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Slow Americans

BY PAUL S. REINSCH

A Fortnight on a Cargo-Boat

BY WILLIAM L. HALL

A Welcome Guest in Forbidden Tibet

BY MURIEL PERCY BROWN

Children of Moscow

BY ANNA J. HAINES



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A WELCOME GUEST IN FORBIDDEN TIBET

By MURIEL PERCY BROWN

IT has been my happy lot to be the first Englishwoman to cross the Tibetan plateau as far as that outpost of the British Empire, Gyantze. I accompanied my husband there on a journey on which he was sent by Government for the sole purpose of studying the art of that wonderful country.

On April 29, 1915, we started from Darjeeling, riding on two sturdy nags. Passing through glorious forest scenery that allowed us enchanting glimpses, through the rolling mists, of the far, far distant plains of India, shimmering like opals set in gray, we mounted far above the Darjeeling range and reached the region of rhododendrons, which were of exquisitely varied color and at all stages of flowering.

After an extremely stiff climb we reached Gnatung, and here I peeped into one of the native huts. The tiny entrance-room was used as a stable for two rampant mules. Bending nearly double, I went through the low door, at the risk of getting a nasty kick, and found a dwelling-room with only one tiny square hole in the roof for window and chimney combined. In the center was a most primitive loom, on which a woman was weaving narrow breadths of extremely thick dirty white wool called *chugdoo*. Cloth of this sort was sewed together into sleeping-bags. In them the family slept on a few raised boards, which, together with a few cooking-pots, formed the sole house-furnishings. During the winter, when Gnatung was entirely under snow, the poor creatures that lived in this hovel must have spent many months entirely shut up in it.

Our curiosity was roused by the report of a lama recluse from Lhasa who had his tiny abode on a steep mountainside above Gnatung and who was under a vow to live a solitary life for three years, three months, three weeks and three days. Many of our coolies were only too delighted when they heard we wished to pay him a visit, for they looked on such an expedition as a pilgrimage and thought it likely to insure us a safe journey over the perilous Jelap Pass. In his astral body, as we learned afterwards, our lama had been apprised beforehand of our visit. When we knocked, he immediately opened the door, and we saw a cheerful young man, rather delicate-looking, but perfectly sane in appearance, with a broad smile displaying a set of wonderfully white teeth the only clean thing about him. He wore a queer black shade, projecting some inches from his forehead but not covering his close-cropped head, and hung round with a thick fringe of black wool, from under which his smiling brown eyes peered. His voice was hoarse and very weak and sounded as if he had not spoken for months. Once a month his food was brought up from the village and placed outside his door. He told us, through our interpreter, that he had much intercourse with spirits but kept religiously to his vow to see no human beings. Pilgrims probably did visit him occasionally, however; for he had a supply of yellow silk strips and put them round the necks of the coolies, after they had done reverent *pooja* to him, and what was more practical, he gave them all balls of a medicine similar to quinine. The coolies told ghastly stories of spirits that would come at night

and feed on the lama's flesh and put it back in the morning. The holy man needed a stout heart to face the utter solitude of the mountains, believing, as he must have done, in the terrifying pantheon of lamaistic theology. After some slight demur he yielded to the usual prosaic lubricator, bakshish, and consented to be photographed. Then we took our departure, no doubt to be classed as remarkable manifestations of the spirit world.

We had a good deal of snow to plunge through that day. More snow fell at night, and our path was completely powdered over. On May 6, we had a clear morning for crossing the Jelap—a march that yearly exacts its toll of deaths amongst the dak-runners and muleteers. A particularly terrible story is told of how some coolies were found on the pass, leaning on their sticks, supporting their loads on their backs and grinning so broadly that they were hailed for their smiling welcome. But they were all frozen to death, and their lips stiffened in such a way as to show their teeth in this ghastly smile. Our coolies fell back much awed at my appearance in my flannel face-mask, which I had reserved for this occasion and which certainly gave me a forbidding look. We rode up the steep path between grand, snow-covered rocks, and, as we turned the last corner, we came upon great



TIBETAN NUNS AT THEIR CONVENT-DOOR

They Have Put Aside the Gaudy Tibetan Costume for Close Orange Caps and Coarse Madder Garments



A LADY OF RANK FROM LHASA

She Is Dressed in Rich Brocade and Wears Many Jewels and a Head-Dress of Turquoises and Pearls and Coral

fields of snow, with here and there a black rock standing out in sharp relief, and a tiny black line of mules winding into the distance with the merry sound of their bells pealing over the snow. The Jelap Pass, far from being the isolated spot we expected, was filled with a perpetual stream of jostling mule-trains. We saw the tracks of a few animals in the smooth, pure snow, but otherwise no signs of wild life beyond numbers of the tiniest birds just below the pass. Butterflies with snowy velvet wings and white furry bodies are to be found, I believe, on the eternal snow-line. I cannot describe the deliciously intoxicating quality of the air, which, when we were not walking, did not trouble us with its rarity.

