

EARLY TRAVELS & EXPLORATIONS IN MUSTANG (A Hundred Years since 1865)

To the best of our knowledge, there are no record of foreigners on Mustang before 1864. In the summer of 1865, one of the first pundit Mani Singh traveled the lower part of Mustang via Muktinath and Kagbeni on his return journey to Pithoragar from Kathmandu. But the Survey of India did not disclose his detailed report, only but a list of itinerary.

In 1873, another pundit Hari Ram was sent to Tibet through Western Nepal with the secret mission of surveying the area en route. Having started from Pithoragar toward east on 1st July, he arrived at Tradom of the Tsanpo River in Tibet on 23rd Sept. passing through Jumla, Chharka, Kagbeni, Muktinath and Lo Manthang. He returned to Kagbeni by the same way along Kali Gandaki River. From Kagbeni, he changed the route southward and returned directly to India along the river. His precise report on the route survey was fully compiled and opened to the public. (*"Extracts from an Explorer's Narrative of his Journey from Pithoragar, in Kumaon Territory. Communicated by Lt. Colonel T.G. Montgomery of the Survey of India". Journal of the R.G.S. vol.45, 1875.*)

In 1899, a Japanese monk, Ekai Kawaguchi, entered into Mustang on his way to Tibet through Nepal. After he stayed at Tukche, Marpha and Chharang for nearly a year to study Tibetan language and local sect of Tibetan Buddhism. During his stay in Mustang, he secretly sought for the way to smuggle himself into Tibet, and ultimately succeeded in entering into Tibet over a high pass in Dolpo on 4th July of 1900. The story of his living with local Tibetans at Chharang and the nature and landscape along the route were narrated in his famous book "Three years in Tibet" which attracted and interested us a great deal. He was the first foreigner having ever entered to the region and the first Japanese too having entered into the Kingdom of Nepal, both of which were closing the door to foreigners at the time. (*"Three years in Tibet". Madras 1909.*)

Next to Kawaguchi, Swedish explorer Sven Hedin entered to the northern part of Mustang in 1907. On his famous third Tibetan exploration searching for the Transhimalaya and the source of Tsampo River, he entered to the upper part of Mustang from the north crossing over Kore-La on the Nepalese border in June 1907. His skillful sketches and some of the photographs of Mustang can be find in his voluminous reports on the expeditions and others. (*"Southern Tibet" vol. 2. "Maps vol.1-2". and "Atlas of Tibetan Panorama". Stockholm, 1916-22. "Trans-Himalaya. Discoveries and Adventures in Tibet " vol.2. London 1909).*

In 1944, an Austrian climber Hans Kopp passed through Mustang on his way to Kathmandu after he had a narrow escape from an internment camp at Dehra Dun in British India together with H. Harrer and P. Aufschnaiter. Parting from above two comrades at Tradum in Tibet, he alone chose the way to Kathmandu through Mustang in Nov. 1944. (*"Himalaya Shuttlecock" translated from the German by H.C. Stevens. London, 1957.)*

Since then till the opening of Nepal in 1949, no foreigners entered to Mustang. The well-known British explorer and mountaineer, H.W. Tilman visited Annapurna Himal in 1950, and after the failure in climbing Annapurna 4, he made a circuit trip with an objective to explore the mountains along the route from Nar (Phu) and Mustang (Damodar). He crossed over a high pass in Damodar Himal (he named it Mustang La, now Tery Bhanjyang) to Muktinath via GnyuLa, and crossing a pass (now Thoron Bhanjyang), he returned to Manang village. (*"Nepal Himalaya". Cambridge 1952).*

In 1952, Swiss Geologist Toni Hagen entered to Lo Manthang for the first time after the opening Nepal. He came to Nepal in 1950 as a member of the Swiss Mission to Nepal for the geological field researches. During the period from 1950 to 1959, he devoted himself to extensive travels to the most parts of Nepal Himalaya. In some of his geological reports, we shall find his special interest in the geology of Thakkhola & Mustang. From 1959, the door into Mustang was again closed to foreigners. His

abundant knowledge of the land and profound understanding to the people of Nepal, which he had accumulated during his remarkable field works for the first decade after the opening of the country, gave an invaluable suggestion to the development of Nepal afterwards. (*"Uber die raumliche Verteilung der Intrusionen im Nepal Himalaya."* Zurich, 1954. *"Uber den geologischen Bau des Nepal Himalaya."* St.Gallen 1959. *"Geologie des Thakkhola (Nepal)."* Basel, 1959. *"Nepal. The kingdom in the Himalayas."* translated from German by B.M. Charleston. Bern, 1960. *"Report on the Geological Survey of Nepal. Vol.1-2. Denkschriften der Schweizerischen Naturforschenden Gesellschaft.Band 86."* Zurich, 1968-9.)

On and after 1950 to the first half of 1960's, so many mountaineering expeditions visited Dhaulagiri and Annapurna massifs. Most of the access routes to their mountains were not through the southern gate of Mustang, namely Kagbeni. Therefore no reference is made to most of them in the brief chronicle described below, except for a couple of climbing expeditions that entered into the areas to the north of Kagbeni or the eastern part of Mustang that include Bhrikti Himal and Damodar Himal. Several personal travels or expeditions of scholars who went up along the Kali Gandaki in the upper or lower Mustang are taken up in the chronicle.

1952. Italian authoritative Tibetologist, Giuseppe Tucci made his first journey in Nepal for scholarly researches along Kali Gandaki river to Lo Manthang in 1952. Two years later, in 1954, he returned to Nepal for investigation of the ruins of Malla dynasty near Jumla. (*"Journey to Mustang in 1952"*. Translated from Italian by Diana Fussel. Kathmandu, 1977. *"Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal. Series Orientale Roma. Vol.10. Materials for the study of Nepalese history and culture. No.1"*. Roma. 1956.

1953. Herbert Tichy, Austrian Journalist and climber, made a great journey traversing the whole of the western Nepal to the westernmost border, Tanakpur from Kathmandu in 1953. During his long and capricious journey, he visited Mustang. He climbed a peak in the western outskirts of Lo Manthang and named the peak "Dong Mar" (means Red Head in Tibetan). (*"Land der namenlosen berge. Erst Durchquerung Westnepals"*, Wien, 1954.)
1953. J.Kawakita & S. Nakao, scholarly members of Japanese Manaslu Expedition in 1953, followed Ekai Kawaguchi's route in 1900 for their scholarly investigations to Tuje La on the mountain divide between Mustang and Thorbo. (*H.Kihara ed. Fauna and Flora, Land and Corps, Peoples, of Nepal Himalaya. Vol.1,2,3. Kyoto, 1955, 56,57.*)
1955. Heins Steinmez and others, German expedition of four members worked extensively in Annapurna and Damodar Himal in Mustang. They completed the first ascent of 11 peaks in the areas including Annapurna 4 and Kang Guru. (*"Nepal; ein Sommer am Rande der Welt." Stuttgart 1956. "Vier im Himalaya. Erlebnisbericht der deutschen Nepal-Expedