

"SUPERB DRAMA WITH QUALITY OF HEMINGWAY STORY"

A FOOL AT FORTY

George Patterson

"TIBET RAID"

Daring Enterprise of Intrepid Team

The new TV series, "Rebel" got off to a smashing start last night with a fantastic documentary entitled "Raid into Tibet." It was a sensational film, full of excitement, daring enterprises, superb photography, crisp commentary—glowing with the virtue of simplicity.

It was the shatteringly realistic record of a raid by Tibetan Khamba rebels against a Chinese convoy across the Nepalese border in Tibet. "Raid into Tibet" was one of the most hair-raising half-hours ever seen on television.

Adrian Cowell, Chris Menges, and George Patterson managed to persuade a band of Tibetan exiles to take them on their mission across rugged country, rope bridges, sheer cliffs, and 20,000-foot snow-covered mountain passes. Other elements helped to



George Patterson, author, journalist, authority on Asian affairs, and moving spirit behind the film "Raid on Tibet."

gency. A gangrenous foot b amputated. The guerilla raid a truck convoy with blood bullets. An old rebel left for de staggering back to camp on own with face battered, t bullet holes in his body, gush blood.

All of these had the effect an early Hemingway story. was ancient, primitive, classic war—on foot, against the invaders. Somehow it was more "real" and personal than modern, mechanized, long-range war. The personal magnetism of the Khamba leader came through the language barrier as though it wasn't there. The film was an eloquent expression of free men, a classic of reporting.

OTHER BOOKS BY GEORGE N. PATTERSON

Tibetan Journey (published in the U.S. as *Travels with Loshay*)
God's Fool
Up and Down Asia
Tragic Destiny
Tibet in Revolt
Peking Versus Delhi
The Unquiet Frontier
Christianity in Communist China

Major contributor to:

The Asia Handbook, ed. Guy Wint
The Chinese Model, ed. Dr. Werner Gatty

George N. Patterson

A FOOL

AT FORTY

WORD BOOKS

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A FOOL AT FORTY

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“A fool at forty is a fool indeed”

—EDWARD YOUNG

“A fool returneth to his folly”

—ECCLESIASTES 26: 11

*“Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall”*

—MATTHEW ARNOLD

PREFACE

IN GOD'S FOOL, published in 1954 and 1965, I tried to put a vision into words with about the same success as the man who tried to trap a leprachaun in a torn butterfly net. The vision danced from Scotland to London to China to Tibet and to India.

After several years of vainly trying to alert India and the West to the dangers of the Chinese Communist military occupation of Tibet,* and when the Tibetan revolt collapsed in 1959 through lack of ammunition and a lack of outside support, I decided that the time had come for me to change my activities. I was 39 years of age; the vision gleamed as brightly as ever but time was leaving more holes in my net. Instead of using my pen in newspaper articles and books, to plead for peoples and principles and to denounce the fatuities of current policies and complacent politicians, I would leave the labyrinthine complexities of Asia for the accepted straightforward paths to power in the political hustings of the West.

Wae's me, as they say in Scotland, for my naïveté, just in thinking that I could ever again get away from my involvement with the oppressed and downtrodden whom I had known for so long. Further, I erred in thinking that there were *any* direct roads to places of power.

I returned to Scotland in August, 1961, and spent the next few months at St. Antony's College, Oxford, with Guy Wint, a senior research fellow and editorial adviser to *The Observer*, going over the manuscript of my book, *Peking Versus Delhi*. Since I was writing about the Nagas, in addition to other peoples, a proud and independent people living on the borders between India, Burma, and Tibet, Guy Wint suggested that I ought to meet Mr. A. Z. Phizo,

*See *Tibet in Revolt*, George N. Patterson, Faber and Faber, London, 1960.

the president of the underground Naga National Council, who had led the then six-year war against India and who had escaped dramatically to turn up in London.

While in India I had written about the unhappy and explosive situation of the Nagas for *The Observer* and so when the editor, David Astor, asked me to investigate the reports and claims of Mr. Phizo, I agreed and invited Mr. Phizo to come to Scotland. The events flowing from that meeting in the next few years will be the subject of another book—the public campaigns, the cloak-and-dagger activities, the international imbroglios, the high-level maneuverings. It is sufficient here to say that they conflicted with my responsibilities as prospective Liberal candidate for Edinburgh (West) constituency, and I had to resign.

At the same time I had been appointed director of a non-governmental organization, a commission for minorities, known as the International Committee for the Study of Group Rights. Their aims were to take up the grievances of small nations oppressed by others and who had no representation at the United Nations. At the time, there were several issues under consideration by sub-committees—the Kurds of Iraq, the Southern Sudanese in Sudan among others—but because the Naga problem appeared to be the most urgent it was given priority, particularly after the Sino-Indian border war in the North East Frontier Agency in October, 1962.

I visited the East again in mid-1962 for three months, to write a series of articles on the Sino-Indian border, and while there renewed my acquaintanceship with many Tibetan friends. Since the revolt, many of them had become increasingly disillusioned by the policies of the Dalai Lama—or rather, of the advisers surrounding the Dalai Lama.

The Tibetan revolt had been begun and carried to its near-success by the Khambas of Tibet. The Khambas were from the two largest Tibetan provinces of Amdo and Kham, and were reckoned to be the finest fighters in Asia. Unlike the suppressed serfs of feudal-governed Central Tibet they were an independent tribal people who were led by chiefs they respected. There were about sixty-six sub-tribes, forming about 80 percent of Tibet's total population of an estimated three to five million, and their dislike of the Lhasa government was surpassed only by their traditional hatred of the Chinese. When the Lhasa government bowed to the inevitable in accepting the Chinese

occupation of Tibet in 1950, the Khambas began preparing for a long and bitter war with the hated invader. Thus, from 1952 onward they had been fighting on an ever-larger scale, culminating in the spectacular rescue of the Dalai Lama and his government from the midst of some fifty thousand Chinese troops, and his safe escort to India in 1959.

During the last eighteen months of the revolt many of the Lhasa government leaders had risked their lives to keep the Khambas supplied with arms and food, and this had assuaged the resentment of the Khambas for their many years of collaboration with the Chinese authorities in Tibet. Among the key people in the pre-revolt period were Surkhang Shapé (“Shapé” is a title meaning “Cabinet Minister”) and Yuthok Shapé.

According to the Chinese Communists in 1954, when the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama visited China, the plans for the 1956-59 revolt were laid by Surkhang Shapé. Their account reads:

“In the summer of 1955, Surkhang Wongching-Galei and Tserijong Lozong-Yiehsi and other rebel elements for Tibet, after following the Dalai Lama to attend the National Peoples’ Congress in Peking, passed through the Szechuan Province on their way back to Tibet. Surkhang Wangching-Galei and Tserijong Lozong-Yiehsi went by separate routes to the northern and southern parts of the Kantse Autonomous Chou to instigate and direct rebellion along the way. Data now at hand proves that Surkhang Wongching-Galei directed the reactionaries in the area. . . .” (“Facts of The Khamba Rebellion,” New China News Agency, Peking, April 26, 1959.)

Surkhang Shapé I had known for some years. He was one of the people I met during my visit to India in 1962, and was one of the group of leading Tibetans who were disillusioned by the actions, or lack of actions, of the “advisers” surrounding the Dalai Lama. Although there were several of these advisers in a kind of “exile government,” the majority were simply mouthpieces of two major figures—the Dalai Lama’s brother, Gyalu Thondup, and a former official in the Central Government Treasury, T. Shakapba. The former had hardly ever been in Tibet, going to China as a schoolboy and then accompanying Chiang Kai-shek to Formosa on the collapse of the Kuomintang government in China. He came to India in 1952, went to Tibet for five months, then remained in Darjeeling on the borders, doing a little trade, upholding the Chinese Communist

regime to newspaper correspondents, and playing tennis.

T. Shakapba was a much more formidable figure. He had risen to some power and considerable wealth in Tibet in very dubious circumstances, making a lot of enemies in the process. When the Chinese Communists took over in Tibet, he was in India leading a delegation but was reported by some leading Tibetans to have made overtures to Peking on his own initiative to keep himself in the clear. He was able to get the bulk of his wealth to India where he invested it in several profitable ventures, with the result that he was, and is, one of the few Tibetans who can afford to live well in permanent exile.

According to the Tibetan revolutionary leaders such as Surkhang Shapé and Yuthok Shapé, the Dalai Lama had been brought out of Tibet to India in order to make known the predicament of the country to the world, by going to the U.N. if necessary, but he had been persuaded by Shakapba and Gyalu Thondup—whose financial and personal interests were all in India—to accept the Indian Prime Minister Nehru's advice and keep a silent exile. For this and other reasons Surkhang and Yuthok had resigned their positions, and with other Khamba leaders began the now seemingly hopeless task of planning another rescue operation for their almost doomed country.

I had tried to advise against recognizing Shakapba and Gyalu Thondup as accepted representatives of Tibet, both in my writings and conversations at official levels, but Indian policy-makers, British traditional Tibetologists and American refugee organization representatives were all too happy to support a brother of the Dalai Lama and a former Tibetan delegate without looking too closely at their antecedents.

I also tried to head off a split in the Tibetan camp, thinking that there were sufficiently powerful forces who could be lined up against Shakapba and Gyalu Thondup to outweigh any self-centered policies that they might conceive. But after nine months Surkhang had to withdraw from the Dalai Lama's council as "adviser" because he was never consulted.

Any future which Tibet might have would require the cooperation of the numerous and martial Khambas. But since they hated Shakapba and Gyalu Thondup both before and after the 1956-59 revolt, to the point of swearing to kill them, it was suicidal policy to accept as representatives two Tibetans, intensely disliked by a ma-

majority of the Tibetan people, while rejecting the very leaders who had proved their acceptability over many dangerous years. Yet this was just what India, Britain, the United States and other countries were doing.

The term “suicidal” used above is not hyperbole, for India had already lost about 50,000 square miles of territory to China, and had suffered the humiliating defeat of her crack regiments in NEFA—the North East Frontier Agency of Northeast India—and by any reasonable standards of analysis would require Tibet as a friendly buffer state and the fighting Khambas as allies.

So it seemed to me that I would have to take it on myself again—arrogant as that might seem—(but keeping in mind Cardinal Newman’s words:

And so on us it falls at times
To claim powers that we fear,
Or dare some forward part.
Nor must we shrink as cravens
From the blame of pride,
But casting all on God, press on.)

—to attempt to save India and—by extension—the West from the consequences of their own peculiar folly, as I had tried to do in 1950* and again in 1959** when both the Indian and British governments combined to have me expelled from India for writing that there was fighting in Tibet and that India’s “Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai” policy (meaning “Indians and Chinese are brothers”) in the face of China’s actions in Tibet was a threat to Indian security.

This was easier said—or dreamed, Walter Mitty-like—than done. It meant, among many other things, getting the impoverished, out-of-favor Surkhang away from the oblivion of a small back room in an obscure border town in North Bengal to responsible circles in Britain and America. It meant doing this without any cooperation from (in fact, *with every opposition* from) the Indian government who would not want a leading Tibetan activist leaving India to pursue aid-for-Tibet policies which the Indian government considered inimical to her interests, and with no cooperation from Shakapba and

*See *Tragic Destiny*, George N. Patterson, Faber and Faber, London, 1960.

**See *Tibet in Revolt*, Patterson.

Gyalu Thondup who controlled the recommendation for issue of passports to Tibetans wishing to travel abroad.

It meant convincing a cynical world that the issue of Tibet was not dead beyond recall. And more, it meant that there was still a sufficient nucleus of resistance in Tibet to make Tibet more than just a humanitarian project, but rather part of a practicable policy to ensure the safety of India and the embarrassment of a threatening China.

After a lot of thought I came to the conclusion how all of this might be accomplished successfully.

First of all, I arranged for some very kind friends of mine, a Major and Mrs. Richard Knight, to take Surkhang's two children to England for education and then some months afterwards to sponsor and finance a visit to England by Surkhang, his wife, and brother. I also arranged for another Tibetan—Yangphel Pangdatshang, a leading Khamba—to visit London at the same time, following on a visit to Switzerland “for medical reasons.” It was easy then to arrange for Surkhang to lecture at St. Antony's College, Oxford, and at the Royal Institute for International Affairs in London, in order to have an honest and intelligent Tibetan personality presenting Tibet's case rather than a committed European like myself.

This meant that we now had the key leaders of both Tibetan and Naga freedom movements living with us in London. As we shared in family prayers as well as discussions about solutions to their personal and national tragedies of their respective countries, it became increasingly difficult to plan a safe, secure, and ordered future for myself and family while knowing that I had fifteen years of background, training and associations to help publicize their tragedies at least, if not in obtaining more practical help than in the past. And so I discussed the project with a television producer, Adrian Cowell, who had just completed a series on South America and who was planning a series on Asia. He said that he would be interested and after several discussions, it was decided that the series would be on guerilla activities around the borders of China and, among other subjects, would include Tibet and the Nagas. A top professional cameraman, Christopher Menges, previously with ITV's “World in Action” program, agreed to join us.

I was back to my *God's Fool* days with a vengeance, only now I had a wife and three young children to take into consideration in

the gamble! The challenge and vision were still the same, but the big question was—was I?

We sold our house and furniture to help finance the project—my wife and children moved into a leased house, with nine Tibetans—the Nagas had left for Nagaland with assurances of our help, and Adrian's wife and daughter went to her parents in Ireland. Chris was a bachelor, and anyway he had a filming assignment further East and would join us in India.

We had decided, after consultations with the Tibetan leaders, to attempt entering Tibet with the Khamba guerillas from either Bhutan or Nepal. We had a rough idea of where they were, but the natural physical problems of making contact in these towering mountainous territories was made even more difficult by the political and military considerations. Following on her defeat in NEFA, the Indian government was extremely sensitive about allowing anyone near the borders—particularly myself, whom they had forbidden permission to enter these territories—and had shut off large sections behind a “Defense Line.” Bhutan was a closed country, jealously guarded by India from any outside influence, but we hoped we might be able to influence the prime minister, Jigme Dorji, a long-time friend of mine, to allow us in to make a film. While doing a film on Bhutan, our main purpose would be to seek out the Khamba guerillas and persuade them to take us with them across the northern border to Tibet behind the Chinese lines. If Bhutan was not feasible, then we kept Nepal as an alternative, for I knew that there were many Khambas there in the remote Himalayan ranges to the north and it was possible to get permits to visit Nepal.

Finally, we obtained letters of introduction and explanation from Surkhang to show to any Tibetan leaders we might meet, and these, with my knowledge of the Kham Tibetan dialect, should help us to persuade the Tibetans to cooperate in this last attempt to save their nation from extinction.

If this sounds either grandiose or pretentious, then I can only point out how the issue of Tibet is now little more than academic—a formal exercise in the routine mechanics of U.N. procedure by a few obscure nations alleging acts of genocide by China. How few statesmen in any country see any hope for Tibet as a country, and how few editors were prepared to give any news coverage “just for refugee stories”!

Our aim therefore was simple—at least, in conception: to make contact with the Khamba guerillas and persuade them to take us with them in their attacks on Chinese inside Tibet. This would prove that (a) the Tibetan revolt was far from dead, (b) that the Khambas were the match of whatever Chinese occupation troops there might be in Tibet and that consequently, given aid on a large enough scale, they were a real threat to China in Tibet and a worthy ally for India and the West. The whole project would, if successful, serve to dramatize the question of Tibet again, and would make a “hot news” item, in both film and writing media. It would provide a ray of hope for a friendly, charming, and gallant people whose only crime was that they loved their religion and country “unto death.” It would show the Tibetans that somebody cared enough to join them in storming the forts of folly and still counted it worthwhile if their bodies fell near the wall.

Here, then, is what I hope is not, but what I fear may be, my last book about Tibet, and it is dedicated to all those who shared in this last mad, impossible, glorious venture. Even if it fails in its purpose, it was worth it all.



I

THE WING of the giant jet tipped up and the indescribably beautiful, hazy, pastel-colored Indian dusk fell away on one side and the multi-colored checkerboard of lights that was New Delhi appeared on the other.

No matter how often I visited this capital of India, and I had visited it times without number in the past fourteen years, it never failed to excite me. The soft red-brick majesty of Lutyens' imperial buildings and impressive carriageways; the crowded, colorful, stimulating city streets of Chandi Chowk, in Old Delhi; the history-permeated forts and gates and temples; the challenging and successful designs of India's architects in the modern new city. It lay harsh in the brilliant midday sun, but in the evening it took on a new eye-caressing softness. I loved Delhi and India, where so many of my best years had been spent, so many friends made, so many experiences shared.

Yet, the thought which had never been far from the surface of my mind during the flight now pushed itself to the forefront—would I be permitted to land?

Just before leaving England, I had heard from my publishers that my latest book, *Peking Versus Delhi*, had been banned by the Indian government, and it was being rumored that I would not be allowed to return to India. Certainly, what was not rumor was the action of the Indian government in informing the Indian Tea Association, who had invited my wife to return to the Darjeeling Hospital she had helped to build up and for which she had been given the M.B.E., that "Dr. Patterson would be permitted to return to Darjeeling but not Mr. Patterson."

There were several specific reasons for this—and many more unspecific. Since my arrival in India from Tibet in 1950, and the Chinese occupation of Tibet in that same year, I had made no secret of my spiritual conviction that my personal destiny was interwoven

with Tibet, of my liking for Tibetans and championship of their cause and my equal disapproval of the pusillanimous policies vis-à-vis Tibet of India, Britain and the United States. This had not only involved me in public clashes but also in many cloak-and-dagger escapades, necessitating the outwitting of a growing number of Indian police and security personnel, which had not made me popular with them. My highly publicized clash with Mr. Nehru, at the peak of his popularity, when he accused me of being “an alarmist and irresponsible” for my reports on the fighting in Tibet and I had accused him of “endangering the security of India” in ignoring what China was doing in Tibet,* had provided every petty official with just the excuse he needed to be as obstructive and difficult as possible. Even when, later, Mr. Nehru had received me amicably, and all was forgiven, many Indian bureaucrats still thought me fair game for their most infuriating petty tyrannies. Sometimes the battle was amusing, but more often it was exhausting and irritating.

Then I had taken on the cause of the Nagas, and the hitherto friendly Indian press was angered by my articles—although they themselves had been forbidden permission to visit Naga territories to see for themselves if what I said was true.

Now my book had been banned and although favorably reviewed by Indian newspaper correspondents in London and elsewhere, the publicity following on the banning was sure to inflame an already explosive situation. And in the midst of all this I had to attempt to bring off my biggest *coup* yet.

I don't know if it was appropriate but the words of Christ to his disciples came to mind: “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” If I was a fraction as successful as they were, then all would be well.

What happened was something of an anticlimax. There were only a few passengers disembarking at Delhi, of whom I was the first to alight. Never on any previous occasion in India, and seldom in another country, had I been treated with such consideration and politeness. I was right through all formalities, including customs, in less than five very pleasant minutes.

Chris had already arrived in Delhi and Adrian arrived next morning, both with the minimum of fuss and bother at the airport,

*See *Tibet in Revolt*, Patterson.

and we spent the rest of the morning discussing plans. By afternoon we had worked out the broad outlines of our approach and decided that our first move was to pay the usual formal courtesy call of all pressmen at the Press Relations Division of the Ministry of External Affairs.

In previous years, after a short wait I had always been shown in to the office of the chief press officer, Obadiah Rahman, who had chatted pleasantly over a cup of tea. When he had been transferred to London his successor had been equally pleasant and helpful, even though at times my articles had not been favorable to the administration.

Now, I noticed that Mr. Obadiah Rahman, who had since returned to India, through his open door saw us arrive, but did not receive us, sending instead an assistant to meet us and take us to a side room. The reason for this change of attitude may have been based on a stormy interview which I had had with the Indian acting high commissioner in London, Mr. T. N. Kaul, at which Rahman was present, over the question of India's policy towards the Nagas. So he may well have been humanly piqued and incensed and determined to "put me in my place." On the other hand, he might have been instructed not to meet me but pass me on to someone else, who, to my suspicious mind, would be from Security and not just a routine Information Department official.

The official concerned was a Mr. Mahajan, introducing himself unsmilingly. His whole attitude was edgy and unnecessarily aggressive. I began mildly and pleasantly, explaining that this was a courtesy call to let the Indian government know our tentative program and requests.

Adrian would deal with the TV aspects, but briefly my purpose was to (1) assist in the making of a TV film about Tibetan refugees, (2) discuss with the Dalai Lama the possibility of a feature film on Tibet and his possible appearance in it, and (3) discuss with leading officials in India, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim the feasibility or otherwise of a Confederation of Himalayan States as a possible solution for the Sino-Indian border conflict.

I had scarcely finished talking when Mahajan demanded to know bluntly what sort of film the TV unit wanted to make, who were my publishers, when was the film commissioned and by whom and on

whose initiative, where was it intended to shoot this film, and where were our credentials.

I felt the familiar stirring of amusement and mental stimulation which these officious types always produced in me, in which the desire to provoke them into incoherency was stronger than the caution in not making another official enemy. But too many of these small-time Indian officials took themselves too seriously. Too often they viewed the man across the desk as a supplicant rather than an applicant, and in their petty tyrannies and pomposities they were too many times encouraged by the poor Indian newspaperman dependent on them for their favors.

However, I decided that there was too much at stake to needle this one at this stage and I remained mild and polite, simply pointing out that I was here to discuss the questions he had raised, that we had valid contracts in our possession, and this could be discussed with the proper people at the proper time.

Gradually, his edginess wore off and he consented, grudgingly, that we could film in India under certain conditions, which he produced for us. But we would have to submit a synopsis of our proposed filming program, then a detailed script and, afterwards, if this were approved by the government—say, in one or two months—we would be able to go ahead. We thanked him, saying that we would discuss the proposed program with the Tibetans then return with an approved script at a later date. I was confident that the sequence of events which would follow this interview were reasonably predictable and would, in future interviews and whatever our actions, serve as an adequate smokescreen as we headed toward our main objective in Tibet.

Reports in the newspapers, too, had helped to create the kind of situation which would work to our advantage. My more recent visits to India, and my newspaper writing, had been concerned with the problem of the Nagas' nine-year war with India. Within two days of my arrival several Indian newspapers carried angry reports of yet another group of 300 armed Nagas making their way through the Indian Army lines to East Pakistan. It was inevitable, therefore, that there would be suspicions I might be trying to get into touch with them again as I had done in the past.

Then three Opposition leaders launched a violent attack on government policy which provided me with opportunities to discuss

Sino-Indian border policies in an unforced way. Acharya Kripalani, veteran Socialist leader, declared:

The Government should stick to the resolve to get every inch of Indian territory vacated by China and not talk in terms of the Colombo proposals. The "illusion" created by repeated support to the proposals that they were something good, should be done away with. There should be no talk with China unless she vacates the entire land forcibly occupied by her.

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, the Socialist Party leader, stated that India's foreign policy had failed. She was losing friends and had enemies on her borders. When everybody wanted peace, it could not be bargained at the cost of Indian territory.

Mr. M. R. Masani, the Swatantra Party leader, said that the question before the country was not whether she wanted war or peace but whether she wanted to follow realistic policies to ensure national and territorial integrity or follow a policy of "illusion and appeasement." He added, "India cannot fight China alone."

At the same time I heard through a mutual friend that Jigme Dorji, the prime minister of Bhutan, had arrived in New Delhi the night previously, with a Bhutanese delegation, to begin a round of talks with the Indian government for the next seven days. Since he was one of the key people that we had to meet in our project, and I had been friendly with him for several years (we had already discussed the possibility of one of us having to fly to Calcutta to see if Jigme Dorji was in India or Bhutan), this was extremely providential. I telephoned his secretary to make an appointment.

I also called on the "Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama" to renew my acquaintance with the Dalai Lama's assistant representative in New Delhi, Mr. T. C. Tethong. T. C. Tethong was a younger member of a well-known Tibetan family, whose older brothers I had known and been very friendly with in past years. He had been to Germany for political studies under the internationally known German scholar, Klaus Mehnert. I arranged with T. C., as he was known to his friends, to call on him next day, with Adrian, to make formal application to the Dalai Lama for an audience.

In the meantime, I had already heard from my various sources of information in Delhi, that Jigme Dorji and his sister Tashi Dorji

were still at odds with the Indian government over the rankling question of Bhutanese "external affairs." According to India, Bhutan's external affairs were under the control of India, but Bhutan claimed that while India could give advice it was not incumbent on the Bhutanese government to accept it. Jigme and his sister Tashi had already approached one or two embassies to sound them out in their attitude if Bhutan should set up its own Ministry of External Affairs. Less than a year ago, I had discussed all this and the possibility of a Confederation of Himalayan States with Jigme Dorji in London, so circumstances were once again dovetailing neatly.

I did not have much hope of success in persuading the Dalai Lama to take part in any film, documentary or feature. Not that he would have objected, for he had been filmed on several occasions, but his "advisers" would have too many personal interests against it—it might displease the Indian government; it might suit their purposes better to have it done, if at all, by a United States film company; if done on my advice they themselves would not get the prominence they would like, etc. But it was worth a try and, anyway, the move was necessary as part of the "cover" for our main objective. We had to appear as if we were exploring every avenue and leaving no stone unturned, to coin a phrase, in order to allay suspicions about our real intentions.

So when we called on T. C., Adrian made a formal request for an audience with the Dalai Lama in order that we might discuss with him his participation in a film about Tibet. We explained to T. C. how the Dalai Lama had complained through his cabinet minister Liushar to the British Independent Television because of the wrong impression conveyed in the showing of a film by a pro-Chinese Communist, the English journalist, Stuart Gelder, and that we hoped to offset this effect by a film made under our direction. It would not have the impact we desired just to go around refugee camps taking films of distressed Tibetans; it would require much more than this.

T. C. wrote it all down, Adrian gave him copies of the film contracts, and T. C. said that he would send the report to the Dalai Lama in Dharamsalla by special messenger. He could telephone to Dharamsalla with some difficulty he said, but every call was automatically cut off after six minutes and this would not be sufficient

time to explain the details of our proposed project. He thought we should have a reply within a week.

The most difficult “cover” had now to be prepared, the one that would have to satisfy the suspicions of the most intelligent among security personnel and the national leaders of two or three countries. A hoax was out of the question, but fortunately I had an excellent subject to hand in the proposal for a Confederation of Himalayan States. It was a subject which I had already discussed with the leaders of several countries, I had written several articles about its possibility and significance, and I had concluded my recent book *Peking Versus Delhi* with an unsatisfactorily short outline of the subject. It had the added attraction of not being approved in Indian official circles, of being possibly approved but dangerous to discuss in the Himalayan States, and so requiring considerable political expertise, risk, and cold nerve. Just the kind of prospect which could be expected to attract me and explain our presence in several Himalayan border countries—satisfying everyone that this was our real objective.

Ironically, I could not help feeling that even if we were eventually successful in overcoming all obstacles—political and physical—in getting through to Tibet with the guerillas and dramatizing the Tibetan situation with films and articles, it was the “cover” discussions on the subject of a possible Confederation of Himalayan States which in the long view would be the most important political contribution that we would make.



2

THE IDEA of a Confederation of Himalayan States originated in China, not with me, although I had probably written most about it. While it had been one of the most intriguing of Communist China's many activities on the Sino-Indian frontiers in recent years it had a much longer history than that.

The position of the Himalayan border states, before the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century confusion was created by a succession of British administrators and by a series of British and Chinese military expeditions, was stated explicitly by British Envoy and Special Commissioner Ashley Eden in a dispatch dated April 8, 1861: "Nepal is tributary to China, Tibet is tributary to China, and Sikkim and Bhutan are tributary to Tibet."

After fifty years of British and Chinese intrigue in the Himalayan regions, Sir Charles Bell, the British political officer, expressing concern over renewed Chinese interest in Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan, declared: "Britain has the right to intervene only in the case of *disputes*. If Bhutan, at any time in the future *agreed* to Chinese intervention of her affairs, we could do nothing." And it was on the basis of this concern that the ambiguously worded Anglo-Bhutanese Agreement was signed in 1910, later accepted by India in 1949-50, which was the cause of the present friction between the Bhutanese prime minister, Jigme Dorji, in his discussions in New Delhi.

The British political and military activities in Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet gave rise to strong opposition from China and she declared her interest in the Himalayan border states. In 1908, China informed Nepal that she and Tibet, "being united like brothers under the auspices of China should work in harmony for mutual good," and went on to propose "a blending of five colors representing China,

Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim,” as part of a program to assert China’s claims in the face of British intentions.

Since that time several similar statements had been made by Chinese leaders, all either relating to China’s intentions to recover the Himalayan border states or opposing India’s British-inherited claims to special interests in those regions. For example, in 1939, Mao Tse-tung in his pamphlet, *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*, stated that “In defeating China in war the imperialist states have taken away many Chinese dependent states and a part of her territories England seized Burma, Bhutan, Nepal. . . .”

Soon after the occupation of Tibet, the chief of the central office of the Chinese Communist Party, Yuan Shang-Kim, said in a message: “After the liberation of Tibet, the Chinese people and the Nepalese people will be united in close solidarity for the sake of defending Asia.”

Then, in 1954, a Chinese textbook, “A Brief History of Modern China,” gave a list of territories “seized by the Imperialists” which included:

“*Nepal* went under the British in 1898.”

“*Che-Meng-Hsiung* (Sikkim) was occupied by British in 1889.”

“*Pu-Tan* (Bhutan) went under Britain in 1865.”

“*Ah-sa-mi* (the whole of Assam, NEFA and Nagaland) was given to Britain by Burma in 1826.”

In 1960-61, the Chinese delegates to the Sino-Indian Boundary Commission refused to include Bhutan and Sikkim in the discussions because they claimed they came into a different category.

But the first positive sign that China was interested in Himalayan countries other than Tibet came two years after the occupation of that country. In 1952 in Lhasa, they set up under the Asiatic Section of the International Communist Intelligence Bureau several subsidiary offices, one of which was styled “Training Academies.” In the “Infiltrating section” of this department there was listed an “India Infiltrating Class,” a “Nepal Infiltrating Class” and a “Bhutan and Sikkim Infiltrating Class.” During the next few years nationals from these countries, or others who could pass as nationals, were politically indoctrinated and trained in subversive techniques.

But it was not until 1956 that there was any local or regional evidence of “Confederation” proposals. In the Indo-Tibetan Dar-

jeeling tea district of North Bengal, the Communist Party of India came out in favor of a Darjeeling Autonomous District until Mr. Nehru visited the area and angrily ordered local officials to stop the agitation. This was easier said than done for the Communists had simply been making local capital of what had been and what was again becoming a popular regional issue.

Before Indian Independence, the Indian-based Nepalis had formed themselves into a political organization known as the Gurkha League. They claimed that there were about two million Nepalis living outside Nepal in Darjeeling, Bhutan, Sikkim and Assam and advocated that these be formed into a separate state of Gurkhistan. This proposal had been quashed by the Indian government, but with dissatisfaction arising from post-independence unemployment and other factors, the issue had been resurrected by the Gurkha League.

The matter might have remained of only minor regional importance had it not received impetus from inside Nepal. In 1956 the prime minister of Nepal was Acharya Tanka Prasad, and during his tenure of office he proposed to Jigme Dorji of Bhutan, among others, that Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim should form a "federation." Jigme Dorji had informed me that he had turned down this proposal because he feared Nepali domination. This was only a half-truth, for the Bhutanese prime minister's real fear was that the infant Bhutanese Congress Party, which he had outlawed and which was agitating for representation for their claimed sixty percent Nepali population in Bhutan, might grow out of his control, with or without Nepal's official blessing on "federation." His ruthless suppression of this party—on one occasion, he had several members shot for demonstrating—his dictatorial policies and pro-Indian attitude generally were making him an increasingly unpopular figure in Bhutan.

When, in late 1960, King Mahendra of Nepal took over "direct rule," several disapproving statements were made by Mr. Nehru and other Indian leaders. The King-controlled Nepali press reacted violently, and four leading newspapers warned the neighboring countries of Bhutan and Sikkim of Indian designs, called on them to free themselves from "Indian interference" and proposed a confederation of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, with Nepal taking the lead.

In 1962, I visited Nepal, and Sikkim and Bhutan border areas. Two of Nepal's leading politicians, Rishikish Shah and Acharya

Tanka Prasad, spoke to me spontaneously of the possibility of a Confederation of Himalayan States. At the time I was mildly surprised since I had not considered the subject of any great importance, but I became more interested when I learned that China had also approached one or more of the Sikkimese politicians with the same proposal. Finally, when I learned from Jigme Dorji, that he too had been approached with the proposal, and the Naga leaders, it became obvious that the Chinese Communists were playing some deep game in the Himalayas which warranted my interest.

When China invaded NEFA in 1962, and later surprisingly withdrew while warning India against military reoccupation of the area, this in addition to her stated aims in the Himalayan regions together with detected political activities indicated attempts at a political acquisition rather than a military annexation action of the Himalayan border territories.

Whatever outside observers might think of the proposals—there were many who scoffingly dismissed it—the peoples concerned, Nepalis, Bhutanese, Sikkimese, Nagas, NEFA tribes were all agreed that they wanted less “Indian interference,” more “self-determination and a separate identity,” and such a proposal was exceedingly attractive to them. Naturally, it was not only not attractive to the Indian government, who considered all of these territories within her sphere of influence, it was quite definitely anathema and even traitorous.

But after seventeen years of independence, India had only a precarious foothold of influence in a sensitive Nepal, a complete but intensely resented political and military control of an unstable Sikkim, a tenuous influence in Bhutan through an unpopular prime minister and a sick, absent and not too influential King, and a hated military-imposed occupation of Nagaland. China had shrewdly and successfully exploited the antagonisms at every level and in every situation to India's disadvantage. India's officials might argue passionately and indefinitely the finer points of treaties, maps, watersheds, and outposts, but the hard fact of Himalayan life was that Indians were not wanted—whether as soldiers, administrators, officials, merchants, or even clerks.

It was because I had documented the weakness of the Indian political and military position in the Himalayas that the Indian government had banned my book without making public the reasons.

Now, with the rising campaign in the Indian press and Parliament against the lack of government policy in this strategic area, I had an opportunity to help our project and at the same time help the suspicious Indian government. The irony appealed to me.

My proposal would be to steal the Chinese idea of a Confederation of Himalayan States by suggesting that Tibet should be included, and the possibility of this proposal I felt was based on several reasonable assumptions.

If confederation was ever to be acceptable as a possible solution for Sino-Indian boundary differences, then there would have to be advantages for India as well as for China. As China was pushing her concept the advantages were all in her favor, with disastrous consequences for India. In the final analysis it would not even benefit the Himalayan countries most concerned. On the other hand, it was becoming more and more apparent, even to responsible Indian opinion, that the "Colombo proposals" were an unacceptable basis for a settlement. But since a Confederation of Himalayan States was known to be acceptable to China in some form, a variation of this formula might be found which would be acceptable to India.

The first essential, then, would be the withdrawal of Chinese military forces in Tibet in return for the withdrawal of Indian military forces from Bhutan and Sikkim.

This suggestion I knew would draw ridicule from most quarters, but then I was in the stronger position of knowing the situation in Tibet better than most. I disagreed with the basic premise of most Indian and Western commentators, that China was in an insassailable position in Tibet and so would never consider withdrawal. On the contrary, my information from Tibetan leaders (and which it was our present purpose to prove) was that the Chinese were in a highly vulnerable position in Tibet, were afraid that this vulnerability would be exploited by India and her Western allies by supplies of arms and ammunition, and that this was one of the chief reasons for her belligerent policies and actions on the Sino-Indian border. With Chinese vulnerability then, as a basic premise, and an understandable desire on her part to put possible Indian and Western sources of supply and encouragement as far away as possible, Chinese military withdrawal from Tibet as a *quid pro quo* for Indian military withdrawal from Sikkim and Bhu-

tan became at least an acceptable working proposition.

The Indian military commitment in Sikkim and Bhutan was not only a bone in the throat of China in terms of Himalayan defense, it was a farce. I had discussed this on previous occasions with Indian military leaders and they had admitted that China could overwhelm any Indian military commitment in Bhutan—which would also isolate the Indian troops in a by-passed Sikkim. The memory of the humiliating military debacle in 1962 was still too fresh in the minds of most Indians and others for this point to be labored.

Another part of my proposal would be that the Dalai Lama would return to Tibet on condition that the Chinese military forces were withdrawn. This was not something that I had dreamed up but knew for a fact was under serious consideration in both Chinese and Tibetan circles. The Dalai Lama had been persuaded to return to Tibet in 1956 by Mr. Nehru on being given this assurance but at that time, of course, Mr. Nehru had been unable or unwilling to implement his assurances of Chinese troop withdrawal from Tibet.

However, General Chang Ching-Wu, the Chinese Army military commander in Tibet, had only recently told the Panchen Lama:

We have been telling the world that the Dalai Lama has been abducted to India by the reactionaries. *This we did with a view to keeping the door open for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet.* The Dalai Lama is hand in glove with the Indian Government, so you must assume the Chairmanship of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region in his place. You must stay in the Potala (Palace) and denounce him as a reactionary. (Italics mine.)

Instead of doing this the Panchen Lama had been reported as having refused and was being kept under house arrest.

But, certainly, it was obvious that there would be several advantages to China, as well as disadvantages, in military withdrawal from Tibet, and no one would believe that her political activities would cease in the Himalayas—any more than would India's. But with the withdrawal of Chinese troops to a number which the Khamba guerilla leaders felt they could handle, the threat of war and insecurity would be lifted from India.

The problem was how to have it publicized. But the newspaper and Parliament debates gave me an idea. I went to see Pran Chopra,

the news editor of the *Statesman*, and Sham Lan, the news editor of the *Times of India*, and had long discussions with them. They were, naturally, skeptical and I was at the distinct disadvantage of not being able to divulge how I expected to prove how vulnerable the Chinese military position in Tibet really was, and they could not see the present government of India agreeing to any such proposal let alone the government of China. Anyway, the proposal had now been discussed with some of the press people, should it ever become a public talking point, and now I had to find someone in Parliament.

I decided that the three articulate Opposition leaders were the best approach. Acharya Kripalani I had interviewed in the past, but could not reach him by telephone. However, I was able to get M. R. Masani right away and found to my pleasant surprise that he had actually been thinking of writing to me in England—not knowing that I was in India—since he had already tabled a question in Parliament about the banning of my book. The question was due to be raised in Parliament shortly, and he wanted to have as much information from me as possible before then. I arranged to meet him the next evening, after I had been to see the Bhutanese prime minister.

Jigme Dorji was his usual friendly self, joking in Tibetan in familiar fashion. He was a striking, Yul Brynner-like figure, his head completely shaven, and dressed in the colorful, loose Bhutanese gown hitched up to the knees, kilt-like, by a wide scarf tied around the waist. The Indian political adviser to Bhutan, Atar Singh, was very much in evidence, but before we got down to serious discussion he withdrew. Jigme's younger brother Lhendup—more widely known as "Lumpy"—was with him, I noted with some surprise, for not only was he more unpopular than Jigme in certain Bhutanese circles, he was a political and intellectual lightweight, a playboy. He was now, apparently, chairman of planning and development in Bhutan. It served to underline the disturbing reports I had been receiving about increasing resentment in Bhutan at the widening control of leading positions by the Dorji family. Also present was the shrewdest member of the whole family, Tashi, one of Jigme's two attractive sisters. His other sister, Kesang, was married to the King of Bhutan. A year or two previously Tashi had expressed herself strongly to me on Jigme's dictatorial and ruthless attitude, shut-

ting her out of political affairs to act as substitute hostess, but now she was back in favor as Bhutan's possible minister for external affairs.

After an exchange of family news over cups of tea, Jigme raised the question of our possible visit to Bhutan in his own typical drily humorous fashion.

"You can tell Meg from me, Pat-la (my Tibetan name), that if *she* wants to come to Bhutan she is welcome anytime, but you—keep out! You are trouble. You went to Tibet, and they were invaded. You came to India and they were invaded." He turned to Adrian. "His big mistake was to turn from missionary work and football to politics."

"And yours," I retorted, "was in turning from horse-racing and football to politics." For some time we had played together in the same soccer team.

"But, seriously, Pat-la," he continued, "how about giving us another year before you visit us? You know we are having problems just now, but give us a year to get some of our development projects going then come and film all you want."

"Jigs," I said, equally seriously, "you won't have another year—neither personally nor nationally." I smiled to take the edge off the remark, for Jigme knew that although I liked him personally I strongly disapproved of some of his policies.

"Why must you always be such a bloody Jeremiah?" he demanded, crossly. "Which reminds me," he added, "you owe me ten pounds. When we met in London you bet me that the Chinese would be in Bhutan within a year and that was eighteen months ago."

"*You* bet the ten pounds," I replied. "And let me remind you that I was the only writer on Asian affairs to come anywhere near the mark. In any event, the Chinese attacked in the North East Frontier Agency a few miles from Bhutan inside three months and, although you and the Indian government both denied it at the time, we both know that Chinese troops did enter Bhutan. So I could claim the ten pounds from you."

"I'll pay you that and more if you'd tell me the source of your information," he suggested gloomily. "You could be right," he continued, "but I can tell you that the possibility of invasion worries India more than it worries me."

We went on to discuss Bhutan's relations with India, the con-

tinuing friction over India's insistence on controlling Bhutan's external affairs. He admitted that it was because of pressure from the Indian government that he could not give us permission to film in Bhutan. The situation created by fleeing Tibetan refugees arriving in Bhutan was extremely serious, for India did not want to take more; Bhutan could not absorb them and as they spread through sparsely inhabited areas of northern and central Bhutan, Chinese agents among them were making trouble.

I broached the subject of a Confederation of Himalayan States and he threw up his hands in protest. "Hell, you aren't still riding that old horse?" he exclaimed, "I told you before that I wouldn't touch it because we'd be overrun by these Nepali bastards. India wouldn't look at it, anyway, and we're doing too well from India to consider it."

But when I had outlined my new approach to the subject he settled back in his chair thoughtfully.

"What makes you think you'll be able to persuade that crowd round the Dalai Lama to agree?" he demanded. "Surkhang, Yuthok, and the others can plot as much as they like, even with you helping them, but I can tell you that they haven't a chance. India wants the Tibet issue kept quiet and you know Gyalu Thondup and Shakapba have too much to lose to do anything to annoy India."

"But, Jigs," I argued, "let's assume that Gyalu Thondup and Shakapba can be isolated, or even, that their personal interests could be shown to play along with India and Confederation. What then?"

"If you can get the Tibetan leaders to agree and accept thi," he said slowly, "then I'm with you. Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet with Nepal is quite a different proposition from just Bhutan and Sikkim. Nepal couldn't dominate such a group. But it hasn't a chance. India and China will never touch it. You're mad, Patterson, I always said it, now I know it for sure."

He stood up and addressed Adrian. "How'd you get caught up with him? He'll either have you in prison or dead!"

Adrian asked him how firm was the refusal to visit Bhutan and Jigme hesitated. "Look," he said "do this. Let me get this visit past and I'll know better where we stand. I'm going to stay for some time in Calcutta after leaving Delhi, so why don't you come and see me then?"

He turned to me. "You! Drop dead! Some bloody scriptwriter! Britain's secret weapon is more like it. Give my love to Meg, and tell her she can come and visit me anytime."

"And give my love to Tess," I replied. "She has my sympathy as always in having you for a husband. We shall meet at Philippi."

"God—both yours and mine—forbid," he grinned.

Adrian and I separated for I had an appointment alone with Mr. Masani, the right-wing Swatantra Party leader. I called a taxi and told the driver, "Lodi Estate."

He dropped me outside a three-story apartment building inside spacious grounds, and I went across to the desk in the lobby and asked for Mr. Masani. The man behind the desk looked blank.

"There is no Mr. Masani here," he said. He called to an Indian who was hurrying past. "Do you know a Mr. Masani?"

The hurrying Indian stopped, began to reply, looked at me more closely and his eyes lit up with recognition.

"Mr. Patterson," he declared with obvious delight.

I looked at the stocky, striking figure dressed in an unusual, embroidered tribal jacket, with magnificently up-swept Rajput-style beard and moustache, and piercing eyes.

"Not Chahvan!" I exclaimed, with a mixture of pleasure and consternation.

"Yes, Chahvan," he repeated, delightedly. "What are you doing here in Delhi?"

"What are you doing here?" I said pointedly, "is more like it. No," I added hastily, "don't tell me more. I have an important appointment and I'm running late."

"Who do you want to see?" Chahvan asked.

"Masani, the M.P.," I replied.

"Masani?" he asked in a rising inflection, "What do you—?" He stopped with a grin. "Masani doesn't live here."

"Lodi Estate," I said. "He gave me the address."

"Ah!" Chahvan exclaimed. "This is Lodi *House*. Lodi Estate is different. Come on. I'll tell the taxi driver."

"When am I going to see you?" he said, as we waved a taxi down.

"I've only just got here," I replied cautiously, "and I have lots to do."

"You say the time," urged Chahvan in his lilting, Welsh-like accent, "and I'll come to—" he stopped suddenly as an idea struck

him. "How long are you going to be with Masani?"

"Oh, an hour or so I would imagine," I replied, adding hastily, "but I must get back to the hotel for discussions with my colleagues. I am with a TV film unit."

"Then," Chahvan stated firmly, "you must come straight back here after you've seen Masani. Only for a little while. I have Mrs. Chettri—you remember Maya Devi?—the M.P. from Darjeeling, coming to see me and you will want to be there."

A taxi stopped, and I climbed in quickly. Chahvan shut the door, but leaned his bearded face in the window. "Well?" he demanded.

I laughed aloud. He was so typically the Chahvan I had known on scores of similar occasions—the "fixer," the "wheeler-dealer" *par excellence*. Nothing was too big for him to attempt, nothing too small for him to arrange. Did you want a bottle of whisky in a prohibition state? Chahvan would get you a case—Haigs or Grants? A copy of some secret official documents? Chahvan would get you a photostat of the original. To meet a Minister? Chahvan would fix the time "at your convenience, sir." A party or national revolt? "I have a certain plan right here, sir." Occasionally, but only rarely, he fell down, but would bounce back again with an even more outrageous proposition than the temporary failure. He was always good company, but I was in a hurry, and didn't need anything "fixed" at the moment. Or did I? I wondered.

"All right," I agreed hastily. "If I have time I'll come and see you later. If not, I'll give you a ring in a day or two."

"Where are you staying?" he persisted and I grinned. He wouldn't let me off the hook so easily.

"Maidens Hotel," I grinned at him.

"Right, sir," he stood back. "I'll expect you any time up to midnight. Remember, Mrs. Chettri, M.P. Darjeeling. Very useful to you." He waved away the driver and swept me a salute.

Minoo Masani was an extremely able political leader of a party that had little hope of an effective national following. But tonight we were not discussing Indian politics, and he quickly informed me of two developments of interest to me. One was that the question regarding my book was to be raised sometime in March, and the other that he had just received a letter from Home Minister Guzirall Nanda in reply to one of his asking about the banning of my book. The home minister regretted that he was unable to reply to Masani's

question immediately since he had not read Mr. Patterson's book but that as soon as he had time to do so he would reply in detail.

Masani and I then discussed my book and I agreed to let him have some of the reviews and comments from both Western and Indian London-based critics so that he could be reliably informed before the debate in Parliament. I then said that I would like to spend some time in discussing my proposals for a possible Confederation of Himalayan States as an alternative to the present dangerous stalemate mentioned by him, Kripalani and others. I went a step further, and included what I had not yet mentioned to others, that possibly Kashmir and Nagaland could be added to such a confederation, making one large neutral buffer zone from Afghanistan to Burma. After I had outlined the proposal he agreed that it had considerable value but he very much doubted whether either of the two major countries involved would consider it. However, he suggested that I give him time to think it over, and in the meantime he would discuss it with the veteran and respected Socialist leader, Jayaprakash Narayan.

After my visit to Masani I told the taxi driver to take me back to my hotel. It had been a busy day and I was mentally exhausted. But on the way I changed my mind. I would call on Chahvan after all. It would only be an hour of amusing Darjeeling gossip. I should have known Chahvan better than that.

I had hardly settled in my chair and passed a few remarks to Mrs. Chettri when he began sending out feelers about my intentions on this visit, tempting me with items of secret information on Himalayan politics. I smiled refusal, shrugging them off as of no more than passing interest. I had just written a book about that and nothing he had said was of major significance. With his sensitive antenna, he quickly detected this and dropped the subject, but he eyed me closely.

A little later he suddenly exclaimed, "I have it. Yak-breeding."

I looked at him. "Yak-breeding?" I asked, puzzled.

"Yes," he said forcibly, sitting forward in his chair, his piercing eyes alight with the excitement of a new idea. "What does yak-breeding suggest to you?"

"Tibet," I replied, humoring him.

"And what else?" he persisted.

“Tibetan farmers,” I suggested. “Nomads? Chinese veterinary dispensaries?”

“You’re getting warm,” he acknowledged, “but I’ll have to tell you. Tibetan refugees. You are doing a film about Tibetan refugees, you say, and there are lots of Tibetan refugees in Nepal.”

“But I said nothing about going to Nepal,” I pointed out quickly (*was it too quickly?* I wondered, watching Chahvan’s shrewd eyes weighing me.) “And in any case, Tibetan refugees don’t breed yaks and the Nepal government wouldn’t let us film refugees in Nepal—or, at least, in the mountains where we would want to go.”

Chahvan looked at me in undisguised triumph, ideas were boiling up in that fertile mind, he felt he was on the right track, and he was looking for the best suggestion to lead me on into his next venture.

“I don’t know if the Tibetan refugees in Nepal are yak-breeding or not,” he said, “but this would be your story for the Nepal government. But once there you could film, say, the Khamba rebels, or the new Chinese road. You could leave all that to me. I can fix it. You just take me on as your assistant and I can get you anything you want.”

He was impossible. His impregnable assurance was breathtaking. And yet . . . He had brought off the most seemingly impossible feats for me in the past. He had me hooked again, as I sat pondering several ideas of my own, and he knew it as he sat back stroking his luxurious moustache contentedly, eyes gleaming.

“I was in Nepal two years ago,” I said slowly, “and cooperation from the government was something that was not very evident then.”

“Ah! but that was 1962,” said Chahvan, “and I wasn’t with you to fix it. What do you want? To meet the Nepalese ambassador and find out for yourself? I’ll fix that for you tomorrow morning. And I’ll have him ready to give you permission before you arrive,” he added with outrageous nonchalance.

“Let’s keep away from dreams,” I warned him. “You’ve failed before. And I can make my own appointments with ambassadors.”

“Sometimes,” he waved away his past failures with a flip of his hand. “But take my advice. The Nepalese ambassador knows me, and he also knows that my cousin is the chief of protocol in Kathmandu. So, he knows that if I go with you to Kathmandu I can get you anything you want.”

I was about to ask how the chief of protocol of the Nepal government came to be a cousin of his, when I suddenly recalled previous occasions when I had challenged his claims. One, more sweeping than some of the others, had been that his brother-in-law was a general in the Indian Army, at that time in command of a strategic area of interest to me, who, continued Chahvan, "was likely to be Commander-in-Chief." When I checked on this later I found it to be true. *And* General Chaudhari was now chief of staff of the Indian Army. You could never tell with Chahvan.

"Right," I said, getting to my feet. "You win. I will bring Adrian Cowell, the producer, tomorrow morning at ten. If you can convince him you've got yourself a job."

He smiled happily, enthusiasm and excitement making him an even more bizarre and striking figure. "Leave it to me. From now on you have no worries."

"From tomorrow," I corrected him, "I may have the greatest worry I have ever had. Good-night."

I left him and Mrs. Chettri to carry on with their interrupted discussion of Himalayan intrigues.



3

NEXT DAY, Adrian and I went to meet Chahvan. I had given a hilarious account of my meeting and previous experiences with Chahvan to Adrian and Chris, and they agreed that it might be a good idea to take him along on the project—especially since it looked as if the Bhutan possibility was going to fall through and we would have to try Nepal. We could try Chahvan in Delhi, see how he fared, then if he looked useful I could leave Delhi quietly for Kathmandu with him, while Adrian and Chris remained, ostensibly waiting for a reply from the Dalai Lama, but chiefly as a smoke screen for my exploratory activities in Nepal.

Chahvan was in top form. He had been making several inquiries at the Nepalese Embassy, he said, and he had found out that we would be very welcome to film in Nepal. But, he continued, the ambassador was about to leave this afternoon for a tour of Southeast Asia, and if we wanted to meet him, he, Chahvan, would have to get busy right away to arrange an appointment. I doubted whether this was possible. I thought that it was a typical Chahvan flourish, and said so.

“Ah! Mr. Patterson,” he declared in pained surprise, “how can you say such a thing? Give me permission and I will phone the ambassador right away for an appointment.”

Adrian looked at me to see if Chahvan was joking, and I grinned back at him.

“Chahvan,” I said gravely, “you have our permission.”

“Right, sir,” he said promptly, and stepped purposefully towards the telephone behind our chairs. He dialed a number and said something in Nepali, then asked for the First Secretary. After a few words with him, obviously trying to persuade someone reluctant to agree, he asked impatiently in English to be put on to the ambassador.

He winked across at us in delight, then his face sobered and his voice became more respectful, less demanding. He gave a glowing description of the well-known TV film unit that had just arrived in Delhi, with a distinguished author-journalist friend of his, Mr. George N. Patterson, as a member. He, Chahvan, was trying to persuade them to make a film in Nepal, with his assistance, and that we had finally agreed to do so on condition that we were given every cooperation. He was sure that the ambassador appreciated the importance of such a film for Nepal, and would he agree to meet Mr. Cowell and Mr. Patterson to discuss the possibility? Before the ambassador had time for a polite refusal he went on quickly and smoothly to anticipate any objection by adding that he was aware that the ambassador must be very busy but if he could agree to give us ten or fifteen minutes, it might have great significance for the future of Nepal. It was a commendable performance and the triumphant gleam in his eyes, as he screwed them up at us, indicated that it had been successful.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "Twelve o'clock. We will be there, and we promise not to delay you."

He replaced the telephone, turned towards us with upspread hands and expressive shrug of the shoulders. "There you are, gentlemen," he declared. "Is there anything else you would like? An appointment with the King?"

"I'll have a redhead with green eyes," I replied drily.

"Right, sir," he said confidently, give me two days and you shall have her."

With less than two hours before meeting the ambassador we had to draw up yet another satisfactory and airtight supplementary project. We had prepared two or three contingency plans and what we now decided was to use one definite film project on the contract, and one not-so-definite, as a basis for entering Nepal and giving us enough time to look around and lay our plans for the main objective of entering Tibet. The plan for Nepal would have to be good for I was well known in Kathmandu and no leading politician was going to believe that I would spend a lot of time there just filming temples. The definite project on the contract was a film on "The Changing Face of Buddhism," as the first of a three-part series. Since Buddha's birthplace was in Nepal, as well as several temples and places of pilgrimage, this would justify our being

there for some time. The not-so-definite project was a possible film on the recent economic development of Nepal since the country "opened" in 1954. The trouble with both of these projects was that they would restrict us to the southern areas of the country while we wanted to get into the north. However, I hoped I could keep my talks on Confederation going long enough to allay any suspicion while looking for another leak-proof plan to take us on to the north.

We met the ambassador and spent a pleasant fifteen minutes over drinks discussing a brief outline of our proposed project, and he said he thought that permission for this would be possible. But would we discuss the details with the First Secretary as he had to hurry away to catch a plane?

The next few days were filled with hectic preparations to get the film unit ready to move at a moment's notice. If the Dalai Lama in his reply gave a definite date for an audience, I would have to return from Nepal to join the unit and go to Dharamsalla. If, on the other hand, the Dalai Lama sent only some sort of stalling reply, as I expected, then Adrian would write to say that we had been unexpectedly called away to Nepal and would write again on our return. The final decision would be taken by me in Kathmandu after I had met the Nepalese government officials and obtained their permission to make the film—or had their refusal, in which case we would return to Delhi right away and not bother doing the film on Nepal.

Chahvan was supremely confident, not only because of his usual unassailable assurance but because, he insisted, it was God who had brought us together in that remarkable encounter a few nights ago. I remarked caustically that it was more likely to be Satan, as far as he was concerned, with his Mephistophelian appearance and Machiavellian intrigues.

"There is nothing so bad, but thinking maketh it so," Chahvan quoted piously, his eyes creasing mockingly.

"Where is that taken from?" Adrian challenged him.

"Shakespeare," Chahvan replied promptly, "*Much Ado About Nothing*."

Adrian gazed at him with admiration. "Which Folio?" he asked, not expecting an answer.

"I'm not sure," Chahvan admitted modestly. "The fourth? I'm forgetting the classics these days. With my kind of life, one isn't

always able to keep in educated company.” He grinned across at me, conspiratorially recalling with enjoyable rapport some of the incidents experienced together in what he had euphemistically embraced in “my kind of life.”

We completed the usual formalities—visas, passport, photographs, money changed—in a mad rush over the next few days. Chahvan insisted, “Leave that to me, I can get seven rupees to the dollar instead of four.” Chahvan and I then were ready to leave for Kathmandu while Adrian and Chris waited in Delhi for word from the Dalai Lama or until I sent for them.

Chahvan took over the plane to Kathmandu. He kept it waiting for five minutes at Safdarjung Airport in New Delhi while he made “an important telephone call.” He greeted the pretty Nepali air hostess with elaborate courtesy, detained her in earnest conversation as the plane took off, then requested that coffee should be given quickly to Mr. Patterson while she was distributing breakfasts. He helped her with the preparations, brought me papers and magazines and only after I had finished breakfast did he settle down—beside the air hostess—to eat his own. I wondered what, besides his amorous intentions, he was up to.

After a long and serious conversation with the air hostess, he began to move about the plane, stopping to chat with the various passengers, in the course of which I heard snippets of conversation—“distinguished author-journalist,” “international authority on Asia,” “going to Nepal for talks with the Nepal government,” “we are making television films for international distribution.” I was annoyed, then amused, then intrigued as I considered what confused and bewildering stories would circulate in Kathmandu when Chahvan got there. If I could keep our real intentions from Chahvan I could safely leave all smoke screens and red herrings to him. One of our greatest problems would be to get the films of Khamba guerilla attacks on the Chinese out of the country, after we had successfully planned and accomplished the project. However, with Chahvan around we would not be short of possibilities. But to be on the safe side, I would have an idea or two of my own which Chahvan would not know about. You not only had to be up early in the morning to outwit Chahvan, you had to be unsleeping. I had already considered the not unlikely possibility that Indian security had “planted” him on me, and rejected it, but if the price were high enough, either

from Nepal or India, Chahvan would agree, with alacrity—and an engaging smile.

Outside the plane windows, beyond the low-lying heat haze, the towering snow-covered mountains of the Himalayas were distantly outlined against the deep blue sky. Brown patchwork fields slid away into the greeny blue foothills as the Dakota droned its monotonous way across India's plains to the mountains of Nepal.

The plane droned into the foothills of Nepal, climbing to get out of the mild turbulence of rising air currents and rearing mountains forming the gateway into Nepal. The exact origin of the word "Nepal" is not known but one theory is that it was derived from the name of a celebrated ascetic, "Ne," and "pala," meaning "cherished" or "looked after," thus, "the country looked after by 'Ne.'" "

At the present day the word "Nepal" is used by modern geographers to denote all the country lying within the present boundaries of the Gurkha Kingdom, but to the Gurkhas and the many other tribes, Nepal means only the Nepal Valley. It was so used up to 1768, the "King of Nepal" reigning up to that time exercising sovereignty only over one of the three Principalities—Kathmandu, Bhatgaon or Patan—and no more. From 1768, the Kingdom was expanded by warlike chiefs and petty kings leading their tribes to include the wide regions recognized today of about 520 miles in length and 100 miles in depth, from the Sarda, tributary of the Ganges, to Sikkim.

Four great rivers, and the towering jutting mountain ranges from the Himalayas to the plains of India, split the country crosswise into almost impenetrable areas. Travel in this savage terrain is further complicated by a series of four "terraces," or four natural steps running the whole length of the country from north to east, from the plains to the peaks. First, there is the flat plain extending to the foothills; then the "Terai" with its heavy jungles, alluvial plains and occasional clearings, rising up to about 1,000 feet; then the "trans-Himalaya" with the great central trough of valleys and hills between the lower and inner ranges, varying in altitude up to 15,000 feet, and containing some of the best pasture and agricultural land. Finally, there is the "inner Himalaya," so called because of the geographical situations of the higher border ranges and peaks within Nepal territory, with peaks varying from 17,000 to over 29,000 feet on Everest. In addition to the 51 peaks between 23,000 and 29,000

feet there are an estimated further 38 unclimbed and unnamed peaks from 22,000 feet and upwards.

There, in that savage and icy wilderness, lay our objective—to meet the Khamba guerillas somewhere among the inaccessible mountains, take in our stride some of the peaks that mountaineering expeditions took months and even years to plan and accomplish, go behind the lines of what was considered the most ruthless army in the world, film what we had to assume would be their defeat in an action, and then come back out across the same mountains and jungles.

Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, lay just over the outer ring of low mountains. The early history of Nepal is lost or at least veiled in mythology but there seems to be little doubt that what is now the Kathmandu Valley was at one time a huge lake. The valley itself is about 242 square miles at an altitude of 4,500 feet above sea level, surrounded by tree-covered mountains, except where the millions of terraced rice fields rise like a giant's stepladder to the summits, and the eternally snow-covered backbone of the world's highest mountains in the background.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, when the British under Clive were establishing themselves in Bengal, the fluctuating area in the Himalayas known as Nepal broke up into a number of petty principalities and small independent states. The nature of the terrain kept the tribes fighting among themselves in the mountains and the animal-infested jungles and marshy malarial land of the "Terai" in the lower foothills effectively isolated them from any possible outside interference by Indian Rajas or British troops.

This isolation from the plains of India had not only produced a proud independence of character among the mountain tribes but also, as knowledge of the Mohammedan and, in their turn, the British conquests of India infiltrated the country, it bred a contempt for the "weaklings" of the plains. Consequently, the mountain tribes developed their own customs, and even the Hinduism which had been introduced centuries previously developed characteristics which were never recognized by the Hindus of India.

But while external politics and religion beyond their boundaries passed them by, a series of events inside the country began, with an everwidening circle of repercussion, which brought the last of the Newar Kings in the Kathmandu Valley—or "Valley of Nepal" as it was then known—to appeal to the British invader of India for help.

This was the rise of the state and tribe of Gurkha and the origin of the modern Kingdom of Nepal.

With these different tribes and their multifarious subdivisions scattered throughout the tangle of well-nigh impenetrable jungles, valleys, forests and mountains, Nepalese history was more or less confined to the Kathmandu Valley, with its three contiguous city-states. The valley from east to west was about twenty miles long and from north to south about fifteen miles broad, varying at times as mountain spurs ran into the plain and enclosed side valleys. The valley itself contained two rivers, the Bagmati and Vishnumati and several large streams and when they united just to the south of Kathmandu, they formed a considerable river. The rich alluvial soil of the valley was heavily cultivated and crops could be taken from two to four times a year, according to Chahvan.

The plane was flying between the steeply terraced sides of the mountains into the cupped jewel that was Kathmandu. Beyond the wing tips the fantastically patterned green mountains were criss-crossed with pencil-like paths, with here and there a brown thatched village. Beneath the fuselage of the Dakota, three thousand feet below, an eye-caressing patchwork counterpane of variegated greens and yellows was divided by the glinting blue, green, grey and brown streams and rivers. In the center of the valley where rivers and fields met and parted and met again lay the great golden-roofed temples and small red-brown houses of Kathmandu.

The Dakota touched down and taxied up in front of the long, single-storied, cream-colored airport offices. There were some scattered groups of spectators, several embarking passengers of various nationalities with friends come to see them off, all standing around, relaxed, in the warm sunshine.

And there was Boris. He saw me at the same time as I saw him.

“George!” he exclaimed in pleased surprise.

“Hello Boris,” I greeted him, “I gather you didn’t get my telegram?”

“When did you send it?” he asked.

“Yesterday,” I replied.

“Then it will come in two or three days’ time,” he said, laughing.

“Have you accommodation at the Royal?” I asked anxiously.

“We’ll find something,” he answered. “Here, you go with my man to the hotel and he’ll fix you up. I have to wait here to meet Doris

Duke. Do you know her—the tobacco heiress? I'll see you later."

Boris was—well—Boris was Boris. He would need a whole book to himself. Dancer with Diaghelev, gunrunner, chef, revolutionary, owner of nightclubs for top people, friend of Maharajahs, confidant of intriguers and gangsters and some of the world's loveliest women, Boris was now owner of the leading hotel, the Royal Hotel, in Kathmandu. Friend of the great, his generosity to the poor and down-and-out was legendary.

After lunch Chahvan went off on his own. In the double room which we had to share, he was a strutting effervescent dynamo. Three different kinds of suits he hung in the wardrobe—Nepali, Indian and Western—plus several styles of shirts—handloom, khadi, bush, and fold-over blouse. He ordered a stream of bearers around, altering the furniture in the room to a more pleasing arrangement, gave instructions to the dhobi about our dirty linen, ordered the sweeper to wash out the bathroom, called for papers, more lights, a small table, another chair. When he finally departed, "to arrange my official program," the room, the hotel, and even life itself, seemed to have an empty space.

Knowing something of Nepali officialdom from previous experience, I did not accept Chahvan's optimistic prophecy that he would be back in two hours. Also, I knew something of Chahvan's capacity for picking up situations and from them to conjure new opportunities of interest and profit. So I called for a taxi and went to pay a courtesy call at the British Embassy, whose First Secretary, Peter Wild, I had met on a previous visit. While chatting with Peter the new British ambassador to Nepal, Mr. Anthony Duff, came in and was introduced by Peter. He invited me to dine with him the following night.

When I returned to the hotel, Chahvan had still not returned so I set out to gather what information I could on the present politics of the country, especially who were the people in the key places of power.

Until fifteen years before, Nepal had been a closed country to all foreigners, its feudal "Rana regime" an archaic anachronism in the twentieth century. The "Rana system" was introduced by an earlier powerful prime minister who passed a law making the office of prime minister hereditary in the family without abolishing the institution of monarchy. This was further "adjusted" so that the succession to the office of the prime minister was not determined by the law of primo-

geniture but the eldest among the surviving brothers succeeded to the office on the death or retirement of the incumbent. The second senior-most among the brothers held the office of commander-in-chief, and so on over the senior positions of rank. By doing this, the then prime minister hoped to ensure that no minor ever came to the high office of prime minister and that when the incumbent held final power he would already have held several high positions of administrative responsibility. He also persuaded the King to issue a decree giving him power of life and death in the whole of Nepal, to nominate or dismiss all government officials, to declare war and make peace with other countries.

But the promiscuity practiced by the leading families in Nepal, and the proliferation of children inside and outside wedlock, necessitated a modification of the agnate system introduced, and this was done by creating three categories into the Rana administration. Those born in wedlock were known as "Class A" Ranas, and they alone were entitled to succeed to the highest offices; children born of mothers whose marriages with Rana husbands were legitimized after birth were known as "Class B" Ranas; those born out of wedlock were known as "Class C" Ranas, and were not entitled to succeed to the highest offices. Naturally, the "Class C" Ranas became very numerous, and as they were usually wealthy because of their anomalous circumstances, they were in a position to do a great deal of damage by supporting intrigues.

The Indian freedom movement inevitably influenced the Nepalese people, for so many Nepalese had gone to India for their education that it was bound to have repercussions. An underground movement was formed and run on the same lines as the Congress Party of India. With the interrelation of the leaders there was also a sympathetic interrelation of the movements, so that asylum was provided when the Nepali Congress members were declared rebels by the Ranas, and guidance and sustenance were provided by the sister organization in India. In 1950 the Nepali Congress took to armed rebellion and, after successfully removing the King from the hands of the Ranas and capturing the second largest town in Nepal, an agreement was signed in 1951 to form a coalition government.

The Chinese Communists marched into Tibet in October, 1950, and this, together with the increasing internal crisis in Nepal, compounded the general confusion. A popular Nationalist, Dr. K. I.

Singh, led a successful revolt, then had to flee to China through Tibet when it collapsed. The introduction of an Indian Military Mission gave rise to the belief that India was controlling the Army, and Indian participation in reorganizing the administrative machinery was interpreted in the same way. When India offered financial assistance to build an 80-mile road from India to Kathmandu, this was bitterly attacked by leading Nepalis as an attempt to bring Nepal within India's influence.

Internally corruption and nepotism had grown to a magnitude never known before in the history of Nepal, even under the worst of the Ranas. Corruption was open and everyone in the government was believed to be involved in some scandal or another, so that the reputation of every government servant, including the prime minister, was nil. The people lost faith in the administration, for officials preferred staying in the comfort of Kathmandu to traveling with discomfort and difficulty in the interior, and nothing was done about conditions outside the Valley, and little enough inside it.

On February 12, 1959, after a series of crises, the new King, Mahendra, announced the first constitution for Nepal. It provided for the establishment of two Houses of Parliament, the lower House to consist of 109 members elected from single-member territorial constituencies, and the Upper House, or Senate, of thirty members, of whom eighteen would be nominated by the King. The Cabinet was to consist of the prime minister and not more than fourteen ministers. The constitution also provided for a supreme court and fundamental rights to ensure personal liberty, equality before law, and religious freedom.

It was too good to be true. Although the Congress Party emerged as clear winners with 74 seats in the House of 109, and a popular, able and honest politician, B. P. Koirala, as prime minister, the King was unhappy at the thought of his new powers being curbed by a successful political party. On December 15, 1960, the King announced that he had taken over "direct rule" and had put Prime Minister Koirala and other political leaders in jail, giving as his reasons the corruption of the Congress Party and deterioration in government administration. The Communist Party leaders, with only some 10,000 members, were able to avoid arrest and fourteen of the Politburo escaped.

Shortly after the King took over, the Chinese government an-

nounced that it approved his action "in the circumstances" and that they were extending further financial support to Nepal. A boundary agreement was drawn up and signed, diplomatic relations between Nepal and China were begun for the first time, and China offered to build a road from Tibet to Kathmandu—an offer which the King promptly accepted.

While there was little doubt that it was King Mahendra's intention to equalize the balance of power with these arrangements, by making Nepal less dependent on India and giving her an extra political lever, what looked like happening—politically, economically, and militarily—was a Nepalese Red Ridinghood inviting a Chinese hungry wolf into her house. Or, to change the metaphor, an unwary innocent putting his head into the dragon's mouth.

Inside Nepal, the King was still in full control; some political leaders who had agreed to work with his regime had been released, but the redoubtable Nationalist revolutionary, Dr. K. I. Singh, and the able Socialist, B. P. Koirala, were still in prison. The chairman of the council of ministers—"a puppet body," I was told—was a Dr. Tulsi Giri, a Nepalese politician I had never met.

Chahvan returned at six o'clock in the evening, with bulging briefcase, purposeful stride, and a Nepali friend, Mr. Josse. Mr. Josse, it appeared, was one of a family of merchants who had the largest business interests in Nepal. I had known one of the brothers, his uncle, some years before in Kalimpong. He was a member of the influential Gurkha League. Mr. Josse had come, said Chahvan, to invite me to the wedding of this man's son to be held tomorrow.

Chahvan leaned forward, eyes moving from left to right conspiratorially: "The elite of Nepal will be there," he said, *sotto voce*, "including Dr. Tulsi Giri, the King's right-hand man. We will meet them all socially, then—wham!" He struck his hands together, "Everything's fixed."

Mr. Josse smiled indulgently. Obviously he had known Chahvan for some time, so I had no need to soften his extravagances.

"It will be very useful for you to come," he agreed quietly, "but we would also like you to come just for the enjoyment of our wedding customs."

I expressed my appreciation at his thoughtfulness and courtesy and after some polite conversation, Mr. Josse went off.

Just to keep Chahvan in a proper frame of mind—that is, in

humble recognition of my superior genius—I gave him a bawling out for being away so long on the important first day. He spread his hands expressively, expostulated that he was deeply engrossed in pursuing my interests and that at one stroke, in getting an invitation from these friends, he had managed to fix it so that I would meet most of Nepal's leading officials in the space of two or three hours, including the present powerful Dr. Tulsi Giri, the chairman of the council of ministers.

Further—and he picked up his briefcase, opened it, took out a newspaper and pointed to the headline:

**BREACH OF PROTOCOL BY CHINA,
DIRECT COMMUNICATION TO MAHARAJA OF SIKKIM.**

The Government of India has taken exception to the 'improper' procedure followed by China in sending a condolence message direct to the Maharaja of Sikkim on the death of his father last year.

The Minister in the External Affairs Ministry, Mr. Lakshmi Menon, said that since India was responsible for Sikkim's external relations, China's action constituted a breach of protocol and disregarded India's treaty relationship with that Himalayan state.

She said that so far as the Government was aware this was the first direct communication China had addressed to Sikkim. The Sikkim Government sent a reply to China directly.

"Ah-ha!" said Chahvan triumphantly. "You see—the Sikkim government sent a reply to China directly. Our old friend, the Maharajkumar, wants to be free of India as we have said all along. What about confederation now?"

I looked at him, sharply. What did he know about my ideas on confederation? Was it that he had just read some of my earlier articles, or had he found out something in his own inimitable way? But if so, how? I decided to show no interest, except the natural one of the Maharaja being prepared to annoy the Indian government in pursuit of his own ambitions. But inwardly I added this latest information, with some satisfaction, to the accumulating favorable circumstances attending our project.



4

THE FOLLOWING MORNING

we had a visit from Chahvan's cousin, Prakash Thakur, the chief of protocol. He was quite different from Chahvan in both appearance and manner—taller, stouter, more cherubic, suave, charming, and evasive. I got the impression that he was a man of many faces, and many loyalties—or rather, many alignments.

I gave no hint of this, however, listening politely to his lengthy reminiscences of his early days with the Gurkha League, what he said as a member of a Gurkha Delegation to Mr. Nehru in 1948 in favor of a Gurkha State—had he, too, heard about confederation? I wondered—and his complaints about General Toker's conclusions in his book *The Gorkhas*.

He was fulsome about promises to help, but vague about specific appointments or commitments. I resolved that this was one contact of Chahvan's on whom I would place little reliance, at least until I had made sufficient headway of my own through other channels. Once he saw which way the higher officials were likely to receive me he would no doubt decide to do likewise, but until then all I could expect from him would be words.

My next appointment, arranged by myself, was with the King's press attaché, Renu Lal, who, I had been given to understand, had considerable influence with the King about what could or should not be written—or, in our case, filmed. I spent some time in polishing the details of my approach for, after the press attaché, I would have to work within the outlines specified and not "off-the-cuff" as I had been doing until now.

"I have three matters which I would like to discuss with you, Mr. Lal," I said to the saturnine figure dressed in black Western jacket and tight white jodhpur trousers, leaning back in the armchair myself to give an appearance of confidence and lack of guile. "The first is

that we are a television unit under contract to produce several films on Asian affairs, and our first subject is that of Tibetan refugees. We have asked for an audience with the Dalai Lama to discuss this, and my colleague, Mr. Adrian Cowell, is still in Delhi waiting for a reply. Since Nepal has a considerable number of Tibetan refugees it comes within our sphere of interest. However, there is not sufficient reason to attract us to Nepal to film refugees unless we are permitted to travel outside Kathmandu Valley, to film them in their natural environment in the mountains.

"I may say at this point," and I sat up to emphasize my frankness, "that we have no wish just to go about filming unfortunate Tibetans in camps. We are interested in the subject from the political angle." I noted his heightened interest. "That is, the Dalai Lama has persuaded several countries to receive and train Tibetan refugees in various skills and he must now decide what is to be the future of these refugees."

I spread my hands, and sat forward in the chair, and he shifted to follow me, his interest fully caught.

"Is it the Dalai Lama's intention to have 'Little Tibets' in each country? In India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan—even in Switzerland, Denmark or England?" I asked, rhetorically. "Many Tibetans are either finishing technical training in these countries, or are thinking in terms of marriage or settling down. Whatever their problem they also face this decision which only the Tibetan leaders can resolve—has Tibet itself any future? The Dalai Lama is not only their *spiritual* leader but also their *temporal* leader, and as such he is responsible for political decisions. If he evades or abdicates this responsibility then his senior officials must take the decision for him."

I swung the subject round to hit him while his interest was alive.

"You, in Nepal, come in here with between 10 and 20,000 Tibetan refugees in a very strategic part of your northern territory on the borders of Tibet. With your government's permission we would like to film some of them in this setting."

Before he had time to let his mind dwell on this and suspect things, I moved smoothly on. "We are also doing a film on 'The Changing Face of Buddhism.' You must have noted the near-elimination of Lamaistic Buddhism in Outer Mongolia, the destruction of the religious structure in Tibet and the growing *political* character of Buddhism in countries like Burma, Ceylon, South Vietnam, and

Japan?" He nodded. "This," I continued, "is what we want to portray and analyze, but in Nepal we would only wish to film the Buddha's birthplace, early Buddhist temples and places of pilgrimage, with any useful background material."

"Finally," I slowed down, put my fingers together thoughtfully, and after a significant pause, looked straight at him meaningfully, "I would like to discuss with your leading officials the possibility of a Confederation of Himalayan States."

A shutter seemed to drop behind his eyes, and he sat very still. But I decided that this time he would have to react, so I sat back as if I had said it all.

"What—" he began, and as the words did not emerge he coughed and began again. "What do you mean by a Confederation of Himalayan States?"

"Well," I said, judiciously, "it is a big subject, much too big to discuss now. But briefly, I know from previous visits and conversations in Nepal that Nepalese leaders have for some time been interested in a federation or call-it-what-you-will of Himalayan territories, such as Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and other Nepali-inhabited areas. In my opinion this never had a chance of materializing. But due to recent developments I can see how there might be proposed and formed a Confederation of Himalayan States to include Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and *Tibet*. This I would like to discuss with your leaders, both for writing and filming, with their approval."

I was finished. From now on, in various ways and with different emphasis, these three subjects would be passed upwards and outwards. No one would really know what it was we wished to film, and shortly—as I saw more and more officials, varying the emphasis each time according to the individual—two of the subjects, Tibetan refugees and Buddhism, would coalesce and serve merely as useful opening material for the key subject of top political significance—the Confederation of Himalayan States. If there was no interest in the subject, or if the officials were too cautious or too fearful to discuss it, then the emphasis would have to be on Tibetan refugees, Buddhism, or, least interesting of all, a film on Nepal.

Chahvan and I went straight from the interview with the press attaché to the Josse wedding. The Josses were an influential Nepali trading family, the father, chairman of the chamber of commerce, a privy councillor and a director of the Royal Nepal Airways Cor-

poration. His brother I had known in previous years as a Gurkha League politician in Darjeeling district, and later as a member of the Legislative Assembly representing Gurkha interests in the West Bengal government. It was his son who was being married.

The wedding festivities were to be spread over a period of several days, but today was the first and most important day. A huge marquee had been erected in the forecourt of the two-storied nondescript house and lesser dignitaries were gathering in there when we arrived. On the other side of the marquee a twelve-man band, in gaudy uniforms with black facings and white epaulettes and gloves, blared forth an uneven selection of Nepali and Western tunes. Outside the house were the leaders of Nepal society, government and army, generals in and out of uniform—including Chahvan's friend, General Shamsher, whom I'd met in the plane—mingled with their civilian counterparts, ministers, secretaries, directors.

But as might have been expected, it was Chahvan who stole the show. When the chairman of ministers arrived and was being introduced deferentially to the waiting and respectful groups of guests, inevitably he came to Chahvan—gleaming eyes, upswept moustache and curling beard triumphing over the restraint of his modest Nepali handloom dress.

"This is Chahvan, Dr. Giri," said the host's son politely. Dr. Giri smiled pleasantly. "Chahvan? Where are you from?" he asked.

"Nowhere," said Chahvan, conversationally. "Everywhere," he added. His eyes lit up, his voice rose; "I am a professional exile, sir," and he concluded with a laugh. There was a hesitant and slightly uneasy murmur of laughter and comment.

Dr. Giri looked amused. "Where was your last exile?" he asked. "Delhi—Dehra Dun—Darjeeling." Chahvan dismissed them all with an airy wave of his hand.

The father of the bridegroom, L. R. Josse smilingly interjected:

"Chahvan is the man who organized our Gurkha League activities in Assam and Darjeeling, sir. He is a kind of frontier rebel." Dr. Giri and the others gazed at Chahvan with new interest. "And what are you organizing here?" Dr. Giri asked jokingly. "Confederation," Chahvan said with calculated devastation. There was complete silence, and Dr. Giri moved on.

I gazed at Chahvan with awe, fury, disgust, and sheer admiration. With cold logical planning, I had laid a foundation on which to build

a platform of discussion of an extremely delicate and dangerous implication. Chahvan, with instinctive political acumen and consummate sense of showmanship knew that the subject would now be discussed in every leading Nepali household for weeks to come. "What did Chahvan mean by Confederation?" "Was Chahvan serious?" "Is Chahvan really organizing something about Confederation?" "Haven't you heard the latest rumor? That Patterson has brought some special information from the Dalai Lama." And so on.

I emitted a snarl at Chahvan, who merely grinned delightedly, but inwardly I tensed with a familiar excitement as the political game opened up. This was my *métier*, where I moved with a strange instinctive skill and confidence among practiced Oriental experts. I had never played chess, I was uninterested in bridge, but in the involved game of Oriental politics my mind seemed to function as an intricate independent computer, sifting, weighting, calculating, analyzing, bluffing, tantalizing, forcing, persuading people, politicians, and events. And here, in the most important, most subtle situation in which I had ever been placed, with the armies of India and China facing each other, prepared for war, across a narrow strip of Himalayan territory, and with an internationally admitted political stalemate, my own proposal for defusing this situation against the wishes of both Asian giants by creating a neutral Confederation of Himalayan States had been reduced to a one-word joke from the mouth of an outrageous Oriental *poseur*.

I would have to start a few more hares, drag a few more red herrings, toss a few more stones, and add some home-truths—to mix a few metaphors—if the subject were to become a serious talking point in Nepal. Chahvan would complicate the situation time and again, no doubt, but I had to admit that he provided a piquancy and challenge that gave more pleasure than exasperation. And, in any case, our real objective was still hidden. I hoped.

I left Chahvan at the wedding while I went to dinner with the British ambassador. He had just arrived in Nepal a few days before and his wife and family were still en route. Also at dinner was the military attaché, a Colonel Charles Wylie, well known as a Himalayan mountaineer, a Micky Weatherall, construction engineer in Nepal, and his wife, Kay. Wylie and Weatherall had had years of experience in Nepal, especially Wylie through his association with the Gurkhas, so it seemed a good time in the course of the evening to bring up

again the subject of confederation. But this time I was strictly factual. The Chinese military build-up in Tibet, the logistical problems in vast mountain terrain, the vulnerability of lines of supply, the difficult Indian military position in Sikkim and indefensible Bhutan, the extent of military organization among the rebel Nagas.

I had allowed myself two days in Kathmandu, or, to be more exact, I had decided to give the impression, arising out of the approach I was pursuing, that I was in Kathmandu only for the two days. I knew how difficult it was in the East to get quick decisions anywhere, and I knew even more certainly that quick decisions in what passed for "normal" times in Nepal were next to impossible. With the autocratic King out of the capital and away upcountry for another few weeks, it was naïve to expect any decisions. But my "cover" story had to be watertight to allay the suspicions of many shrewd officials, and so I suggested that permission to film "the King among his people" was a necessary sequence in any film about Nepal. Since there was a deadline—March 24th—to the King's present tour of Western Nepal, and, in the event of permission being granted, a lot of preparation had to be made including the possible charter of a plane or helicopter to fly where the King was, I could plead undue urgency for quick decision.

Over the next few days I came to the conclusion from conversations with Tibetan refugees whom I met, that to reach the most significant group of Khamba guerillas we had to get to a point northwest of Kathmandu, near to a place called Mustang. This was where several thousand of the armed Tibetans were supposed to be located, and through them and beyond lay our opportunity of getting across the border into Tibet. This was the main objective, but it had to be wrapped up and confused by a sufficient variety of other interests and activities to throw suspicious officialdom off the scent. The possible film about Nepal with its emphasis on modern development and progress, education, land reform, and communications would help to draw a variety of red herrings across the trail, while "The Changing Face of Buddhism" and "Tibetan Refugees" would keep us moving quietly in the right direction to accomplish our objective.

Nothing of this, of course, did I communicate to Chahvan. It was not that I doubted his loyalty, but his penchant for the flamboyant and boastful made him untrustworthy in such a delicate

venture. Chahvan had considerable intelligence, infinite deviousness, and remarkable ingenuity—but he did not have the finesse required for a major operation at top level of this kind. So I left Chahvan to pursue his own interpretation and variations of the broad outline I had given to the King's press attaché. It would mean an unexpected variety of bizarre situations for me to resolve, impromptu, but it would be invaluable as a bewildering maze in which officials would wander in assuming Chahvan to be my informed confidant, while I moved in my own way and towards our objectives behind the screen.

We spent most of one day typing and telephoning. I dictated several letters to officials, while Chahvan acted as a very competent secretary typist, giving the outline of our proposed film projects, and making appointments to meet them. In the course of making the telephone calls Chahvan had tried several times to reach the private secretary of the chairman of ministers, Dr. Tulsi Giri, to arrange an appointment, but had failed. While he was typing I offered to try and he gave me the name of Dr. Giri's two private secretaries, one of whom was called Juddhabir Lama.

"Juddhabir Lama," he went on, "is the son of Santabir Lama, who you must be knowing."

"From Darjeeling?" I asked, with quickened interest, "or rather Sukhiapokri, near Darjeeling?"

"That's the one," confirmed Chahvan. "His two sons, Juddhabir and Amir are now working for the government, in good positions, and it is said that Juddhabir is influential with the King and Dr. Giri."

"Well, well, well," I said reflectively.

"What is it?" asked Chahvan, scenting something of interest.

"I have met Juddhabir Lama," I replied, "a few years ago in Darjeeling. In fact, his brother Amir owes his life to my wife and me."

Chahvan gazed at me incredulously—incredulity gradually giving place to an enormous delight as the possibilities raced through his agile mind.

"Amir Lama was brought into the hospital," I went on, "nearly dead. My wife held out very little hope for him, told his family that she must operate immediately but that there was little chance of the operation being successful at this late stage. To complicate matters

more, he would require blood transfusions on a large scale. There was no blood bank and so she sent for me to donate my blood, and any others with me, who could be brought to the hospital urgently. Miraculously, he did recover, although his pulse actually stopped during the operation, and the family was deeply grateful to us for what had been done. Some time afterwards we visited their home during a holiday in East Nepal, and it was then that I met Juddhabir, Amir's brother."

Chahvan lost interest in the typing, and began to elaborate on various ways which his fertile imagination had already suggested on how this vital information could be used. I held up my hand to stem the flow.

"No, no, no," I shook my head at him in rebuke. "This has to be played cool—and subtle, above all, subtle. We don't go asking favors, we don't even mention a straight request. Just leave it to me—and watch a maestro at work."

Chahvan grinned. "Yes, *sir*," he said with mock deference. "You are the boss."

We met Juddhabir in the evening at Dr. Giri's residence. He took one look at me and exclaimed. "Mr. Patterson! I didn't know it was you. Is Dr. Patterson with you?"

"No," I replied, "she is in London with the children. I am out on special assignment. Alone once again."

"Sit down," Juddhabir said. "Well, this is a pleasant surprise."

"Tell me," I added, "before we get down to business. How is Amir?"

"Very well," Juddhabir replied. "He has only recently returned from a visit to China and is out of Kathmandu at the moment, but his wife and son will want to meet you, I'm sure."

"I would like to see them," I said. "And also my wife would like some news of Amir's son. She was only speaking of him a month or two back when another friend, who had a child with a harelip, came to London to have an operation. My wife said then that Amir should bring his son to London, because this particular surgeon known to my wife was having such excellent results."

"We must get together for a meal," Juddhabir said. "Amir may be going to the U.K. shortly, en route to the States, and he will want to know about this. In the meantime, what can I do for you?"

I outlined the same proposal to Juddhabir that I had given to the

press attaché, but added that I would also like to talk to Dr. Giri about confederation. If we were not given permission to film in Nepal, or could not catch up with the King's party, I might decide to return to Delhi right away, but I would like to talk with Dr. Giri before I left Kathmandu.

"That I will arrange," he assured me. "But I'm sure you will be given permission to film in Nepal for it is our present government's policy to publicize our country's activities."

"H'mmm," I said slowly, doubtfully, "but we don't want to come here just to film government-approved development projects. We want an interesting angle, or we would just go elsewhere. We have several films to make in Asia and there are a number of attractive alternatives, so your government would have to give something more than permission; it would have to give us cooperation as well. After all, you must remember that we are offering you not only an audience of about eight million in Britain, but probably one hundred million throughout the world when the film is distributed."

"One hundred million," Juddhabir repeated, slowly and thoughtfully. "I'm certain my government will be interested, and will help you in every way. Anyway I would like to arrange for Dr. Giri to meet you." I noted the sentence construction with interest. "But could you meet me on Sunday in my office for a chat and then we'll see what can be arranged after that? Tomorrow, Saturday, is our official holiday."

I agreed and rose, and after a few minutes' friendly reminiscing about mutual friends in Darjeeling, we left.

Over the weekend—Saturday was the "rest" day in Nepal—I had opportunity for further talks with officials. Chahvan's public declaration about confederation had created the talking point I had anticipated, and my own more calculated discussions had given the subject impetus. With every person I varied the emphasis, depending on his or her intelligence, position in government, background temperament and association. Each new day presented a fascinating variety of situations as different people were met and new conversations were initiated. They might be reluctant to reveal their interest as a political maneuver, but they dare not risk being uninformed on what might be the most important political decision to face Nepal since its independence.

So I gave out only sufficient to whet political appetites while I

cast around Nepal's political structure for the strategic pressure points—the men who had the power to make decisions, or, at least, to influence the King in the making of his decisions. As the names of these men began to emerge from remarks made at innumerable conversations, I moved towards them in my appointments, dropping more and more important suggestions to key figures on the way. The man I must meet, the most powerful next to the King, was Dr. Tulsi Giri, but I wanted to meet him only when the “rumors” of my many talks had been carried to him from different sources, to engage his interest, give him time for reflection, and make him want to meet me for serious discussion. That was where Juddhabir Lama was going to play an important part, for my “frank” talks with him as a friend would be communicated directly to Dr. Giri.

I had a short discussion with Juddha about the proposed TV film project, and I explained how we wished to deal with Nepal from the angle of the country's attempts to modernize itself—the problems at educational, agricultural, and other levels, the difficulties because of lack of communications, and so on.

Then we got on to confederation. Juddha had obviously been thinking deeply about the possibilities I had outlined earlier. Perhaps he had even been discussing the subject with others for he now raised a number of possible objections to the proposal. But, interestingly enough, none of them was from Nepal's point of view. Primarily, the objections were what China might do or not want to do about the proposal if it were ever raised as a serious issue.

“For instance,” he argued, “if the Dalai Lama offered to return to Tibet on condition that the Chinese withdrew their troops from Tibet, suppose for the sake of argument China was willing to agree to the Dalai Lama's terms, could she trust India not to take advantage of her military withdrawal from the borders?”

“That is where the next proposal is introduced,” I replied, “either from China or from, say Nepal, or other friendly country. The proposal being that if China withdraws her troops from Tibet, India should withdraw her troops from Sikkim and Bhutan as a *quid pro quo*.”

“But would India be willing to do that?” Juddha interrupted.

“Why not?” I demanded. “A few years ago I discussed this very problem with leading Indian military commanders and they were

agreed that Sikkim and Bhutan were indefensible against any large-scale Chinese attacks. Now that the Indian Army has had to vacate the NEFA, and especially when India cannot officially move more troops into Bhutan—although you know, and I know, and the Chinese know that India has been putting Indian troops into Bhutan in Bhutanese dress—it is suicidal to have only a handful of troops in these two countries. But India has to put and keep them there for psychological effect, particularly since the disastrous defeat in NEFA so seriously damaged her prestige in these Himalayan countries.”

“All right,” conceded Juddha, “suppose India agrees to withdraw her troops from Sikkim and Bhutan. What about Bhutan and Sikkim?”

I smiled at him. “Wait for it,” I said. “Only last week in Delhi I discussed this with Jigme Dorji, the Bhutanese prime minister, and he said that if the Dalai Lama made such an offer and it was accepted then Bhutan would definitely agree to joining such a confederation—on condition, he added, that the Dalai Lama’s government was a progressive one and not the old reactionary one ruled by old priests and feudal aristocrats.”

Juddha pursed his lips, and nodded thoughtfully, turning his pen between restless fingers. “Sikkim?” he queried.

“Sikkim—I don’t know enough recently to comment on,” I admitted, “but from what I know of the Maharajkumar—now Maharajah since his father’s death—I am convinced that he would want to break away from Indian domination. You saw from the recent report in the Indian papers how he received a letter from the Chinese government, and replied directly without consulting India. That indicates his line of thinking anyway. No, I am convinced that all it needs to give the confederation a possible chance of success is—one, for the Dalai Lama to offer to return sometime in the next few months, and, two, for Nepal to take up the issue at an international diplomatic level. Local, regional and international political realities and pressures will build up sufficiently to make it a serious issue with a good chance of success.”

We talked on for another quarter of an hour or so, then Juddha said suddenly, “Look, why don’t you do this? See General Khattry, the foreign secretary, and talk to him about your TV film project. I don’t think you should discuss confederation with him today as I

will only ask him to see you for ten minutes right away, but mention to him that you would like to meet him sometime to discuss the subject. In the meantime, let me talk it over with our chairman of ministers, Dr. Giri, then you can meet him in a day or two after he has had time to think it over and discuss it with him in detail at that time. What do you think?"

"I think it is an excellent suggestion," I replied.

"I'll also phone the director of publicity, Mr. Banskota," he went on, "for you will have to see him about the films if permission is given. Also, at a personal level you must come and have a meal with me at my house, and meet Amir and his wife and son when he returns from East Nepal."

I left Juddha to call on General Khatry, the foreign secretary, and kept strictly to the instructions laid down by Juddha. I outlined the proposals for the TV film on Nepal, I asked if possible for permission to join the King on his present tours as this was a necessary requirement for a sequence in the film, and then suggested a later appointment to discuss confederation.

The foreign secretary was polite, intelligent, taciturn, but not obviously suspicious as he listened to my requests, then said that he thought it was too late to join the King's tour now, but that he would send a wireless message to His Majesty to find out. He did not expect a reply until the next day, but even if this were given we would have to arrange for plane and helicopter transport. About confederation, if I got into touch with his secretary then we could fix a time to discuss this. I left, well satisfied with my progress to date.

Juddha arranged an appointment with Dr. Giri for me at 12:30 on the Wednesday but asked me to come to his office to have further talks with him before I went to see Dr. Giri. He had one or two more questions to be answered in the problem of confederation but was obviously considerably won over to the idea, for these were more in the nature of clearing away last remaining doubts than raising more insurmountable problems. He said that he had already told Dr. Giri about my ideas, and that he was interested, so to go right ahead and develop them. He also thought that there would be no objections to our film project.

This turned out to be right. Dr. Giri asked some things about the TV project but obviously was not deeply concerned. When I

asked him about permission to film, he agreed. I asked if the permission were firm enough to send for the team and equipment from Delhi, and he agreed again without hesitation.

I then went on to the subject of confederation. This was the key interview. What was said here to Dr. Giri would determine to a great extent what was said to the King, and what the future attitude of the Nepalese government would be.

I proceeded cautiously, passing quickly over what must have been told him by others, or what he could grasp for himself, to the reasons why I thought it was possible—if Nepal and Tibet agreed. He sat listening quietly, only occasionally asking a question, until I had finished. Then he gave his reasons why he thought it would not be possible—but none were based on Nepalese objections, I noted with rising excitement. I sat forward.

“But Dr. Giri,” I said intently, “I agree that neither China nor India would *want* such a confederation. My argument is based on the premise that they do not want it but can be persuaded to accept it. In another six months to one year China will have accumulated sufficient Afro-Asian and other support to enable her to ignore any Sino-Indian border factors. Therefore, it is imperative that any possible move should be initiated immediately. That is why I am here now, and pushing the proposal. If China is genuinely seeking U.N. representation (although I personally doubt it, but even this objection does not matter), then before the next six months she would have to consider seriously the Dalai Lama’s offer of a return to Tibet on condition of China’s military withdrawal and even respond to it—for three reasons at least.

“One, because the basis of U.S. objection to Chinese entry to the U.N. is China’s aggressive action in Tibet, and the Dalai Lama’s return would, at one stroke, eliminate all possible objection on this score. Two, because the counterproposal that Indian military withdrawal from Sikkim and Bhutan should be a condition would both satisfy any requirements of “face-saving” and also reduce the possibility of war, in Asia, between India and China. Three, because it would not tie China down to a definite acceptance or rejection of the Colombo proposals for a solution of the Sino-Indian dispute, with their inhibiting restrictions on China, and would increase China’s peace-loving image in Asia and the world.”

Dr. Giri was now obviously deeply interested. “And India?”

“India,” I replied, “would naturally be reluctant to part with her influence in Sikkim and Bhutan. But I am certain from talks with military leaders that India would be glad to get out of her *military* commitments to defend Sikkim and Bhutan—especially if the countries were to be neutralized. After all, remember that India’s greatest military commitment is only in Sikkim, with about fifty thousand troops and equipment dependent on a single road from the Tibet mountains to the Indian plains. But it is extremely important at this stage to keep the proposed confederation to Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. Any mention of Nagaland or NEFA would kill the idea before it began.”

Dr. Giri smiled, and nodded agreement. “What about Bhutan?” he asked.

“I met Jigme Dorji, the Bhutanese prime minister, in Delhi only last week,” I replied, “and he said that if Tibet came into the confederation, Bhutan would come in—on condition that the Tibetan government was a reformist government and not the old reactionary one.”

“How do you see such a confederation being proposed?” Dr. Giri now challenged. “Neither Bhutan nor Sikkim has authority to do it because of their association with India, and the Dalai Lama is not permitted political activities in India.”

I smiled at him as winningly as I could. “Dr. Giri, that is the beauty of my proposal. The Dalai Lama wouldn’t make a political statement. He would make an appeal for peace in Asia in his *spiritual* capacity and offer to return to Tibet as his contribution to peace in Asia. But, of course, in the interests of peace the Chinese troops would have to withdraw. At that point it would be up to Nepal to offer her services, also, in the interests of peace and good neighborliness and propose that India should withdraw her troops from Sikkim and Bhutan. Since Nepal has diplomatic status Nepal could then carry forward the proposals through her own established machinery in the U.N. and elsewhere. This in turn would increase Nepal’s prestige and international image.”

“So the key to the success of your proposal lies in the Dalai Lama’s willingness to make his offer to return, and then, in Nepal taking up the proposal and acting as honest broker between India and China?” asked Dr. Giri.

“Yes,” I nodded agreement. “It requires both Nepal and Tibet.

And I am sure that Sikkim and Bhutan will agree. What I have not mentioned so far in Nepal—and, if I may say so, what should not be breathed at this stage outside of it!—is that if the confederation can be started with these four territories there is good reason to hope that it can be extended to include Kashmir (as a solution to that problem), Ladakh, NEFA, and Nagaland, making a real and powerful Confederation of Himalayan States along a two thousand-mile frontier.”

Dr. Giri nodded thoughtfully, then began a thorough discussion of the implications of confederation from every angle. Finally, he sat back turning a pencil between his fingers.

“If the Dalai Lama will make the statement and offer your proposal,” he said slowly, “then you can be assured of Nepal’s full cooperation. But the Dalai Lama must make the first move, and then there must be full cooperation and discussion between Tibet and Nepal as to the next step.”

“That is much more than I ever dreamed of when I started out,” I conceded, delighted. “I still don’t know whether the Dalai Lama will agree. Certainly, he made this statement to me—and to others a few years ago, but he is now surrounded by many who have personal rather than national interests at heart. However, if I can have an audience with him I hope to persuade him to take this step.”

“Where do Britain and America stand in this?” Dr. Giri asked, whimsically.

I grinned at him. “Officially, I don’t know,” I replied, “but unofficially I understand that if it had any possibility of success Britain at least would be happy to support it. I ought to add that very few thought it would have any success.”

Dr. Giri smiled and rose to his feet, holding out his hand. “It has been very interesting, Mr. Patterson, and I hope I shall be hearing more.”

I thanked him for receiving and hearing me and left, satisfied at my progress to date. I decided that as our project was now assured, I had better move into a less expensive and exposed hotel. I would now have to let some very suspicious looking people visit me for talks and we would need some place quiet and unassuming.

When I returned to the hotel I collected my papers, and found an item of considerable interest. The Nepali papers were only two-

page, badly written, government propaganda leaflets, and the only real source of information were the Indian papers which came into the country in the evening. Both of the papers which I had ordered contained the news that the Dalai Lama had made a speech the day before, on the fifth anniversary of the Tibetan revolt in Lhasa. According to the *Statesman*, India's leading newspaper, he said:

THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

The Dalai Lama has appealed to freedom-loving countries "not to be misled by the propaganda of the Communist Government of China but to continue to help the unfortunate people of Tibet," reports PTI.

In a statement on the fifth anniversary of the Tibetan uprising the Dalai Lama says, that the free nations of the world have rightly condemned the suppression of the colored people in South Africa "but the form of oppression and persecution which the Chinese invaders have adopted against the people of Tibet is a thousand times worse than the system of apartheid."

Nowhere in the world, "even under colonialism of the worst type," he says, has a Government ever used public torture as a political deterrent "as the Chinese have done and are still doing in Tibet."

The Dalai Lama says that the Tibetans are a distinct people, speaking a language unrelated to Chinese and possessing a religion and culture of their own. Before the Chinese invasion the Tibetans had remained free and independent for decades.

Recalling the Tibetan struggle against the Chinese, the Dalai Lama says thousands of Tibetans have been massacred, thousands have been rendered homeless, and thousands of others have escaped to neighboring States.

But the barbarous atrocities, even to the extent of exterminating the race and the religious belief of the Tibetans, still continue, and the struggle of the people still goes on.

"Today, which marks the fifth anniversary of the spontaneous uprising of my people, we must pay our humble tribute to all those stalwart champions of liberty and faith who have fallen victims to the armed might of the Communist Government of China."

The Dalai Lama adds: "To-day I send my special blessing to all those who are engaged in the bitter campaign against the enemy. I congratulate all my people on their courage and determination in their struggle for political and religious freedom and pray for their success. Our way may be a hard and long one, but I believe that truth and faith must ultimately prevail."

It was significant, coming at this time, in that it showed either the Indian government was relaxing its previous restrictions on the Dalai Lama's statements, or that the Dalai Lama was becoming more insistent on making himself heard. But more important news still was to follow.

The next day the Dalai Lama's brother made another statement to the press which gained even wider publicity. He announced that the Dalai Lama was considering paying a visit to some neighboring Buddhist countries.

If the Dalai Lama was considering visiting neighboring Buddhist countries, the thought leaped to my mind, then what was to hinder his visiting Nepal? It was an exciting possibility in the present context of a possible confederation and Dr. Giri's statement regarding Nepalese interest and cooperation. A visit from the Dalai Lama, either before or soon after a statement from him offering to return to Tibet would give tremendous impetus to the confederation. If it happened fairly soon, my thoughts leaped on, then perhaps we could even cover it as a TV project and newspaper campaign to give added world-wide publicity. I did not sleep until the early hours of the morning weighing all the possibilities.

When I moved to the Imperial Hotel, Chahvan said that he would move next day as he had one or two letters to complete. For a few days he had been working all day on a big list of letters on a borrowed typewriter. None of it was for myself, except for an extension of visa, and I put it down to Chahvan's mysterious commercial enterprises.

However, when he did not turn up on the following day and I had to go looking for him and found him still at the Royal Hotel, still typing furiously, and with no obvious sign of leaving, I asked him what sort of game he was playing. He gave a long, involved, plainly concocted story, and I told him to pay the bill right away with the money I had given him. When he started a cock-and-bull story about having to stay at the Royal Hotel for several days to watch some mysterious strangers, I demanded to know whether he was working for me or not. He said, grandly, that he worked for no man, only for Chahvan and Chahvan's interest, and I replied, "Fair enough, consider yourself fired." I took back the money, paid the bill at the Royal Hotel, told the reception desk and office that I would no longer be responsible for Chahvan's bills and left.

I was sure that I had not heard the last of Chahvan. I didn't think I had made an enemy of Chahvan, but certainly Chahvan's pride had been hurt and I could see him calculating already how he could outwit me and make things so difficult I would be only too glad to invite him back to work for me. We would see. Now the complications created by his unbridled imagination acting on our behalf would be immensely multiplied by him working to assuage his pride, and encompass our failure. Well, no doubt it would add interest to the growing drama.



5

ADRIAN AND CHRIS were due to arrive about eleven on the Sunday morning so I went off to the airport at about ten. Every time I have arrived at, or departed from, the Kathmandu Gauchar Airport it has seemed like a social event. There have always been arriving or departing notables of some kind, or scores of tourists being met or seen off, and the place a riot of color and babble of voices. Even drinks have been served and handed around to groups of travelers and guests in the departure section, like some open-air cocktail party. It is all very relaxed, informal and gay.

Today was no exception. Red-robed Tibetan lamas and tall, powerful Tibetan traders leaving for some upcountry destination. Indians in spotless white shirts and dhotis, with wives and daughters in colorsplashed saris. Nepali merchants and officials in the smartly cut jackets and trim, tight, light-colored jodhpurs, accompanied by graceful, pretty wives, like their Indian counterparts, in brilliantly colored saris. Britain represented as always by sober-suited officials, complete with ties, observing proper protocol as they moved punctiliously from group to group. American tourists in light Dacron suits and nylon dresses, festooned with cameras, dark glasses and shoulder bags for air travel; American officials in comfortable bush shirts, casual and friendly. The rise and fall of conversation was broken by the occasional shouts of airport officials and scurrying porters, and by the staccato cough and roar of arriving or departing aircraft.

Adrian and Chris stepped off the plane, with several other passengers, among whom I was surprised but delighted to note was T. C. Tethong, the assistant representative of the Dalai Lama's bureau in New Delhi. His visit to Kathmandu could not have come at a better time had I been in a position to cable and ask for him.

As we waited for baggage to be unloaded and checked through Customs, I chatted with T. C. and found that he had made no arrangements for transport or lodgings in Kathmandu. I had a word with Mung Hseuh, owner of the Imperial Hotel and managed to fix him up as a guest at the hotel, which meant that we would have plenty of opportunities to talk. He was only on a short visit to Kathmandu to have some talks about Tibetan refugees in Nepal, but in the light of my own discussions with officials in Nepal, and my own plans for further talks with the Dalai Lama, it was going to be important to have him near enough for talks at any time without the formalities of arranging appointments.

It was time to push ahead rapidly with our plans, for not only had we to get out of Kathmandu, to be successful we had to get into Tibet, back to Kathmandu and get the films to London before any of the Nepalese officials—or British, American, Chinese, or Indian officials—suspected anything.

We began a round of telephone calls to make appointments for Adrian, as producer-director of the unit, to meet the various officials and others. Among them it was arranged that he should meet the director of publicity, a Mr. Banskota at noon in his office. After some discussion I decided that it would be better for Adrian and Chris to call by themselves on Banskota to make a formal request to begin filming, and to discuss the details of the proposed film on Nepal as had been arranged informally with him the previous day.

When Adrian and Chris went to the government secretariat, to the offices of the director of publicity, there was no sign of Banskota. The secretary did not know at what time he might come. Adrian decided that it was catering too much to Banskota's already considerable ego to wait for him, so he asked the secretary for another appointment. The secretary said 12:30 P.M., that same day! Adrian came away, and then returned to the office at 12:30 P.M. Still no sign of Banskota. Adrian asked for another appointment, and was given 2:00 P.M. At 2:00 P.M., Banskota was there, but extremely formal and official. What could he do for them? he asked; as if he had never heard of the TV team. Adrian handed him the note with the formal request. He also asked for an appointment with the foreign secretary, as planned. Banskota said he would get into touch with them when he had some information. Then they left, fearing the worst.

But I was also busy. While Adrian and Chris were wandering about the labyrinth of the eighteen-hundred-room Singha Durbar, or secretariat, I had an unexpected but very welcome visitor. This was Amir Lama. Amir was the brother of Juddhabir, mentioned already, whose life had been so dramatically saved by my wife a few years ago. He had been away on a visit upcountry and had only just returned to hear from Juddhabir that I was in Kathmandu.

After exchanging family news we got down to present activities. He listened with interest as I outlined our program, especially so when I touched on the issue of a possible confederation. But I said I would leave the detailed discussion of this until another occasion. What about himself?

He laughed.

“Well,” he said, “did you hear that after you left Darjeeling I joined you in the doubtful distinction of being one of the few people to be expelled from India? In fact, I was even more distinctive for I am the only Indian citizen—although a Nepali by birth—to be expelled from my own country.”

“How did you manage that?” I asked with interest.

“Political activities,” he replied laconically, “in support of His Majesty, King Mahendra of Nepal. For expressing approval of his action in taking over control in Nepal I was expelled from Darjeeling District, with wife and family, for six months. I came here, was offered a good position in His Majesty’s government, and took up residence here. I am one of His Majesty’s nominees in the National Panchayat.”

“Well, well,” I complimented him, “you are doing well. Do you like it?”

“Oh yes,” he replied, “but I haven’t told you the rest of the story. Shortly after I came to Kathmandu the King also appointed me president of the Buddhist Society, and as such I was invited to China as leader of a delegation of Buddhists. When the Indians heard of this there was an outcry in the press and I was attacked for this as well, everybody claiming that I was not only a Nepali agent but a pro-Communist as well!”

As Amir talked my mind was leaping away on another new and exciting possibility. If Amir was president of the Nepalese Buddhist Society, then he would be a key figure in any link between

Nepal and Tibet. Just how, at the moment eluded me. But a little later it suddenly hit me.

Amir was talking of his visit to China, and the favorable impression it had left on him, including their attitude toward religion.

"I asked Chou En-lai straight out," he said, "how he reconciled atheistic Marxism with encouraging Buddhist delegations such as ours, and Chou said that while he and many other Chinese were certainly atheists they respected the wishes of those who felt they had to have religion until they could be educated out of such superstition. He was very frank. I was encouraged to ask him if we in Nepal held a Buddhist convention would the Chinese send a delegation? He said yes. When I asked outright how China would feel about asking the Dalai Lama, or a Tibetan religious delegation, to the same convention, Chou said that China would have no objection."

Here was the link I required between Tibet and Nepal. As long as the Dalai Lama or his chief minister were in India under the supervision and even direction of the Indian government, there was little likelihood of getting the confederation idea off the ground. But if the Dalai Lama came to Nepal with some of his ministers, then there would be every opportunity to coordinate activities. The Indian newspapers had just carried the report that the Dalai Lama had expressed a wish to visit some nearby Buddhist countries outside India—and what country more suitable for the first visit than Nepal, Buddha's birthplace?

I took the first opportunity to speak to T. C. Tethong. "T. C.-la," I enquired, "who went to the Indian ministry of external affairs to discuss the Dalai Lama's proposed visit abroad?"

"I went, with Mr. Gyalu Thondup, the Dalai Lama's brother," T. C. replied.

"How did you find the Indians?" I followed up, "obstructive or cooperative?"

"Well, to tell the truth," T. C. said frankly, "we were surprised at how cooperative they were. We were expecting some opposition, but they were very understanding and approved of the suggestion."

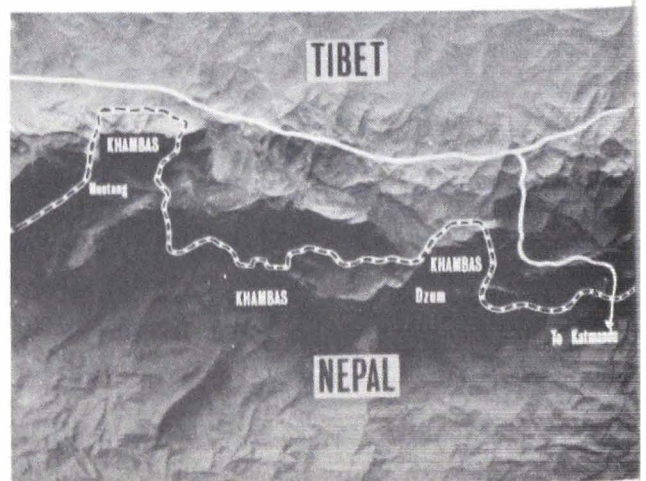
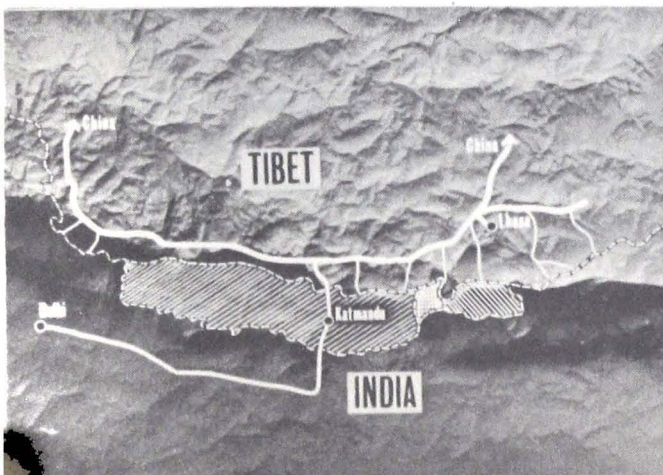
I glowed. Events were meshing with an encouraging smoothness. To pursue the metaphor, all I had to do now was to find a suitable gear lever to coordinate the political machinery of Nepal and Tibet. And in Amir I might well have that gear lever.

The night was far spent before our discussion ended, but high above the dark and jumbled floor of the valley rode a brilliant three-quarter moon, glinting from golden roofs of temples and reflecting serenely from the still pools of water. It was difficult to believe that away to the north and south, beyond the now dark and jagged rim of the encircling mountains, the best brains of the two greatest countries in Asia were pondering the moves that would bring this romantic but confused and exploited people within either of their spheres of influence—to put it at its kindest. In a jolting jeep, tired and slightly homesick, it required a major effort of mind and spirit to look beyond the valley floor, beyond the towering mountains, beyond the silver radiance of the heavens, to the place from which the vision and the call to serve had first come.



Tibetan refugees in northern Nepal.

These maps show the main roads between India, Nepal, and Tibet (China). The film unit traveled west of Kathmandu up to Dzum (map at right). The Khambas there took them across the border to the north-south road.



6

I HADN'T HAD TIME to read the newspapers for a day or two but when I opened the *Times of India* there on the front page was the headline:

600 NAGAS RETURNING FROM PAKISTAN INDIAN TROOPS READY TO MEET SITUATION

I read on with interest:

Indian security forces are on the alert to deal with a column of about 600 hostile Nagas armed with Pakistani rifles, light machineguns, explosives, mines and ammunition, reportedly moving from East Pakistan towards Indian territory through Burma.

This was disclosed in the Lok Sabha today by the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mrs. Lakshmi Menon, in response to a calling attention notice.

The Minister said there were two reports in regard to the hostiles' whereabouts. The first was that they were on the move through Burma.

The second report was that the hostiles, who had escaped to East Pakistan last December, had reached Burma on the return journey, that their strength was six hundred and that apart from weapons they had also been furnished with sufficient Burmese and Indian money. The first report had not yet been confirmed.

Replying to supplementaries, Mr. Nehru said Phizo, the Naga underground president in London, was "apparently not coming to India" because he had not accepted the conditions laid down by the chief minister of Nagaland, Mr. Shilu Ao.

Well! Well! Not only was the situation in Nepal vis-à-vis confederation becoming more complicated, but it looked as if the second major stage of our television project was also becoming more complicated. For now that the Indian government and Indian army

had been alerted to the entry and exodus of Nagas to and from Pakistan, they would be doubly alert to the proposed passage of the next group—the group that we were expecting to arrive and to accompany on our return! At least, it would have this advantage, that it was different and would make an excellent contrast to the present trip. But it meant that we should be ready to move as quickly as possible.

Banskota continued to play his devious game by acting “hard-to-get.” When Adrian phoned to ask if he had any word of our permit, he simply said that he would get into touch with us. He was equally uncommunicative on the subject of an appointment with the foreign secretary which he was supposed to arrange. When Adrian phoned again to ask for an appointment to see Banskota he replied that he was busy, that tomorrow he was “taking some leave,” and he would get into touch with us. I began a slow boil on the subject of Banskota.

It did not help any to be told by several people that this was Banskota’s usual method of dealing with people. Some of the “Aid” Missions had projects waiting, just for Banskota’s approval or signature. Nepali officials smiled knowingly when the director of publicity was mentioned, some of them even commenting scathingly on the fact of his heavy drinking in the city’s hotels. No one seemed prepared to do anything. I noted Banskota’s many enemies and his few friends. I was tired of Banskota.

The end came when I heard that Chahvan, Banskota, and Thakur, the chief of protocol, had been involved in a little operation to obstruct us. Adrian and Chris had sent in their passports for an extension of visa, with a routine request to visit Lumbini, Buddha’s birthplace. This was a normal process and Mark, the Imperial Hotel manager who was used to this procedure for tourists, had offered to get permits for us. While Mark was waiting for the final initials of a senior officer, Chahvan came in with Thakur, spoke to Mark, saw the passports and asked Mark about them. Mark told him, thinking that he was a friend of ours. Chahvan then told the official that he had better check with the department of publicity before signing, and whatever was said over the telephone, after a short conversation with Chahvan and Thakur, the official did not sign and did not give the visas to Mark. When Mark returned with the information, I lined up Banskota for attack—not just because of

pique but because Chahvan, Thakur, and the many other lesser officials would now get the idea that they could deal with us without any fear of dire consequences. But if they heard of quick and summary reprisals on the director of publicity, a new and respectful fear would animate their attitude. It was all a matter of timing, and I judged that it would be better to wait until Dr. Giri and Juddhabir Lama returned in a few days.

In the afternoon Amir called unexpectedly, saying that he had a spare half-hour and as Adrian had wanted to ask him a few questions about Buddhism he was now free to do so. After tea and a short conversation Adrian mentioned that he would like to do some filming of the Buddhist monastery of Swayanbunath and would very much like Amir's advice on certain aspects of Lamaistic practice there. By this time Amir was ready to go to Swayanbunath right away, and canceled his evening appointment.

On the way to Swayanbunath we took two cars and I traveled with Amir. I took the opportunity, while the subject was still Buddhism and Tibet, to raise the question of Tibetan refugees in Nepal. We chatted generally on this for a bit, then I moved deeper to ask Amir about conditions on the northern border of Nepal with Tibet, where I had heard that there were over ten thousand refugees and many of them armed.

Amir admitted his own and the Nepalese government's concern at this state of affairs. The chief concern was that India would raid across the border into Chinese-occupied Tibet and then cause tension between China and Nepal. He said that several Nepali leaders even suspected India of wanting to precipitate a Chinese attack on North Nepal so that they could send the Indian Army into the southern part. Certainly, there were disturbing reports of armed raids by Tibetans on Nepali villages over a wide area in the north. It was because it was such an explosive political problem that the Nepalese government was reluctant to allow anyone to go into this part of Nepal.

This was not very good news for us, for we had hoped to get right to this spot to see what was happening and to use it as a jumping off point for a strike across the border into Tibet. But I said nothing of this to Amir. I pointed out instead the danger of this attitude for Nepal. It meant that they were simply waiting for events to happen without being able to control or even influence them in

any way, and that surely it would be much more sensible policy for Nepal to have some official in charge of the situation who would be able to keep an eye on what was happening, and, in the event of trouble breaking out, who could move swiftly to counteract it.

“But how could this be done?” asked Amir.

By himself, I replied. If he could use his position as president of the Nepal Buddhist Society, with his important political connections, to establish a link with the Tibetan refugees in Nepal, then he could build up an organization that would at one time be of great help to the Tibetan refugees and at the same time could be of considerable benefit to Nepal, in that he would be in a strong position to know what was happening in the strategic northern border areas and thereby able to influence events as they developed. Amir was more than interested, so I moved naturally into the suggestion—which I made appear had just occurred to me—that he should have a talk with T. C. Tethong, the Dalai Lama’s representative, at least to explore the possibilities.

“Do you think he’d come to dinner?” Amir asked thoughtfully. Then when I had said I would persuade him, he decisively added, “Let’s make it a date. Tomorrow night, if it suits Tethong. Just the three of us.”

T. C. did agree. I had the chance of a short talk with him before Amir asked him, and I gave him a brief outline of Amir’s background and the possibilities—not only for the Tibetan refugees but also for the proposed confederation—if Amir could be interested.

Elsewhere the situation was developing interestingly as well. Chahvan was being his usual flamboyant self and really setting things alight. He had managed to have an argument with a young French couple, the outcome of which was that Boris became aware that Chahvan had still not left the hotel premises. He, therefore, told him to be out of the hotel by that evening. Chahvan, keeping out of the way during the day, had contrived to return to his room at the Royal Hotel at night, let himself in with his key, slept there and went out next morning. He had the hotel staff and servants so much under control that none of them thought of informing Boris of this, even continuing to wait on his lordly demands with promptitude, and no one knows how long this state of affairs might have gone on had Chahvan not had his row with the French couple. This brought him under Boris’s eye, and when Boris discovered that Chahvan

was returning at night he put a new lock on the door and kept the key with Chahvan's belongings still inside.

Chahvan's riposte to this was to send a rude letter of protest to Boris with copies to the ministry of external affairs and the Indian Embassy. So Chahvan was now operating on three fronts and his activities—plus his ever-increasing imaginative statements and claims on a variety of subjects—became the talk of Kathmandu. Adrian and Chris became increasingly concerned, while I became increasingly amused. Chahvan really was a delight. He had so confused the situation that whether the subject was our TV film project, confederation, or any other suspected activity which might be interesting me, no one would know what to believe. There must have been a near-panic of bewilderment and fury in the various intelligence departments of the Nepalese government and embassies as they tried to sort out the load of conflicting reports pouring in from Chahvan's fertile imagination.

My own fertile imagination was not required at the dinner with Amir and T. C. in the evening. After ten or fifteen minutes of general conversation, when we discussed people and events of mutual interest in Darjeeling, T. C., right out of the blue, asked Amir:

"Have you ever thought of coming to Dharamsalla to see His Holiness the Dalai Lama?"

Amir looked a little taken aback at this sudden opening but took it in his stride. "I have been considering it," he said, "but, of course, I would need His Majesty's permission before I could do this. Do you think it would be useful?"

"I think it would be of great benefit to both our peoples," T. C. said. "And if you decide to come, let me know and I can arrange an audience for you with His Holiness. Even if it is not official, and you want to talk with His Holiness as a private person, I will arrange it, for I personally think that it would be very useful."

Prompted only on two occasions by me—once when I suggested the expansion of the Nepal Buddhist Society to include a link with the Tibetan refugees, and then, when I suggested that Amir might propose, either officially or unofficially, that the first country which the Dalai Lama should visit was Nepal, Buddha's birthplace—Amir and T. C. found sufficient points of interest to maintain the discussion through dinner until a late hour.

As I drove home with T. C. he was enthusiastic about the range of

possibilities which had opened up. I was content with the single possibility of a visit by the Dalai Lama to Nepal. Both Amir and T. C., for personal and professional reasons, would push the idea in the high official circles of their respective governments, where it would have the advantage of apparently emerging by virtue of its own importance and not through any suggestion from me. There were lots of lines to pursue, lots of suggestions to propose, in having confederation accepted and the fewer that appeared to come from me the more likely was the possibility of success as a “spontaneous” idea.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in official and diplomatic circles, the seeds sown were germinating and shooting up some strange fruit. And, as in the parable of the sower, some fell into good ground and brought forth a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold—but very few seemed to fall into stony ground and die. Whether this was due to my own patient sowing or Chahvan’s frenetic watering, though, I could not tell.

My friends among the newspaper correspondents in Kathmandu informed me of the widespread speculation, and tried to extract from me what it was all about. At dinners and cocktail parties the conversation inevitably came around to Chahvan and confederation—and no account of either subject seemed too outrageous to be believed! Chahvan was dining at the Indian Embassy; Chahvan had filed a lawsuit against the redoubtable Boris; Chahvan was being detained by the Nepalese authorities; Chahvan was serenely prophesying that his influential government connections would have Boris put out of the country; Chahvan was negotiating a big wool deal with a New Zealand U.N. representative; Chahvan had embarrassing information about several leading Nepalese officials, and their enemies were supporting him to put pressure on them. And on the subject of confederation: “What *is* all this about confederation?”—“There will be a fine of one rupee for every time confederation is mentioned,” said an exasperated hostess—“George, what is this new devilment I hear you are up to about confederation or something?”—“Confederation is an old and played-out theme in these parts”;—“If Patterson is interested in confederation there must be something to it”—“I hear Patterson saw the Secretary today”—“I heard”—“I hear”—“I hear”

I not only smiled and dropped more loaded remarks, but stood off and watched with interest the polarizing of groups as their various

opinions moved them together or apart. There were those who were in favor but doubtful, those who were scared of being identified with any school, those who did not want to be left out of something that might be the most exciting political development of the decade—or even the century.

The division was most pronounced between the “Palace” officials and the “Ministry” officials. Since the King had taken over direct rule in 1960, he had only superficially reorganized the government administration and put in his own supporters in key positions. But at the same time he had established an elite of “Palace” appointees who had direct access to him, and through whom he was able to keep an eye on the sprawling, disorganized formal machinery of government, still largely manned by the corrupt, sycophantic and time-wasting officials of earlier regimes. The “Palace elite” had the greater power, and were the only ones who knew the King’s mind well enough to take any effective action; the other “King’s men” in the “Ministries” had to wait for formal approval, either from the King himself or through his “Palace elite.”

I was not sure just how much power the King deputed to Dr. Giri, but I suspected from past experience that it would not be much, and so I decided that I had better aim at an audience with the King for myself. Previously, I had been content to let Dr. Giri present my suggestion for confederation to the King in whatever form suited him, but I could sense how the issue had spiraled to such a magnitude that I had better present it to the King myself, if possible, or he might shy away from the reported and inflated version. Also, the matter of our film project was no longer the simple question of granting of permits, but had become an inextricable part of the larger political issue, and so might even draw Dr. Giri’s refusal at this stage. I had to go to the top.



7

A FEW EVENINGS later T. C. told me that he would be leaving the next morning since he had just heard from the Nepal government that he was not to be permitted to visit Pokhara or Daulpatan, two upcountry places, where there were large groups of Tibetan refugees. This, naturally, annoyed T. C. and was one of those mysterious decisions which seemed to arise out of the Nepal government's fear of the whole Tibetans-in-Nepal question in its present pro-China policies. For instance, was this refusal of permission to T. C. to visit those areas—there was a special service plane flight carrying a U.N. Representative, Mr. Kelly, going at the time with a spare seat—because of the reported incidence of smallpox among the refugees and not to let him see the reported dreadful conditions said to exist among them? Or, was it because they feared the political possibilities of appearing to encourage Tibetan officials before the Chinese?

Later that evening, T. C. received a call from New Delhi, from the Tibetan Bureau, asking him to proceed to Janakpur where there had been an "outbreak of serious trouble" between Tibetans and the local people. T. C. canceled his flight again and arranged to fly to Janakpur in the morning. When he reached the airport it was to find Thakur, the Chief of Protocol there, forbidding him to proceed to Janakpur that day. T. C. was justifiably bewildered and annoyed, and quickly arranged to fly to Delhi after all.

Before he left I had a last talk with him. I urged him (1) to inform Gyalu Thondup and the Dalai Lama of the developments on confederation which I had outlined to him; (2) to tell Gyalu that I was prepared to meet him amicably for discussions although I had opposed him bitterly for five years or more; (3) to ask the Dalai Lama for a quick audience for me; (4) to discuss the possibility of the Dalai Lama granting permission for a full TV study of "A day

in the life of the Dalai Lama"; (5) to arrange quickly a visit of the Dalai Lama to Nepal. T. C. agreed to do what he could.

An interesting development to emerge in the past few days from my talks was the Nepali suspicion—amounting almost to fear—that the Chinese would one day soon ask for the same facilities as Britain and India to recruit Gurkhas. My personal contribution to this climate of fear was to suggest the possibility of China aiding the Nagas militarily, and that this would increase the danger of Nepali friction with the Chinese. Primarily, because by extending Naga military activities against India more Gurkhas might be used by India and therefore killed; and also because the Chinese might protest at the military activities of Nepali Gurkhas against the Nagas.

One Nepalese also raised another interesting point, namely, that the old southern boundary of Nepal used to be coextensive with the old southern boundary of Sikkim and Bhutan and that, taken together, Nepal could have a common frontier with modern East Pakistan.

Then suddenly, out of the blue the Kathmandu newspaper, *The Motherland*, carried on its front page the news of the possible visit to Nepal by the Dalai Lama. What was so remarkable about this report—apart from its English—was that it should be printed at all, and at this particular time. The newspapers in Nepal were strictly controlled by the government and this news item would never have been printed without consent having been obtained at a very high level.

Following so soon after Tethong's visit and the talks held then, I assumed that certain Nepalese government officials were not only in favor of the confederation proposal but were committing themselves to making the running so that the diplomatic initiative would remain in Nepali hands. That rather than wait for formal talks with the Dalai Lama, it had been decided quickly to release a news item to test the reaction—either from India, or China, or both.

But in the meantime we seemed unable to move any member of the government to get the formal permit to film. I phoned Juddhabir and expressed our increasing concern at the delay, and he seemed to be genuinely puzzled himself. But I felt that if there were official reasons for the delay, then Juddhabir was clever enough to sound genuinely puzzled.

Juddhabir suggested that we arrange another appointment with

the foreign secretary, General Khattry, since to the best of his knowledge the formal permit had been approved and was to be issued by General Khattry. I telephoned the secretary and made an appointment for the next day at 2:00 P.M.

Although formal permission to film still had not come through, we were going ahead filming in the temples of Kathmandu—particularly Swayambunath, the famous Buddhist temple—where there was a group of Tibetan lamas willing to be photographed at prayers and religious observances. Also, in moving around among Tibetans in Kathmandu, Adrian had been impressed with the possibility of filming a certain group on the outskirts of the city.

This was at Jowlikell, near the ancient city of Patan. The group of Tibetans first attracted my attention because of the pitched tents, bringing back with a sudden wave of nostalgia my years of travel in Tibet. When we walked over to the tents, a striking looking elderly Tibetan in the red robes of a lama emerged and greeted us with the natural dignity and friendliness of the Tibetan people. Since he was not shaven as a majority of priests were, but had long grey hair wound into a top-knot, I asked him his religious persuasion and he said that he was a “Ka-gyu-pa” lama, by name Gorschen Rabden, aged fifty-nine and the spiritual leader of these people scattered in tents and nearby outhouses. What was my name, and age, and country?

I told him, and asked how many there were in his group and where had they come from?

“Forty-three,” he replied, somberly. “We began with two thousand and many yaks and sheep in the year when the revolt broke out in Lhasa [1959] and ‘The Presence’ [the Tibetan name for the Dalai Lama] left Tibet for India. The Chinese captured our leader, then tried to stop us leaving for India and we lost many hundreds in the fighting. When we crossed the border into Nepal we were only two hundred people with no herds, and facing great hardship. Five months ago we decided we must go to India to join ‘The Presence’ and place ourselves under his care and we are now reduced to forty-three. It has been a time of great hardship.”

“How do you live?” I asked gently, as the old man, bronzed face ravaged into a simple but impressive nobility by suffering, wiped away a tear without self-consciousness.

“We do what we can wherever we are camped,” he replied.

“Sometimes we carry water; sometimes the women tease wool and roll it into balls; sometimes we dig, or plow, or carry wood.”

“And all the time the Rimpoche [a priest’s honorific title] looks after us,” interrupted the chieftain of the group, Cho-dzen, with a fierce pride. “He goes out all day begging for us and what he receives he brings back to us to share. We only do a little, but he does much. We would have died many times but for him and his care for us. He has a great reputation for goodness and everywhere people respect him, and he begs on our behalf and gives us everything, taking nothing for himself.”

“These are my people,” said the Rimpoche simply, “and I am their priest.”

I looked around at the circle of faces, wondering again as I had so often done in the past, whether it was just their prominent Mongolian features which made them into so striking looking a race even when they were simple peasants and herdsmen like these here, or whether I romanticized them in some way so that my association with them projected them as a race with more than the normal virtues of the human family.

I don’t know. I only know that as I moved among the forty-three men, women, and children—dirty, smelly, the children with thick snot on their noses—I felt a fierce pride at knowing these people, at having given the best twenty years of my life to helping them, at the way in which they asked for help without being abject, at the steady courage unflinchingly staring out of their slanted eyes as their whole world disappeared around them. I went into the surrounding outhouses where scores were jammed together with only pieces of rag curtains separating them, and more often than not with nothing at all, and I was proud of the simple cleanliness and order in the midst of squalor and a vast poverty. Five hundred people who for three months had had no assistance of any kind, from anyone, who could only find a little to eat every three days from the work they were able to find, whose children lay listlessly on the mud in starvation and dysentery-racked lethargy, and they still showed no signs of despair. Only bewilderment and confusion at why they could not find permits to go to India to join the Dalai Lama, who would look after them.

I wept for the listless children, and their simple parents, and I raged inwardly at the heartlessness and selfishness of the governments

of India and China and the West which could bring them to this pass. But most of all I raged at the Dalai Lama and his circle of admirers who, with their inept and even self-centered actions, were consigning these people, and millions more, to suffering, starvation, and destruction. Because India was afraid of what China might do, the Indian government put pressure on the Dalai Lama's advisers to keep quiet and not cause any tension in Sino-Indian affairs. Because the Dalai Lama's advisers were afraid of their permits to reside in India being withdrawn, or their financial position threatened, they advised the Dalai Lama not to say or do anything to annoy the Indian government. Because the Nepalese government were afraid of the possible repercussions in their delicately poised relations between India and China, Nepal would make no concentrated effort to relieve the distress of the ten to twenty thousand Tibetans in Nepal. Because Britain and the U.S. sympathized with India in her fear of China, and supported the military stand, they were not prepared to use their influence in a situation which to them had merely explosive political consequences. So Tibet must die, so Tibetans must die. Three to five million wonderful people, who individually warmed the hearts of all who ever met them, would have to disappear because of the necessities of delicately balanced power politics.

We returned to the Imperial Hotel about nine for dinner. I thought I would have an early night for a change, but as we left the dining room and I walked to the office to collect the newspapers, I met a party arriving. It was Michele and Marie-Claire Peysell, a French anthropologist and his wife interested in Tibetans.

As we stood and chatted, Michele said that he had received his permits to travel to the north and he expected to leave as soon as possible. He also added casually that a Tibetan friend of mine had just arrived at the Royal Hotel that day, a Mr. Gyalu Thondup.

I evinced no particular interest, but my mind leaped into an excited top gear. Gyalu Thondup was the brother of the Dalai Lama, the presently-styled "Foreign Secretary" in the exiled Tibetan government, and his presence in Kathmandu only a few days after T. C. Tethong had left for Delhi was highly significant. But there was a major difficulty to establishing any productive contact—we had been bitterly opposed to each other for about five years.

For some years previous to that—since 1952, when he took up residence in India—we had been very close friends. At that time

Gyalu Thondup had either no interest in politics—or showed little interest—studying English, educating his family, doing some trading, and playing a very good game of tennis. When the revolt had broken out in Tibet in 1956, he occasionally passed some information to me, but as the fighting was mostly in Kham in East Tibet, I had far better sources of information than were available to him. In fact, the Khambas, bitterly opposed to the central government in Lhasa anyway, were even more antagonistic to Gyalu Thondup because of his close association with the former Tibetan Finance Secretary, Shakabpa.

Because I suspected Shakabpa's intentions from the beginning, having had considerable evidence of his activities, I was convinced that any move of his would be directed to safeguarding his own position in India and his own influence in Tibetan affairs. Consequently, I had had several talks with Gyalu Thondup telling him of my suspicions and warning him that if he associated himself with Shakabpa I would have no hesitation in attacking them both—for I considered Shakabpa's personal ambitions disastrous for Tibet.

All this, and more, passed through my mind as I sat in my room in the hotel, after Peysell's news of Gyalu Thondup's arrival in Kathmandu. I had already told T. C. Tethong during his visit to Kathmandu that I would like to see Mr. Thondup in Delhi, or Dharamsalla, for I had resolved that the break between the two main Tibetan groups must be bridged. I was hopeful of this, for I had heard in Delhi that Shakabpa was away in the U.S.—writing his memoirs for Yale University, it was said. But now Gyalu Thondup was here in Kathmandu, and in Tibet's interest I ought to see him quickly to brief him on the developments regarding the possibility of confederation before he saw any Nepali official of importance. Otherwise, the whole concept might fail because of some unwary word dropped by him—or at least, Tibet would lose the political and diplomatic initiative.

I pulled the typewriter towards me and began typing.

It was 10:30 P.M. by the time I had finished, and I walked through the darkened deserted streets to deliver the letter at the Royal Hotel. There was no one at the reception desk, and I was about to drop the letter into the pigeon hole opposite Gyalu Thondup's name when a thought struck me.

I called to the chowkidor who was standing in the doorway, and

giving him two rupees, I asked him to push the letter under the door of Room 17, and waited. In a few minutes the chowkidor returned—and Gyalu Thondup was with him, as I had hoped. It was as if the intervening years had never been. He was pleasant and friendly, and so was I. We asked about each other's families and health. Finally, he held up my letter.

“Thank you for your letter,” he said, “and we must meet sometime, but I don't know how long I will be here. If I am here for a few days we will meet and talk, but if I have to leave quickly we must meet in Delhi.”

“I would very much like to,” I replied, “in fact it is essential, for I have very important information which you must know.”

After a few minutes conversation we parted and left it at that.

The next morning I was told that the King's brother, Prince Basundhara, would agree to my request to speak to him and that he would call on me at the hotel later for a talk.

Prince Basundhara was quiet but sincere and gave an impression of strength and reliability. I found it easy to talk with him and quickly told him of our problems—that the whole concept of the confederation was in danger of being destroyed either by the outrageous rumors now circulating from Chahvan or by misrepresentation from officials who might put their own construction on the concept when reporting to the King. Also, there had been a curious hiatus between the first granting of permission to make a TV film and the granting of a formal permit to begin filming. We understood that the Nepal government was anxious for publicity in its present political situation between India and China, but unless we were given permits quickly we would have to withdraw—and with an unfortunate impression of the state of government administration in Nepal. Finally, I would like his advice about the possibility of asking for an audience with the King, to discuss the affairs of Nepal and the confederation.

We spent two hours talking it over, in the course of which all formalities were dropped and he suggested that we use each other's first names. Finally, it was decided that Basundhara would phone Juddhabir to find out the position and cause of delay, if any, then he would phone General Mullah, the principal military secretary to His Majesty, to ask about the film project and possibilities of an audience. He, Basundhara, was going off for four or five days but

I could phone these people tomorrow, and if there still was no action on his return he would personally look into it again.

The next few days were filled with hectic activity. Although, as I said, we had no permission to film we had been visiting temples and Tibetans, and a Dr. Miller of the United Mission Leprosarium had obtained permission from the Palace for us to film the King's opening of the new Leprosarium. We took this to mean that the formal permission would be granted and we filmed throughout Kathmandu.

When I phoned Juddhabir, as suggested by Basundhara, he said that we should arrange a new appointment with the foreign secretary, General Khatri, and that everything should now go ahead.

In the afternoon I saw General Khatri, who said that the formal permit had been granted and we could collect it from the director of publicity, but that we must not film Tibetan refugee camps, nor Mr. Patterson's idea of a Confederation of Himalayan States. Adrian asked if there would be any objection to filming Tibetans *outside* camps and the foreign secretary and no, and we breathed with relief. We were not interested in filming Tibetans *in* camps. I added that, at this stage, we had not considered filming anything on confederation as Mr. Cowell had said that an abstract idea was difficult to film anyway, but should the proposal take more definite shape I would like to discuss it again. I was not too impressed with the foreign secretary, who struck me as a person using silence to cover a lack of ability. In discussing confederation, his objections seemed irrelevant as he suggested that Nepal could not support it because Nepal supported the "one China" not the "two Chinas" theory.

Next day a new and exciting development took place. I was called to the phone in the morning and found Amir waiting to talk to me. He said he would come around to see me about lunchtime.

When he arrived he said that he had had several talks with leading officials, including Dr. Tulsi Giri and the King, and they were all very impressed with my proposals for a confederation, and that he had been asked by Dr. Giri to keep in touch with me. Also, although at this stage the Nepalese government could not make any open overture to the Dalai Lama, he had been asked to explore the possibility of an unofficial meeting with the Dalai Lama. Could I arrange this with Gyalu Thondup? If possible, could I arrange for the three of us to have dinner at his house this evening without telling

Gyalu Thondup too much? I said I was sure I could arrange it, and would call him back later to confirm it.

When he had gone I went to the Royal Hotel—and found that Gyalu Thondup had gone! He had only stayed overnight and left the next day for Delhi. It was infuriating. Presumably he had either not wanted to risk a rebuff if he stayed to make inquiries about the possibility of a visit of the Dalai Lama to Nepal, or he had interpreted the caution of whatever official he had met to mean a possible rebuff. Yet, here was Amir all primed to meet him for talks. I was disgusted at this further display of pusillanimity and self-interest with his country and countrymen in such desperate straits. Later, when I met some Tibetans, including a new representative for the refugees who had come with Gyalu Thondup, they told me that he had left a message with them apologizing for his hasty departure and that he hoped I would call on him in Delhi.

Next day I went to Amir's home for a meal and a long talk. He said that he had been instructed to follow up the possibilities of confederation in several ways. The Nepalese government, naturally, did not want any moves to originate from them at this juncture, but if it could be arranged that the Dalai Lama invite him unofficially, to Dharamsalla—say, in his capacity of president of the Buddhist Society—then he would go. He was also about to leave for Darjeeling and he hoped to sound out Nepalese leaders there and in Sikkim and Bhutan about the prospects of confederation. If I could send him a telegram—in code, of course—about the possibilities of a meeting with the Dalai Lama he could come to Delhi and Dharamsalla almost right away. We prepared a suitable code, and laid some more plans and left it at that for the time being.



Refugee priests in northern Nepal, around Dzum, celebrate the Dalai Lama's birthday.

8

WE WERE DETERMINED that today was the day we must have the formal permits to film, over a wide area of the country, or we would not wait another day in Nepal!

We had an appointment to meet Banskota to collect the permit at 10 A.M. and "to discuss the program." When we met an Banskota's office, the director of publicity was uneasy and even frowning.

There was no difficulty about the places in the south of Nepal but when it came to our request to go to the north to film the Chinese road, and travel near the Chinese border, there was considerable hesitation. He said that he would have to get special permission for this, and I said, mildly, I hoped it would not take too long. He suggested that we go along to the chief of protocol for the places to be listed in our passports, and he would make inquiries during our absence.

It was my first meeting with Mr. Thakur, the chief of protocol, since the time we had met with Chahvan soon after arrival—who at that time was loudly proclaiming the chief of protocol as his "cousin-brother." He was very pleasant and we sat chatting about Chahvan for quite a time. Thakur said that he was not a blood relation at all, but simply a neighbor and colleague, and he deplored the difficulties he had been creating for everyone since his arrival in Kathmandu.

Then we got down to the question of the permit, and Thakur said that there had been certain confusion caused by claims and statements made by Chahvan, but these had now been cleared. When he came to the list of places in the north he said that it had not been possible to grant us permits to visit these places. He was very apologetic, but pointed out that these were very sensitive areas.

I was very understanding but firm. "Mr. Thakur," I said, "I'm

sorry, but you must understand that unless we get permission to go to the north we will not make any films at all. Mr. Cowell will support me on that.”

Adrian did, unequivocally, and Thakur was obviously in a spot. He tried to explain, but we shook our heads politely and refused to consider any alternative. We had to have the Chinese road and some other places to the north, or we would leave Nepal as soon as we could obtain a plane reservation. We had already wasted too much time and money waiting for permits. It was then 1:15. Mr. Thakur suggested that we go for lunch, let him have some time to talk this over, and we could meet again at 3:30. When we met at 3:30 we had been given permission to visit the Chinese road, and also three places near the northern border, and told that Banskota had been given instructions to this effect. Banskota had our permits ready, and he also had our liaison officer—whose name I didn't catch in the introductions. But when we were outside, and I asked him again, he replied “Banskota. . . .” Banskota, true to form, had managed to slip his younger brother on to us as liaison officer! This was a shattering blow, for it meant that whatever we did would be reported back to him and the Nepalese government, and that if he accompanied us to the northern boundary there was little hope of getting anything worthwhile about the Khamba guerillas. For he would report it to his brother, who would confiscate our films and notes before we left the country. “Ah well!” I thought. “We'll just have to deal with that when it arises.” There were several ways of dealing with this in the high and distant mountains.

Next morning, before breakfast, I began fiddling with the radio to get the news in English from India. I had not bothered with this before, for there was little of interest in the Indian English broadcasts after listening to the BBC and I had nothing in mind for this particular day. As the needle landed on the station the announcer was already speaking: “The prime minister of Bhutan, Mr. Jigme Dorji, has been assassinated. He was shot last night and died after two hours. The assassin has not been captured.”

I sat back stunned. Jigme murdered! I had expected several things as possibilities in this explosive area, even including Jigme's overthrow as I had told him, but for some reason had not expected his death. It was not that he had no enemies. He had many—Bhutanese, Nepalese, Indian, Tibetan and Chinese—despite his ap-

parently easygoing exterior. But his sudden death, and at this particular time, came as an unexpected shock. Where was the confederation now? And who had pulled the trigger? Or, more significant still, who was behind the assassination?

For whether the assassin turned out to be Chinese, Indian, Bhutanese, or Nepalese, it would still have tremendous political consequences.

