

DIARY OF A PILGRIMAGE TO
LAKE MANASAROWAR AND MOUNT KAILAS

WITH

H. H. THE MAHARAJA OF MYSORE
IN 1931

BY

N. RANGACHAR, L.M.S.

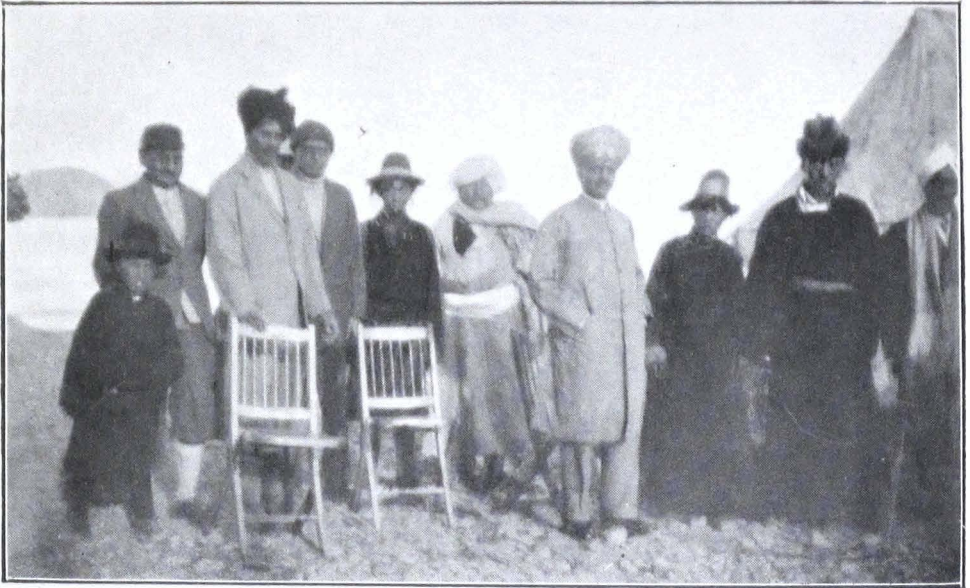


MYSORE

PRINTED AT THE GOVERNMENT BRANCH PRESS

1931

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HIS HIGHNESS, THE JUNGPON AND PARTY AT TAKLAKOT

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. The Jungpon's little servant | 6. Nandaram Singh, merchant of
Garbyang, our guide |
| 2. Mr. Prathap Singh, Tahsildar | 7. His Highness The Maharaja |
| 3. Major S. Gopal Rao | 8. The Jungpon's daughter |
| 4. Mr. N. Rangachar | 9. The Jungpon |
| 5. Tibetan officer | 10. Kumar Khadga Singh Pal |

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18th to 27th June 1931—Mysore to Almora.

WE left Mysore by special train at 5-30 P.M. on the 18th June 1931 and reached Guntakal at 6-55 A.M. the next day, where we caught the mail train from Madras and reached Bombay at 6-15 A.M. on the 20th June 1931. Bombay was very warm and we left it the same night by the B. B. & C. I. Frontier Mail and reached Muttra at 5-43 P.M. on the 21st June 1931.

Muttra was very hot, hot winds were blowing and there was a dust haze in the atmosphere which made us very uncomfortable. Leaving Muttra the same night, we reached Kathgodam at 10-25 A.M. on the 22nd June 1931, which we left at 1 P.M. and reached Rani-khet at 5 P.M. We halted here the next day, and reached Almora on the 24th June 1931 and stayed there in the Circuit House, once the residence of General Ramsay. We halted at Almora till the morning of the 27th June 1931 to complete our preparations for our forward journey.

His Highness had most graciously supplied every one of us, including our servants, with plenty of warm clothing. Six retired Indian soldiers who had seen war service—three of them Ghurkas, and the other three Kumaonese—were also engaged to guard us right

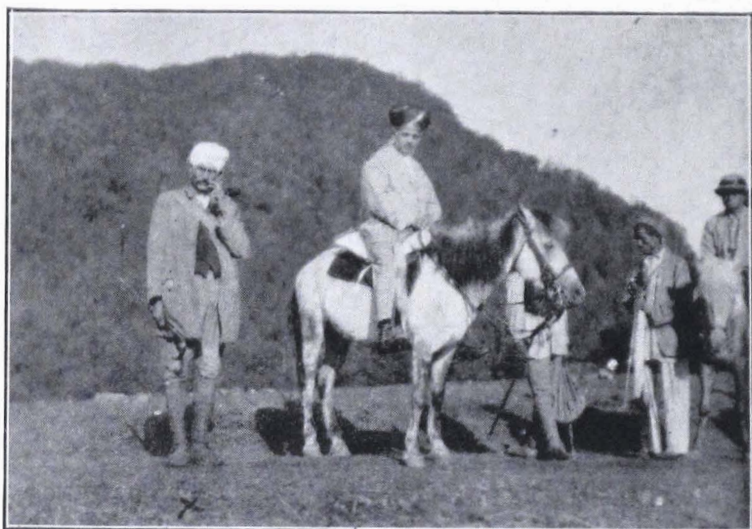
through. We also carried our own arms and ammunition from the Palace. Besides my humble self, the following officers and officials accompanied His Highness on duty :—

1. Mr. Sadeg Z. Shah, Assistant Secretary to His Highness.
2. Col. A. V. Subramanyaraj Urs, Hon. A.D.C.
3. Major S. Gopal Rao.
4. Capt. Nabi Khan.
5. Lieut. Nanjaraj Bahadur of the Mysore Lancers.
6. Mr. A. Venkatasubbayya, Manager, Private Secretary's Office.
7. Mr. C. V. Subramanyaraj Urs, Mokhtesar, Khas Samukha.
8. Mr. K. Venkatarangayya, Clerk, Private Secretary's Office.
9. Mr. C. Krishnappa, Sub-Assistant Surgeon.

Mr. Prathap Singh, Tahsildar of Almora, who was on duty with His Highness during our last trip to Badri Narayan, was deputed by the U. P. Government to accompany the party to arrange for transport, supplies, etc.

27th June 1931—Almora to Barechina.

We all woke up at 3 A.M. and were ready to start at 4-30 A.M. But as the ponies had not yet arrived, as also the guide,—a Chaprassi of the Almora Tahsil—we left at 5-30 A.M. and reached Barechina, a distance of a little over 8 miles, at 8 A.M. and camped in the forest bungalow situated on a hillock. There were pine trees all along the route, and patches of cultivation in terraces on hill slopes and along the valleys. The sun was hotter than at Almora owing to the lower altitude. The bridle-path is tortuous and follows the hill sides. Near by, on a hill opposite, is the Binsar Estate, where there is an orchard with a bungalow in which General Ramsay once lived.



CHAPRASSI NARAYAN DUTT (×), OUR GUIDE

Some very large-sized cardamoms were presented to His Highness by the local people. The night was fairly cool with a bright moon and there was mist in the valleys in which was running a small stream. All our kit was carried on mules.

28th June 1931—Barechina to Kanerichina.

We left Barechina at 4 A.M. to go to our next camp at Kanerichina, a distance of 10 or 11 miles. The first part of our route was all up-hill for about 3 or 4 miles till we passed a cool ridge, but the latter half was mostly down-hill. All through, there were pine trees and we camped at the forest bungalow similarly situated as at Barechina. The day was uncomfortably warm as this place is very much lower down in the valleys. There are small plots of rice cultivation in the valley where a small stream is flowing.

29th June 1931—Kanerichina to Ganai.

We left the camp at 4 A.M. and with the aid of lanterns, as it was still dark, we walked for about 4 or 5 miles along the course of the stream mentioned in yesterday's notes till we crossed the Sarju river which is spanned over by a nice suspension bridge. As the valley was very narrow and tortuous, we felt it very warm even in the early morning. But the valley became broader towards the Sarju, and we had to do a climb of nearly 2 miles after crossing the river on our ponies and reached Ganai, a distance of 12 miles, at 8 A.M. and camped at the forest bungalow. Ganai was very hot during the day, situated as it is in the midst of high hills. All the raiyats of the village turned up in the evening to pay their respects to His Highness who graciously enquired after their welfare, and before they departed they shouted "Mysore Maharaja Ki Jai! Kailas Jatra Ki Jai!" and went away quite pleased.

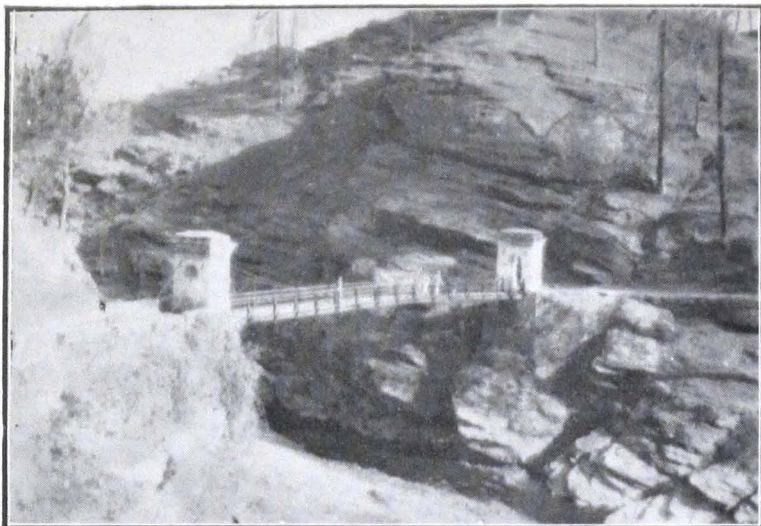
30th June 1931—Ganai to Berinag.

We all got up at 2-30 A.M. and finished our morning toilet. The moon was still shining bright and we left Ganai at 3-40 A.M. and walked up the valley towards Berinag for about 6 miles. The path was mostly level and only towards the end, there was a steep zig-zag ascent for about 3 miles which we climbed on horse back reaching Berinag at 8 A.M.—a total distance of 12 miles.

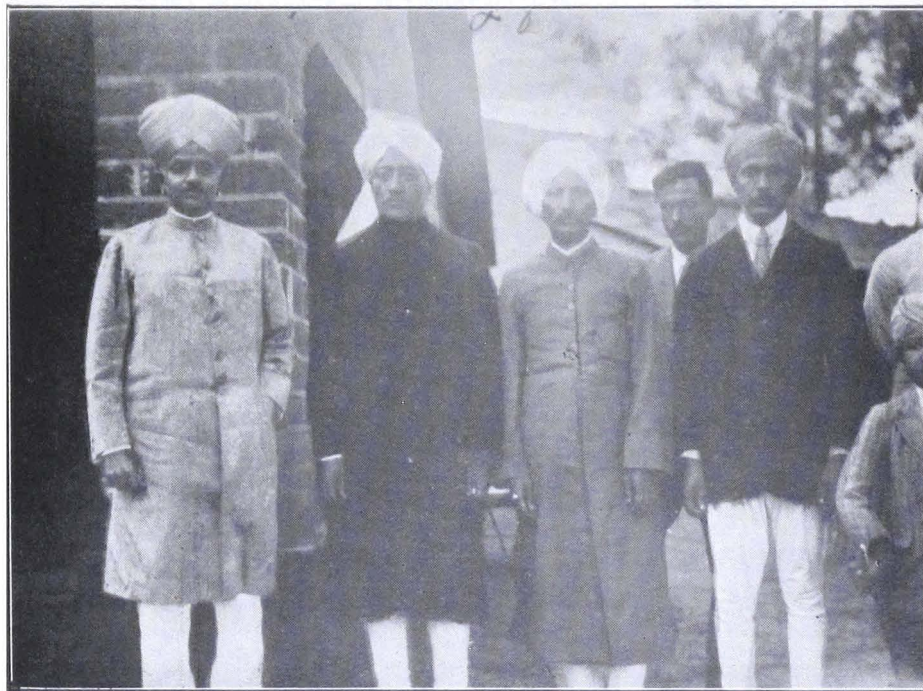
On the way, there were small villages with their patches of cultivation. Berinag is on a much higher level than Ganai and we felt the place much cooler. It is full of huge pine trees. As usual, we camped at the forest bungalow commanding a nice view of the valleys and mountains. Unfortunately for me, the mule that was carrying my steel suit-cases stumbled on the way and my kit was dropped into the valley 100 feet below, and was much damaged. A large number of villagers turned up with their drums to pay their respects to His Highness. It began to rain at 5 P.M.—the first shower we had during this trip. They grow tea here, and there is a Dairy Farm about 3 miles from here at Chowkorie. Thakore Dev Singh Bhisht is a wealthy landlord who owns the tea estate and the dairy and he was granted an interview by His Highness.

1st July 1931—Berinag to Thal.

We left Berinag at 3-45 A.M. and walked for nearly 7 miles, all down-hill, and after crossing over a small wooden bridge over a stream, climbed up another 3 miles on our ponies to Thal, a distance of about 10 miles in all, and reached there at 7 A.M. On the way we saw three European missionary ladies who have settled here. The forest bungalow is situated overlooking a valley and commands a fine view. The afternoon was very hot. Far away to the north, we got our first glimpse of snow-clad peaks in the evening.



SUSPENSION BRIDGE—THAL TO SANDEO



HIS HIGHNESS AND THE RAJWAR FAMILY OF ASKOT

Down below in the valley, flows the Ramganga, more than a 100 feet wide, over which there is a suspension bridge. This river is said to be a tributary of the Kali which we meet later on.

2nd July 1931—Thal to Sandeo.

As usual, we left Thal at 3-45 A.M., got down the valley and crossing the Ramganga, we got up on our ponies and climbed the first 3 miles of our way, all up-hill. Our subsequent route was not so steep. As it had rained yesterday, our path was quite cool and after covering a distance of 10 miles we reached the forest bungalow at Sandeo at 7 A.M. All through, there was green grass, various kinds of pine trees and oak. This was our coolest march so far and reminded us very much of dear old Ooty. In the evening, we got a glimpse of Nanda Devi, Panch Chuli and Pindari snow peaks far away. Sandeo is about 6,400 feet above sea level and commands a fine view.

3rd July 1931—Sandeo to Askot.

I woke up at 2 A.M. and found that it was raining very hard. The rain continued till 5 A.M. when it changed to a drizzle. We left Sandeo at 5 A.M. and our path was mostly level with a little ascent here and there. Most of the distance we walked with our rain coats on, and reached Askot at 8 A.M., a distance of 9 miles. Here, His Highness was welcomed by Rajwar Vikram Bahadur Pal, the biggest landlord here, and by his uncle, Kumar Khadga Singh Pal, a retired Deputy Collector.

It rained throughout the day. In the valley, they grow a kind of rice which does not require a constant supply of water. There are many mango trees here. We felt the weather cool on account of the rain. For the first time in my life, I got two leech-bites here, one

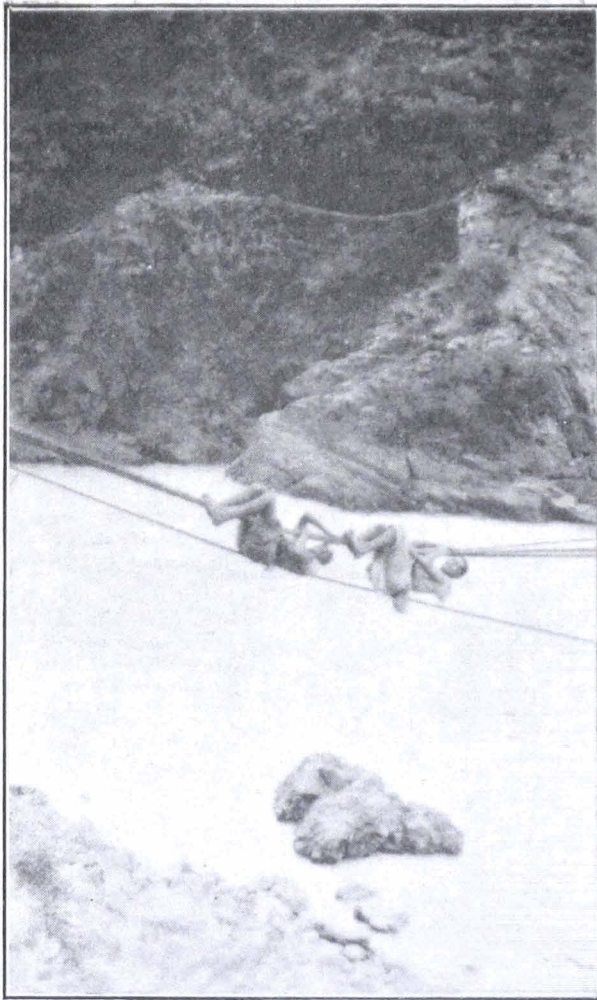
in each leg! Askot is said to be 5,000 feet above sea level.

4th July 1931—Askot to Balavakot.

We left Askot at 3-30 A.M. and descended down a steep valley for about 3 miles where we crossed the roaring rapids of the Gowri Ganga by a small bridge. A mile or so further on, this river joins the Kali Ganga. Again we had to go up-hill on the right side of the Kali river in the opposite direction of its course, the path being quite narrow in some places and also very slushy on account of yesterday's rain. In some places our path was several hundred feet above the bed of the river, and the sides of the valley being almost perpendicular, the least slip by our ponies would have ended disastrously. At the *sangam* or confluence of the two rivers known as Jaljeevi, a fair is said to be held in the month of October, when several thousand people collect and the Bhotias from above do a brisk trade in Tibetan goods which they exchange for other wares. We reached Balavakot at 8-30 A.M., a distance of 12 miles. Our camp had been pitched on a grassy slope by the side of the Kali. We found the place unbearably hot in the afternoon. The waters of the Kali river are quite turbid. There are several abandoned houses here into which Bhotias return during winter from their permanent abode higher up in Byans or Garbayang.

5th July 1931—Balavakot to Dharchula.

We left Balavakot early morning at 3-45 A.M. and reached our next halting place Dharchula, at 7-30 A.M., a distance of about 11 miles. Our route was fair on the whole, with moderate ascents and descents and fairly level in places, but always following up the course of the Kali river which was narrow in some parts and wide at others, ever roaring and surging forward. I believe we have to follow up this river right



CROSSING THE KALI AT DHARCHULA



CROSSING THE KALI AT DHARCHULA

up to Garbayang. We used to be quite near to it in our descents, and the river was several hundred feet below our path in our ascents. The Kali forms the line of demarcation between Nepal and British India; the other side of the river belongs to Nepal. At Dharchula itself, the valley is wide and our side is sloping and fertile. They grow rice, maize — a most luxuriant crop—plantains, mangoes, lemons and oranges. The Nepal side is fairly steep. His Highness was accommodated in the local school building and we stopped in tents. Near our camp, they had fixed several coir ropes across the river to the Nepal side, and from one of the ropes a trapeze-like thing was hung with an inverted V-shaped piece of wood resting on the rope, from the two limbs of which the trapeze was hanging. People cross the river just as a monkey does, holding on to the rope by its fingers and toes. Only, these people support their hips in the trapeze; but women and nervous people actually sit on the cross-bar and are tied with a piece of cloth to the trapeze itself and are pulled across. It is a very primitive and dangerous method. I wish they had a regular rope-bridge. The morning was cool and there were clouds overhanging; the afternoon was nearly as sultry as at Balavakot, the altitude being only 3,000 feet above sea level and hedged in by hills on all sides. On the Nepal side, there is a Nepalese Judicial Officer and a court building. Dharchula reminds one of some parts of Kashmir. They grow rice by diverting hill streams on to the plots. His Highness granted an interview in the evening to Swami Anubhavananda of the Ramakrishna Thapovan—two miles from here on the route to Khela.

6th July 1931—Dharchula to Khela.

As our route to our next stage, *i.e.*, to Khela, was not negotiable by laden mules, all our kit was sent by coolies. The route followed up the course of the Kali and was very narrow—in some places only 3

feet wide or even less. It was passable for about 4 miles and the last bit of about 4 miles was a very steep zig-zag ascent paved with rough stones and slippery. It made one feel almost giddy to look down into the valley. As we left our last camp at 5 A.M., we felt the sun very sharp when we reached Khela at 9-30 A.M., a distance of 10 miles. Khela is amidst steep hills and there is no room even to pitch tents. We camped in a few houses belonging to the Patwari of the place. In fact, to-day's march was one of the most difficult we have had so far. On the opposite side of our camp, the zig-zag path along the steep hill side leading to our next halt, is fairly discouraging to pedestrians. We felt much cooler here, the altitude being 5,500 feet. We halt here to-morrow also and engage new ponies and coolies.

7th July 1931—Halt at Khela.

The whole morning has been misty and a mild sunshine appeared after 10 o'clock. Our advance party to Thithla left this morning. The sky was cloudy during the whole afternoon and the atmosphere very sultry.

8th July 1931—Khela to Thithla.

We left Khela at 5 A.M. and reached Thithla at 9-30 A.M., a distance of 8 miles. We had to get down the valley for about a mile and after crossing a rapid stream—a tributary of the Kali—by a bridge, we began the ascent mentioned yesterday locally called *Khadi Chadhai* or steep ascent. The local people climb these hills quite easily as they are accustomed to it. It was about 3 miles to the top of the ridge and the sure-footed Bhotia ponies and mules took us up panting and stopping for breath every now and then. They are all unshod. After some more ascents and descents and meeting two nice villages and several hill streams, we reached our destination. It had rained heavily the

previous night and the ground was all damp. Our tents were pitched in a small sloping field and it was cold enough to make us put on warm clothing. In the evening, a good many villagers came to us for medicines and we gave them as much as we could spare. Medical help for these hill tracts is quite inadequate. On a hill opposite to our camp, there is a luxuriant growth of a species of fir trees. The altitude of this place is 9,000 feet. Mr. Sadeg Z. Shah composed some doggerel to-day about our present trip.

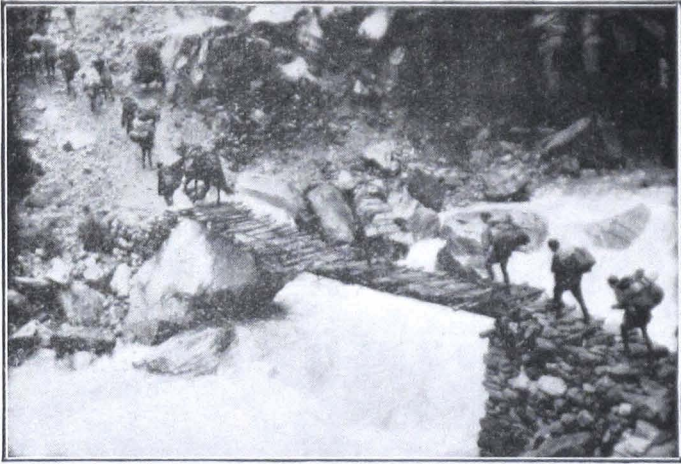
9th July 1931—Thithla to Galagar.

