

# NEPAL

(Continued)

## Two Months in Nepal

January-March 1898

Note book to sojourn

- Sylvain Levi

The son of the Pundit of the Residence comes afterwards; he brings me an old Pundit, Todarananda; both of them typical Nevars; small, very small, flat faced and nosed. They are absolutely, totally, radically ignorant. These poor Buddhistic Pundit know nothing, of Buddhistic literature not even the titles beyond those of the nine 'Dharman' which they have not read besides. They promise me make a search for manuscripts and to bring me a true Pundit who lives in Patan. The reputation has flown, there arrives on the spot the Jemadar, the factotum officer of the Residence, a Hindu of the Madhyadeca, devoted Vishnuist who knows as much Sanscrit as I do Hebrew. I recite to him the Gayatri and his admiration knows no limit, then the mantras to Krishna, Kecava and the whole litany. Here is a man who would fall at my feet. It is really moving to see his emotion in the presence of a sahib who knows the sacred language. In short he completely binds himself to serve me and Mitra cautions me that he is the most useful of auxiliaries; he has been attached to the Residence for the past twenty years.

I spent the rest of the day in attending to my unlucky Francesco, badly depressed, very feverish and shivering. In a few days time he was frightfully changed. He is distressed and so am I. I was compelled to employ a cook temporarily to replace him. This second-hand cook has sworn to pull my stomach to pieces and to assist him he needed a Khitmutgur a server a pown of filth an epopee of dirt. The country is cold; if the Nevars hardly wash themselves, he certainly never washes. The infamous rags that clothe him 'enrich' more again his filthiness with a repulsive appendage. I close my eyes and turn away the head when he bring the dish or attempts to clean a plate.

Saturday, 15th January- I would be entirely contented if I had not learnt to distrust the Nepalese. I spent a whole morning waiting till doomsday or more exactly under the orange tree since my garden is sown with orange trees and orange trees laden with oranges. It is not warm in the morning in the country where flourishes the orange tree. At 7 a.m. thermometre fluctuates between 3-

and 5 (c) and till 10 a.m. one lives in a fine mist a real vintage mist. The sun dissipates it only towards 10.30 a.m. it gets warmer immediately 25, 28, 30 and 32 towards 2 p.m.; but the shade is lukewarm and nothing more; the thermometre hardly records more than 15, in the warm hours. It is the cold for an old Hindu; I have ordered myself a Nepalese costume, tight-fitting breeches with very loose upper end, tunic with large flaps tightened at the waist by a belt, the whole in a kind of lustring (stuff) of the colour of wine less and stuffed with padding (cotton).

Decidedly the Nepalese are right in closing the door; if they half-opened it, it would very soon be removed. It would be so nice to live here: a devine landscape - the valley of Gresi-vandan with Grebible and her circle of Alps, by Alps that are called Himalayas. The western peak is the Dhaulagiri; the Eastern one is the Gaurisankar. An eternal spring under a sky always blue, the caress of a luminous vapour, the pine trees side by side with the orange trees and the banana plants; the birds silent below are chatterers, singers, warblers a concert on all the trees; instead of the solitude that reminds of the lazaretto one lives here, even within the precincts of the Residence, with the natives. The post office is intermediate with the Residence and swarms with children who sing, laugh, play, fight, squall, live their lives. And the town is a marvel of pictureques with is pagodas of storied roofs, his many-coloured houses, the charming of the windows and doors where wood is sculptured with all the imaginations of a skilled mind and to what an extent, free the bazars where the oily and yellowish and filthy Tibetans hostile among mingled with the ferocious Patans almost white of complexion and filthy they also. An infinite variety of types going from the Aryan Hindus with

their long eyes, straight and strong noses, and clear complexions to the Moghuls, altogether yellow, squat; massive the eyes bridled and obliquely shaped. In crossing the villages, one also sees the gentleman on the threshold garbed with a string (pyjamas), and madam dressed in a petticoat and the tribe of children clothed in innocence,

And, as usual in military places, a perfume of gun-powder floats on all this. At 3 o'clock in the morning a canon shot announces the opening of the gates at nine o'clock at night another canon shot announces the closing and woe besides him who allows himself to be over-taken unawares later in the streets. The Nepalese police takes care to pass him... by opium. And all during the day one hears the trumpets, the rifle shots of the parade; the dazzling rays of the helios play all night on the higher parts of the surrounding mountains.