The rough and precipitous path downwards was made impassable in one place by a snow-drift. We had to scramble over rocks as best we could until we once more reached the road, which now entered the beautiful Chumbi Valley. Our resting-place that night was at Lungram in a Tibetan house pure and simple. It was built around a little courtyard, in which our servants and riding-ponies found accommodation, with a quaint doorway, strongly barred at night against all intruders. There were three rooms, opening one out of the other. The furniture consisted of two raised planks for our bedding, two square stools and a very high table for our meals. The square lattice-windows of Chinese design boasted no glass, but had been covered with paper, which was too much torn

to leave us any privacy. So we hung rugs in front of the windows, depended on our log fire to give us light and enjoyed the feeling that we were close to primitive nature.

That afternoon, however, I had an experience of primitive nature, in its human form, which was not quite so pleasing. My husband had gone off to shoot pheasants and I, very tired after the long march, sat outside the bungalow. While I was idly amusing myself by attempting a little sketch, some of the coolies rushed out with pale faces, saying a terrible fight was going on inside the courtyard. Since I heard not a sound, I paid no attention until another deputation ran out, breathlessly saying that two coolies were killing each other. I then summoned one of the most powerful coolies and commanded him to separate the combatants, but he firmly declined, saying they were husband and wife. I next besought our *sirdar*, or head man, Lumboo, whose name means "Tall One", to see what could be done, but he showed equal reluctance. So finally I had to investigate matters myself, and opening the door of the courtyard, I saw a man and a woman locked together in a savage, grim embrace, swaying to and fro in complete silence, except for gasping breaths, with their faces streaming with blood. Considerably frightened, I tried to rally Lumboo's fainting spirit into attempting to unlock the furious pair. He finally did so with the help of a few other spectators, and after about five minutes' painful wrestling, the gory combatants were imprisoned in different rooms, still showering curses on each other.

We had a glorious walk next day down-hill to Yatung. Here we were met by gorgeously clad *chuprassies* heralding the approach of the British Trade Agent, Mr. David Macdonald, and the State Engineer, who escorted us to the village of Rinchingong and on to the village of Chema, situated on the banks of a broad river, the Amo-chu.

Here Mr. Macdonald took us to visit a very rich man's house, which we entered by climbing an extraordinarily precipitous ladder. At the end of several winding passages, we came to a gorgeous private chapel, most beautifully fitted up with gilded wood carvings and altars. An old priest was banging a big drum in the corner and droning prayers for the health of the owner, who was ill. In this holy spot we were, to my surprise, offered refreshments, consisting of Tibetan tea (a compound of rancid butter, tea and salt) or, as an alternative, fiery brandy.

After this picturesque interlude, two Tibetan *dah-pön*, or generals, invited us to lunch with them. As distinguished visitors we were allowed to ride through a gateway guarded by Tibetan soldiers armed with enormous battle-axes, right on to a wooden platform, where we dismounted and were received by our two hosts. Both of them were dressed in Chinese costumes with queues, long pendant turquoise earrings in their left ears and buttons, the signs of office, on their hats. During the meal the *dah-pön* discussed at some length between themselves the respective ages and sizes of their guests, and we all tried to look as natural as possible under their searching personal scrutiny. After luncheon, we were entertained with a duet, in which one of our hosts played a tiny species of violin and one of the table servants, a wild-looking man, deeply pock-marked, played a flute.

We finally made our adieus and rode on to our halting-place for the next few days, the village of Shashi, or the new Yatung, a pleasant little spot, where the British Trade Agent has a small bungalow. Here, in the garden,



MUMMERS READY FOR A CHUMBI DANCE

The Performers Are All Men, Some Masked, Some Dressed as Women. They Gyrate in Rapid Catharine-Wheels Around Vessels—Perhaps Prosaic Kerosene-Tins—Filled with the National Drink of "Chang"

we saw at Mr. Macdonald's kind invitation, a Chumbi dance—a curious performance in which masked figures gyrate with extraordinary rapidity in catharine-wheels, round two prosaic kerosene-tins filled with the national drink of *chang*.