We left Thithla at 4-40 A.M. It was rather chilly, especially after yesterday's rain. The first 4 miles was all down-hill. We met some nice villages with their cultivation and several small mountain streams—the water supply for these villages. Then we had to go up-hill for about 4 miles. All through this portion, there were fairly tall trees with plenty of green vegetation in between, and several wild flowers, some white on top and bluish below and others, light blue. There were a lot of ferns and orchids, some of them growing on the trunks of the trees. Sometimes these trees were covered over with graceful creepers; also clusters of thin green bamboos were in abundance. After reaching the top of the ridge, 10,000 feet above the sea level, we had to descend for about a mile and a half and cross a stream. The rest of our path was fairly easy. We reached Galagar, a distance of 11 miles, at 9-30 A.M. Both the ascent and the descent of the ridge were through a very damp path with a lot of decaying dead leaves. All the same, the air was bracing and we did not feel tired. The path was also very slippery. Our camp was pitched overlooking a valley on small flat bits of ground just big enough for a single Kashmir tent. The sky was cloudy and the weather was cool, the altitude of the place being 8,000 feet; but we were pestered by too many flies owing to the fact that the same camping

ground is used by Bhotia traders. Opposite to our camp the hill is well wooded. Our trusty ponies carried us over all the ascents, panting and gasping, while we walked all the descents.

10th July 1931—Galagar to Malpa.

We left Galagar at about 5 A.M. and rode on our ponies for about 2 miles and then our descent to the bed of the Kali river began. We had to dismount from our ponies as this stretch is fit neither for ponies nor for *dandies*. As usual, the path had been paved mostly with rough stones, and the zig-zags were steep and in some places slippery and slushy owing to last night's rain. We had missed the Kali river during the last two stages, and renewed our acquaintance with it again. After descending with great caution for about 2 miles, we crossed the river by a temporary bridge to the Nepal side, *i.e.*, to the left bank of the river, as otherwise, we would have had to do another dangerous 4 miles through Nirpani (waterless region) over a mere goat-track. People are forced to take this route if the Kali is in floods. We walked over rough stones and boulders right on the river bank, now turning this way and now that, up and down, helter-skelter! We again crossed the Kali where it was narrowest and began our ascents and descents through rugged narrow paths, always precariously clinging to the edge or side of a precipice. This was the most dangerous part of the route and tired us very much. This path is unspeakable for nervous people. At last, we reached Malpa at about 9-30 A.M., a distance of 10 miles. Two mountain torrents, one from the Nepal side and another bigger one from our own side, rush in a waterfall to the Kali during this march. Our camp was pitched on the bank of the river in constant view of its noisy, turbulent waters. Within a stone's throw, another mountain torrent joins it from the right. One of our ponies fell down the *Khud* and was much injured and another that



CROSSING THE KALI TO THE NEPAL SIDE
ON THE WAY TO MALPA

came for us from Garbayang fell into the river on the way and died. I give below with much pleasure Capt. Nabi Khan's poetic effusion as regards to-day's march :—

From Galagar to Garbayang, we crawled eight miles,
Over boulders and rocks of every size,
To call it a road, is all damn lies,
'Tis a short cut to Heaven, if you slip sidewise.

The Medical Professor—what shall I say of his fate?
Every few steps he progressed, he made a long wait.
For a mile, we passed through the Nepal State,
The tenth of July is a memorable date.

Our beloved Maharaja, he led the whole way,
His kindness and charity, my words fail to say,
O! Lord of the Kailas! to You we all pray,
O! Guard and protect him, each hour of the day.

Most of the hills are bare and there are very few trees. The elevation is 7,200 feet.

11th July 1931—Malpa to Budi.

We left Malpa at 5 A.M. and reached Budi at 9 A.M., a distance of about 7 miles. This bit of our journey comes only second to our yesterday's march in every way. We rode for about a mile and then had to walk, as it was not safe to ride. The path was extremely narrow and, as usual, on the edge of a precipice, and there were gaps in several places due to landslips. These were bridged over by beams thrown across and covered over with rough pieces of wood laid across, with earth on top. There were several landslips, some of them recent, and in one spot we heard a large stone falling into the valley with a crash from above us, as soon as we had passed the place! It was, moreover, raining most of the way. We were again alongside the Kali river which was deep down in the valley. As we went higher, there were huge masses of snow on either side of the water in the valley. There were few trees on our way. The last 3 miles, we were able to ride and after getting down a valley and crossing a big

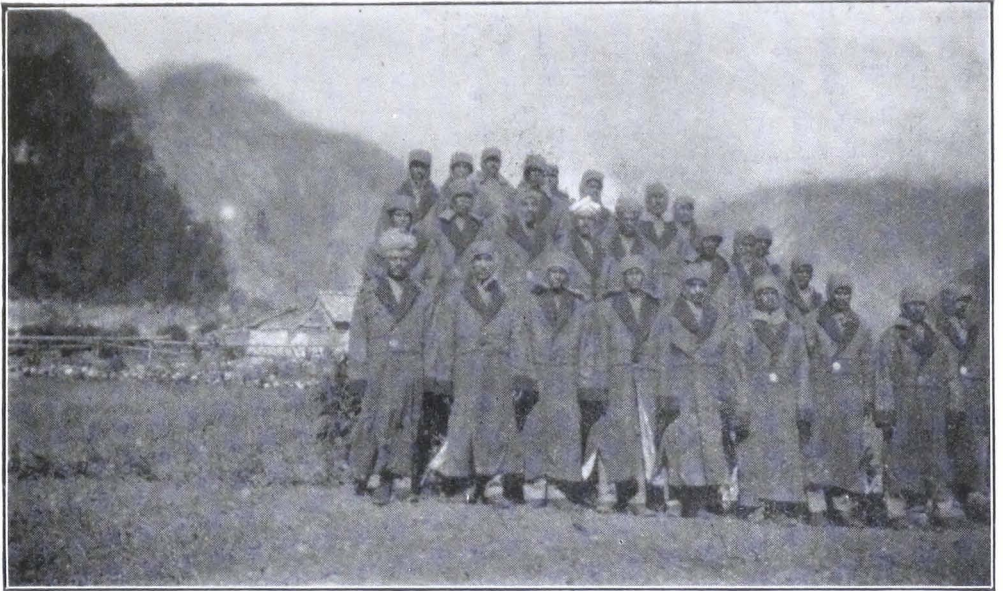
mountain stream over a bridge of the same kind as that described above for filling gaps and landslips, we had again to ascend for about half a mile and reached our camp, pitched on a flat piece of ground about two acres in extent. Near by, is the village of Budi, nestling on the hill slopes and looking pretty from a distance with its patches of cultivation. Our camping ground is enclosed by a sort of compound wall, about 4 feet high, made by piling rough stones over one another. Outside the wall is a small stream which is our water supply. In some of our camps, we had to fetch water from a distance of as much as a mile. On the Nepal side, I see a large mass of snow in a depression in the hill and some small trees. Also there are lots of wild flowers round about us. It is a pity I cannot name them. We had bright sunshine till 4 P.M. and the weather afterwards became cloudy with chill winds blowing. The elevation of the place is 9,600 feet. The weather cleared during twilight, showing some fine snow-clad peaks on the Nepal side.

12th July 1931—Budi to Garbayang.

We left Budi at 5 A.M. towards Garbayang. After a march of about a mile, we had to go up a very steep zig-zag for nearly 2 miles on our ponies when we came upon more level ground, and from here we descended about 2 miles over gentle slopes and reached the village of Garbayang at 7-30 A.M., a distance of about 5 miles. On the way, every now and then, we saw snow in the hollows and there were moderately tall fir trees throughout. There is plenty of level ground at Garbayang for cultivation and the village is a big one for these parts, but very smelly and dirty. The population is of a mixed kind—Bhotias and a few Tibetans, most of whom were ugly and dirty. There is a school here and 30 children—all ill-nourished—welcomed His Highness with songs. Our camp is situated overlooking the Kali, deep down in the valley, on a level piece of ground surrounded by cultivated fields. It is very cold



OURSELVES IN WARM CLOTHING AT GARBAYANG



OUR SERVANTS IN WARM CLOTHING AT GARBAYANG

here, the temperature being 56°F early in the morning. The elevation is 10,500 feet. In the evening, Tibetans came to sell locally made woollen carpets and boots. The sole is made of thick woollen twist and the top is of multi-coloured pieces of broad cloth, velvet, etc., and reaches up to the knee. Sometimes they cover the sole which is an inch and a quarter thick with thin leather. I also saw the third day funeral ceremonies of the Bhotias. They pile up wood and set fire to it and dance in a circle all round to the music of drums and cymbals—men, women and children—with a shield in the left hand, and a naked sword in the right. Now and again, they drink some liquor out of a small cup from a wooden bottle. The liquor is made by them out of fermented rice and jaggery without any special license from the authorities.

13th July 1931—Halt at Garbayang.

We halted here to-day and we have to do the same tomorrow as well, as one of the bridges ahead required repairs. The night was very cold, and from 8 in the morning till 2 in the noon, we had brilliant sunshine and then, alternate sunshine and drizzling rain.

Some Tibetans have come here from Taklakot with some ponies for us. These people keep their hair uncut and part it in the centre in front, and plait it behind, as our women do in the south. They have very little growth of hair on the upper lip and no beard. They are strong and sturdy. A Tibetan village headman from Taklakot, said to be a military officer who has to mobilise a thousand fighting men when called upon by the Government to do so, came here with another Tibetan, supposed to be rich but in tattered garments. They paid their respects to His Highness and noted down the strength of our party, the extent to which we were armed and the object of our visit and went away. At about 6 P.M. the Rani of Sanghai (U. P.), a most venerable looking old lady who is also on a pilgrimage to Kailas,

had an interview with His Highness. Kumar Khadga Singh Pal is also accompanying the Rani looking after her comforts. At sunset the weather was clear, and while there was shadow in the valley, some snow-clad peaks opposite to us on the Nepal side were brilliantly lit and looked grand.

14th July 1931—Halt at Garbayang (contd.).

Last night it rained heavily and the morning was very cold. There was drizzling rain almost the whole morning. His Highness and some of us went down the valley to the river bed for a walk. Our advance party left this at 12 NOON. The afternoon has been sunny.

15th July 1931—Garbayang to Kalapani.

We left Garbayang at 6 A.M. and reached Kalapani at 10-15 A.M., a supposed distance of 9 miles, but it may be a mile or two more. We had to descend at first to the bed of the Kali river, a distance of about half a mile. It was very slippery and more than two inches of clay had stuck to the soles of our hob-nailed boots! Then for about a mile we followed up the course of the Kali and crossed to the Nepal side of the river as our path was narrow and risky. We were glad that there were no very steep ascents or descents and most of the route was fairly level. But, if ever there was a stony path, it was this. In very many places it was impossible to ride or go in a *dandie* and much walking was tiresome owing to the rarefied atmosphere. On the Nepal side there was a strip of about 2 furlongs width right along the Kali and this was well cultivated. There are many pine trees on both sides that were not so well-grown as at Ranikhet. There were also wild white roses and many small plants with white, yellow, pink and blue flowers. After going for about 5 miles in Nepal territory, we re-crossed to our side pretty tired. At Kalapani we again crossed the Kali.



JUNGPON'S SPIES
MILITARY OFFICER AND HIS FRIEND

Our camp was pitched on a piece of level ground at a height of about 50 feet from the river bed. A small brook from a spring behind our camp rushed past us and is supposed to be the source of the Kali. So, our water supply was easy. In one of the sharp turns on our way, my pony went on its knees and my saddle slipped to the left with my feet still in the stirrups. Luckily, servants helped me. I extricated myself and was not hurt. We had brilliant sunshine almost the whole afternoon, and did not feel as cold as in our last camp. High up on the hills, there is snow in the hollows, and on our way also we had to pass over a huge mass of snow. The rapid in the valley below us, is said to be a tributary of the Kali. The altitude is 12,000 feet and some of us feel slight giddiness.

