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Some Inscriptions From Dolakha^x

By

Mohan Prasad Khanal.

King Indra appears to have been an independent ruler of Dolakha, but no information is available about his date, the dynasty to which he belonged, etc. In fact, the history of Dolakha is quite unknown. It had a King of its own before the partition of Kathmandu Valley or even earlier. We do not know whether or not this King was an independent one. Nor do we know anything about social and religious conditions in Dolakha at that time. Historians have conjectured that Dolakha was not an independent Kingdom but was a feudatory of Kantipur. However, I have been able to discover some new facts about Dolakha.

Dolakha is an ancient historical town. Traces of its ancient origin are found there even now. However, no Licchavi inscriptions have been found there.

In Aswin 1411 Vikrama (September 1354), Rajalla Devi was married to Sthiti Malla in Bhaktapur. Sthiti Malla then became King. By 1423 Vikrama (1366) he had become King of the whole of Nepal. It was during his reign that a statue of King Indra was erected in Dolakha along with that of Manikaratna Bhero. An inscription to this effect, contained in a broken pedestal, has now been discovered. The inscription is in Newari script. It bears the date Falgun 490 Samvat. The statues are missing, however. In any case, the inscription proves that King Indra of Dolakha was a contemporary of King Sthiti Malla.

Although we do not know when King Indra was born, or when he ascended the throne, there is evidence that he was a religious-minded person and that he died in 1605 Vikrama (1548). Several images installed by him are still found. He was an adherent of Shaivism. An inscription contained in another broken pedestal found in Dolakha, which had been installed by

^x Mohan Prasad Khanal, Bhilekh-Sankalana (A Collection of Inscriptions), Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan, 2028 (1971), pp. 3-16.

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King Indra (or Jaya Indra Sinha), begins with a hymn to God Shiva. The inscription is dated Ashadh 667 Samvata. The hymn is in Sanskrit, while the remaining portion of the inscription is in corrupt Sanskrit with a mixture of Newari. The inscription was installed by King Indra in the memory of his dead daughters.

There is a ruined Buddhist Caitya in Dolakha town with several inscriptions. One of these inscriptions, which are in Newari, was installed by King Jaya Narayana Deva in Baisakh 669 Samvat. Jaya Narayana Deva was the son of King Indra Sinha. Jaya Narayana Deva's younger brother, Vasudeva Thakur, offered a gold chakra at the Caitya and installed an inscription to commemorate this act in Baisakh 1606 Vikrama (April 1549). Similar chakras were offered also by Bhardars named Jogi Bharda and Ujgyot Sin in Baisakh 669 Samvat (i.e. 1606 Vikrama or 1549 A.D.), with two more inscriptions to commemorate the act.

To the east of the Caitya there is another inscription in Newari which is only partly legible. The inscription mentions Kasthamandapa, thereby possibly indicating that the Kingdom of Dolakha had religious ties with the Kingdom of Kantipur. This inscription too is in the Newari script. It bears the date Jestha 669 Samvata.

King Jaya Indra Sinha and his Queen, Vijayalaxmi, had minted silver Mohor coins much before King Mahendra Malla of Kantipur. This disproves the legend that Mahendra Malla had obtained permission from the Emperor of Delhi to mint such coins.

In Chaitra 574 Samvat, King Jaya Narayan Deva installed an image of Umamaheshwara in the memory of his dead wife, Vittalaxmi. An inscription describing this act has been found on a wall above a water spout at a place west of Dolakha town. The inscription is in Newari.

Conflict and Reconciliation Between Queen Rajendra-
laxmi and Bahadur Shah*

By

Baburam Acharyau

After Rana Bahadur Shah was proclaimed King, Pratap Simha Shah's widow, Queen Rajendralaxmi, suspended the administration for the 13-day mourning period and sent an order bearing the royal seal through a courier to Bahadur Shah who was living in exile in Bettiah. On receiving this order, Bahadur Shah returned to Nepal before the period of mourning had expired and subsequently assumed charge of the administration. Along with Queen Rajendralaxmi, he set upon the task of suppressing non-Gorkhali factions. But as soon as he heard that Bahadur Shah had returned to Kathmandu, Kaji Swarup Simha Karki fled to India and thus saved himself. Brajanath Pandit was arrested. He was convicted of treason, deprived of his caste and banished to India through Sindhuli. Sardar Parashuram Thapa was imprisoned. On the advice of Rajendralaxmi, Bahadur Shah sent permission to Chautara Mahoddamakirti Shah and Dalamardan Shah to spend their last days in Varanasi, although they had already been living in exile, and also made provision for payment of allowances to them. Two of the three sons of Mahoddamakirti Shah, Balabhadra Shah and Srikrishna Shah, both of whom were senior to Bahadur Shah, were summoned to Kathmandu. Balabhadra Shah was appointed as a Kaji and included in the Bharadari. Dalajit Shah too was summoned and appointed as a Chautarau. But he was not made a minister of King Rana Bahadur Shah. Since he belonged to the royal family, he was designated as a Bhara-dar with a status slightly above that of a Kaji.