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

Captaian Sahib asked me for a rendezvous. At the appointed time he arrives and informs me that the commander-in-chief, maharajah provisionally, Deb Sham Sher, would be pleaded to see me at 3 o'clock. At 3 o'clock the royal landau comes to take me; Captain Bhairab is dressed in full-dress a pretty costume strictly blue-black with a few gold braids and his cap is bordered with a filligree of gold and crowned with a gold and

crowned with a plate. I put on my ceremonial gloves which will symbolize the 'full-dress', the etiquette not imposing the costume. Very handsome landau, sumptuous and comfortable; the amazed Gurkhas see me pass. Deb Sham Sher lives in a S. N. corner of Kathmandu, the bungalow is in the N. E. corner, we skirt the town the Champ-de-Mars and here appears the palace; an entanglement of constructions all modern the work of an architect of English schools, without characters, with Greek porches, but in an admirable setting. The entrance meanders one door after another sentinel after sentinel. It seems to me I have found again the darbars of Kattiawar. A crowd of servants who serve at nothing, of courtiers who put in an appearance of employers, of babus, below the galleries on the steps, at the windows. I am the event itself the talk of the day they are awaiting me.

Captain Bhairab introduced me in a vast hall, forty or fifty metres long that occupies the whole length of the facade of the first storey, filled up with the necessary bric-a-brac of sofas, chairs, bracket-tables, barm-chairs, chandeliers, gilded mirrors; on the walls, portraits painted by English artists and by the indigenous artists of the present maharajah and of his predecessors: Jang Bahadur, Bhim Sen, etc., life-size eminent men in entirely gilded frames and everywhere works of art in gilded bronze, the industry pre-eminently that of Nepal. In short, pressed by the push of too curious an assemblage of attendants the commander-in-chief enters, small, broad, wearing a gilded toque, wrapped in a long day gown, the mouth red with betel-nut with the red lead and sandal mark on the forehead, everything else connected with the daily puja, he invites me to take a seat next to him on a sofa and has his son sent for, a child of ten, or eleven years who is studying English, intelligent face and quite energetic

as the papa; white tunic of the Brahmans, chief's uniform babu's soutane all around Dev Sham Sher is well informed and starts immediately. The tournament begins. A pundit or so-called one addresses me in Sanskrit, painfully, incorrectly; a second Pundit appears my success in easy. Deb Sham Sher, attempts to articulate a few Sanscrit syllables: Purvasmin... Kale...Judhisthira...king...was...then....Sanscrit bhakha...in use..., and collapses under the strain. He speaks to me of the Cakuntala in Paris; he asks me if I believe in the devas if to my knowledge the prophecies of the Bhavisyat-Purana are exact; then if Sanscrit is printed in Paris. I speak to him about the Bhagavata of Burnouf. The name of Burnouf could not be ignored in the country of the manuscripts of Hodgson. He asks me to read him the legend in the French which accompanies and English engraving; the death of Tipu-Sahib and exclaims on the melody of French (Ah, if I had a 'golden voice'). I bring the interview to an end which would never end and Dev Sham Sher declares to me that he places himself at my disposal, that I may go where I wish to, that he would help me in the research of manuscripts and inscriptions. "Such a learned man come from such a distance is it not our duty?" Assuredly, your honour, but we shall see what the Nepalese all is worth. Liberty of entry of working, of reading, of having the manuscripts gathered at the Durbar library, copied not tomorrow, naturally, day after to-morrow; things must be placed in order, always the same system. And he gives an order to Captain Bhairab to 'drive' me through Kathmandu by the two or three roads through which a vehicle can pass.

In returning I settle my household accounts, 2 fowls, 8 annas; 1 dozen eggs, 3.5 annas; 1 barrom, 2 anna; a pot for water, 1 anna; Sugar 2.5 annas; butter 3 annas; a

tin of petrol as a recipient for water, 2 annas; vegetables, 1 anna; oranges, 1/2 anna; flour 2 annas. And in short the influential intervention of Captain Sahib and subsequently of the police have made it possible for me to purchase a sheep. It is true that I paid a lot; 2 rupees. To what and extent, and it is quite true, strangers are made the most of in Nepal (They are exploited to their detriment).