If Chinese inspired, then it meant that China had already planned a showdown in Bhutan. The plan, so far as I could read it, would be to trap India into a similar series of moves as she had launched in Sikkim in 1949—send a “political adviser,” then send in troops to “control an unstable border state.” This would provide China with the excuse for another swift attack as in NEFA, to drive out “the Indian aggressors” and to set up a “Bhutanese People’s Government” of her own.

If Nepalese inspired—that is, if the assassin were a member of the outlawed Nepali-dominated Bhutan State Congress—then India would blame Nepal for interference in Bhutan’s internal affairs, create ill-feeling and bitterness between the two countries, and any prospects of confederation would disappear.

If India inspired—that is, if someone in India, Communist, or just anti-Jigme had done it—it would still be likely to provoke a war between India and China. And even if the assassin were a Bhutanese national, it would have serious political consequences.

I telephoned to Amir, giving him the news which he had not heard, and he said that he would be around later in the day.

When the leading Indian newspapers arrived they carried startling headlines:

CHINESE HAND IN MURDER OF BHUTAN PREMIER

The assassin had been captured and had served in the Indian Army in NEFA during the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962. He had been taken prisoner by the Chinese, removed to Tibet, then sent back to Bhutan in mid-1963. In his confession, the assassin said that he and four others had been hired by a group of Bhutanese army officers, headed by the deputy commander-in-chief, to kill Jigme Dorji and his two brothers. The newspapers said that some of these Army officers were known to have had contacts with the Chinese Communists across the Bhutan border.

Then there was the ominous report that Chinese troops were massing all along the Bhutan and Sikkim borders, in some places even to have penetrated into Bhutan.

In Delhi itself the Indian minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, stated that the Indian government "would provide facilities to the Dalai Lama should he wish to go to Buddhist countries. So far no such request had been made by him nor by his brother. The government could not act on its own." So Thondup was still obstructing any possible hope for Tibet in his own inimitable fashion.

The Chinese government, in a diplomatic note, accused India of "shielding and supporting the traitorous activities of the Dalai Lama," who was accused of "attempting another rebellion in Tibet," and accused the Indian government of "openly directing the Dalai Lama to sow discord in China's friendly relations with Southeast Asia countries," by agreeing to assist him in his proposed tour.

And speaking of publicity, I suddenly had my own share of it. When I opened the morning newspapers a day or two later the lower front-page headlines leaped out at me:

MASANI QUOTES FROM BANNED BOOK
ROW OVER PROSCRIBED BOOK IN LOK SABHA
MASANI RAISES CONTROVERSY

It appeared that there had been a mild stir when Minoo Masani began reading some extracts from my book, *Peking Versus Delhi*, but this had blown up into a storm over a decision by the deputy speaker which other members took to be a violation of their parliamentary rights. The *Statesman* account read:

Mr. Masani read the extracts as proof of his claim that the Government had banned the book because of critical references to it and not because it contained anything objectionable.

When he did so, a member rose on a point of order to ask whether Mr. Masani could read from a proscribed book and demanded that the parts be expurgated from the proceedings.

The Deputy speaker agreed that this was not permissible and duly expurgated the offending parts of Mr. Masani's speech. This found Mr. H. V. Kamath, a jealous guardian of members' rights, getting up, the book of rules ready in hand, to quote the relevant rule and challenge the Deputy Speaker's authority to expurge the remarks. He was joined by Mr. N. R. Ranga

The Deputy Speaker agreed to study the matter and, in response to a request by Mr. Kamath, said his ruling was "temporarily rescinded".

The debate had continued even more passionately after this, while Masani pointed out that the book had been favorably reviewed "in such an august organ as the front page of the *Times Literary Supplement*," and even by responsible Indian correspondents in London. "Who are these semiliterates," he demanded, "to tell us which books to read?"

The *Times of India*, in a leading editorial, was not so impassioned but still concerned at the waywardness of the government's decision:

Mr. M. R. Masani's determined attempt, however unsuccessful, to extract an official explanation of why *Peking Versus Delhi* has been banned in India certainly deserves to be applauded. It is by no means clear that the prohibition can justifiably be described as "shameful" and "an outrage on the Constitution," but Mr. Masani is presumably a better judge of this point since he has obviously read Mr. Patterson's book, and is in possession of a copy. The point here surely is that, Mr. Masani's opinion apart, there is no assurance that the Government's decision to prohibit the book is based on a broad or enlightened interpretation of the national interest. Admittedly, the executive, during an emergency, is under no obligation to justify or explain prohibitions of this kind. Yet it must be asked whether the Government should invariably take the fullest advantage of this lack of obligation and refuse to indicate, even in the most general terms, the grounds on which a particular book or publication is withheld from readers in this country. All that the Minister of State for Home Affairs had to say in the Lok Sabha in answer to Mr. Masani's points was that Mr. Patterson's book had been proscribed "after careful consideration." This is not very intuitive or reasonable at a time when it is very necessary to convince public opinion that the executive's arbitrary powers are being used with the utmost discretion. . . .

There was more of the same—all good, clean political fun, no doubt, in the game of democracy. Almost all of the comments, I was interested to note, deplored the short-sighted and narrow-minded policy of the government in banning any reasonably argued book.



ADRIAN AND CHRIS were now almost through filming Kathmandu and other surrounding sequences of Buddhist temples, Tibetan priests, and Tibetan refugee groups.

The Buddhist temple, Swayanbunath, was one of the oldest if not the oldest of the two to three thousand temples of Kathmandu. Its origin was lost in the myth which claimed that a disciple of Buddha threw a lotus into the original lake of Kathmandu, and from the flower there appeared Swayanbu, the Eternally Existing, in the shape of a flame which was claimed to still flicker in the shrine of Swayanbunath.

Swayanbunath was built on a solitary hill which rose sharply out of the plain. The gilded roofs of the temple reflected sunlight from whichever part of the valley it was viewed. Over three hundred steps led upwards, past giant Buddhas, through avenues of stone gods and mythological beasts to the main temple courtyard. Here the *stupa*, or central cupola, was a gigantic affair, surmounted by a square tower from the four sides of which the blue-painted, penetrating eyes of Buddha watched over Kathmandu and the world. Above the eyes were thirteen gilded roofs, pagoda-fashion, each smaller than the lower one, and crowned by an umbrella-shaped device, the symbol of majesty.

At one time or another every Tibetan who visited Kathmandu came to Swayanbunath, and the many refugees we had met were no exception. It was an excellent place to rendezvous, for here there were hundreds of tourists, scores of movie cameras, several film units, and the Tibetans we wished to recruit for our journey into Tibet.

The usual practice of mountaineering expeditions climbing in the Himalayas was to hire the famous mountain people, the Sherpas, who lived in Northeast Nepal. But the very special character of our project ruled out the use of the excellent Sherpa porters and guides.

What we required were Tibetans, and very special Tibetans at that.

In the first place they had to be Tibetans who were strong enough to carry heavy loads, not an easy matter among thousands of refugees who had been starved for several years. They had to be from an area right up on the border so that they could take us from Kathmandu right through all officials and border check-posts. They had also to be from an area near to where the Khamba guerillas were operating, again not an easy matter, for the Khambas were clannish and feared, living in remote, inaccessible spots. Above all they had to be completely trustworthy, so that they would not betray our intentions to the Nepalese authorities while in Nepal, or to the Chinese Communists while near or in Tibet. Finally, when we had completed the project, we had to be so sure of them that they would say nothing on our return to Kathmandu of what had been done, although bursting with excitement, and would even help us in the complex and near-impossible task of getting the completed films out of Nepal without the authorities knowing.

While we were going through this difficult, laborious, but essential chore, I was approached by a former friend of my wife, a Dr. Anderson, who was working at the United Christian Mission Hospital in Kathmandu, to ask if my wife would possibly consider coming out to Kathmandu to help out at the hospital. They were desperately short of staff, with no possibility of immediate replacements in sight, otherwise she would not have even considered asking; for, in addition, they could not pay the fares and could only offer a "missionary" salary.

I was shaking my head in smiling refusal when I suddenly paused, the glimmerings of an idea flickering at the back of my mind. Our return with the completed film was going to be the most difficult part of the whole operation. Our reentry into Kathmandu would have to be completely natural, as innocent—or even more so, in view of all my recent activities—as any mountaineering or botanical expedition. What better "cover," then, that my wife should arrive, with three young children, to do very needed work in a respected hospital? It was the sort of action that was expected of her, and myself, and would imply innocence of purpose and a long stay. Surely, the authorities would reason, I could not be up to any mischief in such circumstances.

I sent a cable to my wife right away. I received one in return to

say that she could not come because she had a pneumonia virus and our two-year-old son had dislocated his neck. Well, that was that. It was a good idea while it lasted. I would have to think up something else.

Meantime, we had our hands full. We had picked up information of a group of Tibetan refugees in a camp some distance out of Kathmandu, at a place called Trisuli, who fulfilled most of our requirements—and who, under cautious questioning, said that Khambas had been operating in their border home areas until quite recently.

We singled out one of the most intelligent, a Tibetan called Tsewang, and brought him to Kathmandu for more discussions. Gradually we were able to work out an itinerary that would keep the Nepalese authorities unsuspecting as to our intentions while taking us near to where the Khamba guerillas were operating.

While our plans regarding Tibet were taking shape we filmed the final episodes required in Kathmandu so that we could leave the country immediately after our return from Tibet. Banskota's brother, after asking Adrian for a loan of 100 rupees "to help his sick wife," then said that he could not go with us as liaison officer for the same reason. We were not bereaved. But Banskota's next appointee—a tough-looking, taciturn specimen that had me wondering how he would take my making him sick with medicine—also asked to be excused as he had "a heart condition." So did a third appointee. Then we heard that word was getting around the government corridors that we "were a tough outfit" and the regular liaison officers were reluctant to take the job. Our first reaction was to be relieved, but the constant nagging anticipation of our return to Kathmandu being as unsullied as Caesar's wife took over, and I said that we would *have* to take a liaison officer even if it meant forcing Banskota to provide one. For I could see Banskota preparing gleefully for our arrest on our return if we left without one.

We decided that we would leave Kathmandu on May 14th, almost three months to the day after leaving London. But while all that we had when leaving London, in addition to the usual traveling clothes, was a mass of television equipment, we were now a fully equipped expedition ready for travel in the most difficult mountainous terrain in the world.

Along with all the other difficulties, we could make no obvious preparations for a mountain expedition lest this should provide a clue

for sharp-eyed security officials in India or Nepal. We had to look like a normal television unit filming in the warm plains of India and foothills of Nepal. Even with our official permits to travel some distance to the north and west outside Kathmandu, one would only require a limited amount of food and equipment.

Quietly and cautiously, we ordered rice and tinned and packaged food, and made discreet enquiries about equipment. There was plenty of equipment in Kathmandu, but we were faced with the major obstacle of not being able to approach the Sherpa organizations without creating suspicion about our real intentions. However, Adrian and Chris found out from a friend that a large group of American Peace Corps personnel were about to end their tenure in Nepal, and they had tents, oilskins, haversacks, waterproofed carrier bags for rice, American dehydrated foods, sunglasses, sunburn creams, first aid kits, useful medicines and clothing. It was an excellent exchange for both parties—and no officials knew that we were now sufficiently outfitted to enter Tibet. It would still be difficult, but no longer impossible.

It was the same with the food supplies. Adrian and Chris went out and bought large quantities of rice, flour, *dahl* (a kind of nourishing lentil soup), dried milk, cocoa, sugar, and salt. The Tibetans said that we would be able to find meat on the way—chickens in the foothills, sheep and yaks (the Tibetan buffalo), further north.

We were ready to leave on the final stage of our mission. That was when my wife's cable arrived to say that she and the children would be arriving in Calcutta on May 24th and Kathmandu on the 27th—"please meet and make the necessary arrangements." Adrian also received word from his wife, that she was sick and might require to go into hospital for an operation.

We could not draw back now. Too many other people's wives and children were suffering and dying—risking more than we were. What was it Christ had said to those of His would-be followers who said, "Suffer me first to bury my father?" Was it not, "Let the dead bury the dead. Go thou . . . No man who putteth his hand to the plough and turneth back is fit for the kingdom of Heaven?"

We made what arrangements we could in the limited time left to us and prepared to leave on the day appointed, May 14th. On that evening we had to attend a friend's prewedding party. I did not feel too well, but put it down to too much running around and the tensions of the past few weeks.

As the evening wore on, the slight nausea I had begun the evening with increased. When the excellent meal was served I took a small helping and only a little of the superb Chianti. About midnight I went off to the bathroom to be sick. A passing thought of poison did cross my mind but I could not see how it could have been managed. I had been given a lift by some friends and it was 3:30 before the party finally broke up and I was taken back to the hotel.

I stepped out of my clothes as I swayed beside the bed, dropped on the top of the bed without going under the sheets. My last conscious thought was how was I going to be up at six and carry a fifty-pound haversack?

When Adrian did call, I could not lift my head from the pillow. I was violently sick and felt like death. To Adrian's worried questions I replied that I would be leaving with them as arranged later that morning—if necessary, put the departure off until afternoon to give the medicines I had taken time to work. This was not just bravado, for I had decided that, whatever it was, it was not food or other poisoning—the symptoms did not quite fit. My diagnosis—or hope—was proved correct when I wakened at 11:00 and found myself clearheaded and without stomach cramps, but with a distressing weakness of the legs.

Adrian, Chris, and Mung were very concerned about my condition, but when I pointed out that today's stage to Trisuli was mostly by jeep and I could go straight to bed when we got there, they accepted my assurances.

In the meantime, Adrian had had to deal with another crisis. Banskota, obstructive to the last, had still not produced a government liaison officer to go with us. Adrian, determined that we would not be trapped by this move, now or later, had finally sent him a typed letter saying that if no liaison officer was ready by noon we would leave without him—but we would leave official notice that we had tried and Banskota had not been cooperative.

This produced immediate action—but of a completely unexpected kind. We had been using the services of a young university student, Hemantha, as interpreter and general assistant. Hemantha's mother was a relation of Banskota. He was a clever young fellow, pleasant and friendly. His family had good connections through the old Rana system, but he was surprisingly outspoken for a Kathmandu Nepali on matters of which he did not approve. He had wanted to go with

us on the expedition, but we were reluctant for two reasons; one, he was a friend as well as a colleague and if we were successful he would get into serious trouble afterwards; two, he was a Kathmandu Nepali unfitted for the tough demands of travel in the mountains. Banskota, it appeared, had sent for Hemantha, asked him if he wanted to go, gave him official papers authorizing him as the government liaison officer—then phoned to tell Adrian.

There was nothing to do but to go ahead with Hemantha, we decided, and hope that somewhere along the way we would be able to think up something that would keep him from being with us when we made contact with the Khamba guerillas. While it would be pleasant having him for a companion, and extremely useful in many ways, I could hardly use my secretly obtained and cherished medicines to knock him out as I had intended with the others! Hemantha, of course, knew nothing of our real objectives.

Another three hours were spent in rushing around Kathmandu finding suitable equipment for Hemantha. While we would have cold-bloodedly allowed any other Banskota-government appointee to freeze—and go bedless—we could not do this with Hemantha.

The distance from Kathmandu to Trisuli was forty-five miles, and Adrian had hired two jeeps, one Russian and one American, to take us, our equipment, and Tsewang and Trashi, two of our Tibetan team.

The first part of the drive to Trisuli was hot, dusty, and distinctly unpleasant for me. But gradually the last of the nausea wore off, the oppressive weakness lifted, and as we entered the mountains encircling Kathmandu I began to enjoy the drive.

The road was only a built-up dirt road, pitted, rutted, and corrugated by the passage of many vehicles, but it wound up and around the lower foothills surrounding Kathmandu Valley providing an ever-changing scenic panorama. When we passed over the first ridge we entered a long, shoulder-clinging drive around and down plunging tree-clad mountains and valleys. Where the variegated greens of the trees thinned, the light green of fresh rice shoots and darker stalks of maize took over in staggeringly breath-taking cultivation of precipitous, six yards by two yards, terraced fields—from mountain top to valley bottom. In these pocket-sized fields, small-built Nepali women and children worked, and even bullocks turned, phlegmatically, above terrifying drops.

It was 5:30 before we arrived. Low-gear, jolting driving, and long waits to overtake slow driving trucks, took up the time. When we did get to Trisuli, the large and well-appointed guest house for visiting officials was not available and we had to put up with dirty unfurnished rooms in a dirty, unfurnished house, where there were pallet beds and nothing else—no lights, no fireplace, no kitchen. Just to complicate matters, a thunderstorm broke, and our Tibetans wanted to get away to visit their camp three miles away so that they could make final arrangements for their families before departure.

Our supper consisted of damp rice, burned sausages, and uncooked onions. However, the tea was hot, sweet, and *very* acceptable.

There were no nails in the walls, so we had to improvise with pieces of string in order to hang up our mosquito nets. We would have avoided this if possible, but Trisuli had a notorious reputation as a malarial death trap. It was a hot and uncomfortable night.



NEXT MORNING Adrian called everybody out at 5:30. In the confusion of arrival the night before in the darkness and the thunderstorm, everything had been piled up into a heap wherever there was a space. The Tibetans had asked to be excused from turning up before breakfast so we had agreed to make our own.

But by the time we had found utensils and food, and had a meal ready, it was almost nine o'clock. The Tibetans had agreed to turn up at nine but from my experience of Tibetans in the past I was prepared to give or take two hours. However, sure enough, at five minutes to nine the cook Se-dar appeared, followed by another Tibetan. My satisfaction was short-lived. Se-dar, the cook, came and squatted beside me where I was sitting on the verandah with my back to a pillar, drinking tea and reading from the Bible, one of the three books I had brought with me (the other a Penguin Books paperback, *Metaphysical Poets*, and René Sédillot's *History of the World*) to read in the mountains.

"Bon-bo-la," using a Tibetan term of respect, he said apologetically, "please excuse me, but I have something to say. When Tsewang got back to the camp last night he said his wife was too sick for him to go out on the expedition with us, so he requested the leaders of our camp to be excused from going and said he would send a substitute in his place. I told him in that case to excuse me as well for I am not going with the substitute. I had a great quarrel but I have come here to tell you this myself."

"What's wrong with Tsewang's wife?" I asked grimly, for this looked like one of those concocted tales one meets with in travel in difficult places. A man will take on a commitment because it will help to serve his own immediate plans, but once this is accomplished he then finds an excuse to opt out of the remainder of the trip. A

sick wife, or mother, or child is an excellent excuse in the East as well as the West.

“No, it is true she is sick,” the cook admitted, “but he knew this before he made the agreement in Kathmandu, and we all have troubles, anyway. I, too, have a wife and children, and what if they get sick tomorrow?”

I agreed, and asked him if Tsewang was coming in to report or would I have to go out to the camp? He thought he would come in, but as they were still discussing the situation when he left, it might take a little time.

In the meantime I questioned Se-dar about his background, partly to find out all I could lest we should want him as leader in Tsewang's place, and partly because I wanted to know if he was playing up the situation in order just to obtain this position. It appeared that he had been a fairly well-to-do trader, of wealthy parents, before the revolt against the Chinese in Tibet. He had had servants and horses when he traveled to various parts of Tibet, and the Tibetan who had come with him was a former servant. Since the revolt he had been, first of all, in North Nepal, then in Kathmandu and Trisuli, doing whatever work he could do to find money for himself and family. His knowledge of cooking was that of any Tibetan trader who had to make do for himself in traveling across the vast spaces of Tibet. He had come with us because he was young, healthy, wanted money, and above all, because we were trying to help Tibet and Tibetans.

He seemed genuine enough, and after a long discussion with the others we decided that if we had to go without Tsewang then we would settle for Se-dar as leader. But I said to Adrian that I would push as hard as I could for Tsewang to go with us since it was bad Tibetan psychology to accept excuses right at the beginning of a dangerous venture. Tibetans would do anything a tough and tested leader demanded of them, but they could sense weakness instinctively and exploit it mercilessly.

At eleven o'clock I decided that we had better go to the Tibetan camp and settle the dispute, but we hadn't gone five minutes on the road when we met Tsewang, the other porters strung out in a long line behind him. I greeted them as if I knew nothing, chatting with them as we walked back to the quarters.

Among the new arrivals were the two older Trisuli refugee camp

leaders, and it was they who broached the subject of excusing Tsewang. I listened politely to them until their explanation was finished, then equally politely but very firmly refused permission. There was a surprised silence. I followed up my refusal by stating:

"This is not Tibetan custom. When I was in Tibet I learned the custom that once a man had given his word to do anything, no matter what it cost him he would keep it."

I looked around at them and they nodded and murmured approval.

"Then Tsewang must go, for he gave his word and I cannot accept any excuse," I concluded.

The younger of the two Trisuli camp leaders looked disturbed. "Yes, this is true what you say, but Tsewang's wife is sick and he has young children who must be looked after."

"Was she sick before he gave his word?" I asked. "Yes," he replied, "but she is now more sick, and he is afraid she might die, and if this is so, then he must be here to arrange for his children."

I shook my head. "This I cannot accept. My wife is sick and attending hospital, my child is sick and attending hospital. Yet I am here many thousands of miles, and many days' journey, away from them. If they are sick and die tomorrow how can I be excused? The Dalai Lama and your leaders want the world to know about Tibet and the suffering of the Tibetan people, and to help Tibet we must all be prepared to sacrifice—even if it means wives and children. Many of you have no wives, and no children, because they are dead; and many more will die. But if you want help for your country, and want the outside world to know about your sufferings, you must be prepared for anything. I do not ask of you more than I ask of myself, and that is why my conditions are hard. We need Tsewang as leader on this expedition and I will not accept anyone else."

There was more in this vein, but I had already broken through their resistance. I was being weighed and sifted by twenty pairs of eyes, by minds sharpened by revolt, oppression, suffering, exile, and starvation, and being judged as to whether I could carry the responsibility of their lives over the next month or more.

But I had handled tougher Tibetans than these—the fearless warrior Khambas of East Tibet. In my morning conversation with Se-dar I had told him that it was our intention to get into touch

with the Khamba rebels in the north of Nepal. We had also told one or two of the others in Kathmandu such as Tsewang, Trashi and a few we felt we could trust. And each time an expression of doubt and fear flashed across their faces and they would say how difficult this would be. Khambas were always feared in Tibet, whether as bandits raiding on caravans, feuding among themselves, or fighting the Chinese. But the Khamba rebels in the north of Nepal were especially feared by the less martial Tibetans from the territory bordering Nepal and West Tibet, known as Bhotias, for it was said that the Khambas either despised them for their weakness or suspected them as possible informers for either the Chinese or Nepalese. Where the local Tibetans and Bhotias starved, or begged for help from the Nepalese authorities, it was rumored in Kathmandu that the Khambas arrogantly took what they wanted over a large area to the north of where Nepal's famous Gurkhas were recruited, and so great was their reputation that neither the local nor the Kathmandu authorities could do anything about it.

I had spent three years in Kham, the dialect of Tibetan that I spoke best was Kham, and I knew personally all the local chieftains of the Khambas. Even my nickname was Kham—"Khamba Gyau," the bearded Khamba. It was only this that tilted the balance in my favor and persuaded these people to go with us at all, even after I had shown them Surkhang's letter. And it was this confidence that persuaded them now that I could be trusted and followed.

When a murmur of conversation began, and then grew as they discussed my stubbornness, I noted that Tsewang himself moved away from the inner circle of those surrounding me and began to give orders to those on the outside regarding the loads. The two Trisuli camp leaders, still looking concerned, moved several yards away and held a short conversation. Se-dar began getting the cooking utensils together. When Adrian and Chris asked what was happening, I said that the crisis was passed and we would go as arranged.

But it was now almost one o'clock, and we had hoped to get away by ten at the latest. Loads still had to be sorted out and tried by each porter for carryable weight; payments had to be made so that footwear could be bought, as well as sufficient rice and flour for each, for the whole journey. For we had contracted that we would only carry food for six people—myself, Adrian, Chris, Hermantha, Tsewang the leader, and Se-dar the cook—and the others

must provide their own out of the agreed wage and arrange to carry this.

The tempo of preparations for departure quickened, and the two Trisuli camp leaders came back after their consultation and said that as I was so insistent they had decided that Tsewang should go with us, and he had agreed. I thanked them, but not fulsomely, and asked them to look after Tsewang's wife and children as their contribution to the task of getting help for Tibet.

When the loads had been sorted out and allocated we went off to have a meal at a nearby roadside restaurant. The parties went off to buy their food for the journey, and Tsewang and Se-dar came to have lunch with us. I decided that the time had now come to temper justice with mercy, and asked Tsewang how sick was his wife and how old were the children. His wife did seem bad, and out of four children the youngest was only a year old. So I suggested to Adrian that we pay for her to go to the United Mission Hospital in Kathmandu and I would be responsible for her treatment there. Adrian agreed to this and Tsewang—who had really taken the harshness of my earlier decision very well and showed no sign of animosity—was obviously relieved and grateful. He asked if he could be given a few hours off to go and arrange for his wife and children to be sent to Kathmandu and he would catch up at our first camping-place, and I agreed. It was with Tibetans as with horses, once mastery had been established they could be left to a light rein.

We got away at three o'clock. There were eighteen porters; Se-dar the cook; Adrian, Chris and myself; Hemantha the liaison officer; and Tsewang who had gone back to the camp. Twenty-four people in all, and everybody carrying loads from fifty pounds to some weighing nearly 200 pounds. The sun shone, the sky was cloudless but the heat was oppressive. Even without a load it would have been unpleasant, but carrying a fifty-pound haversack for the first time in at least fifteen years—and after a violent bout of sickness and diarrhea—was a frightening prospect, especially to face several days of this before reaching the cool of the mountains. Fortunately, the path was fairly smooth and ran alongside the river in a gentle gradient.

An hour or so later we called a halt at a flat spot on the other side of the brawling river. It was more of a stream than a river at

this time of the year, a shallow four-foot flow in a wide rocky bed, but it was sufficient to sit in and enjoy a cool bath to get rid of aches and perspiration.

It took about two hours to set up the camp, for the Tibetans knew nothing of erecting tents—or, at least, foreign tents. Adrian had bought a large tarpaulin and had converted it into an open-sided tent for the porters, and this they erected quickly and efficiently, storing the loads in a long “wall” down the center, to sleep on either side.

Before dark, Tsewang arrived full of smiles as he reported that he had arranged for his wife and child to go with a friend to Kathmandu, and that he had given her my letter of introduction to the foreign doctor. He took quick command and soon had ready a meal of rice and chicken curry. We topped this with cocoa and were ready for bed by nine o'clock.

We were up at dawn the next morning, and for the first time since I had left Tibet I realized the satisfaction of a long-dormant nostalgia. First, there were the mutterings and movements as the Tibetans got up, then, the low murmured repetitive religious chants as they got the fires going and water on to boil. This was a double evocation for me, for it invariably brought to mind the hauntingly beautiful Gaelic “Peat-fire Smoothing Prayer” as well as years of travel with laughing, swashbuckling Khamba companions beside the campfires of Tibet.

It took us two and a half hours to get moving, though, for as the loads were being sorted out and allocated an altercation broke out among the porters. For half an hour I let it go without paying attention, sitting drinking tea and reading from the Bible, but as it went on and on without settlement I decided that I would have to assert my authority again. The chief culprit appeared to me to be a Tibetan called Basang, whom I had always noted in my own mind as a “smart boy”—the typical “ship’s lawyer”—who knew all the answers and could make all the trouble. Now was the time to nip it in the bud.

“You,” I said, suddenly, pointing to him, “pick up that load and get up the trail.”

He looked startled at my interjection, and started to explain about the weight of his load. I waved him to silence.

"I don't want to hear," I stated bluntly, "I only want you to know that I give the orders and you obey."

He looked mutinous. "In that case," he said, "I am going back again."

"Oh no, you're not," I shook my head. "You did not hear me correctly. I did *not* ask you what you wanted to do; I *told* you that you were going to pick up that load, whatever its weight, and get up the trail. Either you do it now without further argument or you will do it with me beating you with this stick," and I lifted my walking-stick, a stout branch cut from a tree. "I am not having *anybody* telling me yesterday, today, or any day, what they will do after you have all agreed to go on this expedition. So all of you—up loads and on your way!"

There was a general movement as they started to pick up their loads, with glances towards where Basang still stood looking from me to his load to the others. He would have liked to push the issue further, and was desperately seeking a way out to save some face. I kept him on the hook by standing still and watching him.

He screwed up his face, pulled up his shirt, and putting his hand to his stomach, said, "Bon-bo-la, I have a sore stomach and that is why I cannot carry such a load."

"You should have thought of that sooner," I replied drily. "I'll give you medicine later, but now you pick up that load and carry it until you drop. Next time think twice before you make trouble for us." He slung his rope around the load, picked it up and trudged up the trail after the others.

The trail began to slope more steeply upwards, and soon disappeared into the rocky bed of the river. If I thought the going unpleasant yesterday, today it was even more difficult. The rocky bed of the river gave no regular passage and it was a rugged, uneven climb. Muscles which had been little used for years ached in protest as they were stretched, twisted, and jolted under the unusual demands.

The river bed rose steeply and the blazing sun climbed in a cloudless sky. Perspiration poured down the faces and dropped off the chins of all of us as we labored upwards. The path left the river at last, but sloped more steeply as it zigzagged across the face of a steep mountain, and still remained rough and uneven. Finally, it became so steep that it was like climbing an interminable stairway—

with the added disadvantage of irregularity. Each step was a major effort on trembling legs as they labored to carry the weight of body and load. My hair was plastered to my head with perspiration, my breath came in great soughing gulps, and every faculty was reduced and concentrated to overcoming that one next step.

I was long past my limit of endurance and was simply a moving machine, when the trail straightened out and, coming around a bend, a strong and steady cooling breeze signaled the top of the mountain. I dropped my haversack and dropped myself beside it. One by one the others did the same.

The silence of utter exhaustion was shattered by the voice of Cliff Richard singing,

“Let’s all go on a . . . Summer Holiday.”

Chris had brought his transistor radio and switching it on brought some of the recumbent figures upright with the syncopated blast. Hemantha even managed to beat out time and a kind of moaned accompaniment to the Elvis Presley record which followed.

An hour later, Tsewang said that we should move on down the other side for a bit to where there was an open space beside running water for a camp. After the previous four hours’ effort it was a simple stroll, although the few Nepalis coming up the other way looked in some distress.

Where the steep sides of the mountain fell back a little we camped beside a clear stream. The first thing I did was to strip to the waist, sit knee deep in the cool water, and just soak. By the time I had cooled off it was time to set up the tents—and, of course, drink tea. I had already told the Tibetans that the first job of the cook, and those not occupied in putting up tents, was to collect firewood, fetch water, and make tea. They had grinned and nodded in appreciation of this recognition of their own priorities in Tibet.

The setting sun slanted across the narrow valley, laying a beautiful yellow patina on the shimmering greenery of moving leaves and inevitable terraced fields. Birds stirred themselves in the cool of the evening to a last burst of song. Smoke trailed upwards from our own fires, and from various hidden houses across the mountainsides. The sky faded from intense blue to an orange-streaked grey, then indigo, with countless flickering points of stars.

The only problem appeared to be—who was to kill the chicken for our supper? We had bought a chicken and out of twenty-four

people—including twenty Tibetan rebels—no one was able or willing to kill the bird. The Tibetans either claimed that their religion did not allow them to kill, or that they did not know how. I drily asked them how it was they could kill “Gya-mi” (Chinese) but could not kill “gya-mo” (chickens). But I said I was busy writing up my notes; Chris said he could not kill it after seeing it carried with us all day. Finally, it was left to Hemantha to make a messy job of it with a deadly, curved Nepali *kukri*.

But it made an excellent supper for hungry men. The camp had also produced a real treasure in a Tibetan called Trashi. He had taken it on himself to be general handyman, and among his many useful abilities was a knowledge of how to make excellent flour scones. We appointed him cook’s assistant with full privileges to eat with us.

As we lay back replete, our satisfaction with the good meal increased by the drifting aroma of wood smoke, the moon broke from behind the mountains and bathed the valley in silver. The suddenness and brightness of the moon appearing, making every tree, every branch, even every leaf, stand out against the skyline in breath-catchingly beautiful silhouette, reminded me of some lines of a poem by the sixteenth-century poet Sir Henry Wotton, which I had been reading earlier:

You Meaner *Beauties* of the *Night*
That poorly satisfie our *Eies*
More by your *number*, than your *light*,
You *Common people* of the *Skies*;
What are you when the *Moon* shall rise?

You *Violets*, that first appeare,
By your *pure purpel mantels* knowne,
Like the proud *Virgins* of the *yeare*,
As if the *Springs* were all your own;
What are you when the *Rose* is *blowne*?

While we drank slowly at our final cups of tea, the Tibetans, after a great deal of discussion, sorted themselves out into two lines beside the fire, pulled their voluminous gowns around their shoulders and, squatting Buddha-wise, launched into an impromptu “prayer-meeting.” The flickering firelight played redly on slant-eyed, squat-nosed faces, and their voices rose and fell in haunting melancholy, as

they prayed to Buddha and the gods for the safety and success of our expedition.

“Om Mani Padme Hum
Om Mani Padme Hum
Om Mani Padme Hum
Om Mani Padme Hum . . .”

Later, Tsewang suggested, and we agreed, that we would not eat as soon as we got up next morning but drink tea, travel for two hours or so in the cool of the morning, then have breakfast, about mid-morning. After about two hours we would walk until two or three in the afternoon, camp, have tea and then have an evening meal at six. In this way we would be able to make the best use of the day.

The first part of the morning was fairly easy, but about seven, as the sun warmed, the trail rose again out of the valley. But it was not nearly as steep as yesterday and with a few stops for breathers we moved steadily on. After an hour of this it straightened out across the mountainside in a long, angled loop. Away to the south, the mountains fell away in a diminishing tangle of dark green and ocher ridges, disappearing in a shimmering blue haze.

The early morning muscle cramp and stiffness eased off in the warmth and steady rhythm, and the thought of the prospect ahead increased from muted excitement to exhilaration. Intellectual argument was stimulating but after a time—especially in the limited *milieu* of Nepali politics—it became repetitive and stale. Away from the artificial life of the cities of the plains and the selfish ambitions of a favored few, in the mountains of the Himalayan countries politics became the concern for people rather than ideas, and problems—those of food, shelter, travel, and self-defense. If a Confederation of Himalayan States seemed an impossible political idea because of the tensions of inter-Asian power politics, the idea of these Himalayan countries being homogeneous units in unanimous support of a pro-Indian—even pro-Chinese—policy was even more ludicrous as we passed village after village where Mongolian-type inhabitants barely lifted their heads from their fields or their grinding stones as we passed. They wanted peace, and they needed leisure, but they went from dawn to dusk in a ceaseless round of labor under a growing threat of war. Those north of the border

who cared for their bodies, if not their souls, had the same shape of faces, the same peasant background, the same unwearying patience—and they were within the same easy reach of their villages as ourselves. We could not offer much—a book, some newspaper articles, a few films to reach a possible one hundred million public—but at least it was something, better than indifference, and from smaller mustard seeds greater trees had grown.

We stopped for breakfast about nine o'clock at the top of a ridge, where the mountain dropped in a giant's staircase of terraced rice fields to the valley bottom seven thousand feet below on one side, and the trail continued up and up in a wide sweep on the other. It was an excellent vantage point after my peripatetic musings to read a few chapters of René Sédillot's *History of the World*—especially of the early tribal emigrations and rise of the Greek city-states—and a few chapters from the Gospel of Matthew—especially chapter 17 and Christ's promise, "I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move hence to yonder place,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

And the words of John Donne, too, seemed singularly apt in the circumstances:

. . . On a huge hill,
Cragged, and steep, Truth stands, and hee that will
Reach her, about must, and about must goe;
And what the hills suddennes resists, winne so;
Yet strive so, that before age, deaths twilight,
Thy Soule rest, for none can worke in that night.
To will, implies delay, therefore now doe:
Hard deeds, the bodies paines hard knowledge too
The mindes indeavours reach, and mysteries
Are like the Sunne, dazling, yet plaine to all eyes.

We climbed steadily until about 3:00 P.M., when we reached a rounded knoll on which stood a huge tree. Here Tsewang said we would camp for the night. It was not too soon, for as the porters trudged slowly into camp a few drops of rain fell. As we rushed to raise the tents, the wind carried it drummingly against the tent fabrics.

The Tibetans huddled under the tarpaulin, and Se-dar and Trashi even managed to produce a pot of hot, sweet tea on a paraffin stove in the thunderstorm. It was a fitting background as Tsewang and

Se-dar recounted experiences and stories of Khamba exploits before and during the revolt of 1956-59. The orange-colored material of our tent gave a greenish glow to the dimly discernible faces, lit by streaking flashes of lightning, and the steady drumming of the rain was counterpointed by great rolls of thunder. It was obvious from the awe in which these Western Tibetans held the Khambas that they would never make an attempt to get into touch with them, but it was encouraging they considered it possible that I might be able to make contact and might even persuade them to be filmed. Another ominous remark to emerge was the one that because the Nepalese government had been so uncooperative in the present time of Tibetan difficulties, they would have to look out in the future for the Tibetans would no longer view them as friendly neighbors.

It rained much of the night, but the morning was dry. When I had rolled up my bedding and packed my rucksack I took time to look out across the valleys. Away to the north there was a remarkable sight. The lower, snow-covered ranges of the Himalayas were visible, but beneath them there was a startling arrangement of thunderclouds. The slanting rays of sunlight which illumined the snowy lower slopes disappeared into a heavy charcoal-grey cloud, then bank upon bank of cloud towered in almost mathematical layers of lightening shades of grey to emerge at the crests in smoky white masses tipped in blazing gold. This awesome aerial phalanx moved majestically forward over the towering peaks wiping them out from view to a rolling accompaniment of deep thunder.

Once morning tea had been drunk—and my morning dispensary for cuts, bruises, stomach and bowel ailments, had been completed—we got on our way. The trail wound downwards in an angled slope, with occasional rocky and steep stretches, for two hours.

When we stopped for breakfast, there was a natural platform of earth projecting behind a large tree and sitting here the whole of the next valley lay spread out like a gigantic map. Tsewang, who had come this way several times before, pointed out today's—and the next few days'—journey. The path dropped right away at our feet, plunging in a series of dizzy spirals and zigzags to a narrow brown thread snaking along beside the river bed, six thousand feet below. The valley floor was wide and heavily cultivated, with clusters of brown-ocher, thatched-roof houses scattered on either side of the river. Where the river disappeared around a bend to the south,

we had to turn north over a ridge into another valley and away to the north and west, under a small drifting patch of cloud, lay the large village of Arughat, one of the few marketplaces on our route. Here we would add to our stores to last us for the remainder of our trip. Further north still, behind where the morning thunderclouds were thinning out before sunshine and blue sky, lay the Tibetan occupied villages of Dzum, our immediate objective, still a nine days' journey away.

The next few hours were torture. The Tibetans have a saying:

*Test a horse going up,
And a man going down.*

After half an hour of plunging, boulder-strewn descent my legs were trembling, aching muscles twitching uncontrollably. I could feel my toes wearing through my socks as they pressed and rubbed against the front of my boots in rare agony. And still the trail wound on and down. It was almost three hours later before we reached the bottom of the mountain, and dropped our loads in breath-expelling relief.

I lay back against my pack, eyes closed, letting the warmth ease the pain in my limbs and the breeze soothe my sweat-splashed head and shoulders. When I looked up the two Tibetans, Tsewang and Se-dar, were sitting looking at a piece of paper and when they saw me watching them they grinned and came over, squatting down beside me. I looked at the paper casually, then with sudden interest. It was a long piece of rough Tibetan paper such as was used in their prayer scrolls, but in addition to the usual Tibetan characters there were two foreign names printed—Heinrich Harrer and Peter Aufschneider. These were the two German prisoners-of-war who had escaped from a detention camp in India in an epic journey across the Himalayas to Lhasa in Tibet, told by Heinrich Harrer in his book, *Seven Years in Tibet*. Peter Aufschneider, strangely enough, was now in Kathmandu working as an adviser in an agricultural project.

I asked the Tibetans how they had come across the paper, and Se-dar said that it was his own.

“But how did you get it?” I asked. “Did you buy it?” “No,” he repeated; “It is my own. When these two foreigners traveled through

my country they stayed with my parents and it was my uncle who wrote this. I was only a child at the time. My family and my uncle were very wealthy and we gave the two foreigners food and shelter and my uncle taught them the Tibetan language. Afterwards they left to go to Lhasa.”

He had met Peter Aufschneider in Kathmandu, who had remembered him as a child and asked about his family and uncle. They were all dead in the fighting against the Chinese, he added. Somehow he had gained the impression that Harrer was dead, too, but I told him that he was alive, to the best of my knowledge, and that I was sure he would help him if he wrote to Harrer.

The walk along the valley beside the river was easy, but blindingly hot, and perspiration dripped steadily from my eyebrows, nose and chin. By midafternoon we were near the end of the narrowing valley and the path dropped to wind across the boulders at the side of the fast, tumbling river. At one point it disappeared into a branch of the main current, and we had to wade across, thigh deep, to reach a camping place for the night. Here we arranged that Chris and Hemantha should go ahead of the party to be in Arughat before us, in order to save time by buying supplies.

Next morning, we climbed steadily for two hours, then emerged on to a ridge overlooking a lovely, heavily cultivated valley. The trail dropped away into the valley, then straightened out to follow the path of a brawling mountain river. This, said Tsewang, was the river we would follow all the way to Dzum. It came “right out of the snows”—from Tibet.

Arughat was only a slightly larger version of some of the villages we had already passed, but the houses were more solid and some of them had corrugated iron roofs instead of thatch. It was built on the side of the mountain so the houses rose from sixty feet above the river in several tiers. A rickety bridge swung uneasily above the river, and a steep stairway of stones led into the one street of the village. Hens with chirping chickens, lean dogs with mange, scores of hungry-looking children, women with babies at the breast—some children even standing as they suckled—filled the street.

Chris and Hemantha had arranged for us to sleep in the office of the “Nepal Malaria Eradication Organization,” which—although it had a grandiloquent name and was doing excellent work—was only a mud-and-stone structure with a beaten mud floor. It was

decided, therefore, that we would cook in the main square of the village, on a raised stone platform under the shade of two large trees, and that the porters would sleep there around our baggage.

But a major problem had to be settled first. There was no food in this chief marketplace serving the surrounding area. Chris and Hemantha had been able to find only cups of tea, and no one would sell eggs, chickens, or rice. The rice shortage was a serious matter—not only for the villagers but also for us. Normally, Arughat shops were packed with stores of rice, but it appeared that for some unknown reason the previous year's crops had been a total failure and there was now a drastic shortage in all the surrounding valleys. Only two or three days before, we were told, in a village only a few valleys away from Arughat, a family of six had died of starvation. Many of the hillmen to the north were living on roots only, and no one had anything to sell. By a savage irony, while Adrian and Hemantha were in the small post office waiting to send off letters, the postmaster was trying to dissuade a farmer from sending a letter to his son asking for help—saying that he should not mention that there was a shortage of anything as the government had denied shortages. This was the Kathmandu politician's answer to the problems of the people. They had every reason to be worried about the Chinese road to the north—where rice was available and good prices were given. Here was a country where people cared less for politics than for food.

And this was the country of the Gurkhas, the home of Nepal's most famous fighting men—the government's largest foreign exchange "commodity." Only six hours' walk from Arughat was the village of Gurkha from which had come Prithvi Narayan Shah and his martial followers to take over, unify, and consolidate the Kingdom of Nepal.

While we were waiting for the cook to brew tea, the porters had been in the market looking for food. Now they returned to report that there was no rice at any price, but Tsewang had managed to find 21 eggs for ten rupees. This with the excellent Tibetan scones, would give us our breakfast.

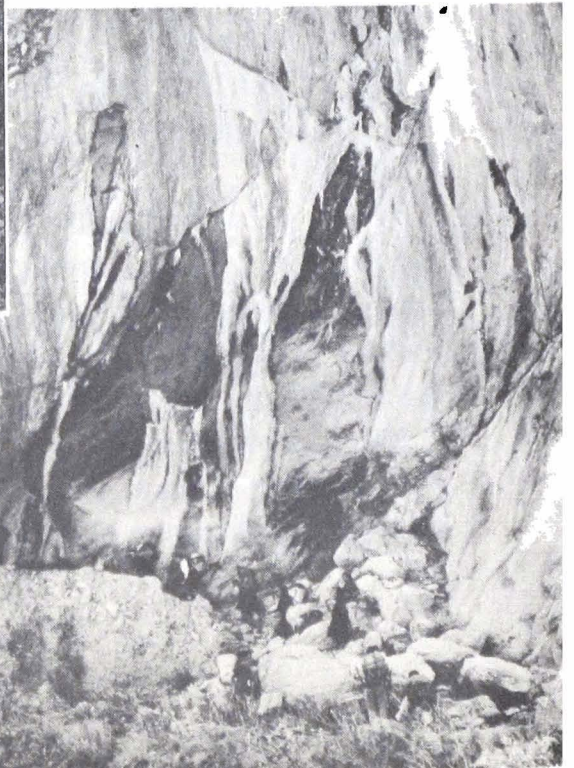
We had sufficient food to last us for a month, but the porters had only brought enough to feed them till they reached Arughat. With at least another seven days before we reached Dzum, therefore, it

was imperative that they find supplies here or we could proceed no further.

The only solution was for several of the porters to return the way we had come, and to scout the surrounding valleys for villages where they could obtain supplies of rice. This would mean that we would have to stay here overnight and a good part of tomorrow. It was no pleasant prospect, but unavoidable in the circumstances.

We settled down to our long wait. I used the time to write up my notes, as the sun climbed and sank, with the local inhabitants sitting around to watch unblinkingly for hours. Adrian, Chris, and Hemantha entered into a long discussion with one of the local hillmen as to the possibility of catching fish in the river, then spent the next few hours bending nails, pins and spoons into a fishing line with hooks and spinners. In the late afternoon we bathed and fished—the former with enjoyment in the snow-cold mountain river, but the latter without success.

It was obviously a night for cocoa, chicken curry and early bed.



11

WITH MY NOTES written up I had time to read again, and I returned with enjoyment to the combination of the New Testament and *The History of the World*. It was a fascinating experience to look at historical events from the divine perspective and through the prophetic teachings of Christ, with the hindsight evaluation of the materialist, economist-historian, René Sédillot.

Whether looking back through history at the rise and fall of nations, or beyond the snows to the blue vault where other universes spun, it was peculiar joy to muse with John Donne as he, too, traveled and wrote:

But that Christ on this Crosse, did rise and fall,
Sinne had eternally benighted all.
Yet dare I almost be glad, I do not see
That spectacle of too much weight for mee.
Who sees Gods face, that is selfe life, must dye;
What a death were it then to see God dye?
It made his owne Lieutenant Nature shrinke,
It made his footstoole crack, and the Sunne winke

Though these things, as I ride, be from mine eye,
They are present yet unto my memory,
For that looks towards them; and thou look'st towards me,
O Saviour, as thou hang'st upon the tree;
I turne my back to thee, but to receive
Corrections, till thy mercies bid thee leave.
O thinke me worth thine anger, punish mee,
Burne off my rusts, and my deformity,
Restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace,
That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face.

The porters straggled back throughout the morning. They had managed to get sufficient rice to enable them to travel with easy

minds, if not as much as they had hoped. But the extra food meant extra weight and several of the porters were now carrying double loads—which meant a slower pace of travel. We tried to get some local hillmen to carry, but either they said the loads were too heavy for them, or the price they asked was much too high.

We finally got away from Arughat at twelve o'clock. It would have to be a short day, but it was better to go a short distance today than wait for another day in Arughat, for this kind of delay was seldom made up. At about half past two we came to a wide and pleasant spot beside the river and decided to camp there for the night, for the porters were now carrying enormous loads.

It was just as well, for, leisurely setting up camp and eating, we had not finished our cocoa when the sky darkened, a wind sprang up, thunder rolled, and down came the rain.

In the morning, to our surprise, three of the local Gurung hillmen turned up to carry loads for the next few days. Tsewang had spoken to them yesterday, but by the expression on their faces when they had tried the loads for weight I did not think they would come—even for the wage of six rupees (about ten shillings or one U.S. dollar) per person per day. But with the three hillmen carrying loads I warned the Tibetans that we must make good time today, now that their loads were lightened. They grinned in agreement, shouldered their still heavy loads, and trudged away up the trail.

The path out of our camping place led through a pleasant tree-lined slope, fragrant with mint as the porters tramped the plants in their passing. But gradually, as the valley narrowed into a gorge, the path deteriorated into a stony trail and angled steeply upwards. Soon, once again, we were lifting our legs from stone to stone as in a raised stairway of endless length. The morning sun, from pleasantly warming our backs, changed to a sweat-extracting agony. It was a relief to stop in two to three hours for our morning meal. It was an even greater relief two hours after we had eaten, and climbed and labored still further, to emerge into a shaded glade with water and be able to drop to the ground covered—like the dying Buddha—by hundreds of fragrant white frangipani petals.

