

Nepal

(Continued)

-Sylvain Levi

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

Bhatgaon 14th February... .. Twenty—six kilometre of mountains on foot and by what paths. I visited at one stretch Changu Narayan and Sanku. I had my horse it is true but simply as a companion and my feet

alone have stood me instead. The Maharaja returns on Monday from his Winter rounds and my friend Deb Shamsher, will on that very day resign his provisional powers. Will I find the same complaisance in the other ? To avoid eventualities, I shall undoubtedly ask to go and greet him on his way at the time of his entry in town. Suspicious as they are with regard to the Europeans they love to display in public their 'white' connections. The necessities of service have deprived me of my ordinary pony; it was sent in front of the maharaja who was short of cavalry. It was an excellent Bhotiya horse fast and steady; there was no embankings of earth that serve as a protection to the flooded fields and at the same time as a narrow path to the pedestrians, we had made sudden dives, falling down with a lump of earth suddenly crumbled. The equilibrium roughly destroyed was restored while falling. My temporary horse is not Bhotiya and that is its fault. Yesterday, on a fairly rough path, it undoubtedly fell and I just had time to release the stirrups. I thought it wiser to trust only my legs to-day; on the awful road that connects Bhatgaon to the town of Sanku. The path at first paved with

bricks uneven full of holes and rats is not more at the ends of a kilometre and ends in a wretched rutway at the foot of the first hill. The temple of Changu Narayan rises to the north of Bhatgaon on the summit of a lofty promontory which the Mahadeo Pokhari projects towards the west. In order to reach it one must first cross an enormous mass of aluvial sand, hollowed, corroded, ravaged, shaken by the rains, cut on all sides with steep fissures that compel one to climb descend climb again, jump and clamber up. The village of Changu Narayan stretches on a narrow plateau at the foot of the mamelon that carries the temple. A long line of uneven steps leads thence to the temple. I hoped that thanks to the complaisance of my staff I would be able to extricate the pillar of Manadeva from the soil and complete the fragmentary stamping of Bhagvanlal. Since his exploration the situation had modified; the pillar was then simply buried in the ground and only concealed its nine final lines on each facing. The piety of a devotee has now surrounded the base with Nagas stone the removal of which cannot be thought of and this has covered up another three lines. An idiotic "Pundit" preserver of the "mandir" has availed himself of his ignorance by showing me the door of the temple. I was only able to photograph from a distance the pillar with the lower frontage of the temple, adorned with a beautiful gate of gilded bronze. The temple is a large, two-storeyed one, with chapels erected irregularly around; it is enclosed with a rectangle adjoining the dharmasalas. The small beams as well as the walls are carved with as much patience as with imagination; gods, goddesses, monsters, animals, flowers and especially representation of the practices of the Kamasutra are worked in the wood and enriched with lively colours where the blue

and red predominate and which form a gay and harmonious whole. My Pundit Mitrananda, zealous Buddhist and much learned for a Nepalese, asks the pujari to open the sanctuary to make there his puja. The two mukhyas and the coolie follow him; all three remove their head-gear and the Mukhya lay down their inseparable kukhri. My usual mukhya, who is a Kanyakubijya Brahman, sings mantras and stotras while climbing the steps. Before entering, they prostrate themselves and touch the ground with the forehead. When the puja is completed they all come out to the loud pealing of bells; their hands damp with holy water which the pujari had distributed to them with which they sign themselves. They sprinkle the drops from their finger tips on the scattered statues in the courtyard and place on their heads the green leaves which the pujari distributed to them after offering the same to the gods.

The Manaura (Manohara) rushing down from the heights of Manichur separates the hill of Changu Narayan from the plateau bearing Sanku. Further up the stream the river even takes the name of Sanku. It spreads freely plentiful in a large valley which could be mistaken for a lake. The rice fields disappear under the irrigation waters. The surrounding slopes are covered with forests and on all sides noisy torrents descend in cascades. The valley of Nepal stops there. Zig-zag fashion on the slopes of Manichur climbs through the forest, the road to Tibet through the Kuti pass. The beautiful greensward between the river and town is a real Tibetan encampment; they stop here in caravans before ascending the first slope. Men and women, sturdy as beasts of burden, carry on their backs, piled up in baskets, crushing loads from which their often emerge a chubby and fat babe, a real

challenge thrown to all the laws of hygiene. A leather strap that fits round the head bears all the load. Sanku owes all her importance to these wandering Bhotiyas. The town is small and carefully planned and the streets are remarkably clean; everywhere along the causeway, there flows a streamlet of clear water. The temples of no importance, are tumbling down or in ruins. I only found the remains of an inscription on a broken water pipe, deposited against a small temple of Civa.

Kathmandu, Wednesday 16th.-Here I am back to my house to my familiar bungalow. Spring had preceded me. After an absence of eight days, I found the garden marvellously flowered with rose and white. One cannot realize the divine harmony of the country side; a deep blue sky, immaculate, splendid a warm sun but allayed by a kind breeze that still smells the glacier, the luke-warm shade the young verdant sprouts in the darkened verdure of leaves that have stood the Winter; a perfumed efflorescence that adorn the bushes and the tall trees the gaiety of voices spreads in the calm atmosphere, the song of familiar birds, flying through the house, the sonorous calls of the neighbouring cocks, the blue or lilac mountains just seen through the foliage the silhouette of clearly defined pinnacles without roughness in the arure, the horizon fairly limited to be encompassed by the look yet vast enough to give it free play the transparent masses of rocks and the shadows bathed with light have transformed the country. Since day before yesterday Nepal is a paradise. The heat after these trying days was so strong that I felt myself on the verge of a sun-stroke on my way up the long road. Leaving behind the twelve coolies with my usual servant, I intended visiting the site of

Madhyalakhu where according to the Vamcavalis the Thakuris changed their capital. I had a fair amount of difficulty in finding the site. Neither the Pundit the mukhya nor the coolie knew its name. Fortunately my sepoy whose fervent piety had made him familiar with all the temples of Nepal, was able to supply me with the indication. Madhyalakhu is on the right bank of the Dhobikhola, tributary of the Bagmati. In spite of the note in the Vamcavali I found no trace of ruins. They may have disappeared recently because general Bhim Shamsher has erected on the site of the Madhyaku a vast palace surrounded by a large park. It appears that Maharaja Bir Shamsher saw with anxiety the fraternal friendship of Bhim and of Chandra Shamsher, so he has "induced" his brother Bhim to leave Thapathali and to establish himself a little farther.

I had explored before this, the village of Bole (Bude) to the north of Timi, the temple of Maha Laxmi has its frontage adorned with chromo-lithographs where figure the classical Italian brunette and also a madonna with the infant Jesus. Is she here to represent Devaki or Krsna? But I found nothing ancient, in spite of the prayers of my escort. The hunt for inscriptions stirs them; in the evening at Bhatgaon I heard them talking in the verandah below my room and from 'pulis' to 'mukhya' old from 'coolie' to 'sepoy' it was as to who would claim the honour of having found or stamped best the 'cilapattra'. My honest coolie had addressed yesterday a fervent prayer to Suraj Binaik (Surya Vinayaka) in my favour; he had subjected himself to a preliminary fasting; on his humble salary, he had bought grains and flowers intended for the god and he was careful to gather on of the flowers of the puja and to hand it to me as a guarantee of 'parsad' of divine favour. Vinayaka

did not keep his word. This morning in crossing Bole, my sepoy points out a chapel of Bhimasena, excellent patron of soldiers and with all the fervour of his heart addresses him a simple but little used prayer: O Bhimsen maharaj give us a cilapattra. Bhimsen has not better succeeded than Ganesh.

The Gods are vanishing. And yet I had also made yesterday the pilgrimage of Suraj Binaik. The sanctuary of Surya Vinayaka one of the four Binaiks of Nepal, hides in the forest to the S. of Bhatgaon on the first slopes of Palchok. The path rises in a steep slope and ends in a staircase. At the foot of the steps stand a small chapel officiated by a woman. On the road from Bhatgaon to the temple a continuous line of devotees and especially female devotees in great pomp; they are properly attired before paying a visit to Ganesh Maharaj and the female devotees the young ones especially drape themselves with a skirt of flounces which seems to be held up by a crinoline or which recalls the basket-skirts. On their ebony black hair (some dye with henna the tress that stands stiff on top of the head) they all stick with a very conscious coquetry, marigolds of golden yellow. The temple is quite small, just a shelter above the idol but it is entirely plated over with sculptured brass. Facing the god a pillar bearing a large brazen mouse. As regards inscriptions nothing; but a dazzling view on the line of glaciers that seem at each stage of the ascension to descend deeper down in the neighbouring valley, of unbearable brilliancy in the setter-off of this luminous sky. In default of inscriptions, I found a manuscript. The chota pundit the small chap with the cunning face whom I had "appropriated" as a guide gives but too much credit to my perspicacity; he is the most candid little scoundrel that Bhatgaon had given birth to. His father has (he assures me

and I have the proofs) an enormous collection of manuscripts; the father is wrong to absent himself and to badly close the door; my fellow tries the lock and discreetly borrows from the paternal shelves. He brought me a Paracara dharma castra and a Yoma dharma castra written on palm leaves. The episode of the Gunadhya inserted in the Nepala mahatmya has given me to think that the Brhatkatha would be found here I ask him if he has it and promise him besides the price and gratification to take his photograph. He brings me this morning an incomplete manuscript of the Brhatkatha-cloka-samgraha. I shall attempt to get out the rest of him. He brought me an associate equally reliable and who only asks for money. The difficulty lies in that through not knowing exactly the manuscripts in their possession, they work at random. They brought me a Kala cakra tantra a Hariccandropakhya on talapatras which I refused giving them the list of my Buddhistic desiderata and have promised them a pen-knife like mine (this pen-knife fascinates them), if they brought me five of them (Buddhistic requirements). If I only had with me a stock of articles from Paris. The whole library of the papa would pass entirely into my hands. The brother of the said chota Pundit with whom I had the pleasure of conversing in Sanscrit has assured me with perfect candour that he possessed no manuscripts. And the proceedings (I fear to qualify them but "ad majorem scientix gloriam" are transacted under the benevolent gaze of the authority. My mukhya assists to these dealings the rupees cross through him to the chota Pundit and I surmise that a few remain between his fingers, "Captain Sahib, he says to me seriously has ordered me to help you in procuring manuscripts". It is immaterial once in possession of a sufficient quantity I shall hasten to quit the country. I shall

enjoy my forfeit more peacefully on other side of the frontier. And if Belgium was not so far distance from here...