16th July 1931—Kalapani to Siangchum.

We all got up at 3 A.M. and our mules left at 4-30 A.M. with our kit. We ourselves started at 5 A.M. and reached Siangchum, supposed to be 5 or 6 miles distant, at 7-45 A.M. Half of our way was fairly level but full of loose stones varying in size from a marble to a large football; this, of course, made our progress slow.

We had to cross several hill-streams on the way and there were no trees at all, only shrubs. The hills were bare, and here and there were found some green patches of grass and of snow as well. Luckily, it was not raining. The last $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of our journey was a steady pull up along a mountain stream, till at last we reached a slope of about 10 acres—our camping ground. Siangchum is only a halting place and there are no houses or cultivation of any kind. On the way we met parties of Bhotias who had camped with their laden mules, sheep or goat herds or donkeys. The elevation is 15,000 feet and it is very, very cold. We are within a stone's throw of the snow patches. One of our party, Mr. Venkatarangayya, got shortness of breath owing to

the elevation and became very depressed. We thought it very risky to take him further up and so arranged to send him back to Dharchula where there is a small hospital at Ramakrishna Thapovan.

17th July 1931—Siangchum to Taklakot.

All last night we felt it bitterly cold in spite of all our warm clothing, and most of us had a headache and did not sleep well. Moreover, it was drizzling the whole night and in the morning also. So, when we got up at 4 A.M., it was a task to finish our morning toilet, etc., in that bitter cold. We left Siangchum at 5-20 A.M. in pouring rain and went on our ponies to Lipulekh Pass (elevation 16,750 feet) through slippery winding paths and over large areas of snow where the hoofs of our ponies would get buried for over a foot in depth. Many felt queer owing to the elevation and very much out of breath and incapable of any exertion. The Pass is nearly awe-inspiring and makes one think of the majesty of the Almighty.

Perfect stillness prevailed right through the Pass; but it was nothing to the local people. After crossing the ridge, we had to make a steep descent of nearly a mile when we reached a shallow valley through which a stream was running, receiving many tributaries from the melting snows on hill tops on either side.

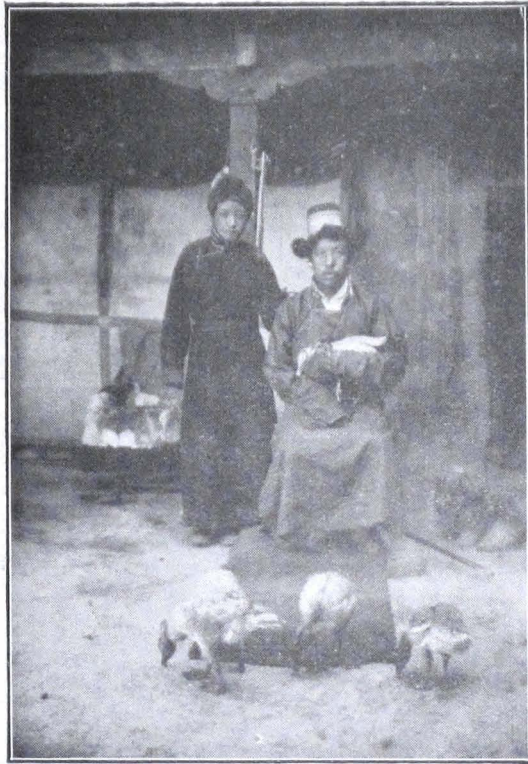
Our path lay along the stream and the valley was so broad that we felt we were in the plains again. The hills were all bare and not even grass was growing on them, though in shape they resembled the Ooty downs. The sun was sharp and we wended our way to Taklakot, a distance of 12 miles, reaching it at 10-30 A.M. Lipulekh Pass forms the boundary between British India and Tibet. A fine canal is led from the stream which irrigates many acres of land. The village is fairly large; the houses are built of mud and stone and roofed over with mud on wooden joists and sticks. The Tibetan villagers are extremely ugly and dirty, varying in complexion from

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12



HIS HIGHNESS, THE JUNGPON AND PARTY AT TAKLAKOT

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. The Jungpon's servant | 7. Mr. N. Rangachar |
| 2. Major S. Gopal Rao | 8. Tibetan servant |
| 3. Mr. Prathap Singh, Tahsildar | 9. His Highness the Maharaja |
| 4. Lieut. Nanjaraj Bahadur | 10. Tibetan officer |
| 5. Col. A. V. Subramanyaraj Urs | 11. The Jungpon's daughter |
| 6. Mr. Sadeg Z. Shah | 12. The Jungpon |



THE JUNGPON AND HIS DAUGHTER
WITH HIS DUCKS

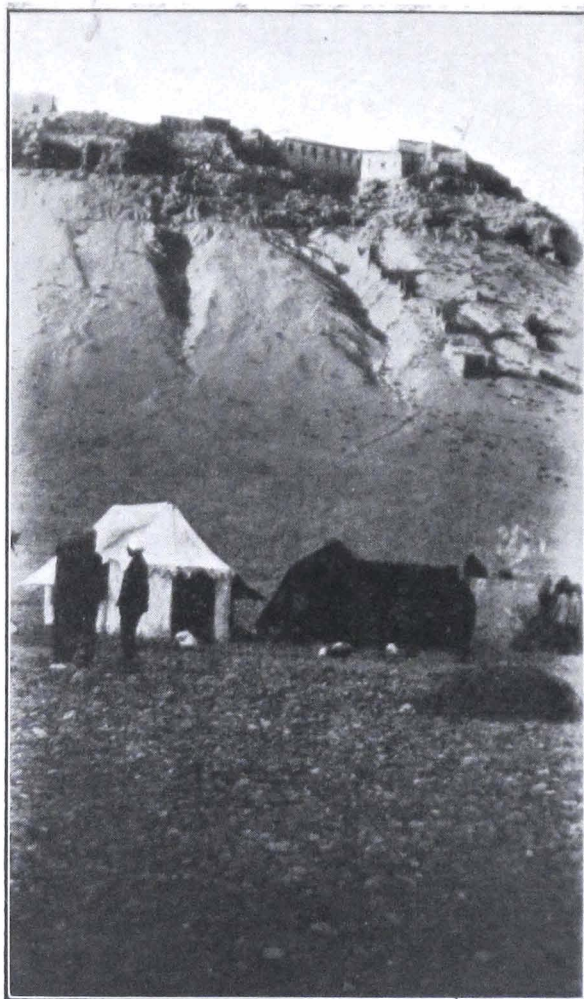
jet black to brown and all the men wear large ear-rings in their left ear. The village is situated on the right bank of the Karnali river, and on a large piece of level ground on the left bank of it, our camp was pitched. Immediately behind our camp, on a ridge about 300 feet above us, is the residence of the Jungpon (a Tibetan Commissioner and District Magistrate) which looks like a castle. Attached to it is also a large Buddhist monastery.

The Jungpon paid a visit to His Highness in the evening and presented some Tibetan carpets. The interview took place with the help of Bhotia interpreters and group photos were taken. He was accompanied by his daughter also, a girl of 14 or 15 years, and was much interested in our binoculars and cameras. He was tall and well-built and had an air of authority about him. All round on the hills patches of snow are visible. There are no trees at all, not even grass; but they grow barley, peas, and some other crops. Many Tibetans were revolving their prayer-wheels. Here and there stones smeared with red earth were piled up and amidst the piles, sticks were fixed to which rags of various colours were tied, and on some of the stones Buddhist prayers had been carved. It is not half so cold here as at our last halt, though the elevation is 13,100 feet.

18th July 1931—Halt at Taklakot.

We had a fairly cold night and in the morning the sun was quite bright and warm. So, we discarded most of our extra warm clothes and at about 8 A.M. began the zig-zag ascent to the residence of the Jungpon over a mere footpath that was slippery owing to loose, stony soil. The hill sides were all loose, the result of old landslides, leaving here and there some cave-like dwellings with narrow openings that looked like the bastions of a castle. When we reached the top of the ridge, the Jungpon received His Highness and conducted

us through a narrow passage to his residence. After passing through a gate and ascending a few steps, we entered a sort of courtyard in which his mules were housed, and on a small terrace was tied his ferocious Tibetan dog who was barking and tugging at his ropes to reach us. He was a fat, black dog with bandy legs, lots of hair and a huge head. Again, we ascended through a flight of steps to another dirty courtyard in which several black- and silver-smiths were working at a saddle for the Jungpon. They were very dirty and one of them was ferocious looking. Then, he conducted us to his private room where we were all made to sit. The room was dark with only one window and in one side there was an image of Buddha and various other images with silver and bronze bowls containing consecrated water, bells and other accessories of worship, all neatly arranged on wooden steps. The walls were painted with dragons, parrots, deer, etc., on a green background. The whole place was smelling of stale butter and ghee. For himself, he had a cosy raised dais with cushions and Tibetan carpets. Above him, on the wall were hung some fire arms of Chinese make and a small stringed musical instrument on which he played some short Tibetan airs. The Jungpon was presented with a gramophone (His Master's Voice, Model 101, with an automatic stop) and three of Indubala's records, which he was taught to handle and a pair of binoculars also. He showed much interest in His Highness's Malacca walking stick which had a dog's head with a silver muzzle carved at the end of the bent handle. This beautiful stick was actually snatched by him and he was mightily pleased with it. By the way, there was a dark room in one of the passages which was used as a lock-up and which made one's blood creep. Next, he took us to the large monastery adjoining, which was several storeys high, all with mud roofs with small covered openings on the top for ventilation and the escape of smoke. The flooring is made of pebbles and clay beaten together. In a fairly spacious hall supported on crudely carved



TAKLAKOT MONASTERY AND JUNGPON'S
RESIDENCE



LAMAS IN PRAYER AT TAKLAKOT MONASTERY



TIBETAN DANCERS OF TAKLAKOT

pillars, there were wooden seats for the Lamas and long narrow mattresses for the smaller Lamas and the boy priests or novices, arranged in rows for them to sit or eat their food.

On a higher level was the sanctum in which there was a clay image of a sitting Buddha painted in gold with a pleasing expression and another of the Dalai Lama, with various accessories for worship consisting of silver and brass cups, lamps full of butter with burning wicks, drums, cymbals, etc., too numerous to mention. There was also a bowl made of the upper half of a human skull lined inside with silver plate out of which consecrated water is doled out with a spoon to the devotees. All round, on shelves, they had arranged their library. The whole place was dark and smelling of stale butter. The Lamas and their pupils were, as usual, very dirty and clad in brown or chocolate woollen gowns and a kummerbund and had their heads close cropped. The Chief Lama was next visited. He was a very old man and made kind enquiries about us and gave some *prasadam* consisting of some incense mixed with dry moss and a piece of thin muslin received from the Dalai Lama with his blessings. In all the dark passages there were the inevitable prayer-wheels and drums which the devotees turn round while passing. The whole atmosphere was very filthy. How much of spirituality lurks behind all this, it is hard to say! At last, we took leave of the Jungpon and at about 11 A.M. wended our way back to camp in the hot sun. In the evening, at about 5 P.M., a party of Tibetan dancers—men and two women sent by the Jungpon fantastically dressed, the men wearing masks and baggy trousers which bulged out when they danced round, and the women wearing several tassels round the waist that spread out along with their skirts like an umbrella—danced before His Highness for about half an hour to the accompaniment of a Tibetan drum and a pair of brass cymbals worked by a woman. It was quite weird. In fact, all about the Tibetans reminds one of the Rakshasas

or giants of our Puranas as depicted on our stage even now in the south. Several Tibetan curios such as their carved, painted tables or stools, bronze bells, their silver filigree work, kettles, etc., were brought to camp for sale a detailed description of which is unnecessary here as they can be better appreciated by actually seeing them, just as Mr. Nabi Khan's photographs will, I am sure, be more eloquent than my poor word-pictures. We all possess so much of woollen warm clothing that I find woollen fibres incorporated in our chapathies! The whole day, strong winds were blowing and the evening was chilly, and the crescent of the moon in the clear blue sky showed the chain of hills with their snows far away from us to much advantage with a belt of clouds behind them near the horizon and the silence made the whole atmosphere peaceful. As fuel is scarce in Tibet, we found dry yak dung, dry roots and shrubs stored in the Jungpon's residence. Not a single yak is to be seen here as many of them died recently of rinderpest. The Lamas wear their boots even inside the sanctum and dogs move about freely everywhere. The Jungpon had a table lamp in his worshipping room that had a revolving shade, the escape of hot air through holes in the top of the shade, keeping it going. There is not a drop of water on the ridge and women carry water in iron drums on their backs from the river. The Tibetans—men and women—are strong and sturdy, and when they wish to show respect to others, they put their tongues out several times. They live mostly on meat, either fresh or dried, and *sattu* (fried wheat powder) and rarely, some kind of bread.