Sunday 16th January - At last I have begin to work. At noon the mukhya, quite an ordinary soldier in spite of the ambitious name he is given has come to inform me on behalf of Captain Sahib Bhairab Bahadur that the horse promised would not be available within two or three days, the Maharajah having taken away all the disponsible horses for his winter rounds in the country; at the same time he placed himself at my disposal. The sepoy given me by the Residence awaited me at the door. I then start on my trip with (for advanced-guard), vanguard the mukhya, a small Gurkha squat and ill-clad and stinking and for rear-guard the sepoy, tall bearded, truculent and simple a child's nurse in uniform. I meet Mitrananda, the son of the Pundit of the Residence who brings me his uncle Bhivanananda, a smal old man with a rumpled face who chews betel-nut. Will he turn out to be the desired Pundit? I address him in Sanscrit; he jabbbers indig-nantly but adds in his almost indistinct dialect fifty per cent of Hindustani; he succeeds in explaining himself. His science of the Buddhistic texts does not go beyond the Lalita vistara. I recite to him the title of the works translated in Chinese and which I am bent on discovering in their original form; he does not know a single one, he does not even understand. In short, half a loaf is better than no bread; I propose to him to accompany me in my rounds in return for a salary he would serve

as a cover and as an introduction near the Buddhists of this place. He suffers from rheumatism, can hardly walk, lives in Patan; in short, he hopes to be cured by Tuesday and will then come and find me. As much as the Pundit in worth so much are the faithful (devotees) also. I got acquainted with the devotees of Cakyamuni. O tempora. O mores.

My mukhya is a fairly honest man, all dazed to behold a Sahib who knows Sanscrit. One must hear the tone of his praises of me to the crowd. In the afternoon half the population followed me about and I have not yet photographed or taken stampings anywhere; what will it be when I do start? The mukhya struck right and left in the crowd in advance and the sepoy did like-wise on the flands. At the temple of Narayana, I meet a Brahman who speaks Sanscrit fairly well at the very moment when the horrified crowd shouts; juthi; juthi as it would shout at Home: Chapeau, Chapeau (Hats off Hats off). My leather shoes soil the floor of the temple. I turn round and face the disturbance, offering a Sanscrit dialogue in a raised voice. The Brahman replies and the conversations is engaged a public debate; no more protests, the crowd swells, advances, surrounds me and when I leave the temple, the Brahman follows me and shows me the inscriptions of the neighbourhood. My cortege interrupts the traffic. I have thus visited all the temple of Kathmandu; Civa, Visnu, the Buddha Ganeca, Bhimsena, without any preference, drawing up a set of notes on all the inscribed stones I met. They are legions. I have not found anything of a great age but dating from the fifteenth century. How many stelas and what beautifully engraved stelas. Kilometres and the kilograms of paper would be needed. I would like to take in everything indistinctly without choice or method. It is impossible besides under the pressure of the crowd to decipher line by line and to

separate the tares from the wheat. The mukhya has certainly received orders to assist me and it is a piquant spectacle to see the little Gurkha and the stalwart sepoy turning round the temple and striving to discover inscriptions.

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

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

and this is the enclosed field for bulls, with enormous heads; they freely move about in the town. Benares has her cows, the town of the Gurkhas should have its bulls. There is no more dreadful wild animal with its sudden violent fits of temper than these amiable quadrupeds have as much sympathy for the European as the horse for the elephant. Thursday, while crossing the bazar at a run in my dandi we are suddenly thrown aside, bearer and dandi by a strong 'back-wash' shouts are heard everywhere. Two bulls have become engaged in a struggle and it is a general 'sauve-qui-peut' (make best your escape) we slip away by a lane where the dandi collides with the walls. Today I peacefully draw an inventory at the base of a temple. New shouts another 'back-wash'; again a fight between two bulls. No sooner is one seen on the horizon than my mukhya stands on my right, the sepoy on my left, both of them their sticks held up threateningly.

Tomorrow morning, peaceful distraction, I will go and examine the collection of manuscripts belonging to the Maharajah. And I will perhaps have my Nepalese costume stuffed with padding that I am awaiting with impatience. The darhi who has measured me disdains the progresses of the French Revolution, away with the centimetre. Just a bit of twine which he relies on as a unit of measure between his forearm and fingers; this is the system of Nepalese mensurations.

Monday the 17th January - Another delay. The mukhya brings me a letter from Captain Sahib, always very amiable. I will have my pony today; but the library is closed. The guardian of the library has a religious ceremony (puja) in his family." I will then take stampings and the attendants will swell up with a coolie who will carry the camera.

the paper, the brushes, the pot of water.  
 Goodness me, what a lot of bandobast

Kathmandu, 18th January - Cakyamuni by you I have vanquished. All the doors of viharas have opened wide and in order to profit by it I hasten to make a circuit, brush in hand, before visiting the Hindu temples the inventory of which I had drawn up. I employed for assistance, Mitrananda and now it is everyday a solemn procession that goes past through the vast avenues of Kathmandu. The mukhya goes ahead the stick in hand, pushing as much as is needed peaceful but very compact crowd, then my pony, a pony belonging to the maharajah if you please a squat and heavy looking animal of Tibetan race, strong and steady on his feet, valuable asset on this uneven soil; on the pony myself dones with my helmet, bowing to the few natives who bow; the great number of them stare at you with distrust and suspicion. Ahead of me, a syce; behind me my gallant and good sepoy, my child's nurse, then the Pundit, small indeed, dressed in his white garments; and lastly the coolie carrying on his shoulder, hanging from the two extremities of a pole like the pans of a pair of scales, the two baskets that contain paper, brush, etc. I must say that everything appears to succeed; I feel I am becoming popular, thanks to a few bowings but especially to the few pals (pies) distributed to the urchins and papers.

The small statured folk make me profuse 'salams' and even yesterday one of them devoutly touched the brim of my hat. The first vihara where I attempted to enter yesterday the Tyekambahal, at the entrance to the town in coming from the East, was rather reserved; it was necessary to start a discussion, then to manage without help and lastly to make a display without the least modesty of the deepest knowledges (their ignorance is distressing) and then the whole population of the vihara,

men, women, children, come out from these infections rooms, surround me, guide me, help me, clean the stones, fetch water, and the pujari of the Vihara who is an Udas (the second caste of the Nevar Buddhists) goes so far as to bring his book of mantras, a collection very anodynous of stanzas in honour of the Buddha. The chapel is opened and statues are exhibited to me; Cakyamuni between Lokecvara and Maitreya; above the door a magnificent panel of sculptured wood shows in its centre Maha-Vairocana who holds in his multiple hands a pustaka (book) then two hands joined in prayer above the head; above him in a small frame also sculptured in the wood, Nama Samgiti carrying a book and I think a rosary; lastly a small triptych of wood figures the Triratna; the Buddha in the centre; Dharma and Samgha by his sides. The viharas are simply buildings erected around a rectangular court wherein live in families and in putrefaction the Nepalese Buddhists; in the centre of the court is a caitya adorned with the four images of Amoghasiddhi, Aksobhya, Ratnasambhava and Padmapani on the four facings of the square block which carries the cupola each one in thier niche; several of these caityas even the most modern ones are surrounded with a balustrade 'railing' which reproduces exactly in its arrangements that of Acoka at Mahabodhi and at Sanchi; but I have seen any that show sculptured medallions. Often caitya of smaller size are scattered around the central caitya and sometimes also, like to Matsyendra Natha, in Lagan-bahal, pillars are erected, quadrangular flats on which inscriptions engraved. I have taken stampings of the reign of Nripendra Malla, masterpieces of splendid ones of lapidar epigraphy. Lastly facing the entrance gate there opens a chapel to the devotees wherein the statue of Cakyamuni receives homages and hymns. The interior view of these courts is a ravishment; all the windows

are sculptured panels that offer a surprising variety of adornments. The art of sculpturing wood is still preserved in the viharas. I have been shown to-day in the disposed in fan-like fashion gods, goddesses, animals and flowers, which has to be despatched in few days hence to the temple of Mahabodhi as a token of homage: the Art Museum of decorative works would cover it with gold.

But if one's eyes are opened one's nose must be closed. Kathmandu deposits her filth in her courtyards instead of her sewers. The rainy season undertakes the washing; the human rejection then flow into the streets and accumulate in pestilential rubbish heaps. Babu Mitra who has travelled all over India assures me that he had never seen a dirtier place than Kathmandu. Fortunately, the atmosphere is bracing; to-day, outside the Sun that scorches the shade is scarcely tepid; this evening it registers 6; last night at 4 a.m., 3 only; whilst I was working yesterday in the courtyard of Matsyendra Natha vast place where there rises a beautiful temple with roofs decreasing in size, surrounded by numerous caityas, I hear myself being spoken to in Sanscrit. It is a Yogi established in the temple of Tripurecvara on the Bagmati. Rumour informed him of my arrival and he hastened to meet me. He speaks a Sanscrit exceeding will like the true Pundits of Benares and he claims to convert me to the Yoga. Perched on a caitya he recites or preaches with a flow of Bengali words, proclaims the uselessness of stampings and of history and extols the practices of of ascetism. I promise to go and see him in his temple; one can just conjecture whether a crowd had gathered compact and pressing. To-day good-luck; a Nepalese officer, whom my visits to the viharas have moved, comes to me in the middle of the road, accosts me in fairly distinct Sanscrit, offers to guide me and help me in other ways, follows me from

stone to stone from courtyard to courtyard (these are viharas like the Lagan bahal with four courts in a line communicating by narrow and overhanging gates) and the work completed he again offers me his services for to-morrow. Here is my battalion increased by an unit.

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

This morning, Captain Sahib Bhairab Bahadur has sent me a basket of citrons; he has also accompanied me to the Library established in the new buildings of the Darbar School. The whole staff awaited me in pomp and the four Pundits who are employed as librarians and copyists and the army of assistants and even a Tibetan employed in classifying the few Tibetan texts. The manuscripts are well classified, laid on shelves, carefully enveloped and labelled. The Buddha-Castra has been rather a deception; a few ancient manuscripts and all or nearly all, already known. The only new one I found was the Abhisamayalamkara, a commentary of the Astasahasrika by Haribhadra in 164 pages; I have ordered myself a copy which will cost about thirty rupees and also of the Nepala Mahatmya. Lastly I have ordered a copy of the

Yevana-Jataka; I have not in hand works of reference and will not find any here, but I do not believe I can recall that this Yavana-Jataka is known elsewhere and forgotten; the manuscripts is ancient, on palm leaves, complete, but many of the leaflets are partly destroyed. Besides, I have placed it aside to take up again its examination.

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

Wednesday 19th January—Night falls; the sun sets here at an early hour toward 4.30 p.m., behind the Chandragiri and the sun takes away the beneficial heat. Splendid day besides, of a clearness that revealed all the folds of the enormous glaciers on the horizon from the Dhaulagiri to the Gaurisankar very soft also, lukewarm even after night of hoar-frost; the grass this morning was all powdered and a light crust of ice covered the pot of water. I profited by an idle morning forced on me to visit the Residence. The 'Lines' occupy the summit of a plateau to the N. E. of Kathmandu, separated for the time by a vast field where the Gurkhas indulge in horsemanship and where slumber herds

of cows, the plateau falls abruptly towards the N.W-facing mount Nagarjun on the large valley where the Bisnumati, too small for her bed, waters rich cultivations. A path of 5 to 6 metres wide only unsets the territory of the residence enclosed on its whole length by walls and thickets an guarded at the entrance by a Nepalese guard-house. All the real kindness I meet here does not suffice to dissipate this after taste of prison. The Residence, a very modest cottage is built in the middle of an English park; then the house of the doctor is still more modest and reaches almost the hospital of the residence which is also very modest and built for 8 or 10 patients, less encumbered now that the Darbar has had erected a vast hospital is under the care of a Bengali assistant, entrusted besides with recording the meteorological observations communicated monthly to Calcutta. I have looked into his books and ascertained that the means pressure of Kathmandu is 25 inches 650 (641-35). In the dry season it constantly shows a pressure of 25 inches 550 (637,50). The mean rainfall is 56 inches (1, 40). The highest figure I found is 74 inches 51 (1, 862) in 1893; the lowest 47 inches (1, 175) in 1896 year of famine. A line or group of Tibetans spread its stinking filth before the hospital; they were waiting to be vaccinated. It appears that they are very zealous adopts and they come everyday even from Lhasa. I have photographed a group. Besides the Tibetans more than abound here, they are met everywhere and they are smelt before seen. They bring with them flocks of sheep and she-goats destined for the market. The Gurkhas (with the exception of the Brahmans) eat the flest of these animals. The lowest castes even eat buffalo's meat but nobody dares naturally to taste the meat of the cow. I have to visit the doctor immediately afterwards.