Friday 18th February—Yesterday under a burning sun (the rains have brought us heat) I rode on horseback to Patan. My worthless horse of Bhatgaon was discarded and the Maharaja sent me a splendid animal. The Pundit solemnly declared to me that I would be admitted to view the inscription of Narendradeva in the temple of Matsyendra Natha on the condition I came before mid-day. At the gate of Patan I find my Mitrananda depressed he had wrongly informed me, the inscription in the interior of the temple is from IXth century of the Nepalese era (XVIIIth century). All my journey, all my haste, all my pains for this result; I was obliged to practise the Ksantiparamita and show glad heart in adversity. I went to the temple of Matsyendra Natha and I have at least assisted there to a curious spectacle; a chorus of old men in beautiful white fineries broken bent toothless shrivelled, crouched on the slabs in front of the temple, and on devillish hymns the glory of Matsyendra Natha, accompanied with a cadenced shindy of cymbals gongs, couches and these cadaverous old men have continued for nearly an hour this musical exercise. The large and lofty temple is encircled by a rectangle constructions, the usual vihara, but a public passage crosses the courtyard and nobody skirted the temple without devoutly stopping on the threshold and greeting the god with hands joined and the head bent. I photographed one of the stupas of Acoka the Lagam. The situated to the South of the town then I returned at a galop. Captain Sahib had informed me of the despatch of manuscripts collected by the order of the Commander-in-chief. Alas. Alas. deception Abhidharmakoca vyakhya,

Gandavyuham, Vidagdham, mukhaman—dana, Bhadrakalpavadona, dvavimacatyavadana, Jatakamala: Here are the results of fifteen days of official search. Yet I do not despair. The Maharaja had expressed the desire to see me in the afternoon and I intend to entertain him on the pillar of Changu Narayan which must, however, be unearthed and on the inscription of Narendra deva which according to the people of the vihara of Matsyendra Natha is in the interior of the Darbar at Bhatgaon. Captain Sahib told me yesterday that I am known in town as Bodha Sahib. This week a priest who came from Lhasa went straight to the Captain's office to ask him if it was true that there lived at the Residence a Buddha Sahib. Ah, if only I was the Resident. At the end of one year I shall have free admittance to all the collection of manuscripts and to all the temples.

Saturday 19th February—I come out of a fairy-land or rather I fully live in it. I cannot help thinking all the time of that poor 'jacquement' who has known the same satisfactions and the same surprises. Yesterday the maharaja Bir Shamsheer expressed the desire to interview me. I hastened to answer it. Captain Sahib, according to the protocol came in full uniform to escort me from the house. There was no vehicle this time. We proceeded together or rather separately.

There is nothing of a Thapathali character here. The houses show the different characteristics. The first courtyard is undoubtedly busy with subordinates and men in uniforms and Brahmans but once beyond the fence of the enclosure there is an absolute silence.

There are no people. Just a servant who comes out at the noise of my galop and introduces me inside the court of justice in the

ground-floor. It is there that His Highness, sitting on a mattress, leaning on a cushion decides the grave cases that escape to the competence of the court or the commander-in-chief. A huge tiger slain by the Maharaja in the Terai and very cleverly stuffed is entrusted perhaps to symbolize justice. With a discreet step, that does not even resound on the slabs only followed by a general His Highness enters; rather small thin the forehead pensive the appearance of the face intelligent; he also wears a kind of day-gown. Greetings, then without any ceremony with the same discreet step, fairly mournful cortege we climb to the hall of the first floor a vast gallery furnished in the English fashion and everywhere strewn with tiger-skins. This is the leitmotiv here. He does not understand the interest that Nepal Presents; I Express to him: I have come to search for inscriptions and the rests of Buddhism; Nepal is the connecting link between the two worlds of the oriental thought she still preserves perhaps the treasures of the Sanscrit literature. The thought of India belongs to humanity like a common treasure. Conclusion, it would be necessary to remove from the ground the pillar of Changu Narayau stamp the inscription of Narendra deva if it is at Bhatgaon and invite the viharas to disclose their treasures. In ending the Maharaja invites me to assist tomorrow to the review of the Civaratri.

Then today it is the Civaratri and good Nepalese as I am I began my day by a pilgrimage to Pashupati. In a normal year, pilgrims come in myriads; they come from Madras, Travancore as well as from Bombay and Calcutta. But plague that terrible plague that comes along increasing has compelled the Nepalese Government to close the access of the country to the pilgrims. There are only Nepalese then to come and at least they come in crowds. All along

the steps that descend to the Bagmati they climb and descend men and women quite unclothed themselves on the bank and plunging in that water which must be freezing each one however, traces the customary mudras with his fingers and mutters the mantras. My "Thula babu" the small Pundit of Pashupati soon learnt of my arrival, he comes and keeps me company and we converse in Sanscrit to the great surprise of the crowd. Delicious fraternity. The purificatory cows move along in the crowd; monkeys clamber up the side of the chapels watch for the offerings and snatch them; one of them crosses the river carrying on his back exactly in imitation of us, a baby monkey too weak to struggle against the current. The dogs, impure (unclean) as they are, also come to the feast and lick unconcernedly the greasy limbs of the idols, whilst fowls freely plunder the grains. The beautiful ladies display sumptuous pyjamas, breeches cut in the Zouave fashion so large that they prevent them from walking. I would be unworthy besides for a distinguished person to walk an ordinary human being; one can see them on feast days crossing the streets and reaching the temples on the back of men. A pauranika reads or recites in a sing-song manner a text that he does not understand and the Yogis more or less professionals display their austerities blowing their big couches and rattling their little bells to attract the crowd. In the afternoon my horse comes to fetch me and always in company with Captain Sahib I enter the Tundikhel, the enormous field of manoeuvres that borders Kathmandu (Eastern wall) and the palace of the Maharaja. A beautiful long champs in what a beautiful set off verdant mountains. To the W the Dhaulagiri to the E the double throne of Gauri Cankara, gigantic and harmonious, rising in the spotless assure and so high that it dwarfs the

neighbouring peaks in spite of their six thousand and seven thousand metres (19500 and 22700 feet). In the middle of the field a large solitary tree encircled with a circular terrace with two storeys. I cross the vehicle of the Maharaja which passes in front of the troops escorted by lancers and followed by a magnificent staff-office, and I hasten towards the central tree where the Maharaja almost immediately rejoins me with a crowd of generals all trimmed with gold. Music, military salute and in this warlike setting off and smell of powder, the Maharaja informs me that he has given the order to unearth the pillar of Changu Narayan and that I can send to that place at my own leisure (admittance being forbidden me) my Pundit and mukhya with brush and paper. He has also given the order to search the stone of Bhatgaon. Long live Nepal and this is not all; he has prescribed to search for the manuscripts that I desire and he who will refused to cede them... .. at least to have them copied they will be forcibly borrowed. This is entirely the good despot. To attest to the firmness of his promises, I had the visit of the Pundit delegated for the research M Cakyamuni would you believe it. What better presage to discover Buddhistic manuscripts? Sakyamuni—prassadayat kim na labyeta? The good old Cakyamuni knows as much Sanscrit as I know Turkish; I have the permission to give him as assistants Mitrananda and the two associates duly trained and warned go to undertake tomorrow a series of reserches. But this Eastern world is so slow to make a move. I often think at the storey Buhler was telling me one evening; the long days of conversation on indifferent topics before tackling the purchase of an ordinary ancient coin. And I can see with regret the departure now near at hand two and half weeks at most to spend here, when the seeds are so near from sprou-

ting. Whilst His Highness gives me these good news the Dhiraj comes in a vehicle, the fine young man between 23 and 24 years of age tall strong, elegant, plated with diamonds the feature insignificant. He does not speak English or rather he does not speak at all. The Maharaja presents me, explains the object of my visit, praises my Sanscrit knowledges and the canons thunder all round and the rifle shots crack by the thousand. The King goes away in an open carriage in which also enter the Maharaja and the Commander-in-chief and I remain with general Chandra Shamsher a face with coarse hair on it and large protruding teeth but kindness in the look and in the manners. He tells me of Alsace-Lorraine with a charming subtleness and invites me to choose myself the manoeuvres to be executed. And an improbable phenomenon takes place mad phenomenon that it is I who passes the review. The admirable troops so well trained to parade like automata that without words of commands on a rythm they keep up themselves by hitting the ground in turn with both their feet, they proceed with all the regulated movements of the rifle, with the precision of a machine. To obtain in the same afternoon an official order for the research of manuscripts an authorisation to unearth the pillar of Changu Narayan and to pass the review of Gurkha soldiers, is surely a day worth dating in one's existence.

Monday 21st February—Yesterday for the first time I was able to return to my residence alone. I had left the house in the early morning to proceed to Thankot; at five in the afternoon I had yet neither eaten nor drunk so that with explicit consent of my mukhya I galloped off at full speed and proceeded in front. On the road as well as in town, the compact crowd made room with good-will without compelling me to make a speech; I

crossed the market, followed the bazar without difficulty, these brave people even chased the bulls and buffaloes who came too close to my security. The day has been very fortunate; I picked up no less than six ancient stelas; two of these are unfortunately undecipherable the stone having decayed (corroded) to such an extent, but the remaining four are good and very important. I found two at Thankot and four in a small village named Kisipidi. Thankot is in the western extremity of the valley at the foot of the perpendicular slope that leads to the pass of Chandragiri and that works a communication between Nepal and India at 16 kilometres from Kathmandu. Thankot has known more flourishing days; she has had her Durbar of which there remains no trace. The only temple in honour of Maha Laxmi is insignificant; the horns of bulls sacrificed adorn the inside and the outside of the temple. Standing against a particular house, separated from the causeway by a group (cluster) of small caityas of brick-work and plaster falling in ruins, I found a stela in good state of preservation, to the North of these caityas in an old deserted hithi (washing depression), I found another stela of the same epoch, but which only shows trace of characters. From Thankot I skirted the foot of Chandragiri to visit Mata Tirtha at about a mile S. E. of Thankot; the Vamcavali places in the neighbourhood of Matatirtha, the capital of the shepherd kings, the Guptas, consecrated by Ne Muni, Mata Tirtha is a rectangular enclosure encircled by the forest. At the foot of a trace that supports a small sanctuary five of six stone spouts pour out the water from the neighbourhood streams but alone among them has the title and value of a tirtha; the water that escapes from it, marvellously limpid fills up a rectangular basin. It is there that homage is paid to the ghosts of a deceased mother. A stela dating

from the close of the XVIIIth century, and that is all. The path that rejoins the road to Kathmandu from Mata Tirtha crosses the village of Kisipidi, at 500 metres N of tirtha. In the small enclosure of small temple of Ganeca, first inscription; on a small square to the E, another very large stela but entirely corroded; against a cluster of chapels in honour of Bhagavati, two other stelas. I have not had the time to examine them. I just had the time to stamp and photograph on the spot.