*Baburam Acharya, Nepalko Sankshipta Vrittanta (A Concise Account of Nepal), Kathmandu: Premod Shamsheer and Nir Bikram "Pyasi", Chaitra 2022 (March 1966), Chapter XII: "Maharani Rajendralaxmi ra Mahila Saheb Bahadur Shahka Bichma Mel ra Sangharsha." (Conflict and Reconciliation Between Queen Rajendralaxmi and the Second Prince, Bahadur Shah), pp 77-80.

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Rana Bahadur Shah was crowned King on December 17, 1777, one month after the death of Pratap Simha Shah. Probably on the same day, Sarvajit Rana was appointed as a Kaji and minister. Vamsharaj Pande too was appointed as a minister and entrusted with the task of keeping a watch on Lamjung and other Chaubisi Kingdoms with his headquarters in Gorkha. Kapardar Kalidas Khadka (Kalu Kapardar of Prithvi Narayan Shah) and other Bharadars were confirmed in their posts. The Newar concubine of Pratap Simha Shah was pregnant. At about the time of the coronation, she gave birth to Sher Bahadur Shahi. The Newar concubine became a Sati immediately thereafter.

For five months, Rajendralaxmi and Bahadur Shah remained on good terms with each other. Bahadur Shah then felt it necessary to recruit additional troops for the annexation of Tanahu. However, Rajendralaxmi prevented him from doing so. This gave rise to a dispute between them. With the help of Sarvajit Rana, Rajendralaxmi kept Bahadur Shah in detention inside the royal palace. When he received this report, Gajraj Mishra rushed to Kathmandu from Varanasi, effected a reconciliation between Rajendralaxmi and Bahadur Shah, and had Bahadur Shah released. However, Rajendralaxmi retained control of the administration, so that Bahadur Shah was left idle. Meanwhile, rumors circulated that there were illicit relations between Rajendralaxmi and Sarvajit Rana. On the basis of this charge, Bahadur Shah, with Dalajit Shah's help, had Sarvajit Rana beheaded inside a room at the royal palace. Rajendralaxmi was put in fetters made of silver and imprisoned inside the royal palace. Bahadur Shah then assumed charge of the administration on August 31, 1778.

Rajendralaxmi was opposed to any campaign of territorial expansion. Her minister, Sarvajit Rana, also shared the same view. In this situation, Bahadur Shah could not have been blamed had he kept Rajendralaxmi in detention honorably instead of levelling false charges against her. It was unjust on his part to imprison her and spoil her reputation and to murder Sarvajit Rana.

After assuming charge of the administration in this manner Bahadur Shah started making plans for the annexation of Tanahu. But he could do nothing in this regard for four months because

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most of the Bharadars were opposed to this plan. Subsequently, Bahadur Shah ordered Sardar Bali Baniya, Vamsha Raj Pande's deputy in Gorkha, to invade Tanahu with troops stationed there. Sardar Bali Baniya occupied Sur, capital of Tanahu, on January 31, 1779 almost without a fight.

Harakumaradatta Sen, King of Tanahu, then obtained troops from King Mukunda Sen of Palpa to reinforce his army and entrenched himself at Bali-Thum. Sardar Bali Baniya attacked him at this place, but was defeated and killed along with 65 Gorkhali soldiers. (March 10, 1779). Four days later, the Gorkhalis left Sur. Emboldened by the Gorkhalis' retreat, the King of Parbat sent troops in aid of Tanahu. These troops could not proceed to Upardang or Kabilaspur, but crossed the Narayani river through Nawalpur, attacked Summeshwar and drove out Gorkhali troops from that place.

On hearing the news of this defeat, Bahadur Shah went to Gorkha and sent additional troops from there to get Summeshwar back. These troops defeated the enemy at Summeshwar and captured some. The rest fled to India. (April 22, 1779).

Rajendralaxmi was a courageous queen. At the time when Bahadur Shah was in Gorkha, she sent couriers to Varanasi asking Chautara Mahoddamakirti Shah and Brajanath Pandit to come back to Kathmandu. Brajanath Pandit did not obey this summons, however, but started performing religious ceremonies to bring about the downfall of Bahadur Shah. Mahoddamakirti Shah, on the other hand, came to Kathmandu. Bahadur Shah had entrusted Dalajit Shah and Balabhadra Shah to look after the defense of Kathmandu as well as keep watch over Rajendralaxmi. These persons could do nothing against Mahoddamakirti Shah, their senior cousin and uncle respectively. Mahoddamakirti Shah declared Rajendralaxmi innocent after a trial by ordeal and released her. On June 20, 1779, Rajendralaxmi resumed charge of the administration. Dalajit Shah fled, after sending information about these developments to Bahadur Shah in Gorkha. Bahadur Shah too then fled. Sriharsha Pantha, who had helped in the imprisonment of Rajendralaxmi, was arrested, branded and banished. He then went to Tanahu. As a result of this internal conflict, no Gorkhali troops remained in the hill regions of Tanahu. Harakumardatta was therefore able to win back his Kingdom without any effort. After some time, Rajendralaxmi charged Mahoddamakirti Shah with the crime of killing

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a Brahman and banished him. Mahoddamakirti Shah then went to Varanasi. Rajendralaxmi dismissed Gajaraj Mishra, a supporter of Bahadur Shah, who had been deputed to maintain contacts with the English Political Agent in Varanasi. He was replaced by Brajanath Pandit, whom Rajendralaxmi regarded as her preceptor.

