present for the benefit of the Future. Its is a history concealed.

It needs a sort of socio-anthropological study and research.

It may come to be a challenge to the linguistic studies.

Albeit he claims himself an **Amatya Thapa** he, however, told us without any hesitation whatsoever that he is a Newar.

He further elucidated: "In order to save the head many Newars had thus kept such names".

We are even familiar with some people in Bhaktapur that have opted for such names.

It has aptly been said that geography can be and has well been changed and altered, whereas we can not alter nor change the history as such. And there is the histroy right over here that is so aptly pointing to historical episodes on geography and the geography is disclosing the histroy as such.



APPENDIX B

Appendix B

Blavatsky (Helena Petrovna) who changed the whole current of European thoughts in 19th century.

Blavatsky had written **Isis Unvelled** and was published in 1877.

Reincarnation is not denied in this volume **Isis Unvelled**. This reveals the beginning of Theosophical movement. It is the 'text book' of Theosophy -- a master key to mysteries of ancient and moden science and theology. It is said to be a classic in occult literature.

It is interesting to note that **Maharaja deb Shamsher** was quite aware of the theosophical movement

APPENDIX C



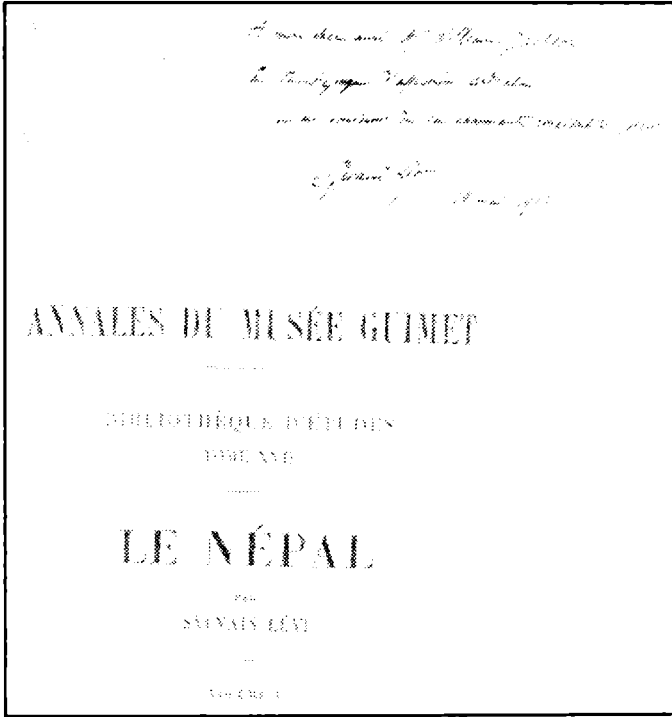
Photo: Harhar-Indu Collection

English rendering of the writing by Sylvain Levi in French on the photograph above

*To my dear Saheb Hazur in tender memory from his true French friend
Konkie Dadima Da damohashaya*

N.B, Saheb Hazur is the son of Maharaja Dev Shamsher.

APPENDIX D



Harihar-Indu Collection

English Rendering of the title page of LE NÉPAL

*To my dear friend AV. William Jackson
in testimony of warm affection
and in memory of his charming hospitality (1904)
Sylvain Lévi
19 May 1906*

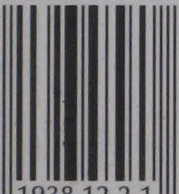
Along the Footprints of Maharaj Dev Shamsheer Rana



Harihar Raj Joshi from Dhankuta
wherein Maharaja Dev stayed
and was popular as Dhankute Maharaj

Himalaya Shumsher Rana
The great grandson of
Maharaj Dev Shamsheer

1935.4.14.5



1938.12.2.1

09



ustab

00