19th July 1931—Halt at Taklakot (*contd.*)

The night was cold and the sun was quite sharp in the morning and throughout the day. There were also strong, cold winds blowing. As transport arrangements had to be made and as there was also a mela or function in the monastery above, we halted here to-day



TAKLAKOT MONASTERY

too. Our advance party left us at 12 NOON. His Highness again visited the monastery and presented khillats to the Chief Lama who held a regular religious durbar. As I did not feel equal to going up again to-day, I could not attend it. Mr. Nabi Khan took photographs. It appears the Head Lama took his seat on a special dais and he was first given consecrated water and some tea. The other Lamas were then given the same and betwixt chantings, they all partook of dried meat, *sattu* and some kind of cake. The devotees made their offerings to the Lama and in return got his blessings. Mr. Shah got some duck's eggs to-day for his table from Lake Manasarowar. They are nearly four times the size of a hen's egg.

20th July 1931—Taklakot to Rungung.

To-day's march was one of the easiest we have had so far. We left Taklakot at 5 A.M. and got down to the bed of a stream which we crossed by a wooden bridge. Proceeding further, we met several villages on the way with their fields in which they grow barley, peas and oats and with their flock of sheep, goats and a few cattle. The hills on either side resemble in shape the downs of Ooty but are completely devoid of any vegetation. These villages are to be found wherever there is a hill stream. In the level portions, a kind of thorny shrub grows which is uprooted and dried and along with dry yak dung cakes forms their fuel. There was no grass on the way and only three or four trees looking very much like the willow in one village only. After doing 8 miles, we came upon a grassy maidan of fair extent with a brook by its side and camped there 2 miles this side of Rungung village as we were told there was difficulty of water supply there. The whole day has been sunny with strong, chill winds. The elevation is 14,400 feet. Our path was very stony to-day too. Perfect stillness prevailed throughout, but for the jingling of bells on the necks of our ponies, or the bark of a village

dog on our approach. We did not come across any birds even. Ever since we reached the higher altitudes we could not get any fresh vegetables or fruits. We brought a good quantity of potatoes, onions, fresh apples, tinned fruits, vegetables and preserved milk from Almora. Rice is underboiled at these heights. Our lips and noses are cracked on account of the cold and we apply emollients. On some distant, low hills,—low to us because the whole Tibetan plateau is on an average 14,000 feet above sea level—there are patches of snow.

21st July 1931—Rungung to Gori-Odial.

We left our camp near Rungung at 5 A.M. as usual, in bitter cold. Our path lay through a maidan about half to one mile broad with a chain of low, bare hills to our right and a stream with another chain of hills, with streaks of silvery snow to our left. The maidan was either sandy or stony, devoid of any trees and with some thorny shrubs here and there. In fact, it was like going through a mountainous desert, the several small hill streams corresponding to the oases. There was perfect stillness save for the sounds of our horses' hoofs or the murmuring of any stream that we crossed. In addition, the thick mist that pervaded the whole morning lent a very sombre aspect. It was a gradual ascent to our next halting place near Gori-Odial, a distance of about 11 miles, which we reached at 8-30 A.M. In some low-lying places near the streams, there was some thin and stumpy grass. The camp was pitched on a grassy maidan very much cut up into numerous ruts like a bog and with a small brook running through it. It was bitterly cold, windy and cloudy till about 4 P.M., so that no view could be had. Here, we saw a few yaks that are used for carrying pack-loads. The elevation is about 16,000 feet and not a single bird was seen to-day. In the evening, we had bright sunshine and the sky cleared and behind our camp we got a magni-



MANASAROWAR CAMP

ficient view of one of the Gurla Mandhatha Peaks rounded like the top of a *lingam* covered extensively with pure white snow which the sun lit up brilliantly. Cold winds were unbearable in the evening and till a late hour of the night, which we all felt extremely cold.

22nd July 1931—Gori-Odial to Manasarowar.

The early morning was very cold and misty. We left our camp near Gori-Odial at 5-30 A.M. and wended our way through extensive, barren, stony plains bordered on either side with bare hillocks for about 3 miles, when we crossed a broad river-bed, full of smooth rounded stones with a rapid in the centre. From here onwards, it was a gradual ascent of about 500 feet to the Gurla Pass which is said to be about 16,200 feet above the sea level, and very near the snow-clad Gurla Mandhatha Range. On either side of us there were bare hill slopes much like Ooty downs. When we reached the end of the Gurla Pass, we found the sun rising above a ridge to the left of us which soon lifted all the mist that pervaded till now. From here we had a clear view of Lake Manasarowar with its blue waters separated from Rakastal, another lake, by a chain of low hills. We ought to have had a glimpse of Kailas Peak also, but unfortunately it was hidden from us by clouds. After descending for about a mile from the Gurla Pass towards the Manas Lake and going for about 3 miles over the broad level ground along its shore, we reached our camp at 9 A.M., pitched only about 30 feet from the water's edge and in full view of the lake, a distance of about 10 or 11 miles from our last camp. Lake Manasarowar is no doubt beautiful, situated as it is, in an extensive basin amidst hills. Its water looks blue from a distance but is clear as crystal and sweet. It is fed by the melting snows of the hills all round, as I am told that they have very little rain in Tibet. From above, it looks oval in shape and Mr. Scherring and some

others estimate its circumference at about 40 miles, though a Japanese Buddhist monk, Ekai-Kawaguchi, who spent 3 years in Tibet and has published a book, gives it as 200 miles and says that the lake is more or less octagonal in shape. But objects that look near in these altitudes are really distant owing to an optical illusion, the result of the rarefaction of the atmosphere. I am inclined to think that the monk is right. His Highness and all the Hindus in the camp, bathed in the lake. The water is cold enough to make one gasp for breath and shiver for half an hour afterwards. We all offered *tarpan* to the manes of our ancestors as this is considered a sacred lake, not only by us, but by the Tibetans as well. Fishing in the lake is forbidden. There are no islands in this lake unlike in Rakastal which is irregular in shape and contains several small bare islands. However, I must mention that after seeing Manasarowar, we cannot despise the beautiful Wular Lake of Kashmir, or our own Krishnarajasagara and the Vanivilas Lakes.

It speaks volumes for the indefatigability of our ancestors in that they traversed all these difficult passes and have given descriptions of these lakes and snow-clad mountains in our Puranas. In the evening there was an unpleasant, strong, cold wind which choked any one even trying to speak facing the wind. I found to my surprise that the numerous clusters of thorny bushes, the only vegetation that thrives here, burn well even raw, and were used as fuel by our coolies. It is locally called *dama*. The Tibetan's dirty habits can be attributed to the lack of fuel, the intense cold of the place even during summer and his extreme poverty. We have not yet been lucky enough to see any swans in Lake Manasarowar—probably they have fought shy of our large camp. There is some thin, sharp grass in our maidan which the ponies relish. The elevation is about 14,900 feet. The Rani of Sanghai along with Kumar Khadga Singh Pal is also with us since joining our camp at Garbayang, and some sadhus who are also pilgrims

to Kailas are being helped with money and provisions both by our Maharaja and by the Rani Saheba.

23rd July 1931—Manasarowar to Jieu Gompa.

We left our last camp on the western shores of the lake at 5-30 A.M. and went along its water's edge towards the north for about 6 miles. On the way, on a steep hill, with loose slippery side towards the lake, there was a monastery which His Highness and others visited. I believe it was very dirty and not half so good as the one at Taklakot. After we had gone about 6 miles, we saw several ducks of moderate size in the lake—some white in colour with a black patch over their heads, others grey or brown; also some kind of smaller birds on the shore which flew away on our approach. We had now to detour to our left over a gradual ascent and then through extensive barren plains supposed to be a region of gold deposits. We did another 5 miles and reached our camp, pitched on the shore where there is an outlet for the lake which is said to form the source of the Sutlej or the Indus, at 9-30 A.M., a distance of 11 miles. Near by there is a hot sulphur spring and over a hillock, is Jieu Gompa, a monastery with an uninviting exterior which we did not care to visit. About noon, we had just a glimpse of the Kailas Peak in the distance through a gap in the clouds. Piercingly cold winds were blowing throughout the day and it was a wise thing to remain within the tent, though the sun was shining bright. On the opposite side to us, there is said to be another outlet to the lake which forms the source of the great Bramhaputra river. One of our men, Harikar Seshachar, has developed broncho-pneumonia after yesterday's cold bath in the lake.

24th July 1931—Jieu Gompa to Barkha.

We left Jieu Gompa at 5-30 A.M. passing through extensive maidans bordered on both sides by hills,

sometimes sandy and at others rocky, with the same *dama* bushes that had black caterpillars an inch and a half long about them, and reached Barkha maidan at the foot of the Kailas Range at 8-30 A.M., a distance of about 8 miles. On the way we saw small hares running about. There were also some flowers resembling chrysanthemum, the size of a quarter anna, yellow in the centre and with thin blue petals. There is plenty of thin, withered grass. We had a glimpse of Kailas Peak when the clouds had cleared. It looked like a huge castle built over a hill and capped by a gigantic dome, all snow-covered with, on one side stones jutting out at regular intervals from the base to the apex in two parallel rows, as if steps had been constructed. Though the sight was pretty, there was nothing majestic about it. Where our camp had been pitched, it is all clayey soil and there are no stones; a small stream meanders in a sort of boggy ground. It is probably an old lake bed. These plains would serve for beautiful aerodromes. There are only two houses here. We saw a large herd of yaks here. The whole afternoon we are having terrible cold winds. In this rarefied atmosphere neither beasts nor men can exert much. There is a "Tarjun" or assistant to the Jungpon here, who can depute any one he likes to act for him during his absence. His Highness visited his residence. He conducted us into a fairly dark room with a single small window, and it was furnished in the same style as that of the Jungpon at Taklakot. There was also a stringed musical instrument like a banjo on which he played two short Tibetan tunes singing them himself at the same time. We also visited the dwelling of a Tibetan shepherd. It was a square pit about 10 feet square and waist deep in the ground, and smoothened with mud paste and roofed over with cloth made of yak hair which is water-proof. They had built a mud stove inside for cooking and in one corner there was a small image of Buddha with cups for water, lamp, etc. It was quite snug inside. The whole family resided in



MOUNT KAILAS AS SEEN FROM BARKHA MAIDAN

this single room. Their fuel consisted of *dama* root and stalk with the dung of cow, yak, sheep and horse. They had bellows also for lighting their fire. All our Tibetan coolies were drinking tea made with butter and salt instead of milk and sugar. Many Tibetans, especially women, apply jaggery paste to their cheeks and over their nose as a cosmetic and look hideous. This they do to prevent cracks in the skin. We saw some very black crows that were four times the size of crows of our parts.