Last evening I held small darbar, the officials of the Residence attended; post-master,



doctor and jemadar came to greet me with their salams. At noon I resumed my rounds surrounded by my cortage. The beginnings have been uninteresting. Entering by the north of Kathmandu, I reach the Thomal-bahal (Vikarama Simha Vihara). I was energetically refused entrance and not a single Pundit nor a pujari. Filthy women and stupefied men. Intolerance is truly the sister of ignorance, I depute Mitrananda who takes the stamping of an inscription, it is one of Parthivendra Malla as is also the sculptured panel above the entrance gate. Same reception at the Gunakara-Vihara where old women and buxom yellow faced lasses, in torn rags, spread grain to dry in the courtyard. But at the temple of Kathisambu, some progress is made. The men come out of the houses that surround the caitya and charm does the rest. I do not succeed in climbing on the platform at the base of the cupola, but I am free to move about elsewhere. The caitya is very large, it raises its gilded arrow to a height of about twenty metre, (65 ft.). It is entirely white of newly laid stucco, from the arrow descend and connect to four small surrounding caityas, stings on which dangle a long line of many coloured bits of cloth. A very small balustrade exactly at the foot of the staircase which leads to the platform, in front of the staircase stands a recent pillat dated in 1010 (1890) crowned with a brass statue of the Vajrasattve. The inscription which is engraved on it consists especially of a (stotra) of the Buddha. In the N. W. of the caitya, a Nepalese pagoda, in wood patiently sunk, surrounded by a wreath of small flags, rattles and mirrors. The mirror seems and offering much appreciated, they are found hanging from the walls of Hindu and Buddhistic temples. The Kathisambu is much worshipped; thus it is that the surrounding courtyard is encircled by small monuments; nothing ancient as regards inscriptions there also; two stelas of Pratap Malla and Nrpendra

Malla. A small vihara is adjoining to the large one, to the South in a large square of slush and rubbish surrounded by houses, a pillar dated from 932 carrying on the summit two small statues in adoration that represent the donors on the northern side a Devistotra.

In proceeding towards the South, a large square covered with temples in ruin (Thamri square); in front of one of these temples a pillar carries the image of Narayan riding on Garuda and a hymn to Narayana dated 783, without a kings name; inscription very badly mutilated.

From Kathisambhu no more difficulties anywhere; the crowd who conveys me also conveys my reputation. At the Karnakottama mahavira a stela the fragment of a stela buried in the wall like in almost all cases bears the name of Kavindra Pratap Malla with an ordinary list of danapatis but the year is missing. At the Harsacaitya-Maha-Vihara, inscriptions of 905 and 931; the pujari states that the monastery owes its name to king Harsa who founded it, but nothing ancient. He promises to show me - one of these days - the manuscripts he has. He ignores what they are; I still expect a Pancataksa. At last I end the day at the Dhokabagak in 812, reign of Bhupalendra Malla.

Monday 20th January - I began the day by a walk to Svayambhunath; the grass was still white with hoar-frost. The thermometre fell this morning at sunrise to 2 at 8.30 a.m., it rose to 3 and while returning I risked a sun stroke at 11.30 a.m. Ordinary reconnoitring attempted in haste, helped only by the mukhya and the sepoy. Svayambhunath, Syambhunath as they pronounce it here, is to the E.N.E. of the town, to the E. S. E. of the Residence, beyond the Bisnumati on a conical hill with steep flanks, ahead of the mountains and