After this short rest at Yatung we pulled ourselves together for the second half of our journey to Gyantze. The march to Gautsar was full of interest. The road wound past several large villages. The richer men had large walled enclosures round their dwellings. The shady groves of trees and rich fields of barley formed a contrast to the barren country that we afterwards encountered. Lingbutam, with its perfectly flat lush green meadows through which meandered the Amo-chu River, presented a still different character. The meadows were shut in by frowning gray cliffs, and the plain was dotted with black specks, which proved to be grazing yaks, with here and there slightly larger dots, which resolved themselves into minute square black tents, each guarded by fierce watch-dogs. Our next day's march was up to the Tibetan plateau through the lovely gorge of Gautsar until at last we entered a bare defile with towering brown, treeless cliffs on each side and a glorious waterfall dashing down through the snows. Turning a corner, we suddenly beheld, as if it were poised over the brow of the hill against the sapphire-blue sky, the most dazzling white cone—Chamalhari. As we continued, the road grew

monotonous. There was no life of any sort, no tree, flower or blade of grass. At last we saw, in the far distant plain, a small black speck—Phari, the dirtiest and highest town in the world, standing 14,800 feet above sea-level. It looked deceptively near in that rarefied air, and we had many miles to go before we reached our little fortified bungalow, which was just outside it. The ruined *jong*, or fort, and the encircling wall of Phari gave it, as we approached, the appearance of one large citadel rather than a town. I looked at the few poor stalls that constituted the bazar and observed from my saddle the wild-looking, filthy crowds in the narrow alleys, which were mere gutters flanked with mounds of refuse higher than the houses themselves.

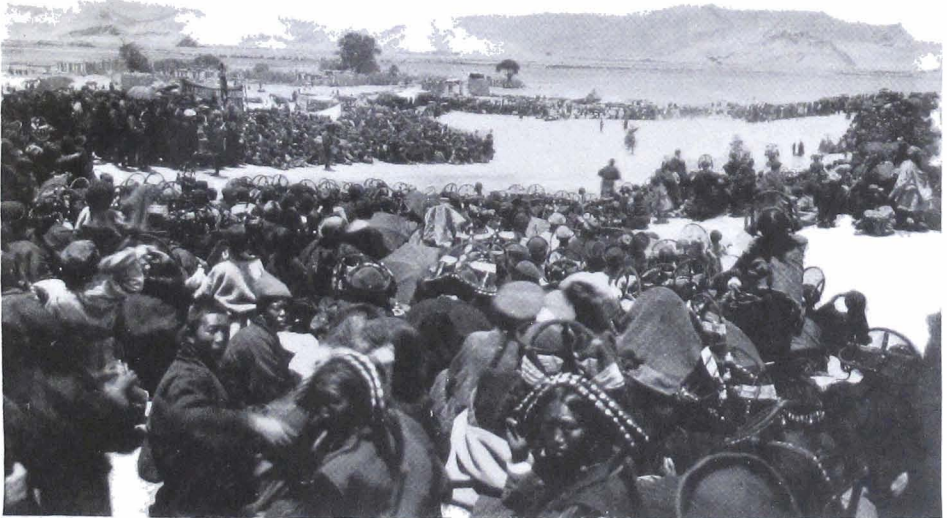
Mr. Macdonald conducted us to the house of the *Jongpon*, or principal Tibetan official in the place. He was a big, jovial, somewhat gross-looking young man, and his wife, who was from Lhasa, was a sweet and intelligent-looking woman slightly cleaner than the others. The house was just a peat hovel outside, but it was built round a small courtyard and was comfortable within. Around the living-room ran a low bench covered with leopard skins, and a European stove stood in the center. We were most hospitably entertained by the *Jongpon*, and the gentlemen of the party stayed to lunch with him.

The cold at Phari was very great. We had there our first experience of the famous Tibetan winds, which rise



DANCERS REHEARSING BEFORE THE GYANTZE MONASTERY

For Days They Practise the Slow Gestures of the "Black Hat" Dance, Which, Finally, to the Blare of Trumpets, They Perform in Magnificent Costumes Ornamented with Chains and Aprons of Carved Human Bones



ONLOOKERS AT THE "ANNUAL ATHLETIC MEET" AT GYANTZE

The Spring Festival Lasts Three Days. It Is the Occasion for Races and Archery Contests and Feasting, and All Gyantze Camps on the Plains in Richly Embroidered Tents to Enjoy the Fun



WIVES OF TIBETAN JONG-PON, OR HEADMEN

The Typical Gyantze Head-Dress Is a Domed Bamboo Framework Concealed by Rows of Great Turquoises and Lumps of Coral. This Huge Crown Is Secured by Finely Woven Strands of the Unfortunate Owner's Hair

with clockwork regularity every afternoon and sweep across those desert plains, often accompanied by cutting hail, and subsiding usually between six and seven in the evening. Though the thermometer did not encourage sketching, I made an attempt at it, cowering behind a small stone boundary pillar, my head tied up tied on, I was going to say—with a shawl, and my sheep-skin coat on top of every other warm wrap I possessed and a large crowd of the unwashed pressing round me, ready to burst into loud giggles at the smallest provocation. It takes very little to raise the heartiest guffaws from the Tibetan, who certainly sees life as a good joke in spite of his stern surroundings.