Thursday 24th February— I ended on Monday my journey to the Darbar of Kathmandu; I began to take the stamping of the polygraphical inscription of Pratapa Malla which awakens here so much curiosity and covetousness. It is engraved on a stone fitted in the western wall of the palace; on the temple facing it all the steps are also decorated with polygraphical inscriptions; less in view, they have remained indifferent and I took care, not to attract any attention on them. This old crazy Pratapa Malla costs me forty leaves of stamping paper. More than elsewhere my presence before the enigmatic inscription has brought a crowd; police officers, soldiers. Blow from rifle butts do not prevent them from overflowing the barriers and to feverishly press round me. Mysterious, the inscription is only partly so; each one knows here from a positive source that it means the hiding place of a fabulous treasure. Where is the treasure? Here is the hitch. And they envy me, I who can explain because a reward of ten akhs of rupees or more than a million and a half of francs is assured to him who will give the translation. Here is something that humbles the most sumptuous rewards of the Institute. Alas, one must lower one's pretensions. The crowned pedant who was Pratapa Malla was pleased, according to what I have been able to

read, to indicate his royal and literary titles in various writings and he has also dated the engraving; he has asked the name of the writing employed. Unfortunately the base of the stone is fairly corroded, the names are deciphered with difficulty and when they are legible, they are not always intelligible. The indication would however, be useful indispensable in certain cases. There are characters here that remind of nothing unknown. I was only able to stamp one third of it but attendants will do the rest without me.

I visited the temple of Budha Nilkanth day before yesterday. It lies at the foot of the Civapuri. In spite of the name, the divinity of the site is Visnu Narayana. The Temple is encircled as usual with a rectangle of dharmasalas with a rectangular basin also bordered by a narrow foot-path and a parapet. A giant stony Narayana is stretched on the surface of water, sheltered under a canopy of snakes. The light foliage of bamboos swaying over divine statue causes the light to vacillate on these stony limbs giving them an appearance of life. The impression is captivating. In the courtyard women and children of Bhotya descent beg for a bakshish without the least shame. A small group of Yogis rubbed over the ashes, almost nude reads the yoga Vasistha without understanding a word of it. Exactly as in the Buddhist temples, a stone portico carries a large bell, against this portico is built a low masonry work in which are engraved a few inscriptions. The only ancient one was collected and fortunately by Bhagvanlal; it is no longer legible. Budha Nilkantha is at a distance of two steady miles north-east from Kathmandu, directly at the foot of the mountain. The road that leads to it is fairly good and it covers the underground cannal that brings the waters of Civapuri into the reservoir of Kathmandu.

From Budha Nilkantha I go and visit the village of Tsapaligaon, that borders the

path at about a mile S. of Budha Nilkantha, direction of Kathmandu. Against the small temple of Narayana there stands a stela the top of which has crumbled down but the base of it is quite clear and the date precise. From there, in returning towards Kathmandu to the right of the path but a small distance on a fairly narrow plateau eaten into by the Bisnumati, the old village of Dharampur with a few solitary huts in the vicinity. There remains a half buried stela but which I unearth. The ground has fortunately preserved the stone the date is clearly legible. The stone faces a chapel of Ganeca; the village has also a small miserable looking caitya of brick and plaster.

Yesterday new excursion in the same direction: I visited the village of Thoka N of Kathmandu and built on plateau that faces Dharampur. The soil of the valley is entirely made up of the same alluvial sand as that which constitutes the valley of the Ganges; the thickness of the layer is considerable. The many small streams that descend the mountain slopes and that furiously swell in the monsoons, dig into and cut their beds and end by flowing in a kind of gorge of sand. Towns and villages are perched on the plateaus thus cut up in the mass of sand and to cross from one bank to another, if it even concerned a river like the Bisnumati, that at this period of the year, flows as much water as the Mauzanares, it is necessary to descend and climb the tracks that crumble under foot. Thoka has given me an inscription, a stela also decorated with the conch and the cakra; the top has entirely worn away, the base preserved in the soil is clear and gives the date, unfortunately of the three numerical signs, the second is confused with the stone photography will perhaps reveal what the paper, my finger and my eyes combined have not been able to see. At last, today, new meeting in the hall of the manuscripts of the Darbar

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

This very morning, Captain Sahib came to bring me informations on the hot water spring mentioned by the Chinese; it appears that like Wang Hiuen Ts'e did it, all the Chinese and Tibetans, who descend into Nepal and India by the Kirong pass, the usual course for the outward journey, stop at this hot spring and cook their food in it. And all the details of the Chinese traveller are of an exactitude to shame the modern geographers and topographers. It appears that, near this source, there are Chinese inscriptions; Captain Sahib has

promised to send the mukhya to take stampings. I would also like to have by the same means the epigraphy of Nayakot that must have as ancient inscriptions. What results would I not reach if my sojourn could be prolonged? The maharaja has sent today four soldiers to Changu Narayan to unearth the pillar and the Commander-in-chief has ordered the scribes of the hall of manuscripts to bring to him the copies that I had ordered in order that he might verify for himself the correction before imparting them to me. Is it this the country described by the tale teller of voyages?

Saturday 26th February—Heat has suddenly come on and with it the days have shortened. Impossible to leave the house before 3 p. m., I have even given up working in the afternoon in the verandah to the N. E., the sparkling heat made my head feel heavy; I was obliged to seek the shelter of the thick walls of the bungalow. Yesterday I have again picked up something epigraphical. I said that a Brahman had come to inform Captain Sahib of the existence of a pillar with an old inscription. The good Captain took me himself to Nangsal, a suburb of Kathmandu, exactly opposite the palace of Dhiraj; between the two is a large depression where flows a streamlet of canalized water and where stretch lands. The village stands between the road to Harigaon and that to Pashupati through Deo Patan. In the centre a fairly high ridge looking like a stupa mark so it appears the site of the ancient stelas one almost completely defaced the other in fairly good state of preservation, with the exception of the top. I then stamped and photographed them. We returned to the Residence through Lajimpat, which is ordinary place with a small chapel and linga. Near the chapel is an image of Visnu in a broken atti-

