

THE KING, THE DRONGO AND GOMA

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The first time I went to Philippe Sagant's course on Nepalese civilisation at Langues Orientales, he brought Tarap and brandished it in front of us, saying, "You may want to look at picture-books on Nepal. If so, I suggest you choose a book like this, because such anthropologists love the people they photograph". This rather unexpected definition of the anthropologist impressed me and suits, I think rather well, Corneille Jest. Furthermore, in my case, it was a confirmation of what I confusedly felt when, still younger, I chose to study Nepal, after reading *Communautés de langues tibétaines du Népal*. It is always difficult to later determine the reasons for such immature decisions, but it is certain that Corneille's photographs had something to do with it. The magic of his pictures probably stems partly from the people and places he captured on film, their mixture of extreme poverty and splendour. But the photographer plays his role in this magic: if beautiful, his pictures are not aesthetic but narrative. They are real "invitations au voyage".

This first impulse in the orientation of my work was followed by constant help from Corneille who see-

paid particularly close attention to children, their games and their stories. In my view, children are the best informants, because like anthropologists, they have to understand what is going on around them. This is why I have chosen to here dedicate a portrait of Goma, who sat on my lap during a good part of my stay in Darling, along with a story that made her laugh and which was intended to go to France. It was recounted by Radha Devi Lalsing (Darling, Gulmi District).

"The Drongo bird

Once upon a time there was a Drongo bird who went to the garden of the king. As he went, he found there an iron piece of a sickle. So he went to the king's palace, in the courtyard, and said 'my rice is bigger than the king's!' The king felt angry: 'Oh oh, his iron rice is bigger than mine, let's kill him', and so saying decided to kill him and eat his meat. Thus went the soldiers who killed the bird. Having killed him and brought him back, what did he say when he was cut (in pieces), even cut, what did he say? 'The king is one, I am numerous'. And the king said, 'Cook it quickly, I'll eat him'. So he was prepared to be cooked. The spices once ground, he was covered with turmeric to be fried. But while he was covered with turmeric, what did he say? 'The king is brownish, I am golden'. The king said, 'It won't be fine until I have eaten him' and ate the bird. After he was



med to have attained a kind of anthropological Boddhhood, leading him to offer, especially to beginners, methodological advice, critical readings, translations from German and even precious fieldwork data. I myself particularly abused such generosity and must say that all my writings benefited from Corneille's information, reading, and criticism.

Long before becoming a grand-father, Corneille Jest

eaten, he still spoke from the belly, 'The king is outside, I am inside'. And the king said to his soldiers, 'I am going to shit, you will stay around my ass holding your kukhuri knives'. The king sat to shit. The Drongo bird went out and flew away while the soldiers cut the ass of the king. Then he went on a tree and said, 'the king's ass is cut, and what did you cut of myself?!'

A golden necklace to the listeners, a flower necklace to the teller, may this tale go to France!"

Cibe cārā

Euṭā cibe cārā rahecha re. Tyo cibe cārā rājāko phūlbārimā gaecha. Jāndākherī rājāko phūlbārimā, hāsiyāko ṭukrā bhetāecha. Bhetāundākherī rājāko darbārmā gaecha, aganmā gaecha : “rājāko dhanbhanda mero dhan ṭhūlo” bhanecha ra. Rājālāi rīs uṭhyo. “Au, au nī, mero dhan bhanda yasko dhan phalāmko ṭukrā ṭhūlo bhayo, yeslai mārō, yeslāi mārera yasko māsu khānchu” bhanecha re. Ab sipāhīharu gaera yeslāi mārechan. Mārera lāera, kāṭdākherī ke bhanyo re, kāṭepāni ke bhanyo re : “Rājā cuṭā, ma mastai”, bhanecha. “Yeslai chito pākāidiyo, ma khānchu” bhanyo rājāle. Ab pākāuna lāgyo. Masālā pīsera hālera, besār hālera buṭna lāgyo. Besār hāldākherī ke bhanyo re : “rājā phurso ma pahēlo” bhanera. “Yeslāi nakhāe hunna, chitei khānu pārne ho” rājāle bhanyo. Khāecha re. Khāndākherī petbhitra paṇi bolyo re “rājā bāhira ma bhitra” bhanyo re. Rājā bāhira ma bhitra bhandākherī sipāhīharulāi bhanyo re : “ma ta basnu hagna, timīharu kukhurī samātera mero cākko varīparī basnuparcha”, āphu hagna basyo. Cibe cārājhai niskiera bāgyo, rājāko cāk kāṭdiyo sipāhīharule. Ab u yesto buṭṭāmā gāera ke bhanyo tyasle : “rājāko cāk kāṭyo mero ke chatyo”, bhana bhanthiyo re.

Sunnelāi sunko mālā, bhannelāi phūlko mālā, yo satar Phransmā jālā”