25th July 1931—Barkha to Darchin or Tarchin.

The night and the early morning was intensely cold. When we came out of our tents at 5 A.M., the sky was clear and the whole Kailas Range was distinctly visible to us. The mount looked now like the principal dome of a mansion inside a hill-fort with its bastions and lookouts with many spires and turrets. We had to cross over to the other side of the maidan which was mostly boggy with innumerable small tortuous streams coursing through it to go to Darchin at the foot of Kailas, a distance of about 7 miles. Darchin village is, they say, the property of the Sikkim State. On the way there was a family of Tibetan shepherds living in a rowtie, and they had a flock of sheep and a herd of yaks with four calves. These latter were photographed. One of the male members was asked to use his Chinese gun and he missed his mark. Darchin contains the residence of the Governor appointed by Sikkim who is known locally as Raja Loba. Our camp was pitched opposite to this, a hill stream intervening. The other abodes consist of rowties only in which several families live. As soon as we reached camp, we had information that the Governor had too much liquor the previous night, and had very severe bleeding from the nose. Myself and my assistant treated him and it was one of the worst cases I had ever seen. He was a tall, sturdy, fair-complexioned individual with bushy hair, and he

recovered in the evening. After 5 p.m. His Highness and the rest of us paid a visit to Gangta-Gompa, the biggest of the five Buddhist monasteries round about Kailas. It was not as big as the one at Taklakot and was equally dark and dirty inside. It was also a mud and stone storeyed structure. One object of interest here was the armour and sword of General Zoravar Singh of Kashmir and Jammu who is said to have been defeated and killed at Taklakot in an engagement with the Tibetans after he had ruled them for some time. His Highness was received at the entrance of the monastery by an old Lama with burning incense, to the accompaniment of the blowing of trumpets, horns, etc., on the topmost mud terrace. His Highness presented some red banath pieces and some cash to the monastery.

26th July 1931—Darchin to Didiphu.

Darchin is at the foot of the Kailas Range on its eastern aspect. It is from this spot that pilgrims go to the right and finish circumambulation or *parikram* of Mount Kailas. We left camp at 5-30 A.M., followed the base of a ridge to the right for about 2 miles, when we came across a flat-bottomed valley with a river flowing through it and separating Mount Kailas from another hill chain. As we entered the valley, we again turned to the right and followed up the river on level ground for about 5 or 6 miles and saw the peak in its southern and western aspects. About the middle of this valley, there is a small monastery known as Nendiphu on the other side of the river which we did not visit. High up, on the Kailas side, there were some ibex grazing. This whole valley contains much green grass and serves as good grazing ground. But owing to the high altitude and some sulphurous smell here and there, exertion was very difficult for both man and beast of the plains. The last 3 miles was a gradual ascent over loose stones to Didiphu, another small monastery on the side of a stream. We were all tired

by 11 A.M. when we had completed these 11 miles. Our camp was pitched at the foot of Mount Kailas on fairly level ground and the Mount itself was very near to us now and a good stream was flowing down from Kailas into a river down the valley. In the evening, myself, Major Gopal Rao, and the Tahsildar, Mr. Prathap Singh, mounted our ponies and went up a rocky and slippery ascent to the base of the Mount which is said to be 18,000 feet above sea level, the elevation of our camp itself being 16,200 feet. The base of the peak is almost a parallelogram and the Mount rises perpendicularly and the top is shaped like a dome. When we reached the base, two huge masses of snow had formed a buttress against it and through a triangular opening below at the junction of the two masses, a beautiful stream was gushing forth. In a small niche in a snow-wall to our right, was a beautiful snow *lingam* about 9 inches high and 3 inches in diameter. The niche had the shape of a saracenic arch. It and the *lingam* at its entrance were so perfect, that it is difficult to say if it was an accidental formation in the snow, or the handiwork of any skilled devotee, probably the former. The place had a magnetic attraction for us, and we were loth to leave soon, as we felt quite exhilarated whilst there. However, as it was about to get dark, we marched down carefully, in some places over hard snow, to our camp, collecting on the way three specimens of a flower known as the *Bramha Kamal* or the Bramha lotus, greyish in colour, and got back to our camp at 7-30 P.M. well pleased with our visit. There were some pigeons near our camp.

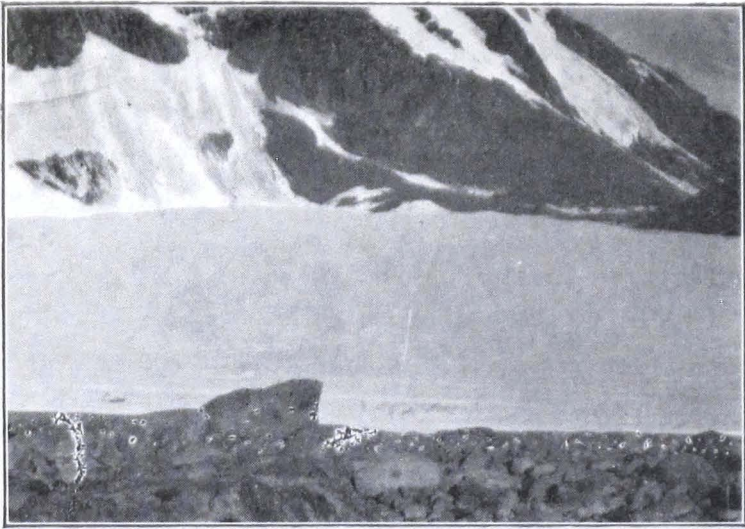
27th July 1931—Didiphu to Zindiphu.

According to our programme, we had to do the second stage of our *parikram* of Kailas. We left the camp at 5-30 A.M. in bitter cold. This march of 11 or 12 miles to Zindiphu proved to be the worst we have had so far. First, we had to do 3 or 4 miles of *very steep* and stony

ascent, tiresome to us and to our animals, to reach a ridge called Dolma Pass or Gowrikund, 18,600 feet above sea level, the highest altitude during this trip; it was nothing to the local Tibetans. At last when we reached the ridge, there was a small frozen lake, Gowrikund, with sheets of ice on it, with rough craggy sides. Throughout our path near this ridge, there were patches of snow and we had several hill streams to cross. The stones about us were of all sorts of fantastic shapes. From the ridge where we felt fairly out of breath, we made an easy descent of about two miles over loose stones into the bottom of a valley through which a stream was flowing. The valley was quite marshy and added to the difficulties of our march. The sun was sharp and there was a sulphurous odour also, and at short intervals there were stones heaped up with carved Buddhist texts interposed. At last we camped right in front of the small, dirty Zindiphu monastery on a sloping maidan with a stream flowing beside it. We reached this at about 10-30 A.M. While descending from the ridge, the pony which Chauffeur Kariappa was riding, slipped; he was thrown and injured his left elbow.

28th July 1931—Zindiphu to Barkha.

When we left Zindiphu at 5-30 A.M. as usual, we had a clear view of Goorla Mandhatha Range in front of us, just as we got a clear view of Kailas Range when we left Barkha for Darchin. After proceeding for 3 miles down the valley along the stream, we reached the Barkha maidan again thus finishing the *parikram* of Kailas. We went slowly straight across for about 7 miles to reach Barkha again at 8-45 A.M., a total distance of some 10 miles. We camped on the same ground as before. We are all glad that our pilgrimage has been thus far successful and our return journey homewards has begun to-day. We have not been feeling so cold as in our last two halts though cold winds are blowing. The whole maidan is a very good grazing



FROZEN GOWRIKUND LAKE



KAILAS PEAK AS SEEN FROM DOLMA PASS

ground for thousands of sheep and cattle. In the evening, as the sun was setting in the western horizon, a mass of clouds above appeared golden and as the rest of the sky was clear, the whole Kailas was distinct before us and the full moon rose on the eastern horizon.

29th July 1931—Barkha to Jieu Gompa.

We ought to have camped to-day on the borders of the Rakastal, but in deference to the wishes of the Rani of Sanghai, we camped on the borders of the Manas, 2 miles south of Jieu Gompa, as to-day happened to be full-moon day, and many among us had another dip in the lake. We left Barkha at 5-15 A.M. and reached here at 8-45 A.M., a distance of about 10 miles. The day has been remarkable in that, strong gusts of cold wind brought down all our rowties between 4 and 5 P.M. Subsequently, the wind ceased fortunately. Kumar Khadga Singh Pal bought a Tibetan pony yesterday at Barkha. At about 7 P.M., in the eastern horizon opposite to us, just where two ranges of hills slope towards each other and in the gap the Bramhaputra flows out of Lake Manas, the full moon—a brilliant, beautiful, big sphere—slowly rose up leaving a long silvery column of its reflection in the calm waters of the lake, and gladdened us all, and Mr. Nabi Khan exposed his camera. I hope the result will be good.

30th July 1931—Jieu Gompa to Rakastal.

Our march to our next stage began at 5-15 A.M. to-day during a bitterly cold morning. We followed up the water's edge of the lake for about 3 miles when we came up on a big maidan and there were lots of ducks sporting in the lake. We then turned south-east towards the top of a chain of hills separating Lake Manas from Lake Rakastal. On the way we saw a fairly big round lake with a white island of borax in the centre, and numerous ducks in it. The borax is not

worked as the Tibetan Government forbade it. It was a gradual ascent to the top of the ridge for about 3 miles from where we had a partial view of both the lakes. Then we turned to our right towards the Rakastal Lake, a gradual descent of another 3 miles, when we came upon a dilapidated building, Lakando, once a dharmasala. Proceeding another 3 miles, we pitched our camp on a maidan on the south-western border of the lake. Lake Rakastal is also beautiful with an irregular shape and several small islands in it. It is probably as big as, or even bigger than Lake Manas. The whole day has been windy and chilly, though the sun was very sharp the whole morning. Thus we reached Lakando at 10 A.M., a distance of about 12 miles. Our animals too were rather tired. By the way, a lean, lanky cheeta or leopard was observed to go up the hills on our approach as we left Lake Manasarowar. Rakastal is said to contain many swans, but we saw none. People say that when the whole lake gets frozen during winter, they walk over hardened snow to these islands to collect swan's eggs.

31st July 1931—Rakastal to Rungung.

We had the coldest night and the coldest morning so far. With all our warm clothing, the cold used to penetrate to the very marrow of our bones, and made us long to bid good-bye to Western Tibet as early as possible for more congenial regions. We left Rakastal at 5-15 A.M. and reached our next camp at Rungung at 9-30 A.M., a distance of about 10 miles. Our ponies did this at a slow walk, but were tired, all the same, on account of the rarefied atmosphere. Instead of reaching Rungung, the way we took on the forward journey, *i.e.*, through Gori-Odial and Goorla Pass, we passed through a shallow valley with a broad flat bottom, much lower in altitude than Gori-Odial and almost level throughout, but quite stony, and with the inevitable *dama* bushes throughout, and some other kinds of shrubs that our ponies ate

greedily. God never created anything in vain, and even the *dama* forms the fuel here. The Goorla Mandhatha Range to our left was throughout enveloped in clouds; otherwise we should have had a good view of them as we skirted the range lower down; most of the morning was cloudy. Our camp was pitched on a level piece of ground adjoining a marshy valley full of green grass and with a tortuous stream flowing through it, so that our water supply and the grazing for our animals were assured. Here too, cold winds were blowing.

1st August 1931—Rungung to Taklakot.