After Bahadur Shah fled, Rajendralaxmi became carefree and began to enjoy the pleasures of life. In an attempt to abolish the Purdah system which was prevalent in the royal palace, she used to go out on horse or elephant back, with her maid servants on horseback. Had the Gorkhali Bharadars followed suit, Gorkhali women too would have become brave like their men. But the time was not opportune and the people did not appreciate this reform.

As Bahadur Shah was no longer in Nepal, and as Queen Rajendralaxmi was being increasingly attracted to a life of luxury, his supporters, Kaji Vamsharaj Pande in Gorkha and Sardar Shivanarayan Khatri in Majhkirat, submitted their resignation. They felt that further conquests would not be possible unless Bahadur Shah came back. Even before their resignation was accepted, Vamsharaj Pande took shelter with Birkishor Singh, a Zamindar of Bettiah, while Shivanarayan Khatri went to Patna. Rajendralaxmi did not regret their departure.

The Semi-Nomadic Khambas^x

By

Nabin Kumar Rai

The term Khamba or Khampa used in this article refers to the semi-nomadic tribe of Khambas living in the Karnali, Seti, Bheri and Rapti zones of western Nepal, not to the Khambas who entered into Nepal after the Chinese moved into Tibet in 1959, and who have ever since been living as refugees in the Himalayan regions from the east to the west. The total population of the Khambas of Nepal is estimated at between 1,500 and 2,000. They are called semi-nomadic because, unlike the Rautes,¹ a nomadic tribe of the food gathering stage, they change the places of their habitation during summer and winter for the purpose of trade.

Kusundas² are also known to be among the semi-nomadic tribes of Nepal. However, Khambas and Kusundas have different reasons and motives in leading a semi-nomadic life. While Khambas, like the Byansis of Darchula,³ move about from Tibet (China) to the Tarai regions of Nepal and change their summer and winter habitation for the purpose of trade in grains and salt, Kusundas engage in farming for some time instead of doing such trade, and move about for some time in search of food.

Khambas stay together with their families in their summer and winter settlements. Usually they spend 5 months (from December to April) in their winter settlements and 5 months (from June to October) in their summer settlements. The remaining 2 months, i.e. May and November, are spent in travelling to summer and winter settlements. That is why scholars studying the migration pattern in western Nepal have described these Khambas as seasonal migrants, or simply as seasonals.⁴

^xNabin Kumar Rai, "Khamba: Ek Ardha Bhramanashila Jati." Contributions To Nepalese Studies (Semi-Annual Journal of The Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur), Vol. I, No. I, December 1973 (Poush 2030), pp 64-75.

Khambas do not know anything about their history. They never tell others about their origin. In fact, it is assumed that Khambas had come from Tibet in groups and lived a semi-nomadic life after another group of Tibetans (Bhotes) settled down around Humla and Mugu. The physiognomy, languages, religion, costumes, occupations and nomadic habits of these tribes also tend to justify this assumption. Even today "Chhowa", a sedentary tribe engaged in trade and animal husbandry, Khamba, a community that primarily controlled the affairs of State in Tibet before the appearance of the Chinese, and Purangwa, a tribe engaged in trade and agriculture around Purang and Taklakot, inhabit the Tibet region of China. There must be an historical link between the semi-nomadic Khambas (of Nepal) and the Khambas of Tibet. These Khambas may have been immigrants from Tibet consequent to a political upheaval or religious strife at some time in the past. Khambas, Chhowas and Purangwas are now seen living as refugees in Nepal after the Chinese took over Tibet. It would not be surprising if these refugees, after having permanently settled down in Nepal, seek to forget that they had originated in Tibet.⁵

Khambas are found not only in Nepal, but also in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh States of India. The author had met some Khampas in the course of his anthropological tour of the Kalpa, Poocha and Nichar areas of Kinnaur, a district situated on the Sino-Indian border in Himachal Pradesh, in September-November 1971. He was told that they had stopped going to western Tibet after the entry of the Chinese into Tibet. Scholars who had visited Kinnaur before the Chinese came to Tibet have also written about the Khampas living there.

Rahul Sankrityayan, who had visited Tibet in 1926, writes of the Khampas of "Kinnar Desh": Kham is a region situated on Tibet's border with China. Perhaps some of their ancestors may have reached this area from Kham, but neither in language nor in dress do they look like Khampas now. This may be the reason why they are now called Gyagar (Indian) Khampas, not simply Khampa (inhabitants of Kham). They wander about vending goods. They go to Mandi, Simla, Hardwar and Delhi during winter, and to the Sutlej and Ganges valleys and to areas up to western Tibet in summer. They are unable to say whether they are Tibetan or Indian subjects."⁶

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In recent years, Khambas have begun to call themselves "Matuwali Chhetris" also.⁷ In fact, not only Khambas but also Byansis and Bhotes have started calling themselves "Matuwali Chhetris." Although somewhat more prosperous than the other Hindu communities, the average Bhote, Khamba and Byansi is illiterate, and is looked upon with contempt by Hindus. This is the reason why Bhotes, Khambas and Byansis have the tendency to change their communal names, costumes, languages, etc. and make a new and artificial history. For example, some of the Bhotes inhabiting Karan Dara (a geographical-administrative region created on the basis of the watershed) claim to be the descendants of the Barakote Thakuris of Barakote-Bada in Jumla in an attempt to prove themselves to be of higher status than other Bhotes. There are also other tribes who have the tendency of changing their history, communal names, religion, language, etc. One example is the impact of Hinduism on the Khas, a community of Kumaun, Garhwal (Uttar Pradesh) and western Nepal⁸ during the 13th-14th century. It is known that the Koche community of the Tarai too had become "Hindu Rajvamshis", "Muslim Rajvamshis", or "Pani" or "Babukoch" during the 16th century on the basis of religion.⁹ Some Magars are still calling themselves Thakuri. Another Byansi group permanently engaged in agriculture in Humla district⁹ which has completely forgotten its language, religion and culture, is not prepared to be called Byansi. During the past 12 years, the Thakalis of Thak-Khola have started a campaign to change their Tibeto-Burman language into the Nepali language, and their traditional Buddhist religion into Hinduism, claiming to be the descendants of the Thakuris of the Tila and Sinja valleys in Jumla.¹⁰

These examples remind us of how Hinduism has left its impact on and become popular among the communities inhabiting the central hill region, the lower hill regions and the Tarai.

The Khamba Community

The semi-nomadic Khamba may be divided into the following categories from the viewpoint of their summer and winter settlements, the area of movement, process of permanent settlement, occupation, trade, language, costumes, etc.

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| 1. Dangali Khambas | 2. Dadakhet Khambas. |
| 3. Mandara Khambas | 4. Dillikot-Hurkot Khambas |

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Dangali Khambas

They leave Sanpe, situated at an altitude of 16,500 feet in the Kunna-Khola area of Achham (Seti zone), around April and shift to Thadedhunga-Yari, the last village situated on the Nepali side of the Nepal-China border between Humla and Taklakot. In the second week of September, when winter sets in, they return to Sanpe. Thus they spend 5 months each at Thadedhunga-Yari and Sanpe, and 2 months in travelling. Since Dangali Khambas stay at Sanpe in Achham district, they are also called "Sanpe Khambas."

Dangali Khambas live in tents both in their summer and winter settlements.¹⁰ They have no houses. The tent is erected by raising a wall or enclosing some space with a pheruwall (goat wool cloth) in such a way that not much air gets in. The site of such a tent is called Le or Läi, which is a Tibetan term. Dangali Khambas transport their tents, utensils and other belongings on the back of mules, Jhopa,¹² Tolba,¹³ horses, sheep, goats, etc. while moving between their summer and winter settlements.

They also carry cows, female Tolbas, etc. along with them. Jhopas, both male and female, and Tolbas, which are among the domestic animals found in the northern Himalayan region, can travel to winter settlements of the Dangali Khambas, which are situated in the central hill regions. Khambas breed mules too, and also possess Chhyanglus (Tibetan or Chhowa sheep, which give fine wool), Ronglu (sheep belonging to Humla and Jumla, whose wool is somewhat coarse), and some Syakchar (cross-breed of Chhyanglu and Ronglu sheep), in addition to goats and Chyangra goats. They carry all these domestic animals with them. However, some Khambas now leave their cows and horses in the custody of a member of their family or a friend at Laga pass (Bhanjyang), situated on the way, instead of taking these animals across Thadedhunga-Yari.

Dangali Khambas move about in Taklakot (Tibet), Humla, Bajhang, Bajura, Achham, Doti, Kailali and Bardiya for the purpose of trade. The main centers where they conduct trade are Taklakot in Tibet, which can be reached from Yari after a journey of 2 days, and Rajapur, (which is called Golaghat by the local inhabitants) and Nepalganj in the Tarai.

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A few Dangali Khamba families have sought to permanently settle down at Gumbagaun (Kunwari-Khola), Muchu and Yangsi (Yari). They are said to have submitted applications to the appropriate District Panchayat and Chief District Officer demanding permanent settlement facilities at Ridikot or Gumbagaun (in the Kunwari-Khola area near Shankha Lagana).

Dandakhet Khambas

Dandakhet Khambas travel from Surkhet in March or April and reach Dandakhet (Karan-Dara in Mugu) by the second week of May. Their summer settlement in Dandakhet consists of houses with stone walls and flat roofs. While in Surkhet, however, they, like Dangali Khambas, live in tents. They take horses, Mugu sheep, goat, Syaktas¹⁴ and cows with them.

But they cannot take such domestic Himalayan animals as Jhopa, Juma, and Tolba to Surkhet valley during winter, because this place is situated in the inner Tarai. For this reason, they employ some men (called Lora) to look after their cattle, crops, houses, etc in their village. Loras are paid remuneration in proportion to the area of lands and number of cattle they have to look after.

Dandakhet Khambas travel to Cheptu and Pongju in Tibet, a Mugu, Humla, Jumla, Dailekh, Surkhet, Danke and Bardiyaa for purposes of trade. Their main trade centers are Pongju, which can be reached from Mugu after a 6-days journey along with sheep, and Nepalganj in the Tarai, which is reached from Surkhet after 4 days travel. A few Dandakhet Khambas also travel to Rajapur.

Dandakhet Khambas have reclaimed lands in the Dandakhet area. On this land, they pay Serma tax (paid on unregistered land). They grow millet, buckwheat, Tite-Mithe, Kaguno and Marse, in addition to potato, radish and Koira during summer, and barley, wheat and Uwa during winter. Some Dandakhet Khambas have purchased lands in Surkhet also. They give their lands in Surkhet to the local Tharus on payment of fixed rents or of half of the crop.

Surkhet is the winter settlement of Dandakhet Khambas. Before 1965, Surkhet was called "Kalapani" (i.e., a malarial area). Even the local inhabitants (who have come from Jumla, Dullu, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Salyan and other places and have not

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permanently settled down in Surkhet) formerly hesitated to live in the valley, and preferred to stay in such hill areas situated to the north of Surkhet as Gothikada, Ramrikada, Bayalkada, Katuka and Jarbuttae. Dandakhet Khambas too never came down to Surkhet valley. They too used to set up their winter camps in the above-mentioned villages, or in Dullu-Dailekh. They are very afraid of frost and malaria. Khambas and others started settling down in Surkhet valley after the introduction of the malaria eradication programme in 1966. A grass known as "Leu" sprouts in Surkhet valley during the months of December and January. It is believed that cows, sheep, goat and other livestock, other than horses develop diarrhoea, and worms in their belly, and that their throat gets swollen, in case they graze on this grass. This explains why people still prefer to graze their cattle in the hill areas around Surkhet valley. Khambas come to Surkhet simply to graze their horses and stay in tents. A campaign for the cultivation of such winter crops as wheat and barley is going on at present in Surkhet. It will definitely have its impact on Khambas and otherwise.

Mandara Khambas

Mandara Khambas are those living in Mandara, situated in Chaudhabis-Dara of Tibrikot district. They resemble Dandakhet Khambas in many respects. Both proceed through Surkhet in March or April and reach Mandara, their summer settlement, towards the second week of May. After spending 5 months in Mandara, they again come down to their winter settlement in Surkhet during October. Most of the Mandara Khambas too own small houses in their summer settlements. Some of them live in tents. In Surkhet, they all live in tents.

Unlike Dandakhet Khambas, Mandara Khambas do not employ any Lora to look after their summer settlements. They leave their Jhopa, Juma, Tolbas and other livestock behind at the villages of Matuwali Chhetris in nearly Chaudhabisa-Dara. On their return from Surkhet, they pay remuneration in the form of salt or in cash to Matuwali Chhetris in consideration of their service. They take with them only sheep, goats, horses and some cows. In the second week of September, they sow seed of wheat, Uwa and barley at their summer settlement and then move down-wards. In winter, there is snow-fall, and the entire ground is covered with snow. Because of snow, no cattle belonging to others can damage their winter crops. The Khambas

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return in April to harvest their crops. During their stay in Surkhet, they do not fail to ask any person coming via Mandara about the condition of their village and their crops.

Like Dandakhet Khambas, Mandara Khambas own lands in Surkhet. (About 12 Dandakhamba and Mandara Khamba families have purchased lands in Surkhet). These are all cultivated by Tharus on share-cropping basis. The Tharus pay Sirto on lands in the hill region. Like Dandakhet Khambas, Mandara Khambas started visiting Surkhet Valley to live in tents and graze their horses only after 1966.

In recent years, some Mandara and Dandakhet Khamba families have ceased returning to their summer settlements. They spend the summer in hill areas around Surkhet Valley, such as Gothikada, Ramrikada, Katuka and Jarbutta.

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In addition to conducting trade in wool, salt, rice and other grains, Mandara and Dandakhet Khambas collect or purchase herbs and drugs such as Attis, Katuko and Matte Jadi in hill areas and sell these in Nepalganj or Rajapur. They are also famous for horse-breeding.

Dillikot And Hurikot Khambas

These are the Khambas living at the Dillikot, Chautara, Chaurikot, Hurikot, Kai Gaun, Wallungchaur, Thanke-Tarakot and Ramedanda-Barikot villages situated in the Dillikot-Hurikot area. Unlike the semi-nomadic groups of Dangali, Dandakhet and Mandara Khambas, they have settled down permanently. Some say that Dillikot and Hurikot Khambas too lived a semi-nomadic life until a few years ago. They used to spend the winter season in Gumraghat (situated on the upper reaches of the Bheri river in Jajarkot district) and Dori-Chaur in Baglung district, and the summer season in Dillikot, Hurikot, Chaurikot, Tarakot and Barikot.

Some of them occupied the position of Jimmawal. The majority of these Khambas have now registered their lands, on which they pay taxes. At the same time, they carry on trade during their spare time. They travel to Mugu, Dolpa, Tibrikot, Jajarkot, Rukum, Rolpa and Salyan for the purpose of trade. The Khambas of the Dillikot-Hurikot area say that their forefathers came from Tibet to Mustang 4 or 5 generations ago. They started living in Mustang after the Raja of Mustang conferred Nepali citizenship on them. Until a few years ago, these Khambas used

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to pay a tribute (Serto) of Rs 1.00 per household to the Raja of Mustang. They are said to be still in possession of a copper inscription issued by the Raja of Mustang. They used to visit Mustang via Mukul and Songada. Until a few generations back, they had Tibetan names. But now they use the names common in the Matuwali community. They breed Jhopa, Juma and Tolbai. Some of them are seen to be breeding yaks (Chaunri) at high altitudes.

Social Life

Khambas are adherents of Buddhism. Although nomadic, they have been scrupulously preserving their traditional religion. Mandara and Dandakhet Khambas have small monasteries in Mandara village and the Dandakhet area. In addition, they worship idols and tankas in their homes. They also construct Lakangs (places for storing Buddhist scriptures). While staying in Surkhet and Sapne, they set up small decorated monasteries (gumba) inside their tents. Khambas also visit adjoining Bhote villages on pilgrimage and burn candles at the local monasteries. The Dangali Tharus thus visit the monasteries of Kormi, Muchu, Tumkot and Yangsi in Humla, and the Dandakhet and Mandara Khambas to those in Karan and Mugu-Dara. Khambas periodically invite Trulky (Incarnate Lama) as well as the Lamas of other major monasteries to their summer and winter settlements to perform religious rites. The Khambas of the Dillikot-Hurikot area previously invited Lamas from Tibet for the same purpose. One or two Lamas are believed to exist in every village.

Language

Dangali, Dandakhet, Mandara and Dillikot-Hurikot Khambas speak the Tibetan language. As is the case with the people belonging to different tribes or living in different parts of Tibet, the Khambas speak the Tibetan language in different ways. The variations in the styles used by them are mainly due to geographical differences, different historical backgrounds, and the influence of different communities with whom they have come into contact. Dangali Khambas have maintained close links with the Sat-Thapale, a Bhote community living in north-western Humla. This is the reason why the dialect spoken by Dangali Khambas bears close similarities with that used by the Sat-Thapales. Mandara and Dandakhet Khambas, who are traders, speak a Tibetan dialect similar to that spoken by the Bhotes of Karan-Dara. They also understand the Nepali language.

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Costumes

While living in the summer settlement, some Khamba men, like Bhotes inhabiting the northern Himalayan region, wear long woolen jackets (Bakkhu). However, like the inhabitants of the central hill region, the majority of the Khambas wear Daura-Suruwal, shirt, coat, cap, etc. Mandara and Dandakhet Khamba women wear a costumes similar to those used by the Bhote women of Karan and Mugu-Daras, while Dangali Khamba women wear Saris and blouses, like Bada-Achhame women.

Marriage

Because of geographical distance, Khambas of the above-mentioned categories have not been able to establish matrimonial relations with one another. These Khambas may be divided into 3 endogamous units:-

- (1) Dangali Khamba
- (2) Mandara-Dandakhet Khamba
- (3) Dillikot-Hurikot Khambas

Some Dangali, Mandara and Dandakhet Khambas have established matrimonial relations with one another. However, I have not found a single instance of matrimonial relationship having been established between the Khambas of the Dillikot-Hurikot area and the other Khambas. On the other hand, Dillikot-Hurikot Khambas have recently begun establishing matrimonial and even commensal relations with Matuwali Chhetris. Dangali Khambas have established matrimonial relations with Sat Thapales of the Muchu-Tumkot area. There do not exist other instances of such exogamous matrimonial relations.

Physiognomy

Social customs, culture, language and religion may be concealed and even changed. A situation arises in which one community has to change its traditions, culture, religion, etc. reluctantly under the influence or pressures of another community or religion. In such cases, studies regarding the physiognomy of a community will be of much help in determining its tribal and historical origins. Physiognomy does not change even under the influence of another community or religion.

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There may be changes in biological and ecological conditions, of course. The nature of matrimonial relationship may leave a dangerous effect on the physiognomy of an individual. It is therefore necessary to study the matrimonial system before studying the physiognomy of any community.

As indicated above, Khambas are mostly endogamous. For this reason, this community does not appear to have received the strain of any other race, nor has it given away its racial strain to another. The traits found in this community must be considered to be hereditary. As such, we may classify the Khambas on the basis of their physiognomy.

Khambas have black and coarse hair and their complexion is wheatish. They have tiny greyish eyes. Their eyelids have Mongoloid folds. They have flat noses and little hair on their bodies. They are generally of ordinary height. These are the general features of the physiognomy of Khambas. From the viewpoint of their physical condition, Khambas may be placed in the Tibeto-Mongoloid group of Mongoloid stock. However, Khambas are a little distinct from the other Bhote groups of Tibet and the Humla-Mugu area, who also belong to the Tibeto-Mongoloid group. Several factors may account for such differences. There are no matrimonial relations between Khambas and Bhotas, which has resulted in their isolation from each other. They live within diverse biological or geographical environments. Khambas of different groups do not maintain matrimonial relations with one another. The population of an endogamous unit has shrunk to such an extent that there has been no alternative to inbreeding. There has been a sudden mutation of chromosomes or, genes, and so a process of natural selection. Thus Khambas have undergone a process of micro-evolution distinct from that affecting other Bhote groups. As a result, the physiognomy of Khambas has become different from that of the other Bhote groups.

Economic Condition

Trade, farming and cottage industry may be regarded as the main occupations, and hence the basis of the economic life of Khambas. Trade is their primary occupation. This explains why Khambas occupy the second place after the inhabitants of Humla and Jumla in the field of trade. Dangali Khambas are the best known traders among the Khambas. In the month of April, they leave Yari for Sanpe, carrying foodgrains on the back of sheep, Lukal goats, horses, mules and Khyang Jhopas. The grains include rice, Dagrel (a mixture of rice and paddy), wheat, maize and

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Uwa. The grains are bartered for salt at Yari. In case salt is not available at Yari, the grains are carried to Taklakot, where these are given to Bhotes in exchange for salt. The Khambas then carry the salt to Achham, where they purchase foodgrains on credit and then return to Sanpe. From Sanpe, they again go to Yari and Taklakot in July, carrying fresh supplies of foodgrains. While in Yari and Taklakot, they also conduct transactions in wool, sheep, Chyangra goats, Jhopa, etc. After staying in Yari and Taklakot from July to October, they begin their journey to Sanpe. The salt procured at Yari and Taklakot is sold at Bhote, Thakuri and Thar-Chhetri villages in exchange for grains, which are then stored in Sanpe. The Khambas utilize such supplies for personal consumption also. During the period from November to February, they travel twice between Sanpe and Rajapur, or between Sanpe and Nepalganj, for trade. They buy Indian salt on cash payment at these places. The salt is then carried to Bajura and parts of Doti and as far as Raskot-Dara, the northernmost part of Achham, where it is exchanged for grains. Grains procured in this manner are sold in Taklakot during the next April and May.

The area of commercial operations of Mandara and Dandakhet Khambas is separate from that of Dangali Khambas. Similarly, their seasons and modes of trade transactions are different. In April, they transport grains, specially rice, on sheep, goat, and horse back to their summer settlements. After spending some time in farming, they leave for Pongju¹⁵ in Tibet, situated to the north of Mugu, in the month of July to procure Tibetan salt and some quantity of wool in exchange for wheat, barley and Uwa grown by them in their farm and rice brought from Surkhet. They visit Pongju generally once a year. The other Khambas exchange their grains for salt with the Bhotes of Mugu and Karan-Dara themselves. Salt procured by them in this manner is sold in Jumla and Tibrikot in exchange for grains. Carrying Bhote salt in some quantities, they descend towards Surkhet. The Bhote salt is exchanged for grains in the villages of Jumla, Dullu and Dailekh districts situated on the way to a Surkhet. Bhote salt is more popular in these areas than Indian salt. The Khambas take foodgrains procured in this manner to Surkhet districts.

During their stay in Surkhet, the Khambas visit Nepalganj in December or January to buy Indian salt. They carry sheep and goats with them. Herds of these animals are called Patha. Salt bought in Nepalganj is brought to Surkhet Valley, where

it is exchanged for foodgrains such as rice, maize and buckwheat. If the transactions prove profitable, the Khambas visit Nepalganj in February too. Indian salt procured during this month is sold in Surkhet Valley, Dullu and Dailekh in exchange for foodgrains. Foodgrains bought in this manner are taken to the hill areas, and from there to Tibet the next year.

Khamba women make Liu (carpets) from the wool of Chhyanglu sheep, Pheruwa, blankets, etc. The handlooms used by them are similar to those used in Humla. These have to be operated in a sitting position. Similarly, the Khamba women of Mandara and Dandakhet make Liu, Dana (small carpet), etc with looms similar to those used in Humla. They also manufacture other cloths with a different type of loom erected on the ground.

Conclusion

The Khambas are thus a small semi-nomadic tribe scattered in such large geographical areas as the Karnali, Seti, Bheri and Rapti zones. Their ethnic similarities with the Bhotes of the northern Himalayan areas of these zones help us to trace the common history of these two communities. Bhotes have already settled down permanently. The Khambas of the Dillikot-Hurikot area too have permanently settled down there after having registered lands in their names. The Khambas of Mandara and Dandakhet have purchased lands in Surkhet and cultivated lands and built houses in the hill areas as well. Only a few Dangali Khambas appear to be interested in settling down permanently. Most of them do not own any land, nor do they ever engage in agriculture.