But today I was ruthless, for we had to make as much distance as possible if we were ever going to succeed in the time limit we had. After half an hour's rest, during which we managed to buy a chicken and a fish, I called out to the porters to rise and go. I told them I

now wanted only a fifteen minute rest for every half hour traveled. I nearly killed myself and them in seeing this observed.

The gorge narrowed until it was only a savage gash between sheer mountainsides. The trail rose and plunged, as it edged around the forested slopes. In places the mountain sides were so steep that the tops of the trees were only a few feet away from the slopes in which their roots were buried, so sheer was the rise. Hundreds of feet below, the river boiled and foamed around rocks and through narrow channels, while we inched perilously across some smooth mountain face with only inch-wide hand- and footholds—still carrying fifty to one hundred pound loads—or clambered across loose shale.

Our stopping place for the night was a ten-foot wide platform, about twelve yards long, under a huge overhang of rock. On every side the mountain plunged straight down into the raging river far below. Even the water supply was a thousand foot waterfall cascading over smooth rock in a spectacular white spray.

It was left to me to cook the fish, so I sautéed it in cooking oil with a dash of cinnamon, and some brandy from the medicine chest. It was a fitting dish for such a dramatic setting; especially when the moon rose in a clear sky, the firelight danced on the rocky walls, the Tibetans settled down to their chanted evening prayers, and around us all rose the deep thunder of the river.

We got away shortly after six next morning, but the advantage was lost somewhat as Adrian and Chris decided that the spectacular surroundings warranted a start to filming. The Tibetans entered into the spirit of the enterprise, and held loads, carried loads, marched and stopped as instructed.

When we stopped for breakfast it was again high above the river, but the mountainside had fallen back a bit and the sheer slopes were once again replaced by steep terraced rice fields.

A few drops of rain fell out of the greying sky and we decided to put up our oilskin "ponchos" as a waterproofed lean-to. It was just as well. We had not put the sticks in the ground when the skies opened and sheets of rain poured down. The porters were busy getting their loads under the tarpaulin cover, so we were on our own, each one frantically putting up supports, or digging channels to carry the all-invading water away from rucksacks and bedding.

It was a vain effort. In the next three hours, at least five inches

of rain fell, flooding the terraces to the top of their containing walls and gushing over to the lower fields. We squatted under the spread ponchos, unable to sit because of the waterlogged earth, with rain pouring through the openings on to our heads, bodies, and legs. It was hopeless trying to keep dry, and after a little time we just sat around wet. Yet, miraculously, Se-dar and Trashi managed to produce a meal in this downpour and we ate Tibetan scones, which became sodden as we ate, with fried chicken and potatoes. Adrian got out the Primus stove and we had tea, followed by scalding cocoa.

By one o'clock the storm had passed and we were able to crawl out into the sodden, water-covered hillside. Tsewang suggested that we move on, at least to a better campsite, and we agreed. But we then discovered that the Gurung hillmen recruits had had enough and gone back home, without payment—yesterday's rugged march and today's cloudburst had been too much for even their tough physiques. However, Tsewang recruited another three hillmen from a nearby village who agreed to carry the loads to the next campsite.

It was up and up again. At one point where the going was particularly difficult, I commented on it to Se-dar who was just ahead and he informed me laconically that this was a "good" path compared with what lay ahead. Within the hour he was proved not to have been exaggerating.

The mountain grew sheer, then tilted forward into a long precipitous overhang. The trail wound across this sheer wall, about 500 feet above the valley floor, where it turned, right above the river. For about two hundred yards there was no path at all and a fantastic "bridge trail" had been made by driving wooden supports into the mountainside, laying branches of trees lengthwise on these, then stones, then dirt into a makeshift and perilous path. As I negotiated this two-foot platform, swung my pack outward away from the rock face so as not to be bumped into space, I put my weight on my stick—which promptly went right through earth, stones and branches! Fortunately, no persons went through.

The campsite was one of those dream spots seen in advertisements, or in photographs in the *National Geographic Magazine*. A wide, grassy space about thirty yards long at the foot of a tree-lined slope, where the river swung wide in a calm, sweep of water. But I regret to record that even here neither Adrian, Chris, nor Hemantha were able to catch a fish.

Next day was a day of the same kind of travel as the earlier days—only more so. More rugged, perpendicular trails; more jolting, boulder-strewn riverbeds; more hair-raising, rickety platforms, skirting precipitous mountain faces; more dizzying plunges down stone stairways.

It was a day when I had to assert my leadership of the Tibetans, for they had been taking more and more time off for rests, little groups of them stopping together and not moving on when others did. I left it to Tsewang, as leader, to handle them but he either didn't see or didn't bother. So I took over. I gave them a real rib-roasting, and when one or two began to mutter objections, I came down hard on them. I had been watching them for the past few days and knew who were the willing workers and who were the ones willing to let them work. I pointed out that I had been paying attention to those who were malingering, and noting their names, and, when it came to the end of the trip and the time for bonuses to be paid, I would remember them. This silenced them all, and there was a noticeable quickening of pace.

But they were really quite a good bunch of men, and as the days passed they had sorted themselves out into determinable characters. The best of the lot was the "assistant cook," Trashi, who was also general handyman. He seemed to be everywhere. Last out of camp and first into camp, getting the fire going, tea made, food prepared, pots cleaned, with a quiet word here and there among the men to get wood or this and that done. Tsewang was quite pleasant as a leader but lacked what was known during the war as O.L.Q.—officer-like-qualities. After having to give the men a telling off he would then be overly friendly with them. Se-dar, the cook, was efficient without being inspiring and did all that could be expected of him. Basang—the "smart boy" whom I had to call down the first day—continued to be the smartest, buying chickens at the lowest price, finding Gurung porters to help carry loads, always ready with a story to cause a laugh, prompt with suggestions at all times, knowing exactly where everything was packed, spokesman for the sick—and assistant to me when giving medicines. In short, he was a minor Tibetan Chahvan!

The campsite on the following night was another narrow ledge, narrower than the previous one, and we stretched out on a leafy couch beside the fire for the night. I thought of Meg and the chil-

dren, spending their last night at home, and all the frantic activities of last-minute packing for a twenty-hour air flight and four-month visit to Nepal—while I had three people serving me an evening meal, and went to sleep at eight o'clock to waken at five in the morning.

We had scarcely started next morning when the path dropped away to an unbelievably hazardous bridge, swung obliquely across a now deep and raging river, about sixty yards in length. It was constructed in three sections, and the first section dropped at an alarming angle of forty-five degrees to a large rock a third of the way across the river. On this rock had been raised a six-foot palisade of branches lashed together with tree fibers and filled with heavy stones. The first angled section reached from the mountain to this makeshift support. From the other side three sets of three thick tree trunks had been projected outwards in a rough cantilevered span, and this formed the support for the far section.

In the space between, two tree trunks had been placed to span the middle section. The footway across was only lashed bamboos and branches, and the whole contraption rocked and swung crazily under the weight of each person. Two or three of the Tibetans could not face the prospect of carrying loads across the first section, and some local hillmen had to be hired to carry their loads across.

It was too good an opportunity to miss for filming and so the Tibetans were startled when they were asked to carry the loads back again, in order to have a film and photograph record. Seven of them volunteered to walk across together in close formation while the others lined up behind them on the safer side. Naturally, Basang was the first to volunteer.

The campsite for the night was on a raised part of the river bed where it widened into a large amphitheater between the mountains. The dry silt would not hold the tent pegs so we had to use stones to anchor the tents for the night. After cloudless skies for the past three nights grey clouds were massing behind the mountain tops and it looked as if it might rain.

Now that we were approaching our objective, more and more time was taken up with filming and this, together with the deteriorating condition of the trail, slowed us down! After breakfast the next morning, we reached yet another spectacular bridge-crossing but shorter. This time I was certain that the bridge would go, for, as I waited my turn to go over, I could hear the trunks groan beneath

the weight of one man and his load when he reached the middle. It rocked perilously, and the swinging fibers which were the only "support" were a fiction in the breath-stopping sway.

It did not rain, but it was quite cool for the first time since we left Kathmandu—since we left London, if it came to that. It was to be a day of "first times."

For the first time we had a really close-up view of the snows between the sharp "V" of the valley. For the first time the hill-people whom we met were bilingual and spoke in Tibetan as well as Gurkhali. For the first time the houses were different; instead of being stone- and mud-plastered, with thatched roofs, they became rough large stones with fiber-matting held down by smaller stones for roofs. For the first time we climbed out of the trees on to slopes that were bare of trees.

About two o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at a village where we had been told we would find an Indian-manned radio check-post. This was our most critical test since leaving Kathmandu. We not only had to be unsuspected here, we had to be so lily-white that they would not think of radioing news of our presence to Kathmandu. And although we had planned a return journey by a different route, it was just possible that we might have to come back by this way and still keep them unsuspecting during our return journey, for we would have our precious films by then. The check-post was on the far side of the village—which was known as Setelvass on the maps, but to the Tibetans as Dotang—and we stopped for a rest in the middle of the village itself.

The Tibetans went off to look for "chang," or beer, and while I was still sitting there Basang returned with a local policeman to ask if I could give medicine to a very sick Gurung inhabitant. We only had a small and very limited amount of medicine to use for our own party in case of emergency, but we could hardly refuse help to someone in real need.

And he was in real need all right. The "house" was only an open cage of loosely interlaced bamboos, with a fiber-matting door and roof. The sick man lay on the earthen floor, beside the scattered ash of an open fire, covered only by a dirty piece of cloth. At his feet lay a pile of reeking faeces and scores of flies crawled over his face as I shone my torch on his unblinking eyes. A dirty woman in dirty clothing sat on one side of him, and an old

man and young boy on the other. What such people found in such a life to struggle to keep alive was beyond comprehension. The only explanation could be the fear of the black unknown ahead. But I had found that however appalling their conditions, they would battle to remain in it. As one of the "metaphysical poets," Henry King, said:

Ill busi'd man! why should'st thou take such care
To lengthen out thy lifes short Kalendar?
When ev'ry spectacle thou lookst upon
Presents and acts thy execution.

Each drooping season and each flower doth cry,
Fool! as I fade and wither, thou must dy.

The beating of thy pulse (when thou art well)
Is just the tolling of thy Passing Bell:
Night is thy Hearse, whose sable Canopie
Covers alike deceased day and thee.

And all those weeping dewes which might fall,
Are but the tears shed for thy funerall.

My own sickness was not with the surroundings—be the stench never so sickening—but with those who claimed to have such people's interests at heart, yet did so little to alleviate them. Vote-fodder for petty selfish ambitions, who could blame them for clutching at a passing red flag?

I did what I could, leaving with his relations a course of Terramycin. But it was not in medicine that any hope for his future lay—or the millions like him—but in a new breed of men who would care more for men's souls and bodies than for meaningless slogans. Men who would traverse mountains as well as grace salons—for whom a well-fed and well-informed people would mean more than a well-turned phrase and well-turned ankle.

Beyond the village of Setelvass was the Indian wireless checkpost. The officer in charge was a friendly Indian, with two junior officers—one a Nepali—and a few soldiers. We stopped at the post for an hour, drinking tea and exchanging items of information.

The officer-in-charge had spent twelve years in the Himalayas in various checkposts and we gathered that there had been an increase in the number of Tibetan refugees crossing the border—thousands in this area alone, according to reports reaching the checkpost. While the idea of wireless communications from the remote

snows to the capital of Kathmandu was excellent in principle, in practice it was a feeble, almost completely useless, precaution. There were only ten of these small checkpoints in less than eight hundred miles of gigantic mountain, valley and forested frontiers. What went on in the next valley was unknown to them let alone what was taking place five days' journey northward to the border. The men in the post could not be blamed, for what was there to see in surrounding valleys, and how could they be expected to patrol such a tangled network? The fault lay with those in Kathmandu, Delhi and Western capitals who persisted in ignoring the patient massing of Chinese military strength on the other side of the borders and blindly underestimated its significance.

That this was not an empty allegation we would soon put to the test, for in our intention to go to Dzum we were taking a wide interpretation of the itinerary listed in our travel permit, and we would have to branch off at a right-angled tangent around the next valley from the checkpoint. From there it would take us about three days to Dzum on the Tibetan border—from there we would go right into the dragon's mouth, if the reports brought to me were correct.

And the reports were confirmed next morning. Shortly after dawn a rough-looking local hillman appeared in our camp. He was as fluent in Tibetan as in Gurkhali and as he spoke with the Tibetans around the campfire I gathered he was a regular visitor to Dzum, trading in sheep and wool. He had only just recently returned from a visit and his information held ominous significance. Thousands of Tibetan nomads had recently crossed over the border into the northern areas of Nepal under Chinese pressure. The Chinese in Tibet were confiscating their herds of yaks, sheep, and goats, giving them nothing in return, but transferring them to distant places to work. Many had died of starvation, many others had mysteriously disappeared, some even while working in local constructions. The remainder were fleeing in communities to the borders of India, Nepal, and even to Bhutan, in their attempts to get away from the starvation and terror.

I questioned him closely, and among other items of information was given the news I sought. There were Khambas near Dzum. No, he didn't know how many, as they kept to themselves. About twenty, fifty, one hundred? He shrugged noncommittally, obviously uneasy.

Khambas made short work of informers. But I was satisfied. Once among Khambas, no matter how small a group, I was confident I could get into touch with the main force—if they didn't shoot us first!

The trail rose out of the valley at a steep angle, increasing even more the higher we climbed. After two hours we could look back and see the checkpost and village like little toys beside an imitation stream. And still we climbed. Our morning break was in the stony bed of a mountain stream, which itself plunged a few thousand feet down the mountainside. Afterwards, we continued to climb, the wind whistling around our ears in a steady blow. Ahead, the pure, snow-covered mountains were framed between dark green mountains and deep blue sky.

Suddenly the path bent inwards and downwards and we began a plunging jolting descent.

We continued in this fashion, zigzagging across the mountain face, until we reached the bottom of the valley, legs trembling with the strain. On the other side of the narrow river there was a small clearing and we decided to camp here for the night while Adrian, Chris, and Hemantha reconnoitered a route across the river, which would take us to Dzum, now that we were out of sight of the checkpost.

That evening another Tibetan-speaking Gurung came past the camp and from him we arranged to buy a goat for meat. Also from him we learned that there was a path—extremely dangerous, he warned—across the mountain to Dzum. After some persuasion he agreed to return next morning and go with us as guide.

In the morning it looked as if the guide would not turn up. We had finished tea, and had almost finished packing the loads, before he appeared.

I had an uneasy feeling that something was afoot, for Tsewang had vaguely hinted about the advisability of going straight up the northeast trail to Bih, three days away, to the east and not going across the river and mountains to Dzum in the northwest by an unknown trail. Also, I caught several snatches of conversation among the porters which indicated that they had understood they were going "the easy route." At first I suspected that they had fixed the guide not to turn up, but when he arrived I could see from their attitudes that they were unhappy. When they began to grum-

ble among themselves, and then to the leader, about the difficulties of the unknown route, I said, casually, that we would be going across the face of the mountainside. There was silence for a few minutes, then one or two started asking questions of the guide about the state of the trail. I told them abruptly that if they had no knowledge of the trail and wanted to know about it they could ask Tsewang, who would then ask me. I also said that I had heard the conversation this morning and that if anyone wanted to repeat this threat to go by a different trail then they should do so to me now. There was silence.

“All right, let’s go,” I said, standing up.

But my easy stance hid an inner tension. The slope was at least forty-five degrees, almost completely bare of trees and without shrubs, dropping three thousand feet straight into the valley below. One false step, one slip, one momentary loss of balance, meant certain death. The “trail” itself was almost nonexistent, a hair-line mark across the face of the mountain. The tufts of grass were short, springy, and smooth and covered with a thin layer of dried pine needles, making it treacherous underfoot. Twenty-nine people had to cross not only that stage, but two days of terrifying climbs and descents, and if one died it would be my responsibility. Only the thought of the 100,000 Tibetans already dead, the hundreds of thousands still suffering, and the possible suffering of many hundreds of thousands more would nerve one to order them to proceed.

The guide went first, then Adrian, then Basang of course, then in twos and threes they all picked up their loads and, treading like cats along a glass-topped wall, they picked their way forward.

That part was bad, but it was still nothing to what lay ahead. The six-inch path plunged dizzily downward in straight drops of one hundred feet. Where it was not straight down, it angled across the precipitous face on a terrifyingly insecure carpet of pine needles with only the steady prod of a stick to keep us from hurtling into the boiling river two thousand feet below.

By midday we turned a bend in the mountains and saw the “bridge” across the river from fifteen hundred feet above. The mountain on either side had narrowed into a menacing gorge and the next fifteen hundred feet down and a half-mile forward was a series of sheer drops and steep angles to a point where the two mountainsides

curved inwards into a narrow sixty-foot knife-gash spanned by two tree trunks.

If it looked hair-raising from fifteen hundred feet up it was positively horrifying when standing beside it. The approach was across a smooth rock with a few shallow depressions for footholds, and at the edge of the rock where it rolled over and curved into the knife-gash two narrow tree trunks bound with fibers led onto the "bridge." The bridge itself was only about twenty feet across, also of tree trunks, but it dropped at a steep angle from our side to the far side, and gashes had been cut into the tree trunks to aid as crude "steps" for footholds. There was no hand rope of fibers to help steady one's self. Sixty feet below, the river swirled through the gash in sullen expectation. We not only made it safely, we even filmed and photographed it.

The slope on the far side rose even more steeply than the down slope. Then at one thousand feet we moved on to a sixty-foot rock face to climb straight up. The footholds were only shallow depressions and thin runnels to keep us from certain death beneath, and each man had a fifty or one hundred pound load to carry—without being roped, as on a climbing expedition. And just to make it more difficult a steady wind had arisen and caught us on the exposed parts of the climb.

When we camped in the late afternoon, on a shelf above the river, the Gurung guide killed the goat which—believe it or not—he had led on a rope all the way, and we celebrated the day's safe journey with a royal feast. The goat's head went to the five Gurung hillmen, half of the body went to the porters and half to the seven chief members of the expedition. Tsewang suggested that we have Tibetan "mo-mos"—steamed breads with a filling of spiced meat and onions—and we ate until we could eat no more, and could scarcely move to bed.

I did remember, though, that it was today Meg and the children would arrive in Kathmandu.

Next morning, after climbing another two thousand feet straight up the mountain—description palls with repetition—we stopped in an unexpected tree-shaded glade for breakfast. There we heard on the radio that Mr. Nehru, the Indian prime minister, had died, and that G. L. Nanda had been appointed as his temporary successor.

More sheer climbing, and for hours all that was visible between

steps was the straining calves of the man in front; and all that was audible was the whistling, soughing intake of breaths against the steady moaning of the wind.

Our guide left us shortly after one o'clock, when we had finally reached the "regular trail" to Dzum. It had taken us almost two days to take the roundabout route to avoid being seen by anyone attached to the checkpoint and hardly a waking minute of those days was free from imminent catastrophe. Each step literally carried with it the possibility of an ugly death. Yet it was the prelude to death which would be ugly—the sudden lurch, the vain grasp at slipping grass or air, and a hurtling, bouncing, bone-shattering, flesh-lacerating drop to eternity.

In the two days I had had plenty of time to think of death, and my own attitude toward it. I found the words of George Herbert in the poem, "Death," very apt:

Death, thou wast once an uncouth hideous thing,
 Nothing but bones,
 The sad effect of sadder grones;
Thy mouth was open, but thou couldst not sing.

For we consider'd thee as at some six
 Or ten yeares hence,
 After the losse of life and sense,
Flesh being turn'd to dust, and bones to sticks.

We lookt on this side of thee, shooting short;
 Where we did finde
 The shells of fledg souls left behinde,
Dry dust, which shed no tears, but may extort.

But since our Saviours death did put some blood
 Into thy face;
 Thou are grown fair and full of grace,
Much in request, much sought for as a good.

For we do now behold thee gay and glad,
 As at dooms-day;
 When souls shall wear their new aray,
And all thy bones with beautie shall be clad.

Therefore we can go die as sleep, and trust
 Half that we have
 Unto an honest faithful grave;
Making our pillows either down, or dust.

Shortly after our guide left us we met two Tibetans going down country. There was a break for an exchange of information and some interesting news was given by them.

It seemed that some of the Khambas who were at Dzum had recently gone on a foray against the Chinese over the border. They had met a Chinese convoy, shot it up, killed the Chinese and brought back bounty and guns from the convoy, and herds of yaks and the crossbred *tso* from the surrounding countryside. It was yet another legend to add to the many already being told about the Khambas, but to me it was doubly exciting in that it meant if we could meet and persuade them, they could both put us in touch with other Khambas and take us with them on a raid.

The camp for that night was on the shoulder of a sharp cleft of valleys just below the first of the massive ridge of snow-covered mountains behind which lay our goal. Another few days now would see us there.



12

WE HAD A LONG DAY next day—a day of aching upward climbs and short downward slopes of no interest in themselves but leading us deeper and higher into the mountains. The mountains themselves were mostly tufted grass and rock, impressive only in their immensity and variety of shapes rather than in their coloring. They towered so high and so steep that they shut out the giant Himalayas beyond.

We had traveled all day out of reach—even if never out of sound—of water, and in the late afternoon, just as it looked as if we might get caught in a passing shower of rain, we reached a spot above the river.

Here a massive overhang of rock bulged out from the mountain leaving a narrow shelf, sixty feet long but only about four feet high in front and sloping to a foot high at the rear. It was an ideal spot for a bandit hideout, commanding a view of the valley on three sides. It was also perfectly dry and flat. When the fires were kindled and the storm lanterns lit, the effect was weirdly beautiful.

We were due at Dzum next morning. Dzum was, strictly speaking, really an area, comprising several places, and the first place we were aiming for was known as Chokang. The porters had run out of food and were eating our supplies, so we arranged to march until we arrived at Chokang, without stopping on the way for a meal.

It was easier said than done. The trail rose sharply again and without dropping at all went right up into the early morning clouds. The occasional few houses dotted on mountain slopes were now definitely Tibetan in design and the few travelers were no longer Gurungs but long-haired Tibetans or Bhotias, Nepali citizens of Tibetan extraction, in the Tibetan dress of loose, ankle-length, maroon

colored gowns caught at their waists with tightly wound scarves of different colors.

The sun rose, the morning breeze dropped, the heat intensified and we stopped more often to recover labored breaths. We passed the first herds of grazing *iso*, the cross-breed between a cow and yak. The trail flattened out, wound between scrub bushes between mountains, passed long lines of "mani"—stone piles with the inscribed prayer formula, "Om Mani Padme Hum" of the Tibetans—and we were there.

Ahead lay a breath-catching beautiful valley, spread out in front of us for about two miles before winding away to the left out of sight, at the near end of which was the large Tibetan village of Chokang. Scores of large fields of tall, gently waving wheat and barley were interspersed with clumps of trees in varying shades of green. The mountains on all sides of the valley swept upwards through forests of green pines and firs for two thousand feet, and then towered in snow-covered, pristine beauty against the deep blue of the sky. The wind whispered with cooling susurrus through leaves and corn, and the river was a murmuring lullaby.

We were met at the entrance to the village by a huge figure in Tibetan dress, but his maroon colored gown was tied at the waist to form a knee length kilt, the top part pushed back and with sleeves tied around the waist. It was worn with a crossover shirt of patterned greeny-brown silk.

"Khamba," Tsewang whispered to me nervously. As we drew near I noted with surprise and then amusement that the shirt was made from parachute silk! The Khambas were already living up to their reputation.

"Is he the chief?" I whispered back, "and, if so, why?" Tsewang shrugged his shoulders in bewilderment, and then we met.

The Khamba appeared to be headman of the village at least, and the few men with him some of the village, or other village, leaders. He had a few low-voiced words with Tsewang, and then, pointing up the narrow street between the houses, led the way. As we walked I could hear the villagers anxiously shouting to each other from house to house. "Have the Chinese arrived?"

Adrian fell into step beside me. "What is happening?" he asked.

"Either we are being taken to his house, or we will be taken to a campsite, then later taken to his house—for tea," I added with a

grin. Adrian and Chris had had to drink the strong, rancid butter tea of the Tibetans while filming the monastery in Kathmandu, and had been violently sick as a result.

The Khamba chief led us to a wide patch of ground on the outskirts of the village, just beneath a house which he pointed out as his own, and with a wonderful view of the surrounding valley. When we had thanked him for the site and given the porters orders to unpack and pitch our tents, the Khamba—whose name was Jampa, or, to include his designation as chief or headman, Abu Jampa—invited us to his house.

To spare Adrian and Chris the tea and sympathy, I asked that they might be excused until the camp was pitched, but that I was delighted to go, with Tsewang, right away.

Tibetan custom required that we now begin drinking interminable bowls of buttered tea—tea mixed with rancid butter and salt and churned to a creamy mixture in a long wooden churn—while making polite conversation. At this sitting, only the vaguest outline of plans would be given and conversation restricted mostly to general news and information.

After a while we excused ourselves, promising to return, and went back to the camp. Trashi already had our usual tea made, and I discussed with Adrian and Tsewang what present we should offer to Abu Jampa. This, too, was normal Tibetan custom. The arriving guest was given every local hospitality, but in return he gave what would be luxuries to the host. It was finally decided to present Abu Jampa with rice, Indian tea, and cigarettes.

This time we all went in a group to pay our respects—Adrian, Chris, Hemantha, Tsewang, and myself. I made a short formal speech, apologizing for the poor quality of the gift offered and thanking him for all the help given. He replied that it was unnecessary and lavish and that he was happy to be of assistance.

This time tsamba—barley flour—and dried meat was served, as well as butter tea, and we got down quickly to details. With Tsewang elaborating, I outlined our plans as wanting to film and photograph Tibetan life and customs in the valley and beyond. Also, to get into touch with the Tibetan guerillas in the area—the Khamba “Chu Zhi Kang Druk”—and finally, with their help, to go with them on a raid across the border.

It was quite a list but Abu Jampa listened impassively until we

had finished. He asked Tsewang about our credentials and Tsewang went into a long explanation about my background of help for Tibet and finally produced his own letter of introduction from the Dalai Lama's representative in Kathmandu, and my two letters from Surkhang.

For the next two hours we discussed in detail how we could best handle the project. Abu Jampa then proposed that he should go personally to the next village of Ra-jen, where the chief monastery in the area was situated, and arrange for us to film the monastery and lamas there. He would also send a letter and message to a large encampment of between five hundred and one thousand nomad Tibetans who had fled from Chinese oppression to a place a day's journey beyond Ra-jen. Finally he would send word to the leaders of the local group of Khambas and see if they would agree to meeting us.

It was as much as we could hope for—far more than I had even expected to accomplish in such a short time, although it had taken us seventeen days to get here from Kathmandu and over three months from London. I retired to bed in the now beautifully silver-lit valley, with a deep feeling of satisfaction.

We all had an uneasy night for we were now at almost fourteen to fifteen thousand feet and suffered from stomach cramp, diarrhea, and sleeplessness. I told the others it had been my experience that it would pass in two or three days.

Immediately after an early breakfast, Adrian, Chris, Hemantha, and Tsewang left to begin filming. I wanted to write up my notes, and had just sat down in the warm morning sunshine, back against a large rock overlooking the valley, when there was a rustle of movement in the camp as the lounging porters stood up or moved out of the way. A tall figure, preceded by a local Tibetan, strode up to where I was sitting and gave a smart salute. The easy, independent carriage, the magnificent physique, the broad features, all indicated another Khamba. But, most significant of all, he was dressed in khaki shirt, wool-lined deer or yak-skin trousers, bound by khaki puttees and army boots. I had made direct contact with the Khamba guerillas at last.

I asked him to sit down beside me and ordered Trashi to bring tea, and we chatted casually for some time. There was none of the characteristic servility of the central Tibetan with a Khamba. He

talked as an equal, if politely, with his own leaders and foreigners alike. This Khamba was particularly cautious in talking about his activities and in addition he was, I guessed, an uncommunicative, cold, and ruthless individual, although a decidedly good-looking one. He was from Litang, in central Kham, but had left there almost twenty years ago, a few years before I had arrived there. His eyes only occasionally flickered with interest when I mentioned names that he knew, and sometimes a flashing smile would light up his otherwise somber face.

We had been talking for some time when he mentioned that one of their group had had frostbite, was in extreme pain and had already lost three toes with gangrene. Could I give medicine? I replied that I had not brought many medicines but certainly I could give something to help.

“When should I go?” I asked casually.

“Tomorrow—or today?” he replied, watching me closely.

“Today is better” I said, “as it will be one day’s pain less, perhaps.”

“Will you come now and alone?” he questioned.

“It will be better,” I answered again. “Don’t you agree?”

“Yes,” he replied. “We must decide about the films and photographs and other matters, but for the present we would like you to come alone.”

“You have something to eat at Abu Jampa’s,” I said, rising, “and I will prepare medicine, then we shall go.”

He stood up, saluted, and strode out of the camp with only a casual nod of acknowledgment to the respectful porters.

Adrian and the others returned before I left, and I quickly explained the situation to Adrian. He agreed that this was too important an opportunity to miss, and when the Khamba was ready I left with him and Tsewang.

The trail wound through the fields, then out on to a boulder-scattered slope highlighted by a spectacular waterfall. This soon led on to a wide valley with more cultivated fields stretching away into the distance in which were working rows of Tibetan women. As we passed they stood up, stared at the sight of a bearded foreigner, and chattered excitedly.

The Khamba went ahead, Tsewang following, with myself behind. The trail angled upwards, away from the fields and towards the

approaching snow. We skirted a village, dropped down towards the river, crossed the bridge, climbed a pleasant slope—and there was the Khamba encampment. It consisted of large black yak-hair tents pitched on a grassy platform with the forest and snows behind forming a magnificent backdrop.

As we approached several figures emerged from the tents and came towards us. When we met I was about to give the usual Tibetan greeting of uplifted hands held together but stopped as they came smartly to attention and saluted. I returned the salute.

They were a striking looking group, only one of them under six feet in height, and he looked the deadliest of the lot. All were dressed in the knee-length, loosely tied gown, parachute silk shirts, knee-length riding boots or regulation army boots with puttees, wool-lined yak-skin trousers, and a variety of headgear. Inside the leader's tent there were three carpeted dais around the sides and at the far end a small altar with the Dalai Lama's picture prominent. I was led to the seat of honor beneath this, the others ranged around the sides and the man who had come as my escort I noted was sitting two places away on my right which meant that there was someone more important still to come. This man came in shortly afterwards. Like the others he was tall, powerfully built, but slightly older—middle to late forties, I guessed.

My escort gave a short account of his trip to get me, and before he finished the smallest but deadliest looking Khamba, who had been watching me more closely than the others, suddenly swore:

“Dik-ba kur! (By my sins!) I have it! You were the foreigner who came to Litang in Kham with Pangda Topgyay and two hundred soldiers about fifteen years ago. You rode the grey horse with a demon and I watched you race afterwards!”

I looked at him with as much—perhaps more—amazement than the others. I had hoped that my knowledge of the Kham dialect and former acquaintance with some of their leaders would break through any resistance to interrogation and proposed association, but never had I thought of meeting someone who had actually known me among the first Khambas met. More, going beyond good fortune and divine providence, to meet a Khamba who had seen me ride a horse even they had considered to be so unbreakable that they had thought it was possessed by a demon! He had seen me ride in races against their best horses and horsemen—and win. He had seen me

shoot against their best marksmen—and come in among the first three on several occasions. All this he now recounted with relish to his engrossed companions.

But the run of the remarkable near-miraculous was not yet finished. The leader, the older man, now turned to me.

“When you were in Kham with Pangda Topgyay, did you ever go to Bumda village?” he asked.

“Yes,” I replied. “I stayed there with Pangda Topgyay’s steward.”

“That is my birthplace,” he said, “and I am a subject of the Pangda-Tsang family.”

The breakthrough was complete. For the next hour, as I drank butter tea and ate tsamba and dried meat in the sunlit tent, I talked over mutual acquaintances and well-remembered experiences.

When I had eaten, they brought in their companion with frost-bite, yet another tall, powerful Tibetan. The description of his leg which the escort had given was an understatement. The whole of the front part of his right foot was a suppurating gangrenous mass of stinking flesh. If he had had two toes left they were now lost in the spongy black excrescence—except for a piece of twisted nail and a projecting piece of bone.

I took a deep breath and called for plenty of boiling water. It was many years since I had operated, and the sight did not affect me, but the sense of frustration did. During the years when I traveled in Tibet I had to take on cases which were far beyond my competence, but which, if I refused to help, would only mean more suffering and agonizing death if I did not do something. But I never lost the fury of impotence at my own limited knowledge and even more limited equipment.

Now I had to cut away the gangrenous toes, and all I had was a razor-blade set into the end of a piece of wood quickly and expertly whittled by the Khambas. My only anaesthetic was four sleeping tablets—and two of the powerful Khambas to hold their companion down. For the rest, Dettol, iodine, Mybacin, and clean gauze and bandages. I don’t know who was more exhausted at the end of the operation—the patient or myself. He had not given a murmur throughout, only straining and grimacing at times of extreme agony. Both of us were covered with perspiration.

I gave him a course of Terramycin and told him to sleep and I would call again in two days to look at the feet.

When I returned to our camp it was something of an anticlimax to find everything normal after the excitement of my day. The evening meal was being prepared at both campfires: flames crackled and pans hissed, men talked and joked and laughed, several villagers were gathered round listening to the radio. In the valley below smoke curled lazily against the darkening green of the trees, and the last rays of the sun turned to yellow the tops of the high forests and the snows. Inhabitants on the roofs of the houses called to others working in the fields; women, boys and girls returned from the nearby stream carrying water-buckets on their backs, and birds sang their last evening song. In this idyllic setting, I told Adrian and Chris of the day's events in as casual a manner as possible, while Hemantha was occupied with the radio and the wide-eyed villagers. They agreed to return with me to the guerillas' camp in two days' time, taking their cameras, and hoped that the Khambas would agree to having the camp photographed and, especially, the Khamba with the frostbitten foot.

Our camp had become more noisy and as we finished our conversation I noticed that what had occasioned it was the presence of some of the younger local women. From joking about the villagers' ignorance of the radio, and misrepresentations of what was being broadcast, our porters now switched to laughing, mocking comments on the young women's looks, offers of marriage, speculation on their virginity—or lack of it—and even bawdier remarks. But the biggest laugh of the evening was on our Tibetan porters—and Hemantha.

The Tibetan people are unabashedly promiscuous. With a claimed population of between five to ten million inhabitants living in Greater Tibet—the three Provinces of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo, lying in the 750,000 square miles between India, and China, Sinkiang and Burma—they were a diverse community in a vast mountainous country seven times the size of the U.K. and a third of the U.S. Most of the Tibetan population were nomadic herdsmen, or traders and muleteers traveling between the neighboring countries, or lamas, or wandering tribesmen. The minority remainder lived in cities, towns, and villages. These dispositions and activities had produced polygamy in some areas, where a man had two or more wives; in other areas, polyandry, where a wife had two or more husbands; but in all areas, whether polygamous or polyandrous, a wide promiscuity. So that a headman would offer his wife or daughter as part of the hospitality,

a husband would think nothing of taking another village maiden in addition to his several wives; and a wife would arrange to have a lover from resident city beaux, or passing caravan traders and muleteers.

Our Tibetans had been no different. On the trail northwards most of their conversations had been concerned with either prices of food or sex—the latter most of all. Part of their ribbing, especially from those who could speak some Nepali, had been directed towards young Hemantha, with the promise that they would find a Tibetan woman for him when we arrived in Dzum. Now that we were here, and the Tibetans were assessing the local female potential, the most beautiful young woman in the valley was a nun! While this did not limit their vocabulary, it certainly restricted their field of activities.

The Tibetan attitude to sex was similar to that healthily, if more lyrically, expressed by the devout Dean of St. Paul's, John Donne, in his "Elegie: To His Mistris Going to Bed."

With these delightful cogitations, lulled by the melancholy rise and fall of the Tibetans' evening prayers, I fell asleep.

The following day we had to get down to serious, detailed discussion of plans in the event of the Khambas agreeing to take us on a raid with them against the Chinese. Our quickly established contact with them also meant that we would have to push ahead rapidly with the background filming and photography, so that when the time came for us to join them on a raid we could leave immediately for Kathmandu.

But one unexpected eventuality cropped up when Abu Jampa told us that in about fifteen days it would be the celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday. If we could be in the valley then there would be much of interest to film. Adrian was very keen to film this, but it meant extending our stay to a dangerous length. Not only might the Nepal government become suspicious, but—a new possibility—Hemantha's parents might become anxious and begin enquiries which could result in us being found in an area not included in our permits. But after considering all angles we decided that we would risk remaining. It might well take that extra time or even longer to plan a raid.

In the late afternoon, all activities completed, I lounged beside the campfire, reading. In *The History of the World* I reached the "Centuries of France." In *The Metaphysical Poets* I reached "On Hope: By Way of Question and Answer, Between A. Cowley and R.

Crashaw.” In the New Testament I finished the Gospels and moved into the Acts of the Apostles.

It was an impressive combination, poised as I was between the intellectual political argument for a Confederation of Himalayan States, and a mad physical adventure with a group of Khamba guerillas against the armed might of the most powerful country in Asia.

In addition to the many other details which had to be considered we now had the considerable problem of Hemantha. We had planned on an uncooperative government liaison officer and had decided that we would either (1) make him so tired that he would not want to accompany us into the snows; (2) give him the slip on a film trip to one of the side valleys; (3) give him a double dose of our weekly malarial prophylactic, Camaquin, to make him feel sufficiently miserable to refuse to go any further with us.

None of these plans could be carried out against friendly Hemantha. While not knowing what we intended doing or even where we were, he was thrilled at the adventure of accompanying us, and we were certain that he would be completely agreeable to going all the way with us. But he was an official appointee of his government, and while I was convinced that Banskota would not admit to the government that he had sent a young student as liaison officer (he probably had the name of one of his staff on the official records), yet we could not jeopardize Hemantha's career, or risk his imprisonment, by sharing in our adventure, quite apart from the fact that he was not physically equipped to do it. Toughened as we were, it still caused us many hours of thought and concern whether we would be able just to move fast enough in these high altitudes. Over 15,000 feet, even without a load, all humans other than Tibetans—or Sherpas, of course—slowed to a breathless crawl.

We still had not solved the problem of what to do about Hemantha when we were called for our evening meal. Tonight we fed royally. In order to keep down the number and weight of our loads we had drastically cut down on the number of tinned and packaged foreign foods, and since we had left Kathmandu we had fed mostly on Tibetan scones and eggs for the morning meal, and boiled chicken and rice for the evening meal. For the past few days we had come through chickenless and eggless country and so we had had to live on rice and scones dipped in “dahl” gravy.

Today the porters had brought in a whole sheep, and Tsewang made scones of Tibetan *mo-mos*—meat and onions wrapped in steamed bread—and we ate ravenously of these, dragging ourselves replete to our sleepingbags.

The big day. Today we would know definitely whether or not the Khambas would allow us to accompany them on a raid, and if so, if they would permit us to film the action. I had asked them to think and to pray over it in the two days before I returned to dress the Khamba's foot and I would do the same, and then, to give us their decision.

The previous evening, they had sent a man to escort us to their camp, the man who had known me in Kham, whose name I now knew as Assang. Shortly after sunrise he, Tsewang, Abu Jampa, Adrian, Chris, and myself were on the way. We had decided, finally, just to ask Hemantha to stay behind to look after the camp, and as this was an accepted routine for each of us, he was unlikely to have any suspicions regarding our destination.

I was a bit uneasy about his seeing the Khamba—another distinctive figure, for whom the Tibetan porters stood up respectfully and looked at admiringly much as children do in England with the Guards—but there was nothing we could do about this. The Khamba wanted to hear the Tibetan news on the radio from Peking and Delhi, and Hemantha had the radio. When Hemantha in friendly fashion commented on the fine fur cap Assang was wearing and asked if it was Tibetan, the Khamba replied laconically in Tibetan, through me as interpreter, of course, "No, Chinese, I had to shoot him for it—but don't tell the Nepali that." So I simply said that it was a Chinese-style hat.

When we arrived at the Khamba camp I found that in addition to the black yak-hair tents the Khambas had now erected a ceremonial tent in our honor. This was almost an exact replica of the medieval Crusader's tent, white with red, blue, and green trimmings, and on the roof an elaborate black scroll pattern. Inside, carpets had been scattered around the sides of the tent with low tables in front of each.

The inevitable butter tea was brought in as soon as we arrived, then followed by sweetened Indian tea for Adrian and Chris who were still in some difficulty over drinking the butter tea.

The conversation remained general until Assang brought out a 35 mm. Canon camera. I looked at him quizzically:

“Did you shoot a Chinese for this, too?” I asked. He laughed uproariously. “No, this I bought a few years ago in India. Is it any good? Please ask your friends.”

Adrian and Chris said that it was a very good camera and had he taken any photographs? Assang said he had, but that he had now run out of film. Did they have any to spare? Adrian replied that they had only a few with them to fit this particular camera, but that he was welcome to some of what they had.

This led naturally to discussion on cameras and I told Adrian and Chris to take the cameras out of the cases, with the long distance lenses, and this would provide an opportunity to open up a conversation on shooting films from a distance. The Khambas were thrilled with this and spent over an hour focusing on distant snows and bringing them close up. Chris then showed them how to focus on the distant trail and pick out people which the naked eye could not see.

When they all had had a turn at this I said conversationally to Ten-dar, the man who had first come to meet and escort me and who I had found out was the commanding officer, that this was how we hoped to film the Chinese if they agreed to take us on a raid. He was noncommittal, but his usually expressionless face lit up with an appreciative smile. He was much friendlier and more at ease than on the previous occasion. But I knew enough of Tibetan custom to let the matter rest there, and bring it up again when they were ready to discuss it.

It was after the excellent meal was finished that the time for discussion arrived. The leaders of the Khambas took their different places according to rank down one side of the tent, the burly Gyen Lamala first—he, I had also found out, was the commanding officer of another nearby group of guerillas, just visiting Ten-dar—then Assang, and so on, with a few others standing at the door. At the top of the tent were myself, with Adrian on my right and Tsewang, the leader of the porters, on my left. On the right side Chris and a few more Khambas. The atmosphere was solemn and tense.

“This is it,” I whispered to Adrian, as Gyen Lamala and Ten-dar launched into the discussion through Tsewang, the Sirdar. It was not that I could not understand, but that he as the Dalai Lama’s representative, bearing the letters of introduction, was the recognized intermediary. When they were finished he would tell me everything

as if I had not understood, and I would also reply through him in like fashion.

Tsewang turned to me. "I have been asked by Gyen Lamala and the other leaders of the *Chu Zhi Kang Druk* (an ancient name for Tibet, used by the guerilla patriots) to say that they very much appreciate your coming here, whether it is agreed that you should go on a raid or not. They also appreciate the fact that you have gone to a great deal of trouble to reach here to make the film. It is because they appreciate this so much that you have been invited here today, given a feast, and will later be given a freshly killed sheep as a gift. They want you to know all this whatever may be the decision about going on a raid."

I nodded my appreciation, folding my hands in the Tibetan gesture of thanks, but said nothing, for Tsewang had not finished.

"About the raid the *Chu Zhi Kang Druk* leaders ask if you have fully considered how serious the consequences of such an attack might be? Everybody may be killed or captured, for the Chinese troops are both clever and ruthless. For themselves this is a known risk taken at all times, but it is much more serious if either should happen to you. In the first place they themselves may be accused of having murdered you for your equipment, for it would please China, Nepal, and India to place the blame on 'Khamba bandits.' Again, you are well-known people, and reprisals may be taken against the few thousand *Chu Zhi Kang Druk*, which would neither help the cause of Tibet nor your own careers. If you are captured the Chinese will torture you, but also will make propaganda against you and your countries, and other consequences, beyond what we are able to consider, may result. Before we talk any more, before decisions which you may not like be taken, they would like your opinion on these matters, and hope you understand that they offer the suggestions as friends."

He stopped, and I nodded my understanding, and said that I would like to explain to my friends.

"The answer is 'no'," said Adrian despondently, as I turned to him; but I said in reply "No decision as yet," and went on to tell him and Chris what I had just been told. They listened, we formed our reply, and I turned to Tsewang.

"We have discussed what the leaders have said, and we deeply appreciate all the consideration they have given to our proposals

and especially to our personal affairs. But we would like them to know that this is something we have thought over for many months, and not just today here in the tent. The Tall One (their name for Adrian) and I are married—he has one child, I have three—and we have both made statements before legal people in our country about our possessions in the event of our death. Both of our wives were sick when we left them and the Tall One's wife may even now be dead as she was to have a serious operation. So we are not young, irresponsible adventurers.”

Two or three of the older leaders nodded understandingly and I felt a surge of confidence. These were my people. The best years of my life had been spent among them, some of the finest people I had known were also known to them. I bent forward towards them, speaking directly to them and yet occasionally looking at Tsewang in observing the custom. But I was now a Khamba among Khambas, and did not require Tsewang or anyone.

“Look,” I said, holding out my upturned hand, “here is India and here is China, with Tibet in the center. Tibet is very important, not only to you as Tibetans, or to me as your friend, but also to India, China, Asia, and the whole world.” They nodded, and I went on. “Why is it that no one else recognizes this? One reason is because of politics, but the chief reason is because you lack opportunity to publicize your predicament. In the past I have tried to do this, but without a regular supply of dramatic news no one is interested. Today, if someone is killed in Africa or some small island it is world news in radio, newspapers and films, but if hundreds of Tibetans are killed no one says anything because they do not know.”

Again they nodded, and they sat forward, shoulders hunched in concentration as they followed my words.

“We have come here so that the world may know about Tibet—its suffering, its importance and its courage. We can film and photograph Tibetans in refugee camps to show something of the suffering, but this is not true Tibet. Tibet is defending religion against a godless country. Tibet is five million people refusing to submit to 700 million. Tibet is a few poorly armed Khambas—the Dalai Lama's loyal fighters, the famous *Chu Zhi Kang Druk*—fighting against impossible numbers of well-equipped Chinese troops. This is what we want to tell the world. I showed you already how Tibet was important between two countries who may soon be at war. In Tibet the two

most important factors in such a war will be—one, the Chamdo-Sikkim road from east to west, and the Sinkiang-Shigatse road from north to south; two, the ability of the Tibetans to attack this road at any point and make it useless if they are given aid on a big enough scale. Now, if you agree, I suggest that you launch a raid on the north-south road and attack a Chinese convoy traveling on it, but permit us to come with you to see and film the action. We will then show to the world how easily this can be done and they will begin to take you seriously. It is for this reason that we came, and without this our whole journey will be a failure.”

I sat back, finished, and Tsewang began talking. The Khambas listened politely until he had finished, but they had obviously got everything from the expressions on their faces. While I gave Adrian and Chris an outline of what I had said, they talked together. When the tempo of discussion dropped I turned again towards them for their decision.

Tsewang continued: “They understood and agreed with everything that you have said. If you want to go with them they are happy to agree. They also want you to know that what you have said is especially significant because they have only just returned from a raid against a Chinese convoy in which they destroyed nine trucks out of a convoy of fourteen, and yet no one in the outside world knew of this because there was nobody to tell. They believe that you have been sent by God to help the suffering Tibetan people and anything that they can do to further our project they will do.”

“Where was the last raid,” I asked, “and where do you suggest that we make the next one?” I turned to Adrian and asked if he had our map and he produced it.

For the next two hours we pored over the map while the Khambas described the Chinese garrison positions and troop dispositions. It was decided to strike as near as possible to the scene of the recent action. This quick attack, following so soon after the other, would have the advantage of surprise to offset the disadvantage of the Chinese being alerted in that area. A rough plan was drawn up, and we sat back to drink more tea, while we continued the discussion.

The Khambas did not want to go into too many details at this stage for they wanted to conform to their customs of praying to the gods and enquiring what their mind was on the whole project. For the moment it was agreed that we should go, that we should attack

the important north-south road, and that it should be approximately in four days' time. They would now go to the monastery and they would inform the priests of what they thought and ask them to consult the gods, and bless the venture.

We had received an official invitation to visit the monastery the next day to do some filming, but since we were obviously expected to go now with the Khamba leaders we went along with them. We drank more tea, made polite conversation while low-voiced conversation went on in the background, and then left to return to our camp at Cho-kang.

On the way back Tsewang spoke to me of the preparations being discussed for special prayers for us in the monastery and valley while we were away on our dangerous mission, and also for the preparations for the Dalai Lama's birthday. While on the subject he delicately suggested that we might make a donation to the monastery as the lamas were going to a lot of trouble and expense to make it a specially memorable celebration. Adrian agreed to donate five hundred rupees, and this seemed to please Tsewang.

He then gave a long and serious dissertation on the significant distinction between believers, such as Tibetans and myself as a representative of the Jesus Christ doctrine, and unbelievers, such as the Chinese Communists. The believers had the superior advantage of a powerful God who would always triumph over unbelievers if our hearts were clean and we did not sin. Because of this he, personally, was confident that I would be successful in our cause of seeking help for Tibet. It was sincere and touching, very real and close to my own heart.

It took on even greater significance when, on my return to camp, I read in the Acts of Apostles:

. . . For in this city there were gathered together against thy Holy servant Jesus . . . both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever thy hand and thy plan had predestined to take place . . . grant to thy servants . . . boldness. . .

. . . For if this plan and this undertaking is of men, it will fail, but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found to be opposing God. . .

. . . And the Patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him, and rescued him out of all his afflictions,

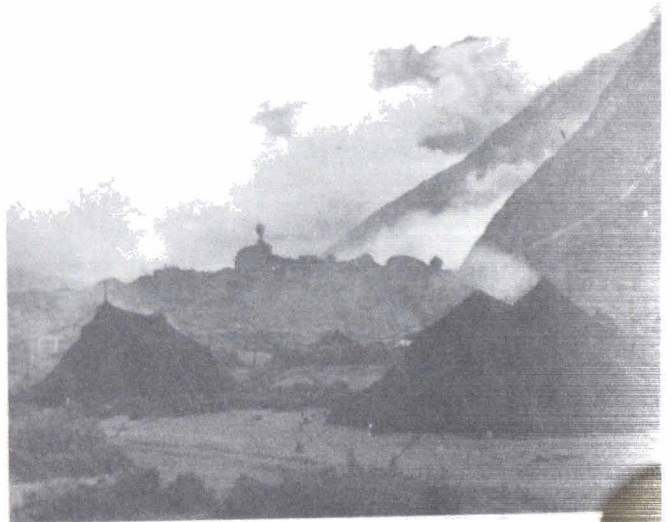
and gave him favour and wisdom before Pharaoh, King of Egypt, who made him Governor of Egypt

And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in word and in deeds and the voice of the Lord came (to him) . . . I have surely seen the ill treatment of my people that are in Egypt, and heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt . . .

He was still the same God. Change the name of Egypt to China or Tibet and He was still able to do the same mighty works—if only He could find believing servants like Joseph and Moses. Men prepared to accept isolation, opprobrium, and misunderstanding for His Name's sake.



Above left: George Patterson treats a Khamba's gangrenous foot. Above right: he discusses plans with the Khambas. Below, left: Khamba guerillas enjoy a joke. Below right: Khamba tents at Dzum.



I SPENT A restless night. It was not the excitement occasioned by the coming adventure that kept me awake so much as the thought of my share of the responsibility in planning the raid. There were several casuistical devices by which this responsibility might be avoided, but none of them stood up in the presence of God. I was part of a plan to attack a Chinese convoy in which people would be killed. I could not accept that the end justified the means, in its accepted sense; that is, that it was necessary for a few Chinese to die in order that many Tibetans, Chinese or other peoples might live. I could only conclude the night with an agonized prayer that I was a servant of God, stumbling but sincere, who believed that God sent me on this mission, against many inclinations of my own, and whose only plea was "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief. Thy will be done."

I was reading in the New Testament in the morning when Tsewang came up to me with the leading lama of the monastery. He had come to renew the invitation to film the monastery tomorrow, but also to say that, after prayer and consultation with the gods, it had been decided to leave for the raid on the 6th—only two days ahead—and not on the 7th, as had been proposed yesterday. The Khambas had accepted this, and Ten-dar, the commanding officer, would come to see us later in the day to discuss the plans in detail.

A man called at the camp about midday to take us to where Ten-dar was squatting in the shade of a large tree, on the mountain-side above the village. When we arrived he inspected the surrounding hillside closely for signs of herdsmen or passing travelers, then satisfied, motioned us to sit down beside him.

He took a piece of paper on which was a roughly drawn map from an inside pocket and spread it out in front of us. He apologized for its crudity compared with ours but said that it had been drawn out

of their own experience of the country and that it would do meantime, for he only wanted to give us a rough idea of the tentative plans. He then went on to show where we would camp on this side of a twenty-thousand-foot pass on the night of the 6th. Scouts would be sent out immediately to spy out the country and road to the east and west for signs of movement from the Chinese garrisons there. When they were satisfied that all was safe, they would return to the main group to report and then we would all move quickly across the pass and down into a narrow valley.

This valley led on to a natural fork in the mountains where they sloped down to the motor road. Ten-dar would lead us to a chosen spot on this side of a deep river where we could set up the cameras, and then he would take the men to their firing positions. The machine-guns would be just beneath us on the other side. The stream, and the rifles to our left. There was a bridge and a turn in the road to our right and a man would be there to watch for any convoy coming from the south, and another man to the north.

If the convoy were too large or too heavily escorted then it would be permitted to pass. But if we wanted, we could photograph and film it from our camera position. If the convoy were small enough for them to attack, then the scouts would give a prearranged signal, the action would begin, and we would be on our own until the action was completed. If possible they would then loot the convoy and we could film close-up, but if there was danger of a counterattack then they would forego the loot and make our safe return their first consideration.

This was as much as could be planned at this stage, and was naturally subject to change at the last moment. If no suitable convoy came, for instance, we would withdraw a little to the comparative safety of the narrow valley, sleep there, and make another attempt the next day. We arranged to take with us a small butane gas fire, which was compact and safe to use, not having flames, or smoke, in addition to our warm clothing. For the rest we would have to live on the Tibetan tsamba, tea, chocolate, and soup.

In order that no word of the action leak out, either south to Nepal or north to China, Ten-dar was arranging to have the valley sealed to the north and south, allowing no possible agent to leave until after we had returned. He treated this as a matter-of-fact precaution rather than a fantastic indication of the complete control which they

exercised at will in the northern regions of Nepal.

Finally, he said that he would arrange for three men to be sent to the camp in the early hours of the morning of the 6th and they would carry our equipment. We should have everything packed as inconspicuously as possible, and keep Hemantha from seeing them. He gave his sudden, illuminating smile which transformed him from a ruthlessly efficient guerilla commander to a recklessly handsome daredevil, and our discussion was over.

Adrian and I returned to the camp, and as Chris and Hemantha were away filming, we began preparations for the raid.

With Hemantha's return to camp we had to drop our preparations, and again I returned to my reading. I was under no illusions about the dangers we were running, but again I was not conscious of fear other than the usual tightening of stomach muscles, and the heightening of mental awareness that danger or excitement had always produced in me. But I was deeply conscious of my need to be close to God—not only for my own sake, but for the sake of my family, the success of the present venture, and the future of these peoples to whom I had been sent.

Next morning the others left for the monastery about seven and I said that I would follow on in an hour or so. I wanted time for quiet thinking, reading, and prayer.

Again it was encouraging to read:

Do not be afraid . . . for I am with you and no man shall attack you to harm you

Paul said, *I now bid you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you*

This very night an angel of God said: "Do not be afraid, Paul, you must stand before Caesar, and lo, *God has granted you all those who will sail with you.* So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told"

It was nine o'clock when I finally got away to Ra-jen. The monastery was situated at the foot of a towering rocky mountain that dipped from a sharp peak, then soared to a magnificent snowy crest against the deep blue of the sky. It was surrounded by a cluster of small villages and nomad encampments scattered across the wide valley floor.

The monastery itself was not impressive, but it contained an image with a remarkable history.

I had asked Tsewang casually how old was the image, which was obviously deeply venerated by the Tibetans—and was startled by the reply that it was several centuries old. I was about to dismiss this as one of the many claims of alleged antiquity of images which were rarely factual when Tsewang went on to add that it was one of the three patron images of Tibet. The others had been lost to the Chinese but this one had been brought out before the Chinese could capture it, and it had been kept in the Ra-jen Monastery since that time.

The remarkable escape had added to its legendary history. Tsewang claimed that it had never been “made,” but had been miraculously created by God, and this had been proved many times by the powers that it had manifested to and bestowed on worshipers. On two occasions it had been known to talk, making prophetic utterances, and it was said that it would speak a third time on a matter of supreme importance. It had become a symbol of triumph and defiance against the Chinese and was identified with the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

I looked at the golden expressionless, pock-marked face, and at the faces of the simple believers, and wondered, and shook my head. Why was it possible to believe this and not in an Almighty who became flesh, who bore our sins when He was put to death as a sacrifice on our behalf, who rose from the dead, and who could give the same kind of power to all who believed in Him?

But Tsewang was weeping quietly as he gazed at the face of the image and listened to the chanting of the monks against the steady beat-beat-beat of the drums and deep-toned dolor of the great trumpets. They were praying for his wife, he said, and Adrian's wife, and my wife, for their country which was suffering so much under the Chinese, for the Dalai Lama in exile in a foreign land, and for their religion being desecrated and destroyed.

We returned to camp in the early afternoon to make our final preparations. We had decided that the best way was to keep it simple. Since we were to be filming up in the snows, where we had heard that there were many Tibetan nomads and others, at a height for which Hemantha was not equipped, he would stay behind with Tsewang to keep watch while we were away. So far as Hemantha was concerned we would simply be away filming in the mountains for several days, and because Tsewang and the other Tibetan porters

were left behind, it would not be suspected that we were up to anything important. We were reduced to three loads, containing all that we would require for our estimated eight days' absence. These three loads would be carried by three trusted porters provided by the Khambas.

Then the loads were prepared to our satisfaction—light-weight sleeping bags, warm clothing, packaged soups, dried eggs, adequate number of films, no toilet requisites of any kind, medicines especially for bullet wounds and high altitude troubles and camera equipment with all chromium surfaces dulled so that no sun-glint would reveal our position to the Chinese. I took Tsewang aside for a short final talk that Adrian, Chris, and I had prepared and polished in the past few days.

Would he be prepared, I asked, to leave ahead of our expedition on the return journey? I went on to explain. If our mission against the Chinese were successful, and we were able to film a Khamba attack on a convoy on one of the most strategic roads in Tibet, then we were going to have in our possession filmed evidence of such importance that the Chinese would be prepared to do anything, literally, to ensure its recovery. We were going to prove that we could get behind the Chinese lines, attack at a point of our choosing only two weeks after a similar attack nearby, film the whole proceedings—and return to safety. This was an action—and evidence—that the Chinese could not ignore and, if successful, they would do all in their power to recover the films before they were shown to the world. To outwit the Chinese, and the Nepalese and other governments who might either be subject to Chinese pressure or reluctant to have the films shown because of policies of their own, we proposed to send Tsewang ahead of us, carrying the films. He would pass through Kathmandu without showing himself to anyone who might know him and go straight to a friend of mine in India with the films and a letter, and he would pay Tsewang a large sum on their safe delivery.

After this had been discussed in some detail, Tsewang agreed. We were ready to go.

Saturday, June 6th! It was 4:30 A.M. when we were awakened by Trashi with the whispered information that our Khamba porters had arrived. We ate our last “good” meal for some time—Tibetan scones and boiled mutton. By 5:30 we were ready to go.

It was obvious that our own Tibetan porters knew that something was going on from the solemn expressions on their faces. Tsewang had said last night that they did not know what we intended to do but they and the whole valley knew that special prayers were being offered at the monastery for the next week for some extremely important event, and this was sufficient in itself to cause them to form a line of unsmiling faces and folded hands in a gesture of good-bye. Tsewang called for some water and with a flick of his fingers he sprinkled us as we passed in the Tibetan gesture of good luck.

Yesterday had been cloudy and cold, but this morning was clear and looked like being a beautiful day. The trail wound past the monastery and villages visited yesterday to the Khamba camp above. Here we stopped and were met by Lama-La and Assang, two of the guerilla officers, and served a quick bowl of hot tea by Nyima—of the gangrened foot, now cheerful at the thought of possible recovery—while Assang got ready to leave.

All the others had left yesterday, leading pack horses carrying the arms and ammunition, and we were to meet them near the head of the pass. It would be a long day, warned Assang, and we would not arrive until about twelve hours later. We left the Khambas' camp at 7:00 A.M.

The trail continued up the valley, past the villages of Nye-lay and Chu-lay, where we had a quick midmorning snack, before turning northwards. Now we were out of the pleasantly cultivated valley and in a savagely split tangle of barren precipitous gorges where the trail rose steeply in a narrow hairline across slanting rocky faces, or wound treacherously across sheer stone or slate slopes which moved under our feet and slid away in a gathering landslide to the river three thousand and more feet below.

About midday, in a turn in the trail, we met a group of waiting nomads. They seemed to be expecting us, for Assang and our porters stopped, sat down, and talked. After a short rest they joined our party as we climbed northwards. An hour later, after a long, steep, zigzagging climb, we emerged into a widening valley. While we stopped to recover our breaths beside a "Mani" wall, Ten-dar, the Khamba commander, appeared.

I did not know how much was to be said in front of the nomads, so we simply talked about the trail as we walked on. Ahead, the

valley widened into a shelf high above the river and on the pleasant tableland, framed by a magnificent backdrop of snow mountains, were several nomad encampments. Ten-dar led the way to a tent similar to the others, and when we entered we found some of the Khamba guerillas we had already met and some others whom we had not met but who were obviously of the same group.

Inside the tent the ground had been covered by a layer of aromatic branches, covered by carpets down the three sides as usual, and as we sat down, first tea, yak milk, yoghurt, and then a meal of rice and eggs was served. When I commented on the amount and variety of food, Ten-dar drily observed that we had better make the most of it, for we would have very few opportunities to eat in the next few days.

When we had finished eating, Adrian and Chris went outside to film and photograph the nomad encampment, while I remained in the tent talking with Ten-dar.

“We have had to change our plans a little,” he said, after a long, companionable silence. In the past few days I had come to like this tall, taciturn Khamba leader very much. He was still cautious and rather uncommunicative, given to long brooding silences, and I often caught his glance resting on me thoughtfully. But he smiled more often, was obviously more relaxed, and had accepted me.

“Yesterday,” he went on, “was too cloudy for our scouts to make a careful reconnaissance, and I decided to wait here instead of just under the pass as arranged. I have sent out six men to spy out the three trails leading from here to the area of the ambush. I am now about to send out a seventh to reconnoiter the place of ambush itself.”

“But how will this affect our timing?” I inquired. “I thought we were expecting to travel so quickly, and to so tight a schedule that we could not afford to lose three hours of daylight.”

“We can’t,” he agreed, “so we have to lose three hours of sleep. We will get up at 1:30 A.M., take a quick meal of tsamba and tea, and then travel as far as we can before dawn. I will have more reports then about the situation on the trail ahead, and will decide whether to remain until dark or move on cautiously in daylight.”

“How are we going to travel in darkness on the kind of trail we came over today?” I asked with interest. “Is the trail ahead easier to negotiate?”

He gave his sudden reckless smile, then looked serious again. "The trail ahead is much more difficult. We have one very high pass with snow, and some smaller passes with many dangerous places. On this side of the pass we will use torches occasionally when I think it safe, but on the other side we must not use torches at all. The Chinese soldiers are clever, and very tough and well-armed, and it is very difficult to outwit them. We are few and poorly armed and cannot afford to make mistakes."

"What arms do you have?" I asked. I had heard of mysterious channels of supply from India, had heard of plane-drops and seen scores of Tibetans wearing the green-camouflage parachute silk shirts—reputedly dropped by Indian planes, American planes and even Chinese Nationalist planes.

"You will see our guns shortly," he said, "when the others come in. Most are old, of different makes, and our ammunition is difficult to find. A-lay!" he sighed in sudden bitterness and regret, "When I think of the guns and ammunition which we handed over to the Indian officials when we arrived with the Dalai Lama in 1959, I could weep. We had modern machine-guns and mortars and automatic rifles captured from the Chinese, but the Indian officials would not let us keep them. Now we have gathered some more with great difficulty but it is so little to fight against so many."

He shook his head regretfully, lapsing into one of his silences. I looked at his handsome, finely featured face in the darkening gloom of the tent.

"What were you before the revolt in Tibet?" I asked curiously. While he had the magnificent physique of the tough Khamba, he had the ascetic features and thoughtful eyes of the scholar.

The eyes which hitherto had been so watchful were now turned to me, unguarded, and with a jolt of surprise I realized that here was a man—tough, ruthless, feared, respected, and admired Khamba leader—who must often have wept. There was no sign of tears in his eyes, but they were dark with a personal grief that caught suddenly at my own throat. I, too, had known something of the experience expressed so cogently by Berdyaev in *The Destiny of Man*—

The suffering that has once been lived through cannot possibly be effaced. . . . The man who has travelled far in the realms of the spirit, and who has passed through great trials in the cause

of his search for truth, will be formed spiritually along lines which must differ altogether from those pertaining to the man who has never shifted his position and to whom new spiritual territories are unknown. . . . I am enriched by my experience, even if, to cross the abyss which lay before me, I have been forced to address myself to powers other than human. . . .

I was suddenly humbled and glad that I was here to share the rare rapport with an unknown Tibetan. If for no other reason, than that I had come out of the West to give eighteen years of my life to serve an inner vision and conviction which led me to share such a moment with such a man, then I was content. His ways were not my ways, neither was his God my God, but the fire of his personal vision and commitment was no less intense than my own.

“I was not born for this kind of life,” he said somberly, hunched forward in his intensity of communication. “I wanted to live in peace, to practice my religion. I was the steward in a large monastery and I loved the life. As a monk I had no wife, but I had brothers, a sister, and parents, and uncles, all of whom I loved and respected. They are all dead—killed by the Chinese. The Chinese plundered my home, destroyed my monastery, took away my friends and companions, to build roads, starve, and die. I was left with nothing but to fight for my country, religion, and Dalai Lama. Later I married a wife, and so apostacized completely from my religion. She, too, was killed, and now I have nothing but what you see here.” His bitter protest was a raw wound in the grey-dark tent.

I sat silent. There was nothing one could say to assuage such private grief, and any trite comment would have been a crude impertinence. I knew that he felt my sympathy, my understanding, or he would never have unloaded that suddenly unbearable, lonely outcry of protest at circumstances which had made a sensitive man of peace into a ruthless machine of war.

“So now I know little beyond fighting Chinese in these mountains,” he continued, reflectively, “and how to handle guns and men. It is now five years since I and these men entered Lhasa and brought the Dalai Lama safely to India, and I have been fighting Chinese and nothing else all this time. Sometimes I despair, but what else is there for me to do? I cannot live in a refugee camp. I am too old to go abroad for studies. I can only fight for the freedom of my country and the return of the Dalai Lama.”

He smiled suddenly, shyly, as he turned to face me again. "That is why I am doing this for you. You are one of us, sent by God to help Tibet, and so I have agreed to take you on this mission. In a few days we may all be dead, but it will be in a good cause. I have given orders to the men that whatever happens you three must be safeguarded in a rearguard action, after the attack. This film must be made, this book and these newspaper articles written, so that the world may know of our deep desire for peace and freedom to worship. This will be the greatest attack I have led since we brought the Dalai Lama out of Tibet, although it will be small, for so much of importance depends on its success."

"I thank God that I am here to share it with you," I said simply, and let the conversation end.

A little later Ten-dar called out to the others to kindle a fire in the tent and the leaping flames lit up a scene of casual but efficient military preparations. Guns were disassembled, cleaned, and oiled with yak butter. Bren-gun, submachine guns, and rifles gleamed dully as they were turned over in obviously expert hands.

Ten-dar was a different man from an hour before. The most expert of all, he had a word of advice to each of the others, about correcting mistakes in sighting, gauging, and trajectory following on their previous attack. His own weapon was an American Springfield rifle and it was like an extension of his own arm as he turned and twisted it lovingly in his hands.

"We will use the hand grenades this time," he said suddenly. "We will try to set the truck alight with them, but if we cannot, we will at least make holes in the road."

Puntshok Thondup, the youngest but tallest and most powerful of all the Khambas, was the Bren-gunner, and he gave a great laugh as he took a hand grenade, made an imitation throw with it as he fell face forward then hitched it to his belt beside his short sword. With his crossed ammunition belt, bulky Tibetan gown, and god-box he seemed to fill half the large tent himself.

Two of the submachine gunners were of average height, Dorji and Lonzong, and looked as menacing as any Chicago gangster's bodyguard.

Assang, my friend of earlier Kham travels, was his usual smiling, deadly self. He obviously enjoyed every minute of this life, knew nothing of the soul-torture of Ten-dar, enjoying the excitement of

battle and the thrill of killing, and was only held in check by his respect for the superior intelligence of Ten-dar and his even greater fighting efficiency.

Gesang, the tall, quiet friendly one, had a rifle and looked like a weekend sportsman. Tsambala, short, stocky, and thug-like, but cheerful and friendly as a puppy, also had a rifle. The others, apparently, belonged to those we had not met, spies and scouts out in the mountains.

They were not only a motley collection of people, they were also clothed in a variety of dress. Ten-dar, from his Chinese cap to his khaki puttees and army boots, could have passed for a Chinese officer—except for the deerskin trousers which he wore. The others had the similar yak-skin trousers, but either wore Tibetan top boots or army boots, Tibetan gown worn Kham-fashion like a bulky kilt to the knees, or loose khaki tunics. All had the green parachute silk shirts, and different headgear. But they were obviously a tightly knit group, bound together by several years of friendship and danger. They had been part of the elite Khamba force which had been fighting since 1952 and which had entered Lhasa to take out the Dalai Lama from the midst of fifty thousand Chinese troops, then fight the rear guard action which allowed him to make his spectacular escape to India.

When we had eaten, Ten-dar gave orders for guards to be set and for us to be wakened at 1:30 A.M. and then those who could, lay down to sleep shoulder to shoulder as they were around the dying fire.

It was cold getting out of sleeping bags at 1:30 A.M. into the fireless tent. There was a quick bustle of activity around the camp as the Khambas went about their tasks with practiced skill. Fires were lit, loads were put together, guns and ammunition belts were slung on, tsamba and unbuttered tea were quickly taken, and at 2:30 we stepped out of the now firelit tent into the blackness of the night.

I thought of the trail behind and shuddered as I felt my way forward across the open grassland. What was it going to be like on narrow precipitous trails? The blackness of the night was a useful cover—and according to Ten-dar an unexpected gift from God in answer to prayers—but it made our movements infinitely more difficult. Torches were carried by a few, at spaced intervals, and were only flashed occasionally at especially difficult places. A night or more like this on the other side of the pass, surrounded by the

Chinese Army, seemed not only fantastic, but positively lunatic in these circumstances.

After an hour of traveling in this fashion the trail dipped down to an unseen but roaring river, spanned by a narrow wooden bridge. On the other side, beside a huge boulder, Ten-dar stopped as a shadowed figure emerged. It was one of the scouts with a low-voiced report on the trail ahead.

We moved on, or rather, upwards, as the trail wound almost straight up and we had to zigzag across the face of the mountainside in order to keep our feet. The trail led on to an open grassy slope, and as we moved across it, Assang turned off and moved towards a dark shadow, which might have been a nomad tent.

A dog started barking and Assang gave a low-voiced command. Yak bells began tinkling—the animals moved restlessly. A voice called out to quieten them, but suddenly one yak must have been startled into panic, for the whole herd began moving around us blindly in the night, bells jangling, dogs barking furiously, herdsman yelling.

The Khambas threw themselves down behind bushes and boulders, and I fell flat behind an inadequate thorn scrub. Suddenly my throat went dry. A black shape slid by about twenty yards away. It was a Tibetan mastiff. If it was anything like the dogs in Kham, these mastiffs were killers once they were let off the leash. I watched uneasily as the black snarling shadow worked closer, weighing my light walking stick in my hand and wondering if I could pull off in the darkness a method of defense against a mad dog once shown me by a Tibetan—jam a stick lengthwise in the dog's mouth and then kick upwards to break its jaw as it snapped on it. Fortunately, I didn't have to try. Another shadow detached itself out of the night and a Khamba crawled up to me and signaled me to move on. He followed close behind and when the barking dog drew too near swung towards it with his sword. It withdrew about ten yards, snarling, and still followed us.

We went around the outside of the herd of yaks, picking up the others on the way, and gradually the jangling bells stilled, the dog dropped behind and stopped barking, and we were left to feel our way forward in the darkness again. The trail wound fairly easily through thorn scrub, and in and out of small gulleys, although always tilting upwards.

When the blackness of the night gave way to a quickly lightening grey, we were in a narrow valley whose steep sides reared into palely glimmering snows. Almost filling the "V" to the north, towered the last twenty-thousand-foot pass leading to our objective. I also noticed that at some point during the night we had been joined by more armed men—presumably two of them scouts who had been sent ahead yesterday.

When we stopped for a rest there was a sudden break in the low-voiced conversation as four of the Khambas pointed up the mountain to the right. I could see nothing, and after a bit asked Ten-dar what was the matter.

"Four deer," he whispered in reply, smiling. He spoke to Assang, who slung his rifle to an easier position on his shoulder—and then went straight up the sheer slope after the animals.

"They aren't going to shoot are they?" Adrian asked me in surprise. "What if the Chinese hear?"

"Apparently," I replied. "They must either be very confident or very clever—or both."

We watched the progress of Assang as he angled across the mountain to where the deer were grazing. When he was two hundred yards away from them, with hardly a stop for breath, he unslung his rifle, sighted it standing up, fired—and one of the deer fell. The sound of the shot echoed loudly in the valley, then diminished into the distance.

"Well," said Chris, "I feel a lot happier about the raid after that performance—if the Chinese don't get us first!"

The Khambas treated it matter-of-factly. Ten-dar said, "A good shot," approvingly, then detailed a man to go to help Assang skin and carry the animal. The rest of us moved on up the valley to a spot proposed by the scouts.

The morning camp was reached at seven. It was on the grassy open side of one mountain, just above the river, where a pile of dried yak dung and a hastily constructed wall indicated that some passing herdsmen used this as a camp.

The sun was up, it was pleasantly warm out of the wind, and as I snuggled down behind the low wall while the deer was being cut up for breakfast, I fell sound asleep. This was a healthy sign that my nerves were in good condition, anyway.

It was just as well. After breakfast—a wonderful meal of boiled

venison—Ten-dar, Assang, and the others gathered together in a circle and began the final plans for the attack. Two of the men who had joined us had been those who had reconnoitered the place of ambush; now as they described the terrain everyone had their say as to how best the attack could be planned. This was Kham custom. They were an independent people, intelligent, and prepared to be led by a strong leader, but he had to prove himself and not simply impose his will, and so Ten-dar listened quietly as man after man had his say, especially the two scouts, only asking an occasional question.

I lay in the sun and let their discussion wash over me, while Adrian and Chris went about quietly filming the engrossed men. I would be told when the plans were completed.

An hour or so later I was called over to the circle. In the middle a model of the place of ambush had been built of stones and heaps of dirt to resemble mountains, valleys and rivers (See page 161).

The plans were that we would be placed opposite the scene of action on the other side of the wide river, so that even if the Chinese saw us they could not reach us. One man would be there with a rifle, and two others would be there to carry equipment; at the given signal we would be ordered to withdraw. As we were on opposite sides of the river the party would regroup at a point half-way up a long valley leading to the high Khojang Pass, back into Nepal.

It was excellently conceived as far as I could see—but it had one major flaw. Our position at “E1” was too far away to take effective films and pictures. Adrian asked if there was no nearer point.

This led to a renewed discussion, for Ten-dar insisted that our safety must be the major consideration on this occasion, not the amount of vehicles destroyed or Chinese killed, and that this film must be brought out of Tibet and shown to the world. The Khambas appreciated the importance of this, but argued that it was too much of a risk to place us near where the Chinese could capture us and the films. It was finally decided that we would be placed only twenty yards or so from the firing party on the ridge “E2,” and the Khambas looked at us with a new respect.

But this change of plans now meant a change in the line of retreat, and it was decided that the approach to, and the retreat from, the place of ambush should be down the long valley “F.” In which

case, said Ten-dar, we would have to leave right away, with scouts out ahead, and risk traveling the shorter route by night. He pointed ahead to where the nearer mountains were a tumbled mass of precipitous boulders, leading sharply to the right where the line of eternal snow began. "Beyond that there are another two steep climbs, with snow and ice all the way; then we will reach the top of the pass." After that—he smiled and raised his eyebrows.

We broke camp at 11:00, and for an hour or two the going was comparatively easy. At one open spot, Ten-dar even gave permission to Puntshok Thondup, the young giant, to warm up his trigger finger by firing three shots at a black stone about six inches in diameter some two to three hundred yards away. He nicked it top right first shot, bottom left second shot, and third shot shattered it to pieces. It was more comfort as far as accuracy was concerned but it seemed to us to be a lunatic risk in disregarding security. However, Ten-dar—whose every action and decision appeared the result of a careful, thoughtful, calculation—did not attach much importance to this. When I mentioned the danger of the Chinese overhearing him, he seemed to feel that it was more essential to give Puntshok "gun-confidence" with a warm-up burst.

We passed into the snow line, and we were now laboring for breath in a way which made our early efforts of several days before seem puny. We would climb a hundred yards or so, then stop for a breather, and every five hundred yards sit down for about ten or fifteen minutes. But in the snows this became a doubtful relief as the chilling wind bit into us the moment we stopped.

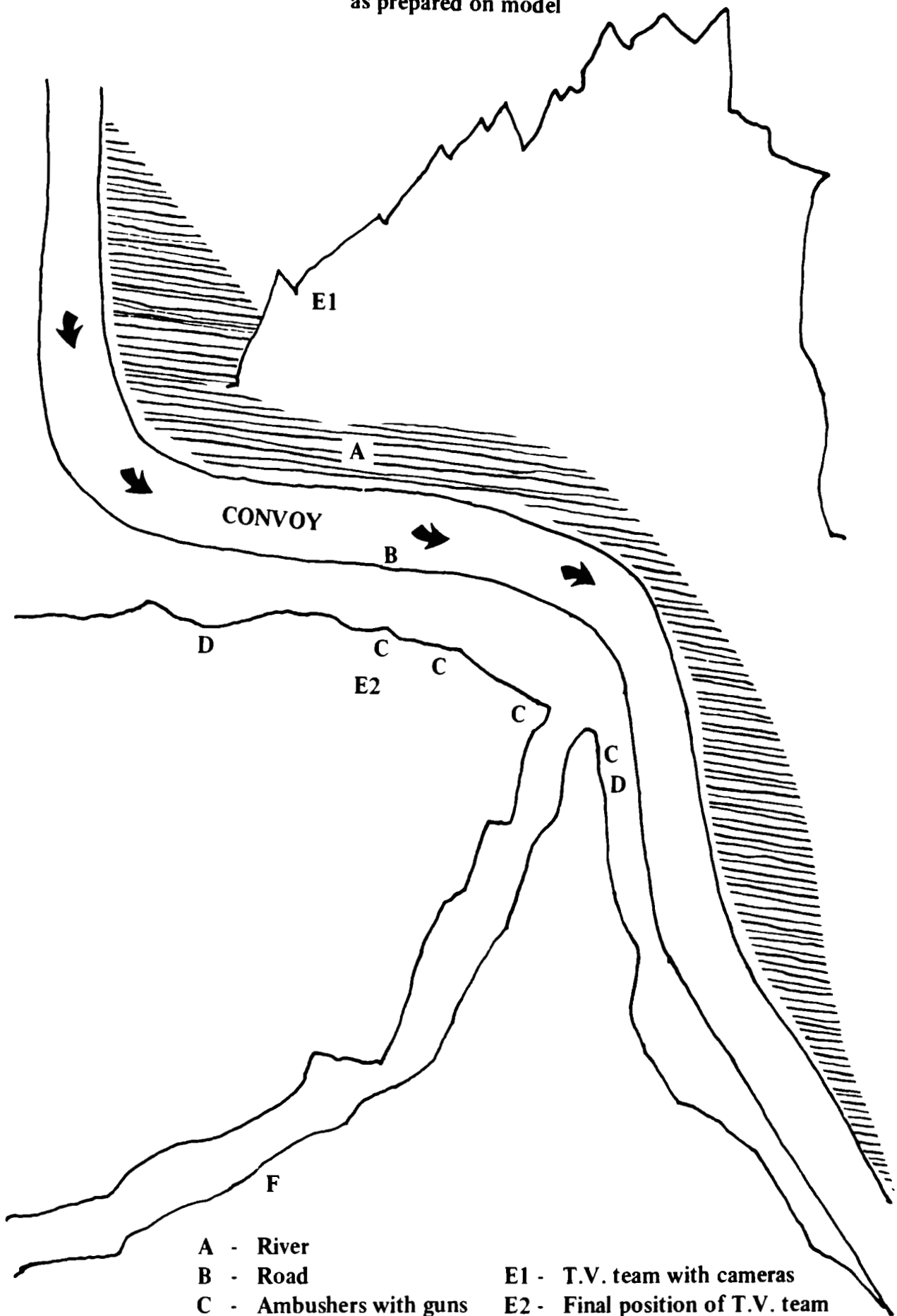
Early afternoon we reached a huge saucer-shaped depression just below the top of the pass. To the south, a magnificent panorama of snow-peaked mountains fell away beneath our feet, with the sun slanting and glinting through heavily moving grey and white masses of cloud.

I looked uneasily at those masses of cloud, pouring like some gigantic cotton wool waterfall over the edge of a not-too-distant pass, and at the snow drifts ahead of us reaching to the top of the twenty-thousand-foot Khojang Pass. I saw Ten-dar also looking at them thoughtfully, and he gave a sudden command to move on quickly to the top, himself leading the way on to the virgin snow.

He sank almost immediately to his thighs but plunged confidently forwards—or rather upwards, for the slope to the top of the pass

DIAGRAM OF AMBUSH

as prepared on model



A - River

B - Road

C - Ambushers with guns

D - Scout with guns

E1 - T.V. team with cameras

E2 - Final position of T.V. team

F - Approach and retreat valley

was now tilted at an angle of forty-five degrees or more. One by one the others followed in his steps, each succeeding footprint making it easier for the one behind to follow in an ice stairway. It was grueling work, and as we labored slowly upwards, I wondered what we would do coming back on the other side if the Chinese were close behind and we could not stop every fifty yards as we were doing now. For although the Khambas were stopping, I knew it was more on our behalf than their own, and that they had reserves neither we—nor anyone—could match.

At 4:15, breathing painfully, we reached the top of the pass just as the thick clouds came billowing over. A howling gale was blowing for which we had not been prepared in our steep and sheltered ascent, and it was difficult to keep our feet while the Khambas raised colored prayer flags at the highest point, a gesture of good wishes for the venture and defiance of the Chinese.

I stood with mixed feelings. For the first time in fourteen years I had returned to Tibet, but there was nothing to be seen in the howling blizzard which caked my eyebrows, dark glasses, and beard with ice. We were a puny group, leaning into the teeth of that gale, hardly able to raise cloth flags, and somewhere within the radius of a few miles and five thousand feet there were thousands of Chinese of much more potent force than a Himalayan snowstorm. But nearer than that, I thought suddenly (I could not suppress a quick, painful, ice-breaking smile) was one even greater Force—the Creator of the Himalayas, Khambas, Chinese, and Scotsmen. I threw back my head and laughed into the gale exultantly, and the howling gale shipped away the words of my own prayer.

Ten-dar stepped back from the summit of the pass and looked along the long line of unbroken snow falling away into the thick grey curtain a few yards away. There was no sign of a trail in that deadly white tablecloth forming a thin cover, hiding crevasses, gulleys, and precipitous drops, into which a thousand men might drop and disappear.

He walked down the shoulder of the pass, swept clear of loose snow by the howling wind, for about a hundred yards, then turned into snow and cloud—and disappeared into the curtain of thick cloud and driving snow. We were also into snowdrifts, waist-high even after following Ten-dar and several of the most powerful Khambas as trail breakers. At one point there was a narrow ledge

over six feet deep and the short, stocky Tsambala had to stand as an anchor a foot away while each of us slid over the edge and fell against him to keep us from rolling down the sheer mountainside in an avalanche.

The drop down was even greater than the climb up had been on the south side. Not one of us could keep our balance, for we had to lie so far back on our heels to compensate for the steep angle that as soon as we lifted one leg we either shot forward or fell back. To increase the difficulty, we had to keep in sight of the man in front, for visibility was reduced to five yards, and to lose sight of the man ahead might mean to be lost forever in the silent mountain and snow wilderness.

Did I say "silent"? I ought to correct that. What to me—and to Adrian and Chris—was a grim struggle for survival, to several of the Khambas it appeared to be almost a winter lark in the park. Shadowy shapes would plunge past at intervals to right and left of me yelling the exuberant "Yee-hee-hee" war cry of the Khambas. The only consolation was that not even suspicious Chinese would believe that a raiding party would come from that direction, at this time, in that kind of way.

My boots, trousers, stockings, and underside of fur-lined coat were stiff and soaked with caked and loose snow. When we finally rested together as a group about three thousand feet below the pass, we were still in cloud, but it was now patchy, and through the drifting openings we could detect snowless spaces. I could not believe that any of the Khambas knew where we were and was about to offer my compass when Ten-dar came up and asked if we were ready to move on.

It was incredible, but true. Not only Ten-dar but a few of the others as well knew that the regular trail lay over to our left, and after an hour or so of angling downwards we came out of the clouds altogether and there lay the trail—and Tibet—in front of us.

It was a breathtaking sight. We were still in the cloud shadow but for hundreds of miles the green-clothed mountains fell away to barren brown and yellow mountains softened now by the late afternoon sun. In the middle and far distance, within the radius of one hundred and ninety degrees seen from our vantage point, majestic snow giants towered serenely, their sun-bathed peaks matching in splendor the dying beauty of the sky.

"The road," said Ten-dar quietly at my elbow, "lies beyond the snow mountain where the sunshine lies in the valley. Are you glad to be back in Tibet?"

"Yes," I said, and sighed, "but I wish it had been in happier circumstances. In that sunshine, beneath that snow mountain, men will die tomorrow."

"In that sunshine, beneath that snow mountain many men, women, and children have died, are dying, and will continue to die and be tortured, until the Chinese oppression is cleared from our country," Ten-dar said reprovingly. I nodded gloomily in acknowledgment and we moved forward in silence, drinking in together the indescribable, austere beauty of this tragic country.

During this comparatively easy stretch, where we could walk together and talk, Ten-dar cleared up a mystery which had been puzzling me. Earlier, talking with him and other Khamba leaders, I had been puzzled by the lack of evidence of and lack of interest in loot from Chinese convoys. They were so obviously short of arms, ammunition, clothes, food, and money, yet except for a few items of each, there was little to show for the many claimed attacks on Chinese convoys, garrisons, or armed groups. Had it not been for the many indisputable statements by the hundreds of inhabitants in the valley, the presence and many stories of the thousands of refugees who were pouring in from Tibet, the obvious awe, admiration, respect, and even love shown by them to the Khambas, and the equally obvious well-organized civilian underground organization known as the *Mi-inang Tsong-du* [People's Party]—whose discussions, which I attended, and expertise indicated constant action—we would have doubted many of the accounts which we heard. But now Ten-dar spontaneously volunteered the explanation, pointing to the heavy loads of food, arms and ammunition being carried by the long line of Khambas ahead, that were it not for the necessity of carrying so much to the scene of an attack, they could benefit a great deal more by carrying off more plunder. To insure the success of a raid, each man had to carry enough ammunition for an unknown number of Chinese enemy, plus a spare reservoir for possible retreat action, and as the essence of their success was their superior mobility, they dare not take the risk of overloading themselves with the much-coveted loot. If only they had horses, he sighed wistfully,

what they could not do to the Chinese and for their own people. He shrugged philosophically.

We now plunged downwards into a valley lying at right angles to the point where Ten-dar had said the road had been. The path was easy and the Khambas strode ahead with their tireless stride, eating up the miles. My legs were rubbery at first, with the grueling upward climb to the top of the pass and then the rapid drop down, but now settled into the steady swing that I had thought I had forgotten in jostling city streets. It was dangerous, mind-taxing, strength-sapping, stuff this, but I was thoroughly enjoying it when I gave myself time to think. There was no other place in the world, no other job I would rather be doing, than this one at this time in this place.

By seven o'clock the small stream in the valley had grown to a small river and Ten-dar called a halt beside it for a meal. I had thought it was for a few hours' sleep, but he shook his head firmly when I asked him and said that we must push on quickly to be in our ambush position by 3:00 A.M. I was unhappy at this time schedule, but did not say anything. It was not that we had now been traveling for seventeen and a half hours, including a twenty-thousand-foot pass, and that by three we would have been traveling for twenty-five and a half hours and traversing two more high passes that bothered me. But if the ambush took place in the morning, then it would mean a return over this country for the same amount of time—but with the fresh Chinese in pursuit and we having had little sleep for nearly three days. These conditions might be all right for the phenomenal iron men of Kham, but we were soft with several years of city life. However, Ten-dar knew this, was aware that we—or at least the films—were important enough to get away safely, and I was content to leave the decision to him. But after the meal—tea made over a low fire and butane burner with Tibetan scones and cold hard-boiled eggs—I had a quick deep sleep for about an hour until we were ready to leave.

Now began our long dark night—but of the body not the soul. No torches allowed. Twenty-three men moving into position between two known concentrations of several thousand Chinese troops, two known garrisons of several hundred troops, several known check-posts, and an unknown number of possible scouting or hunting parties. It was another moonless night, and each man followed the

barely discernible head or rifle outline of the man in front.

At least, that is what I did. The Khambas seemed to have cat's eyes and feet, and I strained every sense to interpret the sway and dip of the man in front to anticipate the kind of path underfoot. Bushes and winding path gave way to a steadily climbing, rock-strewn one, which in turn gave way to those heart-stopping loose shale slopes dropping straight down to the growling river far below. No word was spoken, and during the rests only faint whispers were allowed.

We went on through the night, pausing at every bird call, every suspicious sound, every blacker shadow ahead. Ten-dar was everywhere. Ahead, behind, beside us on the trail; below, with Assang, his lieutenant, equally shadowy and ubiquitous. We tripped over stones, blundered into boulders, slipped into bushes where sharp thorns filled our hands even through our gloves, scrambled back on to narrow ledges after tumbling over edges and being grabbed by hands behind.

The fur-lined coat which had served me so well in the blizzard on the pass was now a thing of torture—hot, heavy, an intolerable encumbrance. I stumbled on, weary, laboring, despairing. It was impossible. The Khambas might—could—make it. I never could at this rate. Adrian and Chris were in the same state, I gathered from our whispered discussion during rests.

Ten-dar slid in beside me as I lay panting after one rough stretch. "We have still four or five hours to go to the place of ambush," he whispered, "and about two hours to the top of the pass at the head of this valley. Do you think you can do it?"

I shook my head negatively, then answered, "No. Or if we do make it to the place of ambush, we can never make the return journey feeling like this."

He was silent for a few minutes, then he whispered decisively. "Then we must lie up for the night and tomorrow and attack the next day. When we have come this far we cannot miss the opportunity. If you have a sleep will you be able to carry on?"

I passed this on to Adrian and Chris and they agreed that this was the only possibility, and I gave our decision to Ten-dar. He squeezed my arm in the darkness, rose, and gave a few whispered instructions to the others.

We went on for another stretch, then in an open space between

bushes, where the dry and ice-covered grass rustled underfoot, he whispered that we would sleep the rest of the night there. In the morning, before dawn, we would move into a narrow cleft in the mountain and spend the day there. The Khambas dropped where they were, pulling their gowns over their heads. I took out my poncho, folded it around my sleeping bag, climbed in with all my clothes on, and dropped off immediately into a deep sleep.

It was a restless, uncomfortable night. The night grew colder, frost and ice covered us, and lay thick around my beard and neck of my sleeping bag. The incredible Khambas—especially Ten-dar and Assang—were awake all during the night to keep guard and constant watch for anything suspicious. Before dawn everyone was up, stiff, and shivering to move into the nearby culvert. Here, in a naturally hidden cutting in the mountainside, the Khambas made a fire around which we huddled, watching the sun rise with agonizing slowness, to thaw us with its heat. It was so bitterly cold I sat wrapped in my sleeping bag, and even when the sun reached us I remained fully clothed inside the bag.

For the whole day we lay there, resting uneasily while the Khambas rang changes of guards. Two of them went off as scouts to the place of ambush for a further reconnaissance. In the meantime we reduced our loads even more, so that the barest minimum would be carried, and allowing us to carry as much camera and film equipment as possible. The remainder we put into a haversack and left it hidden behind some bushes to be collected quickly on our return journey.

At four o'clock, we had a quick meal of packaged soup and tsamba, and by five o'clock we were moving out of the culvert up to the top of the next pass. It was still light when we reached the pass and we halted there until the two scouts joined us with their report and dusk had fallen. The scouts reported that all was clear on the trail again.

While waiting, the Khambas went over the plans for attack again. Ten-dar proposed that if it were a large convoy of twenty trucks or over that they allow it to pass, while we would film it. If less than twenty they would attack it and fight the Chinese troops off while we filmed the attack, then withdraw and retreat with the films to safety. If less than ten trucks they would try to knock them all out, call us down to the road to film them looting the convoy.

There was some disagreement with this plan, especially from the middle-aged Khamba scout, Gay-bo, the most experienced guerilla among them, who wanted to shoot up the convoy whatever size. But Ten-dar finally convinced them that on this mission it was the films and photographs which counted, not the number of trucks destroyed or Chinese killed.

We moved over the top of the pass shortly after six on a wide, easy downward-sloping trail. One scout was ahead, and one behind. I walked with Ten-dar near the rear, still talking.

"It is sad to think that we need so little, yet we cannot get it," he said, without rancor. "Some warm clothing, for instance. You saw how we had to sleep in only shirts and thin Tibetan gowns in this cold climate. Or more food, or enough money to buy simple food. And horses. With pack horses we would not need to carry heavy loads of guns and ammunition ourselves, we could move so quickly that the Chinese could never catch up in these mountains, and we could then loot more Chinese convoys and garrisons for their arms and carry them away. As I told you yesterday, just now we cannot take away guns for we are fully loaded as it is, and must keep as light as possible to escape. If, in addition, we had riding horses we could make it impossible for the Chinese to remain in this country."

"How many attacks do you average?" I asked him.

"Let me see," he replied. "I have been in command here for a year, and we have had too many to remember. Some of my men have returned to the main group at Mustang, so we have been limited for some months. But this must be the fifth attack in five months.

"Have you lost any men?" I inquired.

"None," he said promptly. "Thank God. There are many hundreds of us—four or five thousand—in these mountains, and in the hundreds of raids we hardly ever lose a man. This is deliberate policy, for we now have to conserve every man and every gun as much as we can. So we strike suddenly to destroy trucks and Chinese soldiers and retreat quickly, to safety. It is not very satisfactory, but it is the best we can do until Nepal, or India, or the West gives us sufficient guns, goods, and horses to do better."

It was soon dark, and the experience of the previous night was repeated. I found I was developing an unexpected skill for moving quickly in the dark, by adapting my reflexes to the movements of

the man ahead. But surprisingly silently as we moved for a party of so many large and heavily loaded men, it was still a tense, suspense-packed journey. Every so often we would stop at a whispered command up the line while Ten-dar, Assang, or Gay-bo listened or went ahead to check on the suspicious sound or object. A bird would rise unexpectedly from beneath our feet, its call splitting the night with sudden, throat-constricting clamor, and we would halt until it had settled and the dark valley was silent again but filled with a greater waiting menace. Had some Chinese sentry heard and were rifles already being lifted quietly somewhere up ahead?

We went on for four hours and stopped for a rest. There was a whispered consultation and Ten-dar slid in beside me.

"Have you a torch?" he asked in my ear. "Please lend it to me. Gay-bo says that there is a deserted monastery about half an hour away. If there are no Chinese billeted there we will make tea, sleep for three hours, then go from there to the place of ambush before dawn."

I slipped him the torch and he disappeared as quickly as he had come. We moved off again, more slowly, more cautiously, than ever. A few hundred yards away a light flicked on then off again, and my breath caught in my throat as I waited for a high-pitched Chinese voice to call out—or a burst of gunfire. The night remained black and silent, and we walked on.

The light went on again, and this time remained on for an agonizing few minutes which seemed like an eternity. The whole line of men stopped and tensed.

"Guk-pa rang ray!" (The bloody fool!) swore Ten-dar softly through gritted teeth. "What does he think he is doing? That light will be seen for miles." He lunged quickly but silently up the trail. After a bit the light went out, and we followed.

"Follow me closely, and quickly," he whispered. "The monastery is empty, I think, but we are checking all the rooms in case there is a passing Chinese hunter sleeping there."

I followed him down a long slope, picking my way in his shadow, then over a rubble-strewn courtyard through a dark doorway beside which stood a tall figure with his rifle held at the ready. I had thought the night dark outside, but inside the doorway it was like walking into black velvet. Ten-dar's hand guided me forward over

another step, and then it was suddenly light as the torch flashed on again. This time there was no rebuke from Ten-dar as the scout reported that the whole monastery was empty.