Rungung was not half so cold as Rakastal. We did the journey to Taklakot in 4 hours having left at 5-20 A.M. About 3 miles from Taklakot near a village full of fertile crops of peas, barley and oats, they showed a spot where the Tibetans fought General Zoravar Singh and killed him. We were glad to be back at Taklakot as it is comparatively warmer than the places we visited after leaving it—distance 10 miles.

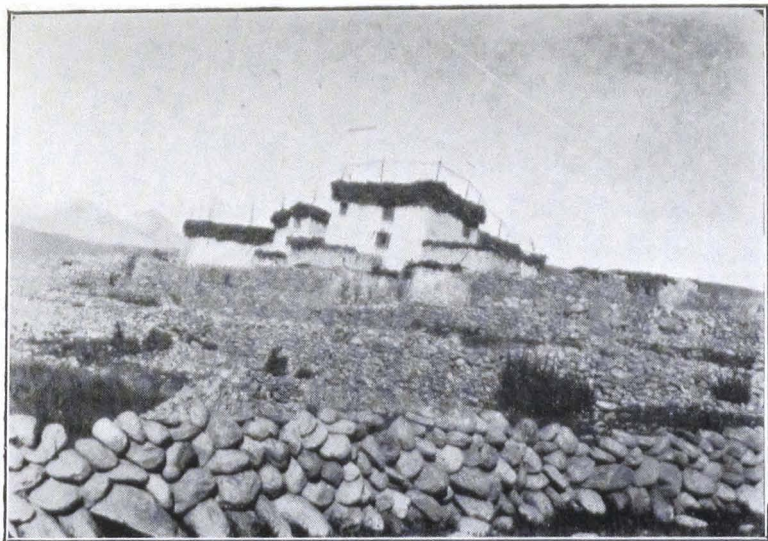
2nd August 1931—Taklakot to Khojarnath.

It was decided yesterday to pay a visit to the well-known monastery at Khojarnath. So, as usual, we left Taklakot at 5-30 A.M. and reached Khojarnath after 4 hours. It is situated south-east of Taklakot on the Mapchu or Karnali river. Throughout, we were following the river's course. The first half of the route was almost level and we had to cross two or three streams. On the way, there were small, neat villages with well-cultivated plots containing luxuriant peas, barley and a kind of wheat that they call jav and watered by diverted hill streams that form neat canals. Here and there, we saw some trees like the willow. Each village had its sheep and cattle grazing on the green grass bordering the canals. The intense green of the cultivated fields was a pretty sight. The canals were bordered by some blue,

wild flowers. The latter half of the route consisted of ascents and descents. The village of Khojarnath forms Sikkim territory and consists of a semi-circular plot of sloping ground, about 2 miles in diameter, with a chain of hills for a background and a broad river, the Karnali, separating it from another chain of hills on the Nepal side. The monastery is situated, like any South Indian shrine, right on the river bank, unlike other monasteries that we saw perched on steep precipitous hillocks. On entering through a crooked, covered passage, we come to a square, open space with buildings on all the four sides. The main shrine is coloured *terra cotta* with mud plastering outside the walls. On the terrace a round brass disc with a brass deer on either side greets the eye in front. On entering the gate, there is a small courtyard, the walls of which are painted with neat figures of Buddha, flowers and wild animals. On proceeding through an inner door, on either side of which revolving prayer drums or casks covered with leather are fixed, we came upon a small room on either side of which stand two painted clay giants about 8 feet high. They say one of them represents Ravana. Beyond this we enter a hall about 20 feet by 50 feet with wooden pillars in two rows, and two rows of seats covered with mattresses for the Lamas to sit in prayer. At the farther end of the hall, there is an image of a seated Buddha with all the accessories for worship, such as cups, bells, etc. Behind this, there is a space about 4 feet right across and at the farthest end of the hall, over a pedestal about 5 feet high, are 3 standing metallic images cast out of an alloy with more of copper in it, of Seetha, Rama and Lakshman, each about 7 or 8 feet in height with a *prabhavali* or frame of Gothic shape behind them. The whole casting is of exquisite workmanship. Across the base of the pedestal there is a perfect elephant at one end and a horse at the other end, and in between, several gods and goddesses in a sitting posture. Above this, there is something like the stalk of a lotus, on either side of which are two nymphs with bent backs

and looking upward with folded hands. Then over this come the lotus petals, the lower half turned downwards and the upper half set upwards to form the top of the pedestal. On this stands the image of Rama with Seetha to the right and Lakshman to the left. In fact, the pedestal forms a beautifully designed bracket for the images. The faces are painted nicely. There seems to be more of silver in the alloy out of which the images have been cast. The *prabhavali* or the setting frame shows designs of peacocks and other animals with some creepers and is very beautiful. There are also two lions crouching on either side of the base and if we put our hands behind the base a current of air is felt. The figures are draped in cloth of gold and some jewellery containing mostly turquoise, and there is an embroidered head-gear also over each image. The whole casting is faultless and full of beauty. How old the images are, is unknown. The local Lamas declare that no human hands shaped them. Probably the temple was originally Hindu and was subsequently used as a Buddhist monastery. There is a narrow, dark passage for pilgrims to go round the main shrine. We were pleased with the whole sight. On a high bench facing the images, there are several large silver and gold bowls containing ghee with wicks placed in the centre and burning day and night. There is an open *prakar* or compound round this building in which innumerable revolving prayer drums are installed. In a room there is a huge drum or cylinder about 10 feet high and 5 feet in diameter with iron rings to set it going and inscribed all over with their sacred mantram or prayer "*Om mani padme ham*" in Tibetan script. The wheel is constantly revolved by an old woman sitting near by. On coming out, we turned into another door on the left and entered a similar very large hall paved with mud and rough stones, at the end of which in a dark room there is a huge painted clay image of Buddha as if seated on a stool or chair. In a large room to the left of the hall, there were several painted clay images of *rishis* or saints all seated cross-

legged and in an attitude of prayer. Opposite to this room, *i.e.*, to the right of the hall, in another similar dark, large room, there were again seven such all sitting cross-legged but with their hands in various attitudes denoting what they call *mudras*. These latter are known as *sapta-rishis* or seven saints. To the left of the Buddha shrine, in another dark dungeon, there are two hideous figures of Kala and Kali, all of painted clay and leather. In one corner of the roof of the main hall, they had suspended a crudely stuffed gigantic wild yak or chorgai and a tiger. We then adjourned to the first floor of the building where we were shown clay images of Kali and of Lakshmi installed in a large library containing many printed Tibetan scriptures. This monastery is very much cleaner than those we saw before and there is an air of solemnity about it. The surroundings are very dirty, and outside the building on a wall, is shown in gigantic letters made of mud-paste and painted white, the same "*Om mani padme ham.*" Near by is a small detached tower supported on a square base with each side composed of a low round arch. After leaving the monastery, we went to the residence of a young Lama higher up the valley. It was a very neat building of mud and stone. We went to a courtyard on the first floor which had a wooden flooring. It was neat and nicely furnished with painted walls and wooden railings. On one side of this courtyard on a sort of *gadi* or dais sat the Lama, aged only 16 and by his side on a lower seat was a child Lama aged only 6 years. Both of them were supposed to be incarnations. Both were fair-complexioned and had a very smart appearance. The elder Lama had bushy hair and was reading some scriptures. He had made a vow not to stir outside the building for three years. He made kind enquiries of His Highness who presented him with two pieces of red and bright blue banaths and some cash. The Lama gave us all his blessings and *prasad*. Here again they had an image of Buddha for worship. The lands round about were quite fertile and this being about 600 feet lower in



TIBETAN HOUSE AT TAKLAKOT



TIBETAN DANCERS, TAKLAKOT

elevation than Taklakot was not very cold. We were well pleased with our visit to picturesque Khojarnath.

3rd August 1931—Khojarnath to Taklakot.

After a good night's rest, we returned to Taklakot to-day which we reached at 9-30 A.M.

4th August 1931—Taklakot to Pala.

We camped to-day at Pala, 5 miles from Taklakot towards Lipulekh. We intend to cross the Lipu to-morrow and go straight to Kalapani without halting at Siangchum which was very cold and made us very uncomfortable the last time we halted there. In the afternoon, though the sun was bright, there were cold winds again.

5th August 1931—Pala to Kalapani.

We left Pala at 5-30 A.M. and by the time we were on the top of the Lipu ridge, it was 7-30 A.M. Throughout, there was drizzling and plenty of mist. The silence and grimness of Lipu and the snows made us think of Lipu as a death-trap. Once on the ridge, the rest of the journey to Kalapani was mostly down-hill, though very stony for the greater part, which, however, we easily negotiated. We reached Kalapani at 10-45 A.M., a distance of about 14 or 15 miles, and camped at the old ground by the side of the Kali spring. Yesterday while our advance party was near Lipu, Lieut. Nanjaraja Bahadur had swooned and was brought round by Mr. C. V. Subramanyaraj Urs. One of the Sanghai Rani's maid servants also fared similarly and was attended to by my assistant who was near by. The rest reached Kalapani safe. We are glad to have left Tibet and reached Indian territory.

6th August 1931—Kalapani to Garbayang.

We left Kalapani at 5-30 A.M. and arrived at Garbayang at 8-45 A.M. We walked most of the distance as it was mostly descent. At 2 P.M. the local Bhotias danced in a circle before His Highness with a shield in the left hand and a sword in the right to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals. It has been drizzling and cloudy the whole day.

7th August 1931—Halt at Garbayang.

We halted here and spent a quiet day as we had to engage coolies in place of mules to convey our kit right up to Dharchula, as this route was not fit for laden ponies.

8th August 1931—Garbayang to Malpa.

We left Garbayang at 6 A.M. and reached Malpa at about 11 A.M. avoiding a halt at Budi. As the route was most difficult and dangerous, we felt quite tired when we reached our destination. The sun was also very severe.

9th August 1931—Malpa to Galagar.

We left Malpa at 6 A.M. and reached Galagar at 10-30 A.M. As I said before, this was perhaps the most disagreeable, *i.e.*, most dangerous march we had to do. Luckily, all our men reached the destination in safety; but a big stone fell on the way and injured two or three coolies, but not too seriously. Some tent poles they were carrying were smashed. We are all glad we are out of the most dangerous zone of this trip.

10th August 1931—Galagar to Thithla.

We left Galagar to-day and returned to Thithla. It was raining when we left and there was a terrible strain



BRIDGE NEAR KALAPANI



BHOTIAS OF GARBAYANG READY TO DANCE

of 4 miles of steep zig-zag ascent for our ponies and a descent of 4 miles for us over most slushy and slippery ground. Mr. Venkatasubbayya and his pony had a hair-breadth escape from a big stone that got loose from above and fell down into the valley below passing right in front of him on the way. Since we last passed these parts on our forward journey, there have been good rains and all the hill slopes are quite green with luxuriant vegetation, especially ferns and wild flowers. All the cultivated plots have luxuriant crops.

11th August 1931—Thithla to Khela.

We reached Khela to-day from Thithla; it was in pelting rain most of our way. All the hill streams have swollen owing to heavy rains and there are small landslips here and there. The climb down of 3 miles through *Khadi Chadai* was very tiresome. All the crops are in very good condition, especially maize, which grows very tall here.

12th August 1931—Halt at Khela.

We spent a quiet day at Khela. It rained heavily last night. The whole day there has been a bright sun

13th August 1931—Khela to Dharchula.

We left Khela at 6 A.M. reaching Dharchula at 10-15 A.M. All through, everything was green with luxuriant vegetation and the several mountain streams were all flushed on account of recent rains. We found Dharchula very hot, as on the last occasion.

14th August 1931—Dharchula to Askot.