tude, the left leg raised towards the shoulder and underneath a votive inscription in the style resembling that of Mahankal but in a worse state of preservation. Here the stone is absolutely bare and the image is contemporaneous to the inscription that seems to be of the VIth, VIIth century. Today Pundit Cakyamuni has brought me his booty. It is not without interest. To begin with an excellent manuscript of the Candravayakarana procured at Bhatgaon and which had the advantage of supplying a useful historical datum. The colophon bears: nepalabdagate mrgankarasayanechaya (?) pancabanayudha... (561). cricripacupaticaranavavindarcanaparayanari purajadaityatripurasu ramanavinrjitacrisamsaratariningouri cvara—crimahecvaravatarerilaksminaryanacricri jayaksmalladevaanujacri crijayajivamalladevasahelvvijayararajye..... (Jivamella is missing in all the lists). I found a good manuscript of the Prakrtasamjivini (Prakrit grammar). A manuscript of the Madyamakavrtti (called here like always Vinayasutra). An important commentary of the Kalacakratantra the Vimalaprabha, very rare work and of it would which perhaps be desirable to have a copy; its crimulantranusarinyam dvadacasahasrikayam lghukalacakratantrarajatikayamvimalaprachyam askalamaravighnavinacatah paramastadevatasaumarganiamoddecah prathamah..... and so on. The manuscript has more than 300 pages; it seems to me as being important to the study of the Tantric doctrine. I also found the manuscript of another new text, written under the reign of Rudra Deva.....work translated in Chinese by Fa-t'ien in the Xth-XIth century (Nanjio 864). It is interesting to observe, to the credit of China exactitude, that the Chinese title translates exactly ratnaguna (pao-te) whereas the title given in Nanjio simply shows: Prajnaparamitasamcayagatha. At last a manuscript bearing for colophon: iti para-

mitaparikatha, subhasitaratnakarandake samaptakrtir acaryacurasya granthapramanam; asya catam. It does not appear to me doubtful that asya-cura must be restored. Lastly there was a manuscript of the Caturvargasamraha. The hunt is not finished. I still hope for some more game. In connection with game a tiger came down the mountain yesterday and walked through the streets of Patan, "quaerens quem devoret", my friend Deb Shamsheer went out bravely and shot it himself. It was the event of the day.

Kathmandu 2nd March—On Tuesday I made a distant and painful excursion to Phirphing but without result. Phirphing is to the south of Kathmandu at a distance of 16 or 18 kilometres, leaning against the mountains that close the valley on a plateau about 300 metres (975=feet) high or a real altitude of about 1500 metres (4875 feet). In fact Phirphing scarcely belongs to Nepal strictly speaking; in order to reach her, one must make a fairly steep ascension on the slope of the mountain and outline afterwards a deep valley where spread in graduations cultivations and rustic houses whereas the higher slopes contrast with their barren ruggedness the wooded summits of the other mountains. The road to Phirphing detaches itself from the great road (principal) between Kathmandu and Patan almost at the very gate of Patan, takes an oblique course towards the South—West, passes in front of the Western stupa of Acoka, crosses two kolas (this is the name given to streamlets flowing in vast beds) continues on an almost flat plateau; then a little before meeting Bagmati, it again bends to the West, descends towards the Bagmati and crosses a large borough Kokona, where there are a fairly large temple and a caitya of no interest and without epigraphy; then it reaches the Bagmati, a little before its egress from official Nepal.

The river in fact elbows almost immediately towards the East-South-East, and skirting the cliffs on which is built Bagmati, penetrates, into as mysterious a defile as the North Pole. The Bagmati descending directly from the Ganges must open a direct means of communication between India and Nepal; the Nepalese do not trouble themselves to open to their invading neighbours a door that has no bolt or lock. At the mouth of the gorge on a vast field the Darbar has erected an asylum for lepers as a kind of scare-crow. By way of bridge between the two banks, a line of small beams just as large as the bare foot too, and immediately afterwards, the path begin to clamber up steeply. Phirphing seemed to promised more results apart to escape the upheavels, rarely visited if ever she has not a traveller, there are the ruins of a Darbar and two very popular temples: Cesa Narayana and Daksina Kali. Cesa Narayana (Sikh Narayan as they call it here) does not only attract the Nepalese; the Bhotiyas also come to it; on my arrival a group of them is installed in one of the dharmasalas and a stone bears inscribed in relief in the Tibetan style the Om mani padme hum fairly unexpected here. No luxurious constructions here like in Changu Narayan; a few miserable and small chapels and stuck against the very rock and only accessible by a perpendicular staircase, the statue doubly holy. A fissure open above in the rock allows the escape, during four months in the year, of a white and limpid cascade. In Switzerland one would call it the Pisshevache here it is Kathmandu the divine cow and the animal is worshipped in real earnest. Besides water spurts out here from everywhere; limpid and gay from floor in basins where the piety of the faithful feed numerous fish. In the village, situated to the East of the temple. I stamped

an inscription of Jyotir Malla one of Cri Nivasa Malla the name of which is unknown to me from elsewhere.