Here we encountered in Tibet for the first time the tribes of outcasts who are not allowed to inhabit any town, and who are the most utterly degraded-looking set of human beings I have ever seen. As soon as we left our bungalow, these uncouth creatures prostrated themselves full-length on the ground in front of us and then jumped up and danced to tiny string violins, all the time loudly demanding bakshish, which was invariably doled out to them by the British Trade Agent. Indeed this licensed beggary seems to be one of the most flourishing of the indigenous industries of Tibet.

We had one more pass to cross over—the Kang la, which is the same height as the Jelap, but totally different. There was no snow, and nothing especially to mark it out from the surrounding scenery. At the cairn of

stones at the top our coolies all did pooja to the Goddess Chamalhari. We heard afterwards of a wretched woman who had been publicly flogged and then exposed for a night on the Kang la. Naturally she had frozen to death. A terrible system of medieval torture still goes on in Tibet.

There is truly awful loneliness in Tibet. Tiny clusters of stone huts, vast distances apart, are the so-called villages. They are hardly distinguishable from the ground, for no garden or vegetation of any kind marks them off from the rest of the desert and they are built from the loose stones lying about. In winter these little hovels must be completely under snow. Far off we saw herds of *kiangs*, or wild asses, beautiful spotted creatures, always keeping close together and turning and curving as if they were drilled. What they fed on in that bare land was a puzzle.

Tuna, at an elevation of 14,900 feet, was the highest bungalow we reached. I was incapacitated there by the altitude. At sunset we had one of the most glorious views of the whole trip. The highest peak, which is the home of the Goddess Chamalhari, is surrounded by several lower ones, her attendant maidens. At the foot of one of the greatest of her glaciers, and on the eternal snow-line, is a nunnery, in which twelve devoted nuns, who keep a few yaks and sheep for their sustenance, lead surely the most isolated lives of any women in the world.

At Samada I had my first view of a Tibetan *gumpa*, or monastery. Spurred on by the spirit of adventure, I

determined to pay this somewhat formidable-looking place a visit. I was admitted first into a stone-flagged courtyard, thence into a passage from the ceiling of which hung the stuffed forms of huge Tibetan dogs, so large that I took them for black bears, and then through a perfectly dark and narrow passage. A lama led the way, always religiously keeping to the left, which is the holy direction, and lighting our steps by a very dim little flickering oil-

the gruesome coloring, faded though it was, heightened the horrid scene.

Leaving this weird temple, we finally passed into a broad and comparatively fertile valley, with our long-expected bourne, Gyantze, at the far end of it. In appearance Gyantze resembled Lhasa, as that city had been described to us. The white houses were edged at the top by a deep band of dark brown brushwood and further



MURIEL PERCY BROWN AND THE GARRISON AT GYANTZE

Mrs. Brown Was the First Englishwoman to Cross the Tibetan Plateau as Far as Gyantze. She Accompanied Her Husband, Who Was Sent by the British Government to Study the Art of the Forbidden Land

lamp down into what seemed an underground chamber. There a cold chill struck to my very bones, even in May, fur-clad as I was. This was the lama's prayer-room. Light was admitted from the top, and how arctic it must be in winter I shuddered to think. We retraced our steps, and I was led outside once more, glad to escape the hideous faces—part of the paraphernalia of the lama's annual devil dances—that peered out from all the corners. At last we reached a breakneck ladder to an outer terrace near a tower of peat. This proved to be an annex built for housing a gigantic Buddha figure, which occupied the three stories of the tower. Light was admitted or excluded at will by windows on each story, and the worshippers in the room below looked up through the deep gloom to see portions of the Buddha mysteriously illumined. Sometimes the glory surrounded his head; at other times, his mighty breast; or again, just the hands, as they remained raised in blessing.