It was an eerie, unforgettable sight. It had obviously been a fairly wealthy monastery for it was solidly built and the wall murals had been elaborately and freshly painted—except where they were smeared by vandals and blurred with smoke. The monastery had been gutted and looted by the Chinese. In the flickering light of the torch as we went from room to room, images had been destroyed or mutilated, thrown to the floor, burned black with soot. Religious scrolls and rich silk hangings had been piled, with scripture manuscripts, on the floor and the whole set alight. Smashed glass and painted wood cupboards lay scattered everywhere.

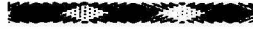
There were murmurs from the Khambas—some shocked, some regretful, some angry, some savage—and I felt that the Chinese would be called to pay an even higher price tomorrow. No—today, I suddenly remembered. It was after midnight.

I did not wait for the tea—brewed in the middle of the monastery floor on a fire made in the same place as the Chinese one, with wood from the smashed cupboards—but climbed into my sleeping bag and went off to sleep. In my pocket I put two small images, a burned scripture page, and a Chinese chopstick as a memento of the occasion.

We were away by 3:00 A.M. and as we were very close to the place of the ambush we now traveled extremely slowly and cautiously. Two hours later we halted and Ten-dar whispered that we were there. He had ordered three men to remain with us, two as porters for equipment and one with a rifle as guard. They would show us to our planned hideout now. He would go on and place his men in their firing positions. I whispered acknowledgment and the group divided in the lightening grey of dawn.

Tse-ten, our guard, turned up the mountainside to the left and began a steep climb which rapidly became almost vertical. It was a loose dirt-and-shale slope, and even the scarce hand and foot holds tended to break away beneath our weight. But about five hundred feet up, the slope ended abruptly in a sharply rearing four-foot rampart, which formed an excellent cover for our activities. The slaty, grey brown hillside, with its scattered, stratified and grotesquely shaped rocks, lent itself admirably to the camouflaged

stone covers and apertures for our cameras which we now hurriedly began to build. By six o'clock, when the sun was just beginning to touch the highest peaks, we were ready for the attack.



Above: Leaving Dzum for the trek with the Khambas, Patterson, Chris, Adrian. *Right:* Planning the ambush. Assang kneels at center, Ten-dar at right. *Below:* Ten-dar inspects pages torn from Tibetan scriptures in monastery desecrated by Chinese.



IT WAS A magnificent setting for an ambush. From the northwest the road curved toward us in a series of sharp bends, following the line of the river. Just beneath us, the mountains on either side of the river closed in and the valley was a lazy "S," a three hundred-yard curve. The road was only about fifty yards from us, on this side of the river. On an exposed point where the shoulder of a nearby mountain met the valley, just above the road and commanding a view of the whole approach, ("C-D" on the diagram) the Chinese at some time had built a dugout and I could see one of the Khambas preparing his position there—Assang, I think. He is going to get the best photographs of us all from there, I thought suddenly, remembering his request for films to take photographs on his old Canon camera. I could see none of the others, but our guard said that three of them were right beneath us and to our right about twenty yards away, and the remainder in a short arc beyond them. They had all put on khaki cotton gowns, on top of their parachute-silk shirts, smeared their faces with dust, and put twigs and leaves into their headgear.

We now settled down to wait for a Chinese convoy. The scouts had reported that, on an average, most of the convoys from north to south passed in the morning, and most of those from south to north in the afternoon.

In the first few hours we were tense with expectation and excitement, but gradually as the sun rose and bathed us in its heat we became less tense and even drowsy. The slope was so steep that we had to jam our feet against embedded stones to keep from sliding to the valley in an avalanche of loose shale, and this did not lead to easy slumbers.

At first I was uneasy lest we all sleep and miss the convoy, but as the Khambas seemed to be keeping a lookout in either ones or twos I let myself drift more deeply into sleep.

We were wakened by the Khambas at one point to warn us that a Tibetan herdsman driving a small herd of yaks was coming, and we listened to the tinkling bell approach and gradually disappear into the distance. Chris filmed him from behind his camouflaged rampart to get the feel of the distance and then we all settled again. There was no sound anywhere, except for the rise and fall of the wind. As I anxiously scanned the surrounding mountainside, I fervently hoped that the scouts had been thorough, for we were exposed to anyone's view from above.

The Khambas wakened me again at 1:30 to say that another Tibetan was on the road. Did we want to film him? I asked Adrian and Chris and they shook their heads negatively. We went back to a dozing silence.

I awakened suddenly, trying to sort out the unusual whine from the moan of the wind. Was it truck engines? I turned to the Khambas who also were sitting up. Tse-ten looked cautiously over the top, nodded his head—and the first rifle shot rang out! This was followed by a fusillade of shots.

During some of our earlier discussions I had asked Ten-dar what methods they used in stopping a convoy. He had looked puzzled.

"Methods?" he said. "What do you mean?"

I explained how during the war in Europe, or in other popular uprisings, the civilians would either put explosive of some kind on the road, or place an innocent plate on the road, and when the vehicle or tank stopped—they dared not take the risk that it might not be innocent—the hidden civilians would throw flaming petrol-bottles or handgrenades into the stopped vehicles.

He was very interested but he had never heard of this, let alone used the methods. "We just shoot them," he said, negligently.

"Yes," I persisted. "But even if you do kill the first driver with the first shot, what happens when the second driver accelerates, and those behind him, to pass the first truck?"

"We shoot them," he replied simply, puzzled by my naïveté.

I knew from experience the astonishing, even legendary, marksmanship of the Khamba, but to accept this so calmly when the success of the raid—and their lives—depended upon those first few shots, was almost beyond belief. However, I had swallowed my arguments and remained silent. It was just as well. For as I looked over the rampart at the scene below, the first driver was already

dead, the others dead or dying as their feet instinctively had hit the brakes—for the trucks were still in line and hadn't even had time to swerve.

I looked at my watch and checked the time—1:50 P.M.—then grabbed my cameras and scrambled to my filming position beside Adrian on one side and Chris on the other.

Just below us, the four Chinese trucks on the almost straight, middle length of the lazy "S," had all stopped within one hundred yards of each other—three together and the fourth about fifty yards away. With no cover anywhere, the Chinese drivers and soldiers who were still alive had jumped down and were underneath the trucks firing at the Khambas hidden on the mountainside.

Suddenly, I could scarcely believe my eyes! Through the long-distance lens of the camera there was Ten-dar walking, yes *walking*, towards the first truck. So far as I could see there were no Chinese under the truck firing at him, but there were certainly two or more Chinese under the second truck less than ten yards away. It seemed suicidal, especially when he turned his back on the second truck and looked over the tail of the first truck, presumably to see what load it was carrying. He had said he would grab what he could for us to photograph, but I had meant at the end of the action not right at the beginning while presenting himself as a target.

He disappeared around the far side of the first truck and I turned my camera on the action elsewhere. The second truck still had two Chinese firing steadily from underneath. The third truck was thrown slightly sideways where it must have turned when the driver was hit, and Chinese were firing from beneath and behind it. The fourth truck, almost fifty yards behind the others, had obviously stopped at the first warning shot and there were Chinese shooting there.

Ten-dar appeared again, making towards his firing position when he suddenly stopped, turned, swung his arm, and fell face downwards on the ground. He's hit! I thought, sickeningly. Then there was an explosion near the second truck and I realized he had thrown a hand grenade. A burst of firing from the Khambas was followed by silence from the second truck as the Chinese died.

Another figure appeared from our side of the valley, swung an arm and another explosion, followed by a blue-black cloud near the third truck, indicated that the Khambas were determined to put

on a show for us. But still none of the trucks were hit—although there was now silence from the third truck.

Some Chinese underneath the fourth truck suddenly broke away and made toward us, firing as they ran. One fell as he was hit by a Khamba bullet but picked himself up and came on. Another disappeared under the overhanging ledge beneath us.

One of our guards, who had been watching but not firing, now took up position and loosed off three shots at the advancing Chinese near our position. Then, remembering his orders, he scampered toward us, motioning for us to go.

“Go now,” he ordered. “Immediately. Pack everything.” I looked at my watch—2:10 P.M.—twenty minutes of action!

We threw cameras, films, and discarded clothing into the packs, the three Tibetans slung them over their shoulders, and we plunged suicidally down that vertical mountainside in a long, sliding, striding, mad dash for the narrow valley beneath.

Reaching the stream at the bottom, without pausing for breath, we strode at a fast pace up the trail we had come down so cautiously the night before. Tse-ten, the guard, left us to return down the valley and help cover our retreat, but the two porters, now joined by another who had been left waiting, kept up with us as we strode quickly up the trail as per instructions.

After fifteen minutes or so we stopped for a breather and a drink of water at the stream. The porters, heads up, motioned us to keep waiting. Tse-ten appeared around a turn in the trail, moving swiftly, accompanied by the tall, gangling Gesang. They waved us to wait.

When they caught up with us, Gesang said urgently to me, “Bon-bo-la, get some medicines quickly. ———has been shot.”

“Who?” I asked, missing the name, and remembering again the seemingly casual movements of Ten-dar.

“Gay-bo—the old one,” he repeated. “He has been badly shot and requires medicines. Ten-dar, Assang, and Tsambala are with him.”

“Where is he shot?” I asked.

“Here,” he said, pointing to just above the heart, “I think, but there is a large hole in his back here,” he pointed over his left shoulder. “He has also been shot in the face.”

I felt a wave of hopelessness sweep over me. The man could not live, if this report was true. In any case, how could he travel over

the road we had come with wounds like these and the loss of blood involved? I said nothing of this, however, but asked one of the men to go ahead and stop the porter with my medical pack. Also, I would need lots of hot water.

They looked taken aback at this, but I said we must have fifteen minutes to dress the wound and water would be ready in this time. If the Chinese followed they would just have to fight a rear guard action.

A man went off with speed up the trail to catch the porters, who had been ordered to leave as soon as the action had been heard to begin. We followed more slowly, joined now by the two submachine gunners. After fifteen minutes or so they waved us to go on and said that they would take the high ridges to our right and left to cover our retreat.

We caught up with the porters half an hour later, and they already had a fire going with water warming up. I cut several strips of gauze, got out the Dettol and Iodine, bandages, scissors—and hoped fervently that no bullet metal had been left in the wound. I had no forceps, no scalpel, no surgical needles to do any useful kind of job. I could only bind him up, keep down infection, and hope that he would survive. The verses of scripture I had read a few days before flashed into my mind—“for there will be no loss of life, among you”—“God has given you all those who sail with you”—and I felt the weight of frustration and hopelessness rise.

But when Ten-dar, Assang, and Tsambala appeared soon after, I could see by their faces that the worst had happened.

“He has gone,” Ten-dar said, starkly. “We could do nothing. He was shot in the heart, shot in the face, and had lost lots of blood. It was impossible for him to live and he asked us to shoot him. We refused, but he insisted that we leave him to die and bring the foreigners and the film to safety. He died in my arms.”

There was silence around the fire. Ten-dar stood immersed in his thoughts. It was Assang who said harshly, “All right. Let’s get going or the Chinese will find us and kill us all.”

“Will we have time to film and take some photographs of the monastery we slept in last night?” Adrian asked me quietly. “It will serve as evidence of Chinese destruction of monasteries.”

I asked Assang and he nodded curtly, taking over easily during Ten-dar’s moment of dark grief. He directed two or three men to

accompany us, with Ten-dar, then ordered the others to proceed with him in a direct line up the valley to the first pass. He himself was limping, but he waved away my inquiries, saying that he had only twisted his ankle.

There were three passes to be negotiated before we could consider ourselves safe. The first was just ahead of the monastery, at about fifteen thousand feet as near as I could guess. Then there was a long dip down, and a sudden rise to about seventeen thousand feet and the second saddle-like pass, where I had walked and talked with Ten-dar the night before. This, too, dropped down for several hours, past the point where we had laid up for the night and day, and on and up to the terrifying twenty-thousand-foot Khojang Pass back into Nepal.

We moved swiftly up to the monastery, and for fifteen minutes Adrian and Chris filmed and took photographs of the desecrated interior and exterior. The Khambas were impatient to be gone, although understanding the importance of having filmed evidence, and, when we had finished, they set a cracking pace up the valley.

The narrow valley at the place of ambush widened into a left and right fork and we could see Assang and the others in the left-hand valley from our higher and longer loop to the right. We could not see what was happening behind us, Gesang and Tse-ten were with us, and in the short halts for breath pointed out the immediate dangers.

There were three main Chinese garrisons behind us in a wide arc—Tsang to our extreme right in the northwest—Dzongkar behind and slightly west—and Kyerong on our left in the east. Between these, there were unknown numbers of concentrations of troops in forests and caves, checkposts, scouting parties—or even another convoy on the road which would quickly alert all troops, everywhere. We were making for the Khojang Pass, between the three garrisons, in a gamble that we could reach there by superior timing and personal strength before the Chinese. If, however, the Chinese guessed our intentions they could throw sufficient troops into a flanking movement to our right and left, which would cut off our route of escape over the Khojang Pass. In which case, Ten-dar said calmly, we would be forced to work our way backwards through the Chinese troops and enter Nepal from alternative passes behind them.

The Khambas took all this matter-of-factly, as if it were some academic game of chess. They obviously enjoyed this battle of wits and were supremely confident that in their own mountains they were the masters.

It was not that they underestimated the Chinese—time after time they spoke of them admiringly, of their strength, their tenacity, their courage—but they were just not able to match the iron men of Kham in mountain tactics. What worried me was they were overestimating our capacity to keep up with them in the grueling hours ahead.

We topped the first pass, and the first set of dangers from our flanks was behind. We were not out of danger by any means, but it simply meant that if a large force of Chinese had arrived at the place of ambush immediately afterwards, then we had escaped the first snap of the Chinese dragon. A larger force, a wider bite, could still take us in at any of the more difficult stages ahead.

It was now 3:30 P.M., less than an hour and a half since our ambush. Except for the steep climbs, I was still moving easily and lightly on my feet, and knew that I was good for several hours. Adrian and Chris seemed the same, although we rarely spoke, saving our breath for the job in hand.

At 5:00 P.M., moving more slowly now, we topped the second pass and turned into the long valley leading to the dreaded Khojang Pass. We were on our last lap.

We reached our sleeping and lying-up culvert of last night by 6:00 and approaching dusk. The Khambas ahead already had a fire going for tea and a quick meal, and we hastily got together the things we had left behind. Everyone was moving quickly and silently and while there was no sign of tension, there was obvious alertness and urgency. We had several bowls of scalding hot soup with some tsamba, but I was not able to eat much.

Just as the valley was darkening, we left the culvert. It was a repeat of our journey of the previous night but we were moving more swiftly, taking more risks, keyed up with the excitement and tension of possible pursuit. At first the trail swung downwards in a long angle, winding around the projecting mountainsides, but soon it dropped to the valley floor and we had to pick our way among boulders upstream. While this made our path infinitely more difficult and wearying, it had the distinct advantage that the noises of the

large stream—or rather the small river—covered the many small noises of our passage.

The river had another advantage I had not thought of until then. We had stopped to take off boots and stockings and roll up trousers to cross the river at one of many points, and somebody mislaid a boot in the Stygian darkness. To find it somebody else flashed a torch. There was an immediate order from Ten-dar and Assang to put it out but not before a distant sound indicated a barking dog. Were the Chinese trailing us with dogs, or was it just a solitary herdsman's dog somewhere in the night? In the light of the torch I had seen that it was 8:15.

But now began our long climb to the top of the twenty-thousand-foot Khojang Pass and safety. Could we make it before the much fresher Chinese caught up with us, or could these remarkable Khambas keep going, with loads and guns and ammunition, and still carry us ahead to safety? Or would the Chinese, with cunning and resource, have made their way to the top of the Khojang in anticipation of our arrival and be waiting for us there? Or—most serious of all—was our strength sufficient to stand another night of unimaginable testing in the highest and toughest country in the world, or would we have to give in somewhere on the many icy slopes above to the overwhelming power of the Chinese?

Down through the night came my answer. "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee." "Be not afraid, be of good courage, for I am with thee to strengthen thee." I took a deep breath and set myself to the slope.

The Khambas were determined to take it the quickest—but infinitely the hardest—way. They went straight up, and because of its almost vertical angle, it meant that we had to move five paces to the right, then to the left, then to the right, zigzag fashion, in order to make progress up the face.

At first we would go for a hundred yards or so then stop, standing for a breather, before going on for another hundred yards and another breather, sitting down almost every third stop for ten minutes. These stages became less and less, and the sitting stage longer the higher we climbed.

Drifting masses of grey in the darkness indicated that we were rising above the cloud; also the night was lightening around us as we entered the regions of eternal snow. Fortunately, there was little

wind, but what wind there was was paralyzingly cold when we had sat for a few minutes.

Soon we were a staggering, stumbling line—silent, except for the sougling of great sobbing breaths. I passed from vaguely hallucinatory flashes of remembered scenes of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow—seeing blindly stumbling figures, wolves stalking up silently on fallen bodies, mutilated corpses—to a numbed exhaustion. I could no longer lift my head to look at that immovable black outline against the now shell-grey sky that was the top of the pass. I only existed in a twisted world of agonizing breathing, of painful automatic movement of leaden legs, of a deep, blazing inner intensity of compulsion which kept me going when everything within me cried out to stop.

I was vaguely conscious when the figures around me dropped to the ground, and I, too, fell flat on my face. I remained immobile—even at times falling into a deep sleep despite the piercing cold—coming to when Ten-dar called out, or pulled me to my feet, to stumble on.

If I had any capacity for wonder left, it was for Ten-dar. He had told me earlier he had a cold and a headache, and had asked for some medicine to keep him from coughing in the night—as a security precaution, of course. When he spoke to me I could hear how hoarse he was, how thick with cold, yet he was ahead and behind as before, and always beside the three of us, watching and encouraging us to go on.

We passed into the snows, and it was an added torture to our leaden limbs. The Khambas threw caution to the wind and flashed their torches in order to find a way through the snowfields. We could no longer sit down, and dropped our weary legs from snowy step to snowy step. My mouth was parched and I tore off an icicle and ate it hungrily, despite Ten-dar's warning admonition that I might have stomach cramps. I was past caring.

Later, much later, I noticed numbly that it was lighter. Ten-dar said "It is the dawn," and I looked around. Away to the north a mountain peak was rimmed with light, spreading upward and outward. "We are almost there," added Ten-dar, and I turned again to see some of our Khambas disappear over that hitherto unreachable outlined rim. In time I, too, dragged myself up and over, and stood swaying in a circle of indescribable splendor.

To the north, south, east, and west stretched range upon range of snow-capped giants, their iridescent peaks hovering in multi-

colored majesty above the clouds, and purple blackness far beneath. It was worth it I thought, reviving already, to have lived a lifetime for such a moment as this. The world, the problems, the ambush, the Chinese, the dark night of agony all fell away and in the awesome height, space, and majestic splendor I breathed, humbly, "Thank you, Lord—for everything."

I moved away from the summit, again with Ten-dar beside me. We did not talk. We dropped about two thousand feet sheer down the loose dirt slope of the pass before Ten-dar signaled a halt, and I sat down, with him on one side and Tsambala on the other. The others were now all ahead, including Adrian and Chris.

"We are now safe," Ten-dar said quietly, "It is only a little difficult ahead, but nothing to what is behind."

"I will live," I smiled at him. "Thank you."

"It would have been very good," he went on, looking somberly at the mountains ahead, "if only Gay-bo had lived. That is bad. We not only lost a good man, but also a good gun."

"What happened?" I asked.

"I'm not sure myself yet," he replied, "until I get all the reports. But Gay-bo was a very foolish as well as a very brave man. You remember the business with the torch at the monastery last night? He insisted this morning that no matter how many trucks or how many Chinese troops came, he was going to fire and 'take' them. All I know is that one of the Chinese soldiers jumped him unexpectedly after he had been wounded in the chest. They grappled and he went down underneath the soldier. He felt for his sword, and then remembered that he had loaned it to one of the others and forgotten to get it back. Still he managed to pin the Chinese soldier's arms in front, and was about to grab for his gun lying nearby, when the soldier sunk his teeth into his hand. The struggle and the bleeding wound had weakened him, and the Chinese soldier picked up a stone and beat him on the head, and he lost consciousness.

"Whether the Chinese became afraid, or panicked, I don't know, but Puntshok Thondup, the Bren-gunner, who was watching for a chance to shoot, says that the Chinese grabbed Gay-bo's gun and his own, slung them over each shoulder and was racing way when he lobbed a hand-grenade at him and fired a burst of his Bren-gun into him to finish the job. He killed him, but he also destroyed the two rifles. I ran over with Assang and pulled Gay-bo out of the fight,

and we withdrew into the narrow valley beside the stream. The remaining Chinese was around somewhere, but he had been shot in the legs and was wounded. The rest were dead. I had thought that I would bring you down to film the trucks on the road as we set fire to them, but my first duty was to the wounded Gay-bo.

“I sent Gesang to fetch you with your medicines, and we put Gay-bo down beside the stream, as he wanted a drink of water. At first, I gave it to him in my cupped hands, but this was not enough and he asked me to roll him over on his face near the water. When he did this the blood came out of his back in great spurts. The left side of his face was also a bloody mess where he had been shot near the cheek and chin; and the top of his head was beaten in with the stone.

“When we tried to lift him, he fell back and said that it was impossible for him to go on. He said that he was an old man, that he knew the time of his death had come, and that we must leave to get you and the films back to Nepal safely. We still said that we would carry him, but his mouth was dropping open and his eyes turned upwards. ‘Shoot me,’ he said to me, and I refused. I could not bring myself to do this. ‘You shoot me,’ he said to Assang. ‘I will shoot you,’ promised Assang, ‘if you will allow us to carry you first and see if the Chinese follow. If you are a hindrance to us, then I will shoot you.’ He did not answer. His head fell back and he was dead. He was a brave man and we shall miss him very much.”

We sat for a little while longer, then moved away slowly down the slope, still talking desultorily of the recent action. Ten-dar had grabbed a Mauser revolver from a Chinese who had tried to shoot him when he approached the first truck, the time I had seen him through the long distance lens. It appeared that Ten-dar had gone to see what the truck contained, as I had supposed, and then found one of the Chinese under the second truck lining up his gun to shoot him. He slipped around the far side of the first truck and the Chinese soldier followed. In order to make the Chinese soldier step wide of the truck, he pulled open the door of the cabin and slipped around the front of the truck to shoot. Nothing happened he said, then suddenly he laughed.

“I was never so frightened in my life,” he grinned, “I went back around the side of the truck and there was the head and shoulders of a Chinese soldier slowly appearing out of the cabin and beside the door. I shot immediately, the body fell—and there behind him

was the Chinese I had been stalking. He, too, was so surprised that he just stood there and I had time to recover and shoot him dead. What had happened was that I must have killed both the driver and his companion with my first long-distance rifle shot. When I opened the door, the driver's companion's dead body must have started sliding sideways, so that when I looked around the front of the truck, it looked as if he were looking around the door at me. I shot a dead man. No wonder the other Chinese was surprised. It gave me time to shoot him, though."

"And the hand-grenade?" I inquired.

"That was to flush out the two Chinese from underneath the second truck. They were proving difficult targets for the others to hit, so I threw the grenade, they ran, and Assang and one of the others shot them."

"Weren't you afraid that you would be hit when you walked towards the first truck at the beginning of the action?" I asked him. "After all, one of several Chinese could have shot you in the back at that stage."

"None of the Chinese could shoot me," he said simply, with a supreme confidence, "I was carrying the Dalai Lama's gift and mandate, and although bullets were going past my face and shoulders"—he grinned recklessly—"as well as my back, I knew that none of them could harm me."

Was it Cromwell who said, "I am immortal till my work is done"? I recalled the phrase—used so often by myself in support of my own convictions in dangerous enterprises—and again, I warmed towards this charming and courageous Tibetan. We walked on in companionable silence through snows and ice to where the sun was creeping down the mountainside to warm the green lower slopes in its rose-yellow glow.

Far below we could see smoke rising from the campfire at the same site which we had left—was it only yesterday?—no, two days before. Some of the Khambas from our party were already there, brewing the inevitable tea and getting ready to eat the last of our depleted food supplies.

"We shall sleep for a few hours there after we have eaten, and then we shall go on to the nomad camp at Kaloon," said Ten-dar. "I don't think the Chinese will follow us, but they have in the past crossed the border saying that they were following 'Khamba bandits,'

and I don't want to risk staying too close to the border."

I agreed, and after one bowl of soup I dropped off to sleep in the blessed warmth of the morning sun. We were wakened at 11:00 by Ten-dar, when we were able to eat, and after a quick meal we broke camp at noon.

We still moved quickly, but easily and without tension. Two hours down the valley, at the point where Assang had shot the deer on the way up, we came on two Tibetans beside a well-hidden campfire.

"The guards I left to close the valley at this end," said Ten-dar in explanation, "so that no spies could leave to carry the news of our attack ahead of us to the Chinese. There are guards like these at the three exits from the main valley."

I smiled and nodded appreciation of his caution, and marveled again at the control the Khambas exercised over a large area and population of north Nepal. For every hundred Khambas there must be at least a thousand Bhutias, or Nepal-domiciled Tibetans and thousands more refugees and Tibetan nomads supplying them with food, information and support of all kinds. They were certainly in an extremely strong position whether facing north or south.

"Do you see that snow-peak up there?" Ten-dar went on. "Just to the left of that and a little down on the other side are fifteen Chinese soldiers, in a large garrison, watching that pass, scouting the mountains, and watching with binoculars. They came there after a previous raid, when we used that route."

"How do you obtain such accurate information?" I asked curiously. "For instance, how do you know that there are fifteen Chinese and not just ten or even twenty?"

Ten-dar gave one of his rare laughs. "Because we have one of our people working for them. We have one Tibetan very useful and important to the Chinese as a guide or informer in almost all of the garrisons in these territories. They send us information and we send wrong information about our movements through them. The Chinese still cannot move in the mountains without the help of local Tibetans—even we need the help of local Tibetans to assist our scouts, you will have noticed—and so we can use them to help us."

We stopped at the nomad camp where the herdsmen, yaks, and dogs had nearly given us a heart attack that night. Only two of the Khambas now had guns in sight, and this was not unusual as they might have been innocent hunters shooting deer. The nomads brought

out a wooden bucket of curds and we sat outside the tent in the afternoon sun to drink them thirstily and with appreciation. Shortly afterwards, we passed four Tibetans going north, and after a short conversation, Ten-dar said to me, worriedly, that they were traders going to Kyerong, and that they would tell the Chinese they saw three foreigners together with Khambas carrying rifles, and the Chinese would guess that we had been on the raid with them. But there was nothing that could be done to stop them.

We arrived back at the refugee nomad camp of Kaloon, from which we had left on our mission, at 4:00 P.M. The others were all there with milk, curds, and tea waiting for us. Adrian suggested that we buy a sheep from the nomads and the Khambas agreed willingly, and began preparing a large meal for all of us.

I could hardly believe that it was only three nights since we had been here—four, if we included the day of our arrival. It was now Wednesday evening, June the 10th. So much had been piled into those past four days—so many miles covered, mountains climbed, events accomplished—that I had difficulty in sorting out the days.

It was a wonderful meal. There was nothing elaborate about it, just boiled sheep with rice, tsamba, and some spices, but to our palates—subsisting on Tibetan scones and eggs, with dried meat and an occasional chicken—it was extremely tasty! We picked up lumps of meat in one hand and cut off pieces with the short Tibetan swords of the Khambas in the other, washing down the lot with bowls of hot yak milk.

At the end we again stretched out on the aromatic, shrub-covered ground of the tent as we were, and fell into the deep, dreamless sleep of the contented and exhausted.



THE PREVIOUS EVENING, over the meal, the Khambas had sorted out the events of the ambush, which at the time had been only a mad scramble of disparate scenes and individual actions.

The lookout had seen the convoy coming and signaled to Assang, who was in the dugout commanding the ravine, who had passed the word to Ten-dar. Assang had then taken ten photographs of the convoy approaching before he picked up his rifle.

Ten-dar had chosen as his moment to shoot when the four trucks had entered the long line of the valley's "S"—and, for the first time in all his activities, his rifle had jammed! When he had cleared the bullet, the second one failed to fire. By the time he had shot at the third attempt, the four trucks were well into the ravine, and the first truck was almost past him situated almost on the valley floor, at the lowest "C" in the diagram. Fortunately, he said, with his third bullet he not only killed the driver instantaneously, but also his companion with the same bullet. At least, he never fired at them again, no one leaped out of the cabin and none of the other Khambas had shot at the occupants of the first truck. He had then passed his rifle to Tsambala on his left, grabbed a submachine gun with bayonet attached, and made for the rear of the first truck—when we had seen him through our camera lens—to see what it contained in the way of loot, leaving the others to deal with the remaining Chinese.

Assang had concentrated his fire on the two Chinese beneath the second truck, but hadn't been able to kill them until Ten-dar had thrown the grenade which flushed them out, when he had shot one and Ten-dar had got the other. After that he divided his time between taking photographs and shooting—taking twenty-two pictures and firing fifty bullets. At one time he leaped out after two Chinese, throwing a hand grenade to drive them into the guns of his com-

panions on his left, and his ankle had given way beneath him. After that he stayed shooting at intervals when any Chinese soldier showed himself, until Ten-dar had called to him to come and help with the badly wounded Gay-bo.

Puntshok Thondup, the Bren-gunner, had killed the driver of the third truck with his first burst and then he and Gesang had fired steadily at the third and fourth trucks to wipe out the remaining Chinese. The fourth truck, which had stopped some fifty yards behind the first three, had been spared some of the withering fire of the others, for several of the Khambas could not see it for the projecting hillside and curve in the road. But it was exposed to Puntshok Thondup and Gesang, and they kept the Chinese under and behind it in their sights.

Puntshok Thondup then said he got the shock of his life when he saw Gay-bo walk out, shooting, towards the third truck to finish off the Chinese there, obviously wounded. Gay-bo had not seen the fourth truck and the deadly firing of the Chinese under it. When he did, he made back for cover, but in the sudden lull in the firing two Chinese had come out from beneath the fourth truck and made for the hillside beneath us.

Puntshok Thondup or Gesang shot one of them in the legs, for he stumbled but made cover safely, but the other came right at Gay-bo, who was surprised by the unexpected attack. He had fought with the Chinese as Ten-dar said earlier, but weakened with loss of blood and the terrible beating on the head with a large stone, he had lost consciousness. When the Chinese assailant appeared again, carrying his own and Gay-bo's gun, Puntshok Thondup threw a grenade at him, and then put a burst of bullets into him from his Bren-gun. It not only killed the Chinese, it had destroyed the two guns which had so much concerned the Khambas, anxious to preserve what few guns and ammunition they had.

The others told of individual shooting, but that was the broad picture of the action. Eight Chinese had been killed, it was estimated, one badly wounded in the legs had been left behind when the Khambas had carried Gay-bo out of the fight to be treated, and Ten-dar had ordered the withdrawal to try to save his life.

Ten-dar was distressed that, because of this, we had not been able to film the trucks and dead Chinese at close quarters, or even that he had not been able to take more than one Mauser revolver as loot

for us to photograph, but he said that his first responsibility was to the wounded Gay-bo, and then to get us away safely. To this we agreed. It would have been exciting to get down on to the road and have close-up of the damage, but in the circumstances there was no alternative to what Ten-dar had decided. In any case, he said ruefully, the trucks only seemed to contain mostly sand and wood for building.

There was one civilian among the Chinese, and one junior officer, the remainder were ordinary soldiers. Taken with the eleven presumed killed on the previous attack less than three weeks before, it meant that this one group had killed over twenty known Chinese, perhaps more, and wounded many others, with only the loss of one of themselves. It was the first loss they had had in over a year's activity on this particular part of their territory.

We were still sitting, eating, in the morning when one of the Khambas called Ten-dar out of the tent. He was away some time, and when he returned he brought with him a short, stocky Tibetan.

He introduced him to me as a trader, and then said, "This man has brought news which should interest you. He was traveling from inside Tibet to Nepal to the south of our ambush point, two days ago, when he was stopped by Chinese soldiers. There were three trucks, packed full of soldiers, all with arms at the ready, patrolling the roads and searching the nearby mountains. They stopped him for questioning about his movements and asked if he had seen any armed Tibetans, and then let him go. The important point of his information is that this was less than an hour after our ambush and on the road to the south, so that more Chinese trucks and soldiers must have arrived within a few minutes of our departure. If we had not left with the wounded Gay-bo when we did, and you had come down to the road to take pictures, we would all have been killed or captured. It was God's goodness that we left when we did, because of Gay-bo, but it is a pity that Gay-bo had to die. I suppose if we had tried to carry him as we thought, we would have been captured, too; for if they were as close behind us as that, they would have caught us easily if we had been carrying a wounded man. God was good to us."

I agreed, but felt unhappy as I recalled, not only the amount of responsibility we shared in Gay-bo's death, but also that I had been so confident that all of us would return—a confidence gained from the remarkable series of scriptures which had emphasized this in my

reading before we left. I did not believe in coincidences in my way of life, especially in such circumstances. The incidents had come with such cogent significance that, despite the tension and excitement, I had never doubted but that we would succeed as God had promised. All that we had experienced and heard since had established this—as Ten-dar said “God’s goodness”—but Gay-bo was dead. To the sadness of his death was added the disturbing factor to my whole framework of confidence in this mission—that unfulfilled promise. If I could be wrongly assured in this before God, I could be wrong in everything. I pushed the problem away for the time being, until I had both time and quiet to think it over.

Later, yet another informant arrived, not of this particular action in which we had taken part, but of the previous one. According to him—he was one of the Khamba agents attached to the Chinese garrison—out of the fourteen trucks attacked in that convoy, ten had been damaged and not nine as the Khambas had thought. Of these ten, two were a complete write-off and had been left beside the road stripped of important parts, three had been towed to Kyerong for major repairs, and five had been so badly damaged that they had been towed away to Lhasa. Also, twenty-three Chinese had been killed and not eleven, and several badly wounded. He had eaten in the Chinese garrison and while he was there the Chinese said to him and other Tibetans that the men in bandages had just been in a “motor accident.”

Following on that attack, thirty-three truck loads of soldiers had arrived and scoured the mountains for three days and three nights, under the command of a high ranking Chinese officer. At the end of that time they had been recalled, and right there on the road the high ranking Chinese officer had bitterly upbraided both officers and men for not finding any of the Khamba attackers. They had then gone back to their garrisons at Tsang, Dzongkar, and Kyerong.

Another group of Khambas from nearby, just to the northwest, had also been active. Seventy of them had crossed the border and engaged four hundred armed Chinese on horses. Over a hundred Chinese had been killed in the action, with none of the Khambas killed. But later, when four of them went to collect information, they had met another group of three hundred Chinese in the mountains and had been captured, tortured, and killed.

Another interesting item of information was that the day previous

to our ambush a convoy of twenty-five truckloads of soldiers had gone down the road; which meant that, if we had not been so exhausted that night and had arrived on the day we had earlier planned, the Khambas would have attacked the twenty-five-truck convoy of soldiers—with unimaginable consequences! God had indeed been good. While there was little doubt that had the Khambas been on their own, they would have been delighted to shoot up twenty-five truckloads of Chinese troops, and then gambled on outwitting and outstripping them in the mountains, yet with us and our equipment to keep them back we would almost certainly have been killed or captured.

But we were still not safe by any means. I calculated that the Chinese now patrolling the other side of the pass would certainly stop and interrogate the four Tibetans we had passed yesterday. They would now know that three foreigners accompanying a group of armed Khambas had been in the vicinity at that time. If the Chinese had been really careful in their scouting of our backtrail (although we had been extremely cautious) they might have found egg shells, film wrapper, chocolate wrappers, or toilet paper—any or all of which would be evidence of foreigners in the party. We had collected and buried everything when we could, but it only needed the odd wrapper or piece of paper to give us away.

Allowing for Chinese intelligence, then, they would report to Lhasa that three foreigners, with or without films, had been with the Khambas in the attack. This was of sufficient importance to be relayed to Peking. The Peking authorities would then obviously communicate with the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu, to find out what expeditions or groups of foreigners were in that vicinity at that time. The glaring answer of one British TV film unit, including George Patterson, would strike them right away. The conclusion? At all costs they—the Chinese—must, at least, get these films and photographs if not the people who had them in their possession.

As I saw it, then, the Chinese might send their troops over the border after us, in their desperation to stop the adverse publicity, and if they could capture us with the Khambas *plus* films, would then claim that they had simply followed us to arrest us for being illegally on “Chinese territory.” But if they were not sure of getting the film and they captured us on Nepal’s territory, they would be in serious international difficulties without evidence to support their claims.

Therefore, we should get rid of the films quickly. So we explained this to Ten-dar and gave them to the Khambas to keep safely until we were ready to leave. It was still a gamble, but it gave us the edge now in any Chinese attempt to recover the films.

We still faced problems. If Peking decided that the publicity would really do them damage—we had broken through their reputedly impregnable frontier, attacked them on one of their famous roads, filmed their defeat, and escaped successfully—then they might well lodge an official protest with the Nepal government in an attempt to recover the films, or have them confiscated, and have us arrested. Their problem with this line of action was that it would give us even greater publicity, which we wanted and they did not, and still leave them no guarantee that they could stop the films and articles. For, obviously, as professional journalists we were not going to be caught with the films in our possession and so lose the whole scoop.

And so I concluded that Peking might try to get one or several of their sympathizers in Nepal to steal the films from us, either openly by threat, or secretly by night, but would not make an official protest. There was no reason why the Nepal government should be suspicious, for we had an official pass to travel somewhere near these areas, at least, and had an official liaison officer with us in the person of Hemantha, and while we had taken longer than the month requested, it was still only a week or so. Therefore, we had only to outwit the Chinese attempts, keeping a wary eye on Nepali officialdom in the meantime, and get the films out ahead of us.

I had already arranged with a friend in India to pay a large sum of money on delivery to any person, Tibetan or Nepali, who turned up with a parcel and letter from me, so it only remained to find the suitable person. I had spoken to Tsewang, our porter-leader, but was still not too happy about him. The alternative was to get someone who could by-pass the Indian military checkpost at Dotang, and the Nepali customs post just beyond. This was the critical danger-point. If there had been any official protest, or any official suspicion, it would be evident here—and so we must not have films or notes in our possession when we arrived there. If all was normal at that point, then we had only Chinese sympathizers' plots to meet in the seventeen days between Dotang and Kathmandu. Before our arrival in Kathmandu we would have to decide on final tactics to get the films out of the country.

It was like an elaborate spy thriller, and I found this part almost as stimulating as the plans for the ambush itself.

We could not leave right away, for we also wanted to film the celebrations in the valley for the Dalai Lama's birthday. This was to be a special occasion, partly because of the recent successful series of raids across the border, partly because of our successful and safe return, and partly because it was felt to be a good sign that we were there taking an interest in Tibet and the Tibetans. And so Adrian and Chris had decided to spend the time between doing some filming.

We had just packed equipment and food to go further up into the mountains for some snow sequences on the day after our arrival, taking the still unsuspecting Hemantha, who believed we were only up in the snows filming nomads, and were less than fifty yards away from the camp, when a breathless Tibetan appeared.

Ten-dar was just ahead of me, and Adrian behind, and I caught a few words.

“——arrived in Kaloon.”

I turned to Adrian, suddenly tensed. “I think the Chinese have arrived in Kaloon after us,” Adrian looked as stunned as I felt. Then my mind began racing, formulating plans. Kaloon was only four hours' quick walk away.

“What is it?” I asked, puzzled at Ten-dar's peculiar reaction. I expected action, quick orders to the Khambas, commands to ourselves—but not stupified silence from him.

“Gay-bo has arrived at Kaloon,” he said, numbed.

“What!” I exclaimed, not believing I had heard right. The Tibetan for “Chinese” is “Gya-mi” and I had thought this was what had been reported.

“Gay-bo, the man who was shot, is alive and has arrived in Kaloon, where we spent the night,” Ten-dar enlarged his statement. His eyes still reflected unbelief, but were lightening into a dawning smile of relief, mixed with incredulity.

“But I thought—” I began.

“He was dead.” Ten-dar finished. “So did I; so did Assang and the others. But he has arrived at Kaloon very ill, but alive.”

“Then we must get there immediately with medicines,” I said decisively. “Who will go? You?”

“You and I will go together, stay the night there, and bring him

on here tomorrow morning," he said curtly. His mind was functioning easily again after the shock. "We will take horses and ride to get there more quickly."

We could not talk as the trail was narrow and rough, and we had to ride in single file. An hour's ride up the valley we passed the village of Nye-lay, and Ten-dar turned across the bridge and up to where we had visited a Khamba sympathizer on our way to the ambush. I assumed it was to warn him of our return the next day with Gay-bo.

We swung off our horses at the gate of the compound—and there was Gay-bo facing us. Again we stopped speechless. Was there no end to this man's remarkable endurance and resilience?

His face was a horrific mask of caked blood, dirt and streaks of sweat. His head was a bloody mess. His woolen pullover, grey-white, over the green parachute silk shirt, was now black with dried blood and dirt, and a small coin-sized hole lay ominously above the heart.

Ten-dar walked up to him, wordlessly, and turned him around. High up on his left shoulder, surrounded by a filthy, bloody tangle of pullover, shirt, blood and dirt, was a huge, three-inch, gaping hole where the bullet had come out.

"What are you doing here?" was all Ten-dar could get out. "I thought you were at Kaloon."

"Oh, they wanted me to stay there," laughed Gay-bo unsteadily, "but I said I was fit to walk on here—and even to the camp."

"You will sit down," ordered Ten-dar firmly, "and Bon-bo-la will give you medicine and dress your wounds." He turned to the small circle of wide-eyed villagers gazing at Gay-bo with awe. "Bring tea and hot water upstairs," he said.

But I decided that if Gay-bo had come this far he might as well travel another hour on a horse to the camp, where I could treat him properly and where he could rest and relax. So I filled him full of drugs, as a pain killer, and said we would move on after tea.

Did I say tea? Ten-dar and I drank tea but the village headmen, elders, and women, came in in a constant stream—some of them weeping with gladness—to press chang (beer) and arak (rice-wine), on to Gay-bo, who steadily obliged with his ready laugh. I let him drink, for it would help to anaesthetize him when I dressed his wounds later.

His story was necessarily hazy for he had had several bouts of unconsciousness, but what he remembered from his times of lucidity was startling.

He remembered all the events leading up to the departure of Ten-dar and Assang, and his own sense of impending death. He recalled that he had not been aware that there was a fourth truck in the convoy, as that had been hidden from him by the bend of the mountain, so when the Chinese had jumped him he was caught completely unawares. He had been shot by this time, had twisted his leg, and in the struggle had taken such a beating that he lost consciousness. He had felt for his short sword during the fight, then remembered he had loaned it to someone and had forgotten to get it back. He also remembered telling Ten-dar and Assang to shoot him, not to let him fall into the hands of the Chinese, then, as he felt he was dying anyway, to get the foreigners with the important films away safely.

Some time after they had gone—he did not know how long, but the sun was still high so it could not have been much later—he had regained consciousness and after a long drink of water at the stream he had started, staggering, up the narrow valley after us. He kept falling unconscious, but always managed to drag himself into the bushes, or under cover before he passed out. At one time he was aware of Chinese voices, so proceeded cautiously, and it was just as well, for he had not reached the monastery at which we had stayed the night before the ambush, when he saw that it was overrun with Chinese troops. He lay and watched them scouting the mountainside until night and reckoned that there must have been fifty of them. So by his reckoning they must have been on our trail less than two hours after the ambush! What they did not know for certain was which of the many valleys we had taken; and where they made their mistake was to stay in the monastery for the night. Had they come on quickly they would have caught up with us.

Gay-bo had followed in their tracks next day, past our previous camps. Then where we had turned into the valley leading up to the Khojang Pass, he swung away to the east and came around in a wide circle to come over another pass, the Sulba-La to the southeast. Here again the Chinese had moved swiftly and he faced fifty Chinese guarding this pass, where there had been only about fifteen the day before, all of them heavily armed and obviously on the lookout.

He had then moved back and come over the range by an unused trail and pass between the two better-known ones, dropping down directly near the nomad camp at Kaloon, where we had come in on an angled approach.

It was a staggering performance, even for a fit man, but for one in his shot-up condition it was next to miraculous. Certainly, time after time the Tibetans who came in said "It is a miracle"—"He came back from the dead"—"It is God's goodness"—"It is an answer to prayers."

He was reeling in the saddle when we arrived back at the Khambas' camp, but still managed a sudden quick gallop, a laugh, and a swing off the horse when we arrived. Then the others were surging around, helping him to a seat in the tent, pouring questions on him, and laughing in relief and gratitude at his miraculous return.

I got hot water, Dettol, bandages, scissors, and what I had left of my now very inadequate medical kit. I had to cut him out of his pullover and shirt, while Adrian and Chris filmed the process, and they gasped as the full horror of his wound was exposed. The bullet had entered at a sharp angle fortunately, so that it was nearer the shoulder than the heart and plowed upwards to come out through the large shoulder muscle, somehow missing heart, lung and shoulder blade. But the wound in the back was huge, gaping, pus- and dirt-filled (I even took out a half-inch broad thorn), angry-red, and swollen. A bullet had also made a furrow along his chin and cheek. His forehead was a mass of bruises and scars where he had been beaten unconscious by the stone, and his left hand was swollen tight with livid scars, where the desperate Chinese had sunk his teeth.

During it all Gay-bo never uttered a moan—even carrying on a conversation with the other Khambas who held him, or who were assisting me to wash and dress his wounds. When I asked if I was hurting him, as I must have been, he said "No," and that he was grateful for the help I was giving him.

When I was finished, I gave him a hefty dose of sleeping tablets and the last course of Terramycin which I had brought with me, and said that he should eat and sleep. I was more exhausted than he appeared to be.

The next day was the celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday. I went up to the camp to dress Gay-bo and Nyima of the gangrened foot—and found that Gay-bo even wanted to join in the day's cele-

brations! I was adamant that he must rest in the tent, and he agreed with a tolerant grin. He was, he said in answer to my question, fifty-two years of age.

I had seen many celebrations of the Dalai Lama's birthday, and so decided, when I was not required for interpretation by the film unit, to write up my notes, which had fallen behind because of the excitement and pace of events.

I was waiting quietly outside my tent when Ten-dar came up and, sitting down beside me, asked quietly if we could talk. I laid aside my notebook and pencil and smilingly agreed.

He lay on his arm, looking for some time towards the distant monastery where sounds of singing and dancing could be heard, and then began to speak slowly.

"What do you really think is the future of Tibet? Do you think Tibet will ever be free? Do you think the Dalai Lama will ever return? What is the future for me and for these men whom I lead? Must we go on month after month, crossing the mountains into Tibet, attacking Chinese convoys, killing Chinese soldiers, until we are all killed? Tell me truthfully what you think—I would like to know."

I, too, spoke slowly, remembering that the next raid might find this man shot like Gay-bo, might find him left behind to die in some lonely valley, alone with his tortured conscience.

"I have spent eighteen years helping Tibet," I said, "primarily because I believed that was what God wanted me to do, but also because I could not believe that God would waste my life in a meaningless pursuit. So I believe that Tibet has a future. That is why I am here today, and not in some safe and easy job in England. But what that future is I do not know.

"The part of me that has studied events in Asia, especially analyzing China's ambitions, believes that there must be war between China and India before China can be stopped. That war, I believe, may come over China's claims to Bhutan or Nepal. But in any event, if there is fighting, India will need the help of Tibetans, and if the Tibetans—such as yourself and the many other guerillas in the mountains around the border as well as inside Tibet—are given arms, you might well accomplish the defeat of China, or rather make it impossible for China to remain in control of Tibet."

"But that will mean a great war," said Ten-dar, "and many deaths

—many Tibetans, many Indians, perhaps many foreigners as well.”

“It may mean a great war and many deaths,” I agreed.

“Is there no other way, no other hope?” he asked.

“I know of only one way, one hope,” I replied, with a sigh, “but no one believes that it is possible. Sometimes I do not believe it myself—but if it is not possible this way, then Tibet must be lost, Bhutan and Nepal must be lost, India may be lost—and a worse war, or worse situation, could result.”

“What is this hope—can I understand it?” Ten-dar asked, his eyes alight with interest.

I took up my notebook and pencil and drew a rough map of Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan.

“These four countries have had a long history of friendship and trade,” I said. “Isn’t that correct?” He nodded. “Then my idea is that they should be formed into a neutral Confederation of Himalayan States, between India and China.” I then went on to explain how this might be done, as I had done with leading Nepalese and Tibetan officials. Ten-dar followed it all closely, absorbed, stopping me to ask questions when something wasn’t clear to him. At the end he looked at me without saying anything but his eyes were as elated as I had ever seen them.