entirely clothed in verdure. The lofty brass arrow stands out alone and distinct above the foliage. The path meanders round the town, crosses the Bisnumati on a bridge and cuts across fields, arranged in gradations to protect the soil against the gulying of the rains. All along the sacred path, caityas succeed one another. At the foot of the hill, the path changes into a staircase; but what a staircase; Rough, uneven, ruinous, tottering, narrow and slippery steps. Sarcastic monkeys play on the steps appear and disappear, look with an air of wicked pity on their human brethren who perspire in the climb; caravan of Tibetans climb and descend; uglier, dirtier and less skillful than the monkeys. Between two lines of stupas under a real bower the platform is at least reached; a vajra (a great warrior) of giant size, entirely gilded, laid on a socle also of giant size, adorns a copper bell-tower with an arrow, discloses at the four points of the compass, entirely gilded chapels of the four Bodhisattvas. The emotion a church feeling, captures one at the first step; the bells peal, rattles play chimes, muffled voices under the vault of the chapels sing hymns and discreet flutes accompany the voices. The spirit has undoubtedly changed but the exterior aspect of Svayambhu can scarcely differ from the temples that Acoka knew. On the platform at the summit of the hill, on the sides and behind the caitya it is a real chaos of small monuments. caityas, stelas statues of giant black Buddhas or entirely white Buddhas or again all red. I search in vain for a dated inscription. Here again it is (Begin) history; at the entrance Pratapa Malla has had engraved on a high stela a stotra (hymn) of his own. An enormous stela engraved in the XVIIth century is bilingual; Sanskrit at first, Tibetan underneath. Besides Tibet counter-weighs and eclipses India. The Om mani padme hum is laboriously everywhere inscribed in Tibetan letters; line of Tibetans with their long greasy hair adorned with a circle (or band) that

frames their head with a hale complete the circuit round the great caitya with a piety as much enthusiastic as it is singular; they fall flat on the stone, the arms in front and murmur a few dharani, trace on the stone as far as the hand can reach a chalkline, they rise and with their feet on the line of chalk just traced they prostrate themselves once again to begin again the same exercise. When passing in front of the four principal chapels, they stop and address to the Bodhisattva a fervent prayer, transfigured by a mystical faith that almost beautifies them. The Nevars are contented with bringing, flowers red lead, sandal wood, as would be performed to Siva and Visnu. Not a Pundit to be met at Svayambhu not a 'Sanskrit bolewala' I would have liked to inform myself on the antiquities on the books kept by the temple. Not a soul. And yet how many centuries have written here their history? Where does it sleep? Under the ground or in the temples?

I went my way home, a little disappointed at this negative result and after breakfast I pursue with my habitual dignity my rounds of the viharas. I enter the Mahabuddha Vihara, undoubtedly ancient; only one stela of this century in the courtyard decorated by a stupa of stucco and two of stones. All on a sudden I am spoken to in Sanskrit in elegant Sanskrit. I reply the dialogue begins. I learn that the stupa of stucco has been according to tradition, erected by Acoka that the vihara has inscriptions, copper plates, manuscripts, but that it is impossible to see them. These ignorant begins defend with zest the treasures that they know not how to employ. One can read here, by way of text, the Catasahasrika Prajna paramita; the recital of the work, divided in uncertain section, lasts exactly the space of one year. My speaker calls himself; it is Damaru vallabha, the honour of Nepal a Pundit whom Haraprasad Sastri showed me as a superior. He

gives me as a meeting place on the morrow the library of the Maharajah; he promises that if I remain here a month and a half or two months, all the gates would open. I take leave of him and guided by my pseudo Pundit (an abyss of ignorance), I went my way towards the Toho-bahal.

Right against the wall of the town, in a heap of ruins, I see one of those stelas that abound here in thousands, to the extent of discouraging one's curiosity, I approach to better read the date, it is of the reign of Narendra Malla. A statue of Mahakala is right against it; even with the ground on the socle, I seem able to decipher archaic characters. Here is some antiquity. Mitrananda quite calmly assures me that this is something of modern Nevar work. I begin to clean the stone. Here you, Pundit, come and read your Nevar. Mitrananda has nothing to say. The inscription is a dedication and the first words are; Samvat 412 rajnah Cri Manadevasya; the date and name are absolutely certain and clear. Once again the crowd gathers, fairly hostile at finding me handling the statue, where stains of red lead attest a recent puja. The mukhya begins to extol my science and throws a challenge who wishes to speak in Sanscrit with the Sahib? Nobody replies and for reason. I wish to take a photograph of the statue. Ill-luck the shutter refuses to act. I ment it and screw and unscrew it and when I point it at the statue the whole thing gets out of place again. Bad luck. I can distinctly here in the crowd that surrounds me that the god is defending himself against me. To put an end to it, I work the camera any way, but with a triumphant air, bent on returning on another occasion, and I declare with satisfaction that everything has completely succeeded. Then I send for the pujari who gives to the statue the daily worship; I hand him half a rupee to celebrate a puja in my name; and thus flattered, I reveal to him the age of