A few miles past Samada we came upon an old building in a very isolated position some distance from the road. The fact that it looked like a fort had misled our force into shelling it, in 1904. In reality it was a species of religious art gallery, and buildings of this nature were always untouched by our troops. The wall was quite intact, very solid and built in an almost Egyptian style round an inner court, and here the shells had played havoc, breaking the roof down but leaving a number of gigantic gilded Buddha figures seated all round the walls as if in conclave. Another small chamber was filled with representations in plaster of hundreds of writhing devils with human bodies and grotesque animal heads, eyes placed in their abdomens and other abnormalities, and

ornamented in many cases by gilded plaques, and over the doorways hung black yak-hair curtains and incongruous fluttering muslin frills. Our arrival was well timed; for the yearly spring festivals were being held and people were coming in crowds in their gala attire to attend the religious and secular dances and to take part in athletic sports.

We received a very interesting invitation to spend the day at the country house of a rich Tibetan gentleman who lived about five miles away, at a place called Gobshi, where, though of high birth, he owned a carpet factory and manufactured the small Tibetan rugs of commerce.

When we arrived at our host's residence, we saw large crowds assembled, who gazed at us with intense interest. In the outer courtyard one of the secular dances was proceeding against a most picturesque background of quaint buildings with bright-colored awnings that threw a rich, subdued light on the dancers. They were gyrating in much the same fashion as those we saw at Yatung. We were conducted to an upper room, the whole of one side of which was open in the form of a gallery overlooking the courtyard, with low piles of costly rugs upon which our host and his friends were reclining while they watched the performance below. Our host was a middle-aged man of dignified mien, very Chinese in appearance, and he wore the round hat and one long earring usual to persons in high position. His son, a youth of about fifteen, was for some reason considered of higher rank than his father, and his hat, a red circular one, covered with thick scarlet fringe, lay on a stand at one end of the room in a place of honor.

Afterwards I was conducted into a small separate



THE MYSTERIOUS IMAGE IN "RED IDOL GORGE"

In This Barren Tibetan Pass, Swept by Icy Winds and Cutting Hail-Storms, An Image in a Half-Ruined Shrine Bespeaks the Peace of the Buddha

room, with a deep awning over the window, but equally overlooking the courtyard, to await the arrival of our hostess.

Meanwhile I was bewildered by the gorgeous apparel of her numerous attendants. At every turn I saw towering head-dresses thickly covered with strings of seed-pearls looped and festooned over the semicircular domed bamboo framework, which was concealed by rows of huge turquoises and lumps of coral. The hair was finely braided and stretched out in thin strands to secure this enormous head-piece, with a long plait left to flutter coquettishly at each side. The gowns, which were no less brilliant than the head-dresses, were of colored cloth, with wide-sleeved bodices and epaulettes of brocade and richly woven aprons with two long stoles in vivid stripes hanging from the shoulders. There were chains upon chains of silver, with necklaces of lumps of amber the size of tangerine oranges and huge coral beads, and, most valuable of all, large amulet-boxes of jewels, which seemed to focus in themselves all the barbaric splendor of this national costume. It was a strange experience to have beings in this dress wait on us at table, offering us chang to drink and courteously extending the full length of their tongues at us as they leaned over us-- their faces plentifully besmeared with the deep tan of pig's blood and catechu, and in many cases their noses ornamented by a thick line of black pigment down the bridge.

I must now return to the advent of our hostess, who was escorted by numerous attendants. Since she hailed from Lhasa, her costume was markedly different from that of Gyantze or Shigatze. Her head-dress was a flat

coronal of turquoises and coral, with an exquisite little cap of pearls. Her hair was puffed out enormously on both sides of her face, carried down in two flowing plaits below her waist and joined together at the back by many handsome clasps of turquoises and pearls. Her gown was of rich Benares kincob, with wonderful jewels. She was of an aristocratic delicacy and pallor and charm of manner. She shook hands with us all very cordially. I was left alone with her and her maidens and had Tibetan tea and sweets pressed on me at inconveniently short intervals.

Later on I was conducted to the private reception- and shrine-room combined. The walls were lined with sacred pictures, one of which, of exquisite appliqué in golden satin, portraying the Buddha and his disciples, was evidently a most valued possession. The brocades on which the pictures were mounted had the effect of subdued old stained glass, and gave a subtle glow of rich coloring indescribably fascinating. All round the walls were low divans covered with good Tibetan rugs, and one whole side of the room was taken up by a beautifully carved and gilded woodwork altar, containing Buddha images of copper gilt.

Our next day's program included a visit to the monastery at Gyantze. It was situated in a large open square. The great doorway was covered with a black yak-hair curtain, and on each side of it was a fresco of the wheel of life. Inside were many gigantic and mysterious figures of Bodhisattvas. A particularly interesting one was that of the Coming Buddha, who was represented as seated in European fashion. The (Continued on page 230)