To the east of the village at the bottom of a narrow and deep gorge with wooded slopes stands the temple of Daksina Kali. The popularity of the goddess is marked by this trifle she wears it appears to the value of five lakhs of jewels and the idol is fifty to sixty centimetres high. There not even a chapel; a square enclosure dharmasalas on three sides the fourth an ordinary wall in which is imbedded the statue of the goddess sheltered under a kind of Chinese hat in copper, adorned with many coloured bits of cloth and rattles. The daily sacrifice of the buffalo is just completed; the blood squitts according to the rules of the profession on the idol the head slowly severed is deposited at the feet of the goddess and the large decapitated body still convulses from the neck, legs, tail; it is still quivering flesh. They drag it outside singe it like they would a fowl over a straw fire and then they embowel it to distribute the portions to the staff. Only a modern stela for inscriptions. I must console myself with the site that is ravishing. A small torrent the Kali kola encased between forests rising perpendicularly flows through the rocks that encumber its meandering bed; shifted by bushy foliages softened by the breeze of the streamlet, the dazzling heat of the South is only a cool caress. Kali is not near from being deserted by her adorers. Yesterday evening I was talking with the small brother of Babu Mitra a lad of fifteen to sixteen years emancipated by an English education. I, he said, I believe in nothing as regard gods and supernatural things; all these are fables for the children. And after this profession of faith perfectly sceptic, without pose or pause without any intended contrast without a change of

tone he adds: I, however, make an exception to the goddess Kali, because I have there, indisputable proofs. And he relates to me the miraculous apparition of Kali that he has not seen himself with his eyes, but he has seen the people who saw them and in what a state they were. Would you now doubt? It seemed to me for a while that I was not in Nepal.

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

Friday 4th March—I was in the house busy with my manuscripts when I was asked to assist to a spectacle of Holi. The Holi is the great spring festival of India Shrove Tuesday or Lent and it is a pity to see how, after all the human imagination is confined India has even her confetti, for eight days the people walk about the streets carrying in sacks or small tubes a red powder and even if he was the Maharaja, whoever passed by in white clothes was pitilessly sprayed. Here also (is it not all in all) takes place the feast of washerman, let us say dhobhis. The cloth stained with red that reists to washing, however valuable it may be, belongs by right to the dhobi. And it is in these narrow and swarming lanes a curious pushing of a reddish crowd, the powder sticking to the hair, beard as well as to the clothes. This nation of Nepal is a perpetual spectacle, such as I have seen it in the 'Lines' today such as I have remarked it everywhere at Kathmandu. A group of brickmakers had seated themselves on a long mat; they were singing choruses, those perpetual choruses of the East in which gaiety mingles with melancholy all in mazzotintos undulating and fleeting, simple and powerful evocation of the infinite. In the centre a small group of instrumentalists: Kettle-drums, cymbals, gongs, rattles, tambourines; two or three would rise

by turn, play and dance with the contorsions of monkeys, entirely smeared with red; the actors of Thespis. The chorus ceases, three of the brick-makers go to a corner to disguise themselves. Music, there enters a shepherd lass of the Terraj, so it appears. I have found again my Tharunis. The Tharuni in question is quite simply one of the three brick-makers who this time has smeared his face with ashes to soften the bronze glitter and who has also painted the eyes as they often do to very small girls; a large black ring gives to the look quite an enigmatic and volyptuous alluremment. The shepherd lass requests and the public indulgence. She will sing and dance to honour the divinity. A shepherd arrives clad in a rough overcoat knotted on his head and that vaguely resembles the skin of an animal; he starts courting the shepherd lass, mingling with passionate appeals ludicrous gestures and subterfuges. There appears a rival. In short a pastoral scene, the classical and perpetual pastoral scene of love and I found here once again, lingering and real, my hypothesis on the origin of the Indian, drama eh, yes, in this idyllic country caressed by the sun and bathed in light, the pastoral amiable and smiling is as old as the world. And beneath this fortunate climate that allows the human form its free play, the body is so supple so easily graceful that these rough brick-workmen intended to mistake their role of women. I was obliged to leave the representation to ascend the Darara, the lofty column erected by Bhimsen Thapa to the East of Kathmandu, quite against the precinct in which it penetrates and the manoeuvring camp; a hideous construction a column of pork-butcher made of lard and that contrasts with the taste of the country. But this is a Gurkha whim, it is true. From the summit at a height of 40 old metres, one embraces a view of the whole valley; but today again the horizon was misty

and the splendid range of glaciers was hidden.

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

Monday 7th March-The Nepalese Darbar has kept his word. I have a complete stamping of the pillar of Changu Narayan. Not less than four soldiers and three days to attain this result. The pillar is now fitted into a kind of sculpture stone ring that gives it the appearance of a base; it has been necessary at first to lift this much heavy ring and to erect a wooden frame-work to support it a system of props that allowed the approach to and the stamping of the stone. I leave out here a list of the ancient Buddhistic works known by Chinese translations and the Darbar has promised me to pursue its researches. My searchers have pointed out to me two very important texts; to all requisitions, even official, the holders have replied that there was a mistake and that they did not possess the manuscripts in question. But the least knowledge of India teaches the worth of these categorical replies that from an express 'no' proceeds along very slowly by small stages to a final 'yes' The possessor of these manuscripts are Brahmans and it is a matter of conscience with them to make known a heretical work. I am also

awaiting a reply with regard to an old text in the possession of an old Brahman, dwelling in a house of the mountain and who without refusing to communicate the text replies to all the notices by the perpetual eastern inertia. The Commander-in-chief has sent him a Pundit, the Captain Sahib has sent him a mukhya. he is out, he is ill, he will bring it himself and I get mad with anger at seeing approach the day of my departure and this rogue of a Brahman who does not stir. I promised him yesterday evening by a messenger 5 rupees reward if he comes to-morrow. Five rupees. This savours on the whim of the American multi-millionaire. There is a great deal to bet on however, that the resistance by inertia will prevail on the inclination for lucre.