To-day it had been decided to go straight from Dharchula to Askot, a distance of 22 or 23 miles, avoiding camping at Balavakot, a very hot place, on the way. We

left at 6 A.M. and reached Balavakot at 9-30 A.M. We had our breakfast there and started again at 11-30 A.M. in the hot sun and reached Askot at 4-45 P.M. The last climb of about 3 miles up the very steep zig-zag of Askot, was very tiresome to us and to our ponies. We found Askot very sultry and full of mosquitoes and other insects.

15th August 1931—Halt at Askot.

It rained heavily in the early morning. We halted here to-day also. In the evening it rained heavily and made our tents damp and uncomfortable. The Rajwar Sahab invited some of us to tea in the afternoon.

16th August 1931—Askot to Sandeo.

We left Askot at 5-45 A.M. and reached Sandeo in 3 hours. It was a very cool and pleasant morning and we enjoyed our march to this place.

17th August 1931—Sandeo to Thal.

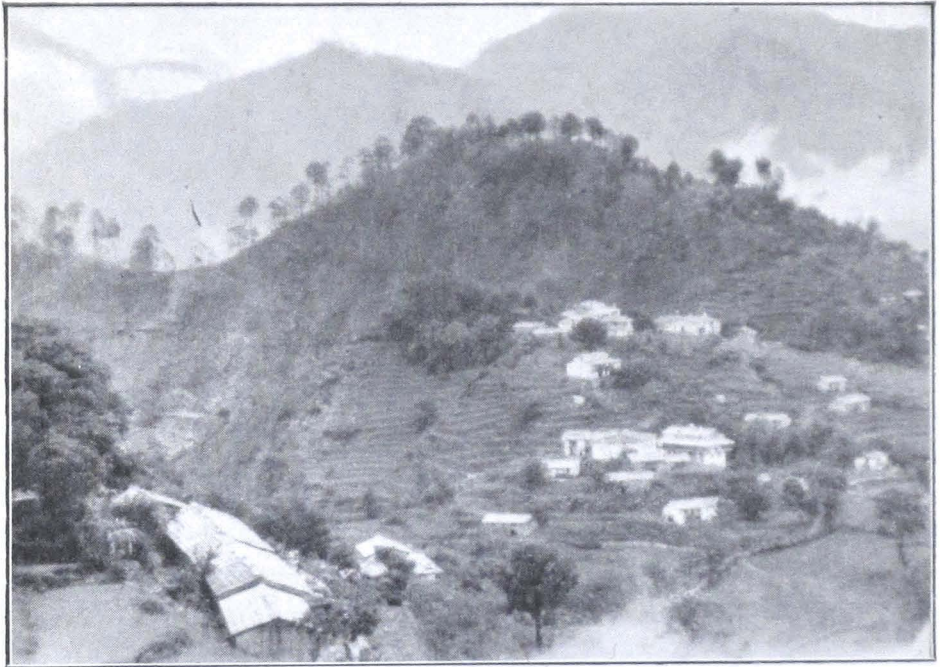
We left Sandeo at 5-30 A.M. and reached Thal at 8-45 A.M. It was all mostly descent, which we did walking. In the afternoon, it was as hot as at Dharchula till 4 P.M. We perspired a lot—a regular Turkish bath.

18th August 1931—Thal to Berinag.

We did the journey from Thal to Berinag in 3½ hours, having left the former at 5-45 A.M. The whole day has been cloudy and we did not see the sun's rays to-day and are glad to have escaped from the terrible heat of Thal. It was all mostly ascent to-day.

19th August 1931—Berinag to Saniodhiar.

We left Berinag at 5-30 A.M. and reached Saniodhiar camp in exactly 4 hours, a distance of 11



ASKOT

or 12 miles. Our path lay through pine forests and we met several small villages with their luxuriant crops and streams. Most of the villagers were waiting to have a *darshan* of His Highness and they all showered flowers on him when he passed them. There were several steep zig-zags that taxed our ponies, and all the descents we did, walking. The whole morning was cloudy and cool. It was very hot in the afternoon. There is a small orphanage here run by some American missionary ladies. We camped about a mile away from the village in the forest lodge.

20th August 1931—Saniodhiar to Bageshwar.

We left Saniodhiar at about 5-30 A.M. and reached Bageshwar at 10 A.M., a distance of about 12 miles, passing through the same kind of beautiful hill country as we did in our march yesterday. It was cloudy the whole morning. Bageshwar is situated right on both the banks of the Sarju rapids. We camped in the spacious dak bungalow which is situated only about 20 feet from the water's edge. To our left is a very nice suspension bridge, about 60 feet long, the width of the river. The elevation is 3,200 feet. Beyond the bridge, the Gomati river joins the Sarju and at the junction or *sangam*, is the small ancient temple of Bageshwar. There are two bazaars, one on either side of the river, and a very large fair is said to be held here in the month of November attracting a large concourse of people. The people gave a most enthusiastic reception to His Highness, having decorated the streets and showering flowers on him. The prominent citizens waited on His Highness in the evening and presented an address in Hindi, enclosed in an embroidered velvet bag praying for a donation for extending the local school building which was estimated to cost Rs. 5,000. His Highness made a suitable reply. On the whole, Bageshwar is very picturesque. It began to rain at about noon and it ceased only after 6 P.M.

21st August 1931—Bageshwar to Binsar.

We left Bageshwar at about 5-30 A.M. and reached Binsar at 12 NOON, a distance of about 17 miles. The journey tired us and our ponies also as there were some very steep ascents. Binsar is very cool as its altitude is above 7,000 feet. We stayed in a very well-situated, nice, spacious, furnished bungalow belonging to Mr. Devi Lal Sha, a rich merchant of Almora. Once, it was the property of General Ramsay, the Commissioner of Almora, *i.e.*, of Kumaon, but we were troubled by numerous flies and mosquitoes. Within the extensive grounds of the building is an old orchard consisting of many apple and peach trees.

22nd August 1931—Halt at Binsar.

As it was decided to avoid camping at Dinapani making directly for Almora, and as Binsar was cooler than Almora, His Highness decided to halt here to-day and tomorrow as well. The forest lodge situated on the top of a hill is a very nice structure and commands a fine view; but the approach to it is a steep zig-zag about a mile long.

23rd August 1931—Halt at Binsar (contd.).

The whole morning was cloudy and misty. We had good exercise to-day, as we went out for a walk during which there were some steep ascents to the old Jhanda Dhara or Flag-staff Hill, where General Ramsay's flag flew during his Commissionership.

24th August 1931—Binsar to Almora.

To-day we returned from Binsar to Almora which we left on our journey towards Kailas on the 27th June 1931. We left it at 6-30 A.M. and reached Almora at 10-30 A.M., a distance of 12 or 13 miles. The route was the easiest

we have had and was pleasant also, though for some hours there was drizzling. We are all very glad and thankful to the Almighty for having brought us safely back to civilization after our most strenuous journey.

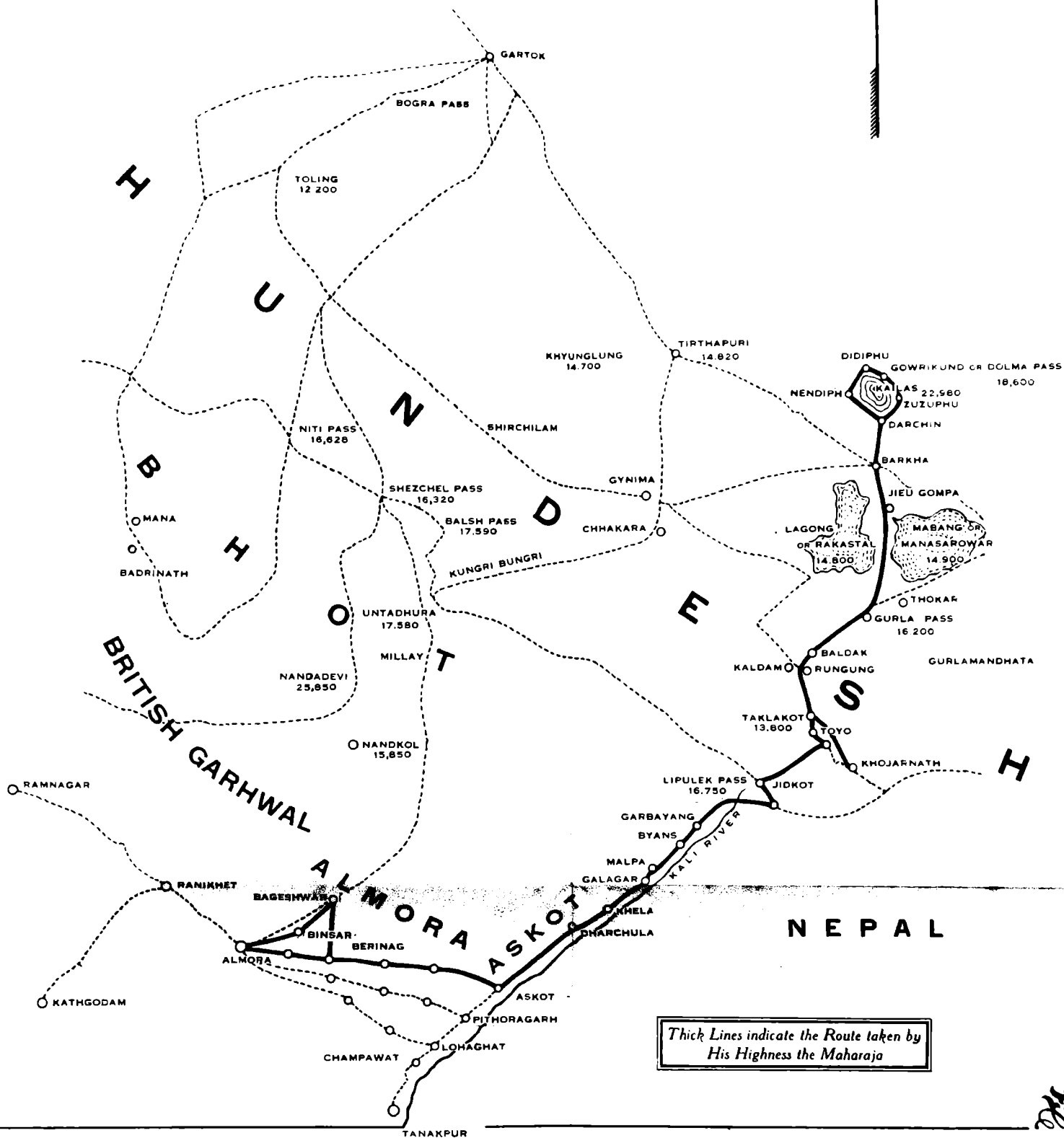
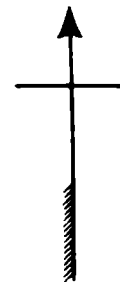
25th and 26th August 1931—Halt at Almora.

During these two days, His Highness granted interviews to Government Officers and to the prominent citizens of Almora and gave souvenirs, khillats and liberal presents to kanungos (Sheikdars), chaprasis, syces, etc.

**27th August 1931 to 7th September 1931—
Almora to Mysore.**

Conclusion.—We left Almora by motor at 10 A.M. on the 27th August 1931 and reached Kathgodam at 3-30 P.M. Next morning we reached Hardwar. We halted here the whole day and left it at 10 P.M., and reached Bombay on the 30th August 1931 *via* Delhi. We stayed in Bombay till the night of 4th September, when we left for Poona which we reached next morning. We left Poona by special train on the night of the 5th September and reached Mysore safely (*via* Arsikere and Hassan) on the morning of Monday the 7th September 1931.

ROUTE TO KAILAS AND MANASAROWAR FROM ALMORA
 TAKEN BY HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA
 OF MYSORE IN JUNE, 1931



*Thick Lines indicate the Route taken by
 His Highness the Maharaja*