“This I like very much indeed,” he said enthusiastically. “You must succeed in having this plan accepted.”

I smiled wryly, “I have spoken and argued many times about this and while many people listen, not many believe it is possible. But I will continue trying to have it accepted. For I believe it is the only hope for Tibet and these other countries—short of war.”

For the next two hours we discussed confederation and Tibet, and finally Ten-dar sat up smiling.

“You have given me new hope,” he said. “When you are gone we will continue to fight the Chinese and destroy their convoys, but it will have some meaning for me. I may not live to see my country free, but I will not feel that I have altogether wasted my life. If I do live, and if Tibet becomes free, I would like to meet you again sometime. Do you think this possible?”

“We will make it possible,” I promised. “After this past week, past month, or even past few years, you must believe with me that all things are possible if only we believe.”

Why was I reminded of Sir Walter Raleigh when I looked at his

handsome, brooding face? Because he was a daring adventurer, or land pirate? Or was it just some subconscious schoolboy hero-image? It was several days later while reading the last of the metaphysical poets in my paperback that it suddenly struck me. Sir Walter Raleigh was the one who had written "The Passionate Mans Pilgrimage," supposed to have been written at the point of death.

Give me my Scallop shell of quiet,
My staffe of Faith to walke upon,
My Scrip of Joy, immortall diet,
My bottle of salvation:
My Gowne of Glory, hopes true gage,
And thus Ile take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be by bodies balmer,
No other balme will there be given
Wilst my soule like a white Palmer,
Travels to the land of heaven,
Over the silver mountaines,
Where spring the Nectar fountaines:
And there Ile kisse
The Bowle of blisse,
And drink my eternall fill
On every milken hill.
My soule will be a drie before,
But after, it will nere thirst more. . . .



Gay-bo shows his wounds and tells his story after walking back alone to the Khamba camp.



THE COLORFUL celebrations drew to a close, and all over the valley preparations were being made by the hundreds who had come in from the nearby valleys and mountains to depart. The black, brown, and white tents which had mushroomed overnight began to fold, and long lines of horses and people streamed away towards the far snows, new hope in their hearts.

It was time for us to return. We had made our final plans, trying to anticipate every possibility so that this memorable film should not be lost through some foolish oversight on our part. There were three major factors to be taken into consideration: one, the monsoon rains which were now imminent, great grey clouds sweeping up from the plains of India to drop sheets of rain, swelling the already thunderous rivers and carrying away precarious bamboo bridges; two, the negotiating of the Indian checkpost so that they would not be suspicious at our delayed return or, if already suspicious, that they should not find the films in our possession; three, to arrive quietly in Kathmandu without anyone knowing until we had got rid of the film.

There was nothing we could do about the monsoon, except to cut down on our travel time as much as possible. To do this, Adrian worked out a scheme whereby the porters would be paid on a sliding scale for performance; if, instead of seventeen days, they did it in seven, then they would all receive top rates plus generous bonus; if eight days, less, and so on. At first there were protests then, after some argument, as we pointed out that the loads would all be much lighter, they agreed with rising excitement to aim for the seven days and highest rates.

To circumvent the obstacles of the checkpost we packed the films and notes into as innocent parcels as possible and put them into

the load of the most intelligent and trusted of the porters. When we got near to Setelvass the others would go ahead, sound out the reception and then send word back by someone to the porter with the films and myself, lagging behind. If we were under suspicion the porter would by-pass the checkpost while I signed the book and either join us further down the trail or later in Kathmandu. He, too, would be paid extra on performance.

The entry into Kathmandu would just have to await our arrival and be played by ear.

The parting was surprisingly difficult, considering the shortness of our visit and acquaintance. We left behind our stocks of food, a radio, binoculars, what extra clothing we had, the butane fire, storm lanterns, and the Khambas were pathetically grateful. I had already used up the last of my medicines on Nyima's gangrened foot and Gay-bo's wounded chest, shoulder and face, all miraculously recovering. They stood in line with the others—as tough, ruthless, ferocious, and attractive a group of men to be found anywhere—hands raised indomitably in a parting military salute. Ten-dar walked some distance beyond them, holding on to my hand. "God has been good to us in bringing you here," he said simply. "Ga-lay peb" ("Walk slowly," the Tibetan parting).

The porters set a really fast pace, in anticipation of the difficult stretches which they feared lay ahead and which would delay us. But we were almost at Setelvass late on the second day when the first heavy rains hit us. It was fortunate in a way, for it meant that there were few travelers or villagers to see from which direction the long line of men were approaching, but it meant also a blinding, slithering scramble down the steep mountainside to a wildly swinging bamboo bridge, on shaky tree-trunk supports, over a raging river in full flood. Some of the porters had to be helped over by the more hardy.

I waited in the slanting downpour, high gale, and increasing darkness with the porter and films, on the far side of the bridge. We had arranged that Adrian, Chris, and a messenger would go first and then send the messenger back to "help" the others across the bridge, but bringing the report to me. When he finally came it was to say that all seemed unsuspecting and friendly as before. I joined Adrian and Chris in the officers' mess, drinking tea, and we gave to the mess a welcome gift of several packets of cocoa. After we

had signed the registration book, we said that we must get further down the trail that night—and the friendly officers even offered us the services of a guide.

But the next day we ran into the monsoon rains with a vengeance. Even with our oilskin ponchos, we were soon soaked to the skin, with rain coursing down inside the necks and streaming perspiration. The trail up which we had come nearly two months ago had now disappeared underneath the ever-widening and rising flood of the river, and we had to clamber precariously up sheer slopes made treacherous underfoot by the cutting rain, and spend extra hours taking roundabout routes over precipitous shoulders.

And with the rains came the leeches. The inch-to-two-inch upright, revoltingly-swaying blood-suckers were everywhere and unavoidable. Underfoot on the trail, within seconds one or more had attached itself to the boot and undulated its obscene way through an eyelet or over the top of the boot and attached itself hungrily to the skin. Weaving from the stone-clad sides of the trail they clung to the clothes and loads then made their way inside shirts, under pants. Dropping from the branches of trees on to the hats or hair of those passing beneath. Millions and millions of them, one dare not stop for a minute or cohorts of them smelling fresh blood swayed and undulated towards us. Soon we were streaming blood from a hundred leech-sucked punctures, stockings, and boots squelching in blood and water. Repellent and salt were of little use, and the only effective deterrent seemed to be the red-hot tip of a cigarette applied to the obscenely-gorging insect. The days were bad enough, the thought of the nights ahead was a nightmare.

On the third day we reached a spot where the river had taken a wide sweep and we had walked on a sandy path when we came up the trail. But now it was a brown and boiling maelstrom for almost twenty yards, cutting off any further progress down country. This was what we had feared, and we had been told that few hillmen even would travel now, so dangerous were the trails and rivers. But we had to get through.

Even the Tibetans were pessimistic, but brightened up a little when I suggested that we might be able to get across by means of a makeshift "rope bridge," often used in Tibet. We had brought some climbing equipment with us in case of an emergency—an ice-axe, pitons, long nylon rope, metal spring clip for tying the rope to the

waist so that it could be paid out—and these were now taken out of the packs. A tree high up on this side of the mountain was picked out as sufficiently strong for our purpose—but we had to get it fixed up on the far side of the boiling, boulder-tumbling river somehow. The river was not deep—waist to shoulder-high, we reckoned from what we knew—but it was fast, turbulent, and dangerous.

Adrian as the tallest had to go first. He stripped to his pants, tied the rope around his waist with the rest of us as “anchors” playing it out, took two long sticks, one in each hand, and stepped into the torrent. It was a nerve-wracking experience, for at every step he would either stumble on the rocky bed or sway as the weight of roaring water hit him, but after what seemed like hours he reached the far side. It was only a matter of minutes to fix the rope to a strong support on the far side, draw it tight enough so that it fell in a descending dip above the river, and we were ready.

Tsewang, the leader of the porters, volunteered to go first. A shorter rope was tied around his waist, passed through the metal spring-clip, which was then placed on the rope, and he was ready to shoot down to the far side. There were three dangers—at least. One was that the person would travel too fast and smash against the boulders on the far side; to avoid this we arranged for still another rope to be tied to the person going over, and for several on this side to “feed” this while others kept the overhead rope from slipping. The next danger was that the dip in the rope would be such that the person would be plunged into the river and carried off and away. The third was that as more people went over it would become increasingly dangerous—and I was due to go over last. Without laboring the point—we made it. But it was a terrifying experience while it lasted—one which Adrian and Chris were quick to record on film, though. Poor Hemantha! He was getting his excitement and experience the hard way, but he was making a valiant job of it for a city-bred aristocrat. He had to if he ever wanted to get back home.

The porters decided to by-pass the large market village of Arughat by taking a more difficult but shorter route, so that we could still make it to Kathmandu in the seven days. They reckoned that by taking this route, although steep—even sheer in places—it would have the advantage of not again risking being cut off by rivers or

broken bridges. So we prepared for our entry into Kathmandu.

We decided that Tsewang lacked the necessary guts and trustworthiness for the important task of getting the films through, and we settled on the porter who had been willing to take the risks at Setelvass, the checkpost. We now instructed him that he was to go ahead of us, alone, and reach Kathmandu one day before we did. He would be given two letters: one for any policeman who might stop him on the way suspecting him of being a thief and saying that he was authorized to take our goods to Kathmandu and to reserve a truck for us at Trisuli; the other letter was for Mark, the hotel manager, to say that we expected to arrive in two days, that we had sent this man ahead to inform him of this, to prepare our rooms and to please take the man's load and keep it safely for us until our return. We reckoned—we hoped!—that its very openness and simplicity would disarm any suspicion, or, at least, would ensure that the important load of films would not be in our possession when we arrived if there was any undue suspicion about our activities.

After a murderous, unforgettably exhausting march through the oppressive heat and rain of the lower foothills we arrived back in Trisuli, the starting point of our expedition, ahead of the time we had planned. Here we left the bulk of our Tibetan porters, taking only Tsewang, the excellent Trashi, and Se-dar—our cooks—with us in the truck to Kathmandu.

Our arrival in Kathmandu was something of an anticlimax. We came through a thunderstorm and the police checkposts waved us on with a minimum of fuss and checking. We arrived at the Imperial Hotel about ten at night to find Mark—and the trusted porter plus load—waiting for us. And so, said Mark, was my wife! Now for the last, most delicate stage of the whole operation.

I found out from Mark where my wife was living. She had been given the use of a house belonging to a British Council official who had gone on leave and offered his house to the hospital for the use of any doctor who might come as temporary *locum*. Mark came out in the jeep with me to show where it was located on the outskirts of Kathmandu, and I arrived at midnight. Mark had not had time to tell her, so my arrival was a complete surprise—and not before time! She had just made up her mind, because of the long delay in

our arrival, that she had better begin making unofficial inquiries, but fortunately she had not yet done so!

She had been having other troubles of her own. Arriving in Kathmandu which she had never visited before, with three children under five, one a baby of five months, she knew no one except Dr. Anderson of the United Mission Hospital. There was no accommodation at the hospital, but the British Council official on leave for four months had offered his house to any of the hospital staff who might come to help. It was a lovely house but several miles away from the hospital, in an isolated spot, had no telephone and there was no transportation provided. This meant that my wife had to leave the children in the care of unknown, Nepali-speaking servants, from early morning until she returned about six in the evening. It was little wonder, therefore, that she welcomed my return!

Adrian and Chris had decided that they would stay at the hotel. This had the double advantage of spreading our forces and confusing any suspicious officials, while leaving Adrian, whose job it was to get rid of the films, free to operate in the city.

We had decided that the simplest and most unlikely method was the one to try first, before attempting something more complicated. Adrian went straight to the airlines office and found that the first plane out was one going to Pakistan. No one seemed suspicious, or even unduly inquisitive, but just to make certain he had prepared a dummy package to test the official reaction. None.

Now for the biggest gamble of all. If it failed then the whole project was lost, for without films who would be interested? The rolls of films were classified, the packages tied, the customs forms completed—"exposed film"—for all to see, and Adrian went off to the airlines office and airport. We waited, tense and anxious, for the telephone to ring with the news that he had been questioned and the goods confiscated.

Two hours later Adrian returned, smiling. Again, no one had been suspicious, the goods had been properly checked and cleared, and he had waited until he had seen the packages on the plane and the plane take off. We had succeeded. The beauty of this part of the operation, too, was that we could not be held for any violation of the laws of the country.

It was time to leave Nepal. But we had decided that before we left, we should see the British ambassador to report on what we

had done and to give our assessment of the critical situation facing Nepal on the northern border. The ambassador had been friendly and helpful (in our “legitimate” filming program, that is—he knew nothing of what we proposed to do), and we felt that we owed it to him to give an account of what we had done. We had no compunction about leaving the Nepali government officials uninformed, after all their absorption in selfish interests and petty maneuverings. But we owed it to the Nepalese people. As responsible journalists, while safeguarding the Khamba guerillas, it was necessary to publicize what Chinese intentions and activities were likely to be in that part of Asia in the months and years ahead.

Since my wife and family were in Kathmandu and Adrian and Chris had some filming to do in India before our next project, it was decided finally that we go and see the ambassador two or three days before they left, while I would wait on in Kathmandu for any discussions that might be required.

The ambassador was annoyed, and said so, but accepted it as a *fait accompli*, as we had anticipated. We had a long discussion on what we hoped to accomplish by publicizing the situation on Nepal’s northern borders with Tibet. Would it not harm Nepal without helping the Tibetans? Would it not just help the Chinese? If the Khambas were there in that kind of strength then there was little that Nepal could do and it would only provide China with an excuse to interfere and make trouble.

I pointed out that until we went there, the Nepal government had not even been aware that there *was* a “situation” on the northern borders. That what they accepted—and told other governments who also accepted it—was that there were only a few Tibetan refugees who had settled down peacefully in the mountains. In the final analysis—just as with Indian government ignorance over Tibet five years before—the political and military initiatives and advantages all lay with China. China was preparing to infiltrate into North Nepal, was already doing it through trade and propaganda on a scale unknown to the Nepal government, and was preparing to move in militarily at a time suitable to her. Any publicity that we could provide, therefore, would only cast light on what was already unknown to friends of Nepal and would not be of any advantage to China. China knew that there was a large, well-armed concentration of some five thousand Khamba guerillas in North Nepal and

West Tibet; was aware that tens of thousands of Bhotias and Tibetans were assisting them, was aware that they were getting arms and ammunition, was aware just how dangerous they were. It was Nepal, India, and the Western powers who were unaware of the true situation. It was Nepal, India, and the Western powers who would be caught unprepared in the event of any Chinese initiative, just as they had been caught unprepared several times over the past fifteen years. Publicity might not suit present British, American, Nepalese, or Indian policy, but then that policy had hardly proved itself perceptive or satisfactory in the past and as far as I, personally, was concerned, the present policy was opportunistic, uninformed, weak, despicable, and useless. It was based on a chain reaction of fear. Nepal was afraid of India and China; India was afraid of China; Britain and America were afraid of India. Only China didn't care who was offended by what policy.

We finally agreed with the ambassador that we would not publish anything right away, to give time for various governments to discuss the possible consequences of our expedition and publicity—say, for about three months. In the meantime, he would approach the Nepal government to report what we had done but at the same time extend our offer to give an account of our conclusions.

The ambassador suggested that this could best be done on the Friday when he was scheduled to have an audience with the King on another subject. This suited me—I had already stated that I was not prepared to go and knock on government ministers' doors and provide free information after the lack of cooperation we had experienced at their hands—but Adrian and Chris were dubious. They were scheduled to leave on Saturday morning, by road, and this would give government officials time to take action. However, I argued that there was absolutely no evidence of what we had done. The Tibetan porters were scattered and government officials did not know them anyway; Hemantha did not know and in any case he was not an official government employee, so it would take some time to reach him (he had asked Adrian and Chris to take him on a trip to Calcutta and Adrian had agreed); while my position would become progressively more difficult as the days passed they could get away safely. And so it was agreed that Friday night would be the time when all would be told.

The reaction was as I had said it would be although the ambassa-

dor had not been prepared to accept such a possibility from “intelligent people.” The King had been annoyed, but had accepted the ambassador’s assurances that we were responsible journalists, we had promised not to publicize the account for three months, and I had offered to have full discussions with any Nepal government official. But the following morning, Saturday, the King had called a special Cabinet session at which he had demanded from his ministers that if what Patterson reported was true, why had none of the ministers known of this situation; and if they had known why had none of them reported it to him?

The ministers were not only confused, they were panicked. The ambassador called me to say that the foreign secretary, General Khatri, would like to see me on Sunday at 2:30. He had sounded very angry, and was known to be very tough when he wanted to be and now he wanted to be very much!

Adrian, Chris, and Hemantha left late on Saturday morning, the truck loaded with television cameras and equipment, by road for the Nepal border town of Raxaul and India. In the afternoon, I had an unexpected visit from Thakur, the chief of protocol, with several companions, including a judge. One, at least, of the others would be in intelligence, I assumed. They had just been out for a drive, said Thakur, and thought they would drop in for a friendly visit. How had I enjoyed my recent trip into the mountains? How did I like Mustang (the rumored headquarters of the Khamba guerillas)? How did I find Tibet? All asked with a jolly, knowing just-between-us laugh. I was equally jolly, knowing, just-between-us laughing—and uncommunicative. I knew Thakur too well. So I spoke of what we had seen in lower foothills areas well within the terms of our permit. I said we had been nowhere near Mustang—which was true—and how could we possibly get into Tibet without anyone knowing?

The interview with the foreign secretary was without humor. He did not look up as I was shown into his office by a minor official. He continued writing as I sat opposite him. Obviously, I was to be given “the treatment.” I crossed my legs and sat back until the performance was finished. His opening was abrupt and unpromising.

“When did you return?” he asked coldly.

“A few days ago, last Saturday,” I replied mildly.

“Where did you go?” he demanded.

I gave him a long look. I did not agree with the embassy assess-

ments of him, that he was a very clever man, a deep man. This was based mostly on the fact that he said little, and that he had read some philosophy. I had recalled the words of Solomon: "Even a fool if he be silent may be known for his wisdom." Nor had he distinguished himself in any way in the labyrinthine politics to the extent of several of his predecessors. As I knew him, he was a man who was prepared to be a mouthpiece, content with his position and prestige, without even the guile to organize an efficient personal following to ensure his continuance in office. Any man who could use a Banskota as his chief operator was a political lightweight without a future. If he wanted it rough I was happy to play it that way, for he would be of little use to Nepal anyway.

"General Khattry," I said politely, "there are two ways in which we can conduct this discussion—pleasantly or unpleasantly. I don't care which one you choose, but whichever it is I will reply in kind. Let me put it to you quite bluntly. You have absolutely no evidence that we have done anything contrary to the laws of this country, so I am at liberty to leave here without saying a word to you or anyone. However, in the interests of the Nepali, Tibetan, and other peoples I am prepared to discuss matters which are of extreme importance to them—but I will not risk being put in prison on my own confession by any small-time Nepali politician. Now we can either talk, or end the discussion."

His face was thunderous. "You went to Mustang without permission," he ground out.

I looked at him in surprise. This was even more stupid than I had anticipated. "I did not go to Mustang," I said emphatically.

"You did," he spat. "And you admitted it in front of witnesses."

Now I was really surprised. Were they going to try to frame me? I knew it was not beyond them, but I had thought it might have some measure of subtlety. This was nonsense. We could prove that at no time were we anywhere near Mustang.

"Who were the witnesses?" I asked, not expecting to be answered.

"Mr. Thakur," he replied confidently "and in front of a Nepali high court judge, among others."

So that was it. Friend Thakur had been given an order to get information in a frontal attack, and he had decided to cover himself by taking along witnesses who, for a consideration—future promotion and cooperation—were prepared to support him in what-

ever he said. They really were silly little men to be handling such grave issues. The men at the top must be scared to death to be so openly committed. Well, they had asked for it.

“Mr. Thakur is a liar,” I said calmly, “and so is your high court judge.”

He leaned across the desk, pressed a bell and when a secretary came in asked him to call Mr. Thakur, chief of protocol. He sat silent until there was a knock on the door and Thakur appeared, smiling and urbane as usual.

“Sit down, Mr. Thakur,” General Khattry said shortly. “Mr. Patterson here denies that he has been to Mustang. You say that he admitted in front of witnesses yesterday that he had been there?”

“That is right,” Thakur nodded, smiling, at me pleasantly. “Remember, you said that you had had a nice time there.”

I shook my head at him, pityingly. “Mr. Thakur, I never said any such thing. I told you quite clearly that I had never been anywhere near Mustang. But you need not take my word. It can be proved.”

“How?” General Khattry jumped at the opening. I was almost tempted to be contemptuous.

“In two ways,” I said, keeping my voice noncommittal with an effort. “First, by checking with the government liaison officer who was with us all the time except for one period of about eight days—an impossible time to reach Mustang from where we were. Second, by checking the signed records at your own checkpoint of Setelvass, also from where it was impossible to reach Mustang.”

The silence dragged on, and I let it. If the hook was unpleasant they had only themselves to blame. Finally, the foreign secretary, after shuffling some papers around on his desk, said in a blustering attempt to regain authority: “That’s another thing. You did not take a government liaison officer with you.”

This was the man who was supposed to be dealing ably and effectively with Sino-Indian and international intrigue in Kathmandu, and on whom India and the West depended so completely!

“Whatever you have there,” I said pointing to the papers, openly contemptuous now, “we *did* have a government liaison officer, appointed by your Banskota, provided with official authorization papers which were duly approved at all official checkpoints in Kathmandu and elsewhere.”

I held all the cards now and I sat forward, completely ignoring Thakur. "How many times must I tell you," I addressed General Khatri, "that I need not sit here, I need not stay in Nepal, I need not say anything? It is because I am interested in your people, in the Tibetan people, in the Indian people, that I am here at all. Give me *one good reason in their interests* why we should not publicize what we have done and what we know and I give you my word that we will leave here and say nothing to anybody."

I sat back in my chair. Now we would see what he and this government were made of. He shifted in his chair and then spoke, at first slowly then with growing feeling.

He conceded my well-known interest and concern for the Himalayan peoples, but I was a representative of the West and the West wanted to use Nepal for their own interests. It was Western policy to try to drive Nepal away from China into a pro-West stand. It was the same with India. There was more danger to Nepal from India than from China. China only wanted to help Nepal, to let Nepal live in peace, but India wanted to bring her within her sphere of influence. Britain and America had their own reasons for also trying to keep Nepal in their groups. The publicity which we could give would harm Nepal in that it would unnecessarily annoy China, create bad feelings, force Nepal to take action to please India and the West which would not be in her best interests. And so on.

I heard him out. Shaking my head negatively, I said, "General Khatri, I appreciate all that you have said, but I have heard it all before—and it was all so wrong, so dangerous, so nearly fatal. Mr. Nehru, as prime minister, said all that you have said in 1954-1959, in a much more impressive way, so that he was able to convince the world, but he was so wrong, so wrong. I was not impressed by Mr. Nehru's arguments. I am not impressed by yours. Mr. Nehru is gone, you will go, the people and the problems will wait for others. I want to look back on 1964 as I can look back on 1959, when I was faced with a similar choice, and know that I did what my God, my profession, and my Asian friends consider was right, rather than serve the personal interests of you or your government."

There was no more to be said. We argued a little about possible alternatives. The government could not or would not help the Khamba guerillas or the Tibetan refugees. The government could not launch a military campaign to exterminate the Khamba guerillas,

and there was no guarantee that even if it did that the Nepalese army would be successful; the Khambas were too powerful and efficient in the mountains. The government could not recruit and train the Khambas as a separate unit within the Nepal army—like the Gurkhas in the British army—as this would be viewed as an unfriendly act by China. The interview lasted an hour and a half and ended as it had begun.

I had arranged to give the ambassador an account of the interview next day. On the way I was stopped by a telegram messenger with a cable. I read it and put it in my pocket.

When I had reported to the ambassador, he told me that he had just heard from General Khatri that he had given orders for Cowell and Menges to be detained and searched at the border. The ambassador was most annoyed, for he had not been informed of this possibility; on the contrary he had been given to understand by the King that the government was to handle us cautiously and obtain what information I was prepared to give. To detain Cowell and Menges at the border meant that either he had been misled, or the ministers had taken action on their own, on Saturday, without informing the King. Khatri had said on the phone that he did not believe Patterson when he said the films were out of the country, and that it was his intention to seize the films from Cowell and Menges, then force Patterson and Cowell to sign statements saying that they had never been to Tibet. That would close the whole issue. He had asked for an audience with the King.

I took the cable out of my pocket and silently handed it over to the ambassador. He read it:

BORDER POLICE SEIZED ON INSTRUCTION KATHMANDU
SEVEN ROLLS CINOFILM THIRTEEN TAPES THREE STILL
FILM SUNDAY OTHER ITEMS ALL COMPLETELY HARM-
LESS STOP FULL DETAILS SENT AMBASSADOR PLEASE
ASSIST RECOVERY ESPECIALLY TAPES AFTER POLICE
LISTENED TO THEM STOP SUGGEST STRONGEST PRO-
TEST ACTION POSSIBLE

COWELL HOMELINESS

CALCUTTA

The ambassador looked up. "Is this genuine?" he asked slowly. "You and Cowell aren't trying to pull a fast one, by any chance?"

I gazed at him in astonishment, then laughed as the meaning be-

hind his question dawned on me. "You mean, is Cowell really in Calcutta or is this just a fake telegram made to appear to come from Calcutta?" I savored the thought and laughed again. "No," I stated firmly. "I like the idea, but it would only make sense if we still had the films which we haven't."

The ambassador gave me a long steady look. "You are quite sure? This is an extremely serious situation. I have asked for an audience with the King for this afternoon in order to protest against the arrest or detention of Cowell and Menges, and if this cable is correct then I cannot go ahead."

"Before we came to see you we had already sent the films out of the country," I assured him. "But from what I know of this government, the explanation is probably that they were just incompetent, or, more likely, somebody in high places is out to discredit General Khattry and there was a deliberate delay in the orders sent from Kathmandu."

The ambassador thought for a few minutes then said, "I must cancel the audience with the King for today, anyway. Do you have any objection to my telephoning General Khattry about the contents of this cable?"

"None at all," I grinned. "I only wish I were there to see his reaction."

The ambassador put through the call, spoke to General Khattry and hung up.

"You would gather that he doesn't believe it," he said drily. "He insists that both Cowell and Menges are on their way back to Kathmandu under escort, and are expected anytime."

I stared at the ambassador while my mind raced over all possible alternative explanations of the cable, but it had to come back to the most obvious—that they were in Calcutta. The foreign secretary must be out of his mind, with the other ministers, because of the threat to their positions and prestige. Then I remembered—the address!

"There is one way to settle this," I said, pointing to the cable in the ambassador's hand, "and that is to send an urgent cable to the telegraphic address given by Cowles in the cable—'Homeliness.' The ministers are just mad enough to keep Cowell and Menges imprisoned and incommunicado in Kathmandu—if they do have them

—without informing you, so we have time to get a reply—or none if they are here.”

I drafted a cable right away:

PLEASE CONFIRM BOTH IN CALCUTTA STOP OFFICIAL UNDERSTANDING YOU RETURNING UNDER ESCORT KATHMANDU STOP AM TAKING ALL NECESSARY ACTION STOP ALSO CONFIRM WHETHER MY LETTER TAKEN

The last question related to my notes of the whole trip which I had put into a letter and addressed to a friend. If these had been confiscated then I was in trouble, for it was a written confession which could be used against me. It was a gamble sending it with Adrian, but it was less risk than keeping it with me.

The reply arrived next morning:

CHRIS HEMANTHA MYSELF IN CALCUTTA WITH YOUR LETTER STOP ALL SEIZURES AT FRONTIER TOTALLY HARMLESS STOP PLEASE CONFIRM WHETHER OUR OFFICIALLY EXPECTED RETURN TO KATHMANDU IS TO BE FROM CALCUTTA
COWELL

I felt a surge of relief, and went to call on the ambassador. He could only shake his head in bewilderment and say that he would make an appointment with the foreign secretary. He confirmed that it was unlikely the government could ask India to return Cowell and Menges from Calcutta without any evidence.

I told the ambassador that I no longer considered myself under any obligation to talk with any minister in the Nepal government. They had proved, what I had always suspected, that they were more interested in trying to safeguard their own interests than the interests of the country. In which case I would now leave in a few days' time. The government would no doubt try to stop me, but I had one or two ideas about that which it would not be wise to tell the ambassador at this stage! We had a short discussion about the implications of the government's actions and I left.

I began a carefully planned and cautiously carried out round of visits to the various newspaper correspondents in Kathmandu—Nepalese, Indian, and Western. I made it appear that these were

impromptu, friendly and with no apparent purpose except shop talk, for I assumed that I was being followed. As I had anticipated it was inevitable that they would ask about our recent trip to the mountains, and to each one I gave a different piece of information, but always implying that the government suspected we had gone to Tibet and had been in touch with the Khamba guerillas, without ever admitting that we had done so.

This "planting" of information had the desired effect, for in the next few days Kathmandu became a hotbed of all sorts of rumors. As I became more and more under pressure to say where we had been and what we had done, I suggested to the correspondents that they ask the ministers concerned about what was happening. This I knew would bring the issue out into the open and force their hands. There was no danger now of the quiet arrest some dark night, but they might well be content to wait until I made a wrong move or they found some evidence of what we had done. I had to get out of Nepal before then.

In addition to my excellent relations with the press I had two other factors working in my favor. My wife had just been asked to stay on in the United Mission Hospital for another month and everyone supposed that I would be remaining in Kathmandu with her and the children. And Chahvan appeared once more! The former gave me the advantage of surprise if, or when, I decided to leave; the latter gave me the advantage of confusion.

Chahvan was his usual ebullient self, and he acted as if we had never had any differences. So did I. Anyway, I liked the rogue. He had again landed on his feet, apparently, for he informed me that he had just opened an "International Hostel," for students and others who could not afford hotel rates, and a deputy minister of the government had attended the opening ceremony.

"In the interests of encouraging good relations between the countries of the world, old chap," he said expansively, his eyes mocking and mischievous.

"What's your cut?" I asked with interest.

"I get my satisfaction out of providing service for all these sincere but poor young men—and women," he added with a meaning laugh. He stroked his moustache complacently. "Excellent idea for collecting information, of course. Speaking of information, what's this I hear about you and the others going to Tibet?"

“What was it you heard?” I asked with exaggerated interest and innocence.

He gave his shouted laugh. “You are the expert,” he conceded with a wave of his hand, “but you still need Chahvan. How are going to get out of Kathmandu?”

“The same way as I came in,” I replied. “Who is going to stop me?”

“General Khatri, for one,” Chahvan said promptly. “The inspector-general of police, palace officials, and the security boys,” he grinned as he went on.

I shrugged my shoulders. “Peanuts,” I dismissed them.

“Did you know there are two sets of intelligence?” Chahvan asked with elaborate unconcern.

“Which one are you working for?” I grinned to take the malice out of the question.

It wasn’t necessary for Chahvan. “The most important,” he retorted. “I can fix you an appointment with the Number One if you like.”

“I like,” I replied, without hesitation.

It caught Chahvan unawares. He looked at me uncertainly. “Do you mean it?” he asked dubiously.

“Why not?” I demanded. “You know I always like meeting important people. I might want to use him,” I added.

Chahvan laughed. “That’s better. Will you talk about your trip into Tibet?”

I looked at him thoughtfully, while I worked out my approach.

“I’ll talk about a trip some people I knew recently made into Tibet, and what they found out—on condition that I get some information in return.” I watched him as he weighed it up. He nodded slowly, the well-known mocking glint lighting up his eyes.

“As our American allies say, ‘you got yourself a deal’—Boss,” he added, impenitently. “Tomorrow morning at ten o’clock at my place.”

It was time to strike. I went to the airlines office and booked to leave next day for Calcutta. Then I spent the rest of the day dropping in on correspondents to hint that there might be some news worth filing at the airport. I hinted that because of certain base suspicions of certain highly placed ministers, who wanted to conceal matters

of great importance, I might even be stopped leaving the country. The stage was set.

I went to see Chahvan at the time appointed. I was already packed and ready to leave for the airport immediately afterwards, but gave no sign of this to Chahvan. Or to the top intelligence official whom he introduced to me.

We sparred around for a short time, then I put my proposition. "I am prepared to give you a detailed report of conditions on the northern border," I stated, "on the understanding that it is not a personal confession, if you will give me the following information: was General Khatry responsible for all the early attempts to head us off, for putting Banskota on to us, and for the attempts to have Cowell arrested, or was he only acting as a front for the Palace?"

The intelligence official took some time to answer. "General Khatry was the man responsible," he said at last, speaking slowly. "He did it on his own initiative. He is out of favor with the Palace, for other reasons, and he probably thought he could get back in favor through your affair."

I let out a sigh—but quietly, lest Chahvan should notice my relief and suspect something. I had based my plans on this assumption, and the odds were now greatly in my favor. I proceeded to give a detailed assessment of the strengths and weaknesses on Nepal's northern border, without admitting that I had even been there. When I finished I left Chahvan and the intelligence official without admitting that I was on my way to the airport. I anticipated that I would be stopped, but if I did not tell Chahvan and his intelligence friend, this would serve to keep them uncertain and off balance—and the initiatives still with me.

The airport was crowded. At first I thought it was because an extra-large tourist contingent was arriving or departing, but then I was spotted by a few of the newspaper correspondents who informed me that the U.S. Aid director was due to leave by the same plane as myself and that Nepali government officials as well as embassy representatives had come to bid him farewell. I smiled to myself at this information, it could not be better if I had planned it myself. Now whatever took place would be in front of every journalist official of note in Kathmandu.

But it looked as if there was to be no sensation. I checked in at the airline counter, had my luggage weighed, my passport checked and

stamped, my currency form cleared, passed customs, and was through to the departure lounge. My wife and two boys had come to see me off and we stood chatting with friends among the various officials, diplomats, and journalists.

An announcement over the loudspeaker said that due to low cloud formation and heavy rains the plane departure for Calcutta would be held up for half an hour. The crowds of officials and guests milled and reformed in new groups.

A young Nepali in bush-shirt and slacks approached us. "May I see your passport, please?" he said politely.

I reached for my brief case, took out my passport—and stopped. There was something wrong somewhere.

"Why do you want my passport?" I asked, equally politely.

The Nepali hesitated—and I knew. "I want to look at something," he blurted.

"Who are you?" I demanded. One of the correspondents appeared, and I nodded. "This is it," I said. There was a flurry of activity as other correspondents pressed forward, officials looking embarrassed tried to edge away from what looked like being a compromising situation, and more plain-clothes Nepalis ranged themselves beside the first man.

"I am a police inspector," the first man now said brusquely. "Give me your passport."

"Uh-uh," I said negatively. "First show me your badge and then your warrant."

He tried to bluff it out. "I will not show you anything," he stated, his voice rising, while he looked at the furiously scribbling pressmen. "I have been told to stop you from going on the plane".

"You have, eh?" I said softly. "And who told you? But wait a minute."

Before he could move I stepped across to a telephone, picked it up and dialed. When I got through I said, "Is that the ambassador? I am being detained at the airport by someone who has no uniform, no warrant, and no authority, but who says that he has been told to stop me leaving the country. Can you please send someone?"

The ambassador said that he would send the First Secretary right away, and I passed the news to the excited correspondents. The police were still standing across the exit of the lounge, near my family. My wife looked pale, the children upset.

“What is it, Daddy?” asked Lorne. “What do these men want?”

“They want to keep me in Kathmandu,” I answered him gently. “It’s all right. Daddy is all right.”

I smiled reassurance at my wife. I was really enjoying myself. There could be no threat; on the contrary the government ministers must still be in a state of panic—or someone would have signed a warrant. The fact that they were still trying to keep it quiet and “unofficial” indicated that I was still ahead. But more publicity and more pressure was needed. I looked across at the groups of intensely interested but still obviously embarrassed officials and diplomats, and had a sudden idea.

Just then the loudspeaker cracked and an announcer called for all passengers to board the plane for Calcutta. I smiled to my family, kissed them, and moved towards the exit. The police inspector moved in front of me to stop me. With a sudden movement I jerked out my right arm and pushed him aside. He stumbled backwards.

“I don’t know who you are,” I warned him, in a voice loud enough for all to hear, “but get out of my way.”

“You will not go on that plane,” he shouted. “I have orders. Your luggage is taken off.”

I walked down the steps to the outer courtyard, ignoring him. He raced ahead of me to the metal barrier, where there were two policemen and he spoke to them pointing at me. I walked on.

There was complete silence now and less than five yards away the American ambassador stood with several of his staff. When I reached the barrier and made to move through in the direction of the plane the two policemen stepped in front of me. I walked straight into them and one of them put up his hand and caught me.

I struck it down. There was a gasp from the spectators and the correspondents scribbled away, delighted. “Can you do it again, George?” someone shouted. “I missed it.”

I did it again, and added. “Keep your hands off me, without a warrant. Your officer has no badge and no warrant to detain me, and I have reported you to my ambassador.”

The police inspector was frantic. He moved to where two Gurkha soldiers were standing, their razor-sharp *kukris* conspicuous, and when they approached he ordered them to block my departure.

I walked forward again. The soldiers put up their hands to stop

me and I struck them down. "Keep your hands off me," I said again. "You have no authority to touch me."

With a roar, the plane's engines started up and all conversation was impossible. So was my departure. But I had accomplished what I set out to do. Now nothing could be done inside Nepal to stop my eventual departure—except finding evidence of our trip to Tibet and I was certain that this was too well hidden. If my guess was right, no minister could hide from the Palace what had happened today, and I could call their bluff.

I walked back to the now clamoring journalists, holding up my hands against their demands for the reasons behind the farcical scene which had just been enacted in front of them.

"All right, friends," I grinned. "You got that? It seems that we are suspected of having gone to Tibet with Khamba guerillas and taken some films for television—but no one has produced any evidence."

"But did you go to Tibet?" somebody demanded. "And what about the films?"

"No comment," I replied.

The British Embassy First Secretary, Peter Wild, arrived and I explained what had happened. The police inspector had made no further attempt to come near me and was nowhere in sight. We went looking for him and when we eventually found him inside the terminal building he tried at first to refuse to answer any of the First Secretary's questions. Finally, he reluctantly repeated what he had said to me, that he had orders to stop me from going on the plane. Obviously, he had no further orders for he ignored me and seemed only too glad to slip away from the curious crowds.

"What do I do now?" I asked Peter Wild. "This government is likely to repeat this farce every day—and so am I. I warned them that if they wanted to play it rough, I would be happy to oblige."

"I'll see what I can find out when I get back to the office," he replied. "When do you want to leave?"

"As soon as possible," I said. "Let's say forty-eight hours. I will make a fresh booking tonight to leave the day after tomorrow. That's an ultimatum."

My first visitor was Chahvan. He looked at me reproachfully. "Why didn't you tell me you were going to leave?" he demanded. "And I could have fixed it for you."

"Chahvan," I grinned at him, "I told you before, I do not tell you

everything anytime—and I can fix this situation without Chahvan.”

“What are you going to do now?” he asked interestingly. “Slip across the border?”

“Tut-tut, Chahvan,” I reproved him. “Since when have you ever known me to do anything outside the law? And slip across borders especially?”

“When is your next attempt then?” he persisted, unperturbed.

“The day after tomorrow,” I replied.

“All right. I’ll fix it,” he said confidently. “And this time I’ll be there to see you off properly.”

Next morning I had a letter by special messenger:

Mr. George Patterson,

In connection with your visit to Setibas His Majesty’s Government requires clarification from you and before that you are not permitted to leave Nepal.

Thank you

Bal Ram Pyakural
Magistrate Kathmandu

Bal Ram Pyakural was the “judge” who had been prepared to support Thakur in saying that I had admitted going to Mustang. Was this just one of these ironical coincidences that life was always throwing up? Or was it part of a deeper plot? I decided on the former.

I rang the First Secretary and gave him the latest information and he said that I wouldn’t believe it but everybody—foreign minister, foreign secretary, home minister, home secretary, inspector general of police—had denied all knowledge of what had taken place at the airport, or of authorizing any policeman to take any action. I told him that, on the contrary, I would believe it. That it was on the basis of such belief I had planned all my activities—recent and not-so-recent. And, that I was determined to leave the next day. He said that he had heard the government “might be prepared to let Patterson leave Nepal if he would sign a statement regarding his recent trip.” I told the First Secretary I was prepared to sign a statement but that it would be on *my* terms not any of the ministers. He said he would arrange a meeting for that afternoon, and hung up.

I phoned various correspondents and gave them an outline of the situation and what I intended doing.

The First Secretary had arranged a meeting with the magistrate in

the office of the commissioner of police, Kathmandu Valley. He thought that it was possibly the commissioner who had authorized my detention—on higher authority of course—but had no official confirmation of this. The commissioner was reputed to be very, very tough. He, the First Secretary, would be present at this meeting.

The commissioner did his best to be tough. He even tried to bring in the magistrate as a threat of what was likely to happen to me in a court of law. I told him, carelessly, what I thought of his “case” and asked him what evidence he had for his allegation that we had gone into Tibet. As for the magistrate, I told him, contemptuously, what I thought of anyone who was prepared to swear a demonstrable lie. It was not a very auspicious start, but I felt I did not need any favors.

“Look,” I said bluntly, “I am here only to discuss what you have put in writing—that letter over this magistrate’s name. Nothing more.”

The commissioner made another attempt to retain the fiction of inferable authority. “We are prepared to produce in a court of law the government liaison officer who will state under oath that you went beyond your permit.”

I laughed. “Your ‘government liaison officer’ was only a student, probably not recognized as ‘official’ but, in any case, is at present traveling in India. Further, he *had* a letter of authority, signed by your government, duly attested at all checkposts including Setibas.”

He didn’t answer, scowling in front of him at papers on his desk. I had a sudden inspiration.

“You must have copies of the official authorization and you can check this for yourself.”

He looked up. “Where is your copy?” he demanded. “Let me see it.”

It couldn’t be true, I thought wonderingly. Even this set of incompetents wouldn’t go as far as this without a copy of our authorization. But I had sensed this in that sudden flash of inspiration. A warm glow spread upwards from my toes and I almost chuckled. Banskota had tried to be too clever again.

“I don’t have a copy,” I said. “Mr Hemantha and Mr. Cowell carried all the necessary documents—and, as you know,” I added innocently, “they are now in India.”

It was the end—or nearly. The commissioner handed me the

draft of a statement for my approval and signature, after which I would be allowed to leave Nepal. I read it slowly:

“I wish to tender my apologies to His Majesty’s Government of Nepal for having contravened the regulations regarding places to be visited listed in their permit and for any inconvenience caused thereby. Further, I declare that I have never visited Mustang nor Kodari.”

I shook my head in refusal: “No,” I stated flatly. “I will not sign this. It is handing you a confession on a plate which you can use to discredit me at any time. I will only deal with what charge you have been prepared to put in writing—that of visiting Setibas. I say that this was in the permit and I cite in support of this that your military officers there who saw our permit must have accepted this for they checked it on two occasions. However,” I paused for effect, “if it is a matter of your saving face, I will sign an amended version of this.” I added a few words to the draft so that it now read:

“I wish to tender my apologies to His Majesty’s Government of Nepal for having *unwittingly* contravened the regulations regarding places to be visited, listed in their permit, *by having visited Setibas*; and for any inconveniences caused thereby. Further, I declare that I have never visited Mustang nor Kodari.”

There was some further argument but I refused to accept anything else. Either they accept it—or nothing. I needed no favors.

It was accepted.

The airport was not so crowded the next day, but the journalists were there. And so was Chahvan. He came towards me, one hand held out in greeting and the other holding a huge bunch of flowers. Beside him walked his high intelligence official friend, also smiling.

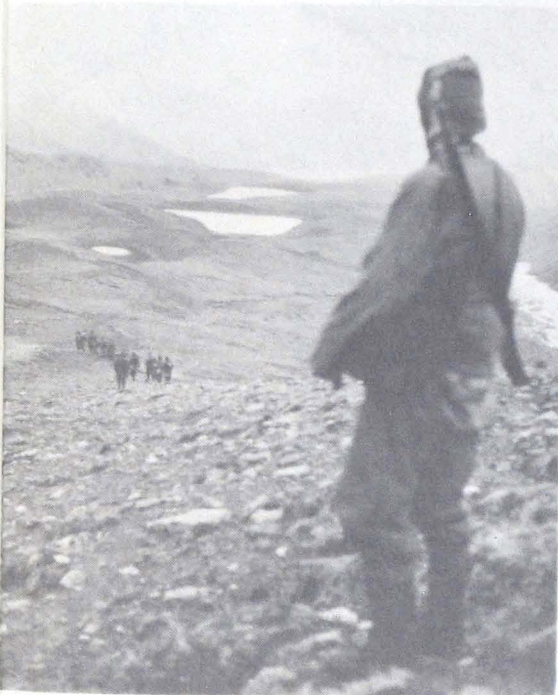
“You pulled it off,” Chahvan called out enthusiastically, “I knew you would. I went to see some of the ministers yesterday and I told them they had better let you go or you would not only have them thrown out of their jobs, you would take over in their place!” He laughed uproariously. “You and Chahvan. Between us we would run not only this country but the whole confederation. Here!” He shouted at a photographer standing nearby. “Take this photograph.”

He pushed the bunch of flowers into my hand, picked up my younger boy Sean, signaled to the intelligence official to stand on the other side beside my wife, and grinned delightedly at the camera and crowd. He was still waving as the plane headed for Calcutta.

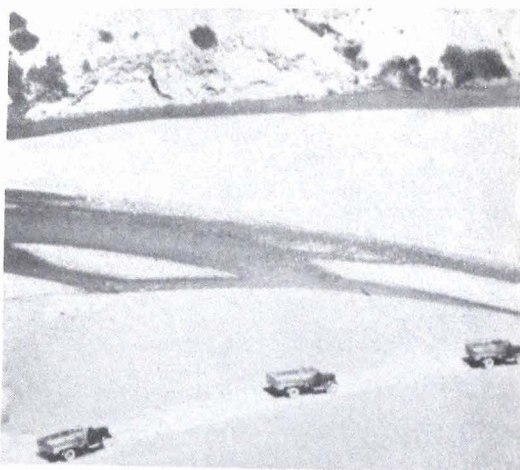




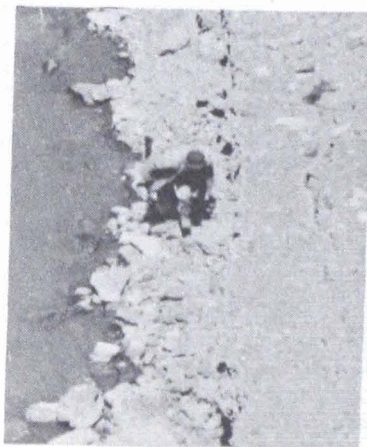
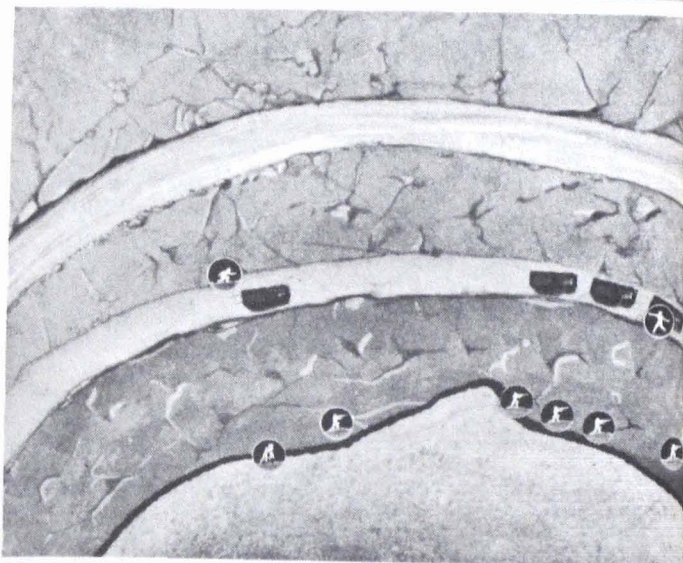
On the trail with the guerillas. On the Nepal side of the Khojang Pass the snow was thick and at the top a blizzard was blowing. *Below:* On the Tibet side, below the clouds, not much snow accumulated.



Above: A Tibetan guards the escape valley from the ambush. *Left:* Well camouflaged in his hillside vantage point, Ten-dar waits for the arrival of the truck convoy.



Above (1) The ambush valley. (2) Truck convoy halted by gunfire. *Right*: Diagram of ambush action. Film unit is at far left. *Below*: Chinese soldier fires from behind fourth truck, then runs for cover.



After the raid, Ten-dar, at right, questions a Tibetan who lives in the garrison town of Dzongkar.