In default of new Buddhistic texts, Pundit Cakyamuni brought me a treatise on veterinary matter; iti cri Rupanaryanetyadimaharajadhirajacriman Madanendrasena Krtan Sarasamgrhe Calihotram samaaptam. In the first cloke there is a different name.

Crimatsuryam anmaskrtya revantam turgadhipam crimad Devendrasenena kriyate saramsagrahaah. Each cloke is accompanied by a vernacular translation.

Verse 2: uddrty calihotrani balanam bodhetave mandarendraserena kriyate sugamo vidhih-The Vidagdhasmapana, a collection of chaades, enigmas, etc.-in verse with partial translation in Parbatya.

In the evening I was invited to visit the "Lines" of the sepoy to assist to a nautch offered by the Jemadar. On the greensward of manoeuvres a few poles are erected and a cloth stretched above them. All around benches and a few chairs for people of importance. No nautch girls; the type is rare in Nepal and

during this week of the Holi they are claimed everywhere. And then the body of nautch girls has suffered vicissitudes. The queen of nautch girls expiates in prison the sin of having pleased to many admirers. She was known to have granted her favours to good few of small Brahman gentlemen of Ksatriyas and to have enticed them to lose their castes. The Hindu law severely punishes this offence. She was sentenced to fifteen years each imprisonment and all the Brahmans implicated to one year each. It has been the great scandal of Nepal. In default of nautch girls the people have nautch-boys; the biggest, a lad of sixteen or seventeen years representing Krsna, wears a high mitre on the head, a kind of cloak on the shoulders and a long blouse of a beautiful blue colour tightened at the waist. Another boy smaller still resembles Radha, the lover of Krsna. Lastly boys of eight and twelve years represented the shepherd lasses, companions of Radha. In the beginning after a chorus and symphonies or orchestras, a large curtain is unfolded which displays the images of Krsna and Radha. Incense is burnt, lamps are swung, hymns are sung. Then the real spectacle begins. From nine at night to four in the morning it is the same subject repeated; Radha sings his distressed passion and moans on his forlornness. Krsna only thinks of playing on the flute. The friends of Radha come to console him and one of them begs of Krsna to satisfy his mistress. Weary at last, he gives in for a while. The shepherd lasses hasten forward and Krsna leads a dance the "Ras Lila". Then he returns his flute and the whole thing begins again. The monotony of this theme is a little changed by whims of the Vidusaka, garbed in Nepalese style, among all these whimsical personages. He is knocked about like a ball, scoffed, mocked, beaten, peppered with blows from fists then tripping and begging for bakshish he receives kicks on his behind. The sepoy in their bur-

nous and white turbans, motionless, burst out laughing at these ludicrous farces; but they gaze with an intense religious emotions at the eyes of Krsna and those of the shepherd lasses. It is so sacred a thing, tells me Captain Sahib. Sacred or not at midnight, I felt sleepy and return to the Bungalow.

Tuesday 8th March—This morning, visit of Captain Sahib for my arrangements for departure. I must regulate diplomatically my visit of farewells to the Maharaja and to all the Shamsher: Deb Shamsher, commander-in-chief, Chander Shamsher, the real generalissimo; Bhim Shamsher, general. I completed them in the vehicle of the maharaja placed at my service; leaving the bungalow at one o'clock, I only returned at five, namely that the visits were not an interchange of ordinary wordings. I attempted to induce the Maharaja to create a museum of Nepalese archaeology; he was impressed and allured by the idea and has on the very spot asked for the French Republic a manuscript of the Prajnaparamita in perfect preservation adorned with paintings and written during the reign of Vighrahpala, then old of about a thousand years and to me personally a manuscript a commentary of the Vidgadhavismapana written in the IVth century of the Nepalese era or in the XIIIth or XIVth century. He asked me the photograph of my children that I left him in exchange for his. And all the Shamsher vied with one another in kindnesses and in promises, placing themselves at my service for all researches that might interest me. In returning to the bungalow, I find the compound crowded with people; the sepoy, the musicians, the dancers come to entertain me with the clatter of the holi; symphonies songs and dances. I still have a provision of red powder, I throw it on them, I receive some in return. It is real battle with confettis.

Wednesday 9th—Eve of departure; each one comes by turn to bid farewell. My Pundit

brings me an ivory comb. Pundit Cakyamuni brings me a letter from Vaikuntha Natha Carman, Pundit of the Commander-in-chief and sends me a walking stick of areca with an ivory handle (the areca nut is a guarantee of happiness according to the Castas and Mitrananda hands me a few Nepalese paintings. Lastly Captain Sahib arrives and in the name of the Maharaja he gives me a Nepalese dress, a Khukuri, a small cap and small sticks of incense despatched from Lhasa and reserved for ceremonial worships. Lastly the supreme rarity, pre-eminently the bearer of good tidings, I receive a gold coin. He also informs me that the Maharaja through a particular favour, places his open carriage at my disposal to convey me as far as Thankot where ends the road practicable for carriages.

At last on Thursday 10th, I leave Nepal. My mukhya, my Nepalese soldier, who has served me for so long as a guide and companion, after having been my peon and my gaoler, Lalitbam the Gurkha who wished to follow me back in company with my residential sepoy, Siri Rama Singh as far as Bhimpedi at the foot of the mountains, beyond the pass of Chandragiri and that of Sivagarhi are all here and when I shook hands with them at the hour of departure, on the square at Bhimpedi, crowded with my coolies, Kabars, dhu-liwalas, palkiwalas and the crowd of villagers who had hurried to the spot to see me, the sahin, Lalitbam and Siri Ram Sing were sobbing like children and I hastened to jump into the palanquin as my eyes were getting wet.

End of Vol. II