A study of the migration pattern of the Khambas would show that the Bhotes were the first to migrate to Nepal and lead a nomadic life. They wandered about in the northern Himalayan and central hill areas for trade, and later settled down permanently in this country. Khambas came to Nepal only after the Bhotes. Some of them have now settled down, while some are still leading a semi-nomadic life. The Khambas have thus passed the nomadic stage and entered into the semi-nomadic stage. This is the history of the Khambas. In course of time, they too will definitely settle down permanently. It is now our duty to help them in settling down permanently and preserving their cultural traditions.

Notes

1. Raute is a nomadic tribe. Members of this tribe completes a tour of Salyan, Rolpa, Rukum, Tibrikot, Jumla, Mugu, Humla, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Doti, Achham, Bajura, Bajhang, Baitadi and Darchula districts situated in western Nepal once every 12 years. They never go down to the Tarai or the inner Tarai. Now-a-days, however, Rautes have started visiting Surkhet and Dang. There is no specific area where they can settle down permanently. They encamp in forest areas, resting inside temporary huts made of thick grass. Such huts, which are called Raute, are erected near areas where water is available. They fell timber of the Dar, Khasru, Thingu, Bhunj and other varieties, and make utensils, cots, tables, chairs, etc. They sell these goods for cash or in exchange for foodgrains. They have a dialect of their own, called Raute. Rautes form a very tiny minority in Nepal. Their total number is estimated at 150.
2. Kusunda too is a nomadic tribe. They used to wear clothes made from fibers of Alto, Sisnu or Bhangra grass, and move about in the forests carrying bows and arrows. Villagers call them Banaraja (King of the forest). They have a dialect of their own, called Kusunda. They have started settling down permanently. Rautes are said to have once regarded Kusundas as their Kings.
3. Byansi is another semi-nomadic tribe inhabiting Darchula in Nepal and Darchula in Uttar Pradesh (India). Their main occupation is trade. In western Nepal, they rank first among those engaged in trade. Some of them are also engaged in agriculture. They procure salt and wool from Tibet on mule, horse and sheep back, and bring cloth, rice and other foodgrains from the Tarai areas of Nepal as well as from India. The commodities bought in the Tarai and India are transported to Tibet. Tingar and Chyang are the summer settlements of the Byansis of Nepal. During winter they stay in the vicinity of Darchula Bazaar, which they call Tallo-Tingar and Tallo-Chhyangru. Byansis are also called Sanyas because they can speak in the Nepali and Tibet languages in addition to their own dialects.
4. Causes And Impacts Of Migration: Preliminary Survey In Surkhet Region. CEDA. Kathmandu: Zurich, March 1973, p. 4.
5. Since the Nepal-Tibet war of 1854, and particularly after the emergence of the Panchayat system, the Bhotes of Humla and Mugu have been officially called Tamangs in order to distinguish them from other Bhotes living in Tibet. However, Hindus inhabiting these areas still call them Bhote or Jad. In fact, they are not known to have any historical, linguistic or other link with the Tamangs of central Nepal. The Tamangs of central

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Nepal were also once called Bhotes. Ta means horse and Mang' seller. In fact, these people sell horses and are therefore called Tamangs. (Dor Bahadur Bisht, People of Nepal, Department of Publicity, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, 1967, p. 48.

6. Rahul Sankrityayan, Kinnar Desh, 1948, pp. 33-34.
7. Matuwali Chhetris refer to the Chhetris of western Nepal who do not wear the sacred thread and take liquor. Unlike sacred-thread wearing Chhetris, Matuwali Chhetris have a Mongoloid physiognomy. Their social customs and usages shows that they are the descendants of the ancient Khasa.
8. Dor Bahadur Bisht, op. cit., p. 124.
9. B.H. Hodgson, Miscellaneous Essays Relating To Indian Subjects, London, 1880; S.K. Chatterjee, Kirat Janakriti, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1951, pp. 60-61.
10. Blanket made of Ronglu wool, which is sewn with a white cloth inside.
11. A shawl made of goat wool.
12. Jhopa is a cross-breed of yak (Chaurigai) and Tibetan bull (L).
13. Tolba means a cross-breed of female Jhopa (Juma) and Lulu or ordinary bull.
14. In the Mugu area, Syakcha is called Syakta.
15. Pongju has developed into a trade center only in recent years. Before the entry of the Chinese into Tibet, transactions in salt and foodgrains were conducted at Cheptu, which is reached from Mugu village after a 3 day's journey along with sheep. There have been stories of many people and sheep having died of altitude sickness while proceeding to Pongju. It is believed there exists a grass on the way, whose smell causes headache and vomiting. The trade centers of Pongju and Cheptu were closed for some years after the entry of the Chinese into Tibet. The Khambas and other inhabitants of Mugu had then to travel to Taklakot which can be reached from Mugu after 22 days' travel with sheep.

(S.B. Maharjan).