the statue that surpasses in antiquity all that I had hitherto seen are Kathmandu. Visible change; my man demands precise explanations and swells with pride. His statue anterior to the Nepala Samvat. And now it happens that I am treated with regard and already the group that surrounds the pujari speaks about erecting a chapel over the statue. Unfortunate Mahakala. Will it be due to me that he owed the renewal of his religion. And always the same question; are you a German? I repeat my eternal speech: I am a French, France is a great country. In short a small epigraphical discovery.

Saturday 22nd January— To-day, holiday on account of an eclipse. Captain Sahib sent word to me that it would be better to give up my daily occupations, I had set out before him by giving yesterday evening a holiday to the whole of my staff. I began feeling also the need for rest. In the morning, always in great ceremony, I leave for Harigaon, a village situated at a distance of two miles E of Kathmandu and where Damaru vallabha had mentioned to me of ancient ruins. I explore the chapels, I scatter the detritus from which emerge broken stones. Always the Mallas. A stena leaning against chapel dates from the reign of Narendra Malla Samvat 653 (1533). Another stela is dated from the reign of Bhupalendra, samvat 819 (1699). But a man from the village offers to show me an old ruin. I descend with him a very rustic staircase which leads to a small tank at the foot of the plateau on which Harigaon is built, towards the East. In the middle of the tank there rises a statue of Garuda and from the bank there appears on the pillar a long inscription in characters manifestly archaic. The stamping is far from being easy, the water is fairly deep, the bottom or (bed) slimy and the socle of the pillar is just large enough to stand upon. The villagers throw stones and pebbles to make me a very small pavement, and the Pundit, sepoy and I clinging to the pillar,

under a blinding sun, take a double stamping. The inscription is composed of about thirty lines engraved with care, but the first lines have disappeared and the date is missing. The character of the writing in any case leaves no doubt: impossible to take a photograph at a convenient distance, right in the middle of the tank; I was obliged to take up a position on a kind of platform facing the pillar and which carries a small temple in ruins dedicated to Satya Narayana; the fragments carry no inscriptions. The pillar seems of great interest to me or account of its date; the inscriptions deal with literary chronology, the pillar and the statue concern the chronology of art. I have only had time to see another inscription at the foot of an image of Laxmi-Narayan fitted in the Eastern ledge of the tank and which bears the date of 139 (1019) without a king's name. The inscription was buried, I have had it brought to light again and I mean to take a stamping of it when I shall return to Harigaon.

In the afternoon I returned to the Library of the Darbar where awaited me Damaru vallabha at the head of all the staff. For about three hours I examined the manuscripts. Lastly to distract myself I looked at the eclipse. It was almost a total one here, we were less than a 100 kilometre from the line of totality and at 2 o'clock and 8 minutes, mean

time (1 o'clock 56 minutes, astronomical time) there only remained of the Sun a thin crescent released like the new-Moon, but this little sufficed to destroy the grandiose impression so it seems of the totality. The urchins were shouting on all sides; "Rahu let go the sun", the dogs barked at the urchins, noise but the bulls have continued to graze without manifesting any distress. Strange, however, if not grandiose, this progressive attenuation of the light under a cloudless sky; a sunlit landscape viewed through a smoked glass no irradiation, no splendence; a dull brightness dim and dreary with opaque shadows a sensation of something unreal. The moment of the totality is captivating. Streak of shadows overlap one another like those shiverings of warm air that rise from the fields on summer days; a sudden and singular puff of cool breeze shake the branches. The thermometre which was registering 20 at noon, falls to 17 at the half eclipse and all of a sudden to 13 whilst at 4 p.m. it had risen again to 28. Spring is approaching here; whilst the garden orange trees are still laden with fruits, we find the apricot-trees adorning themselves with an exquisite white efflorescence. My garden besides changes into a poultry-yard; two sheep browse in it, and a turkey-cock chuckles. The bungalow of Lucullus.

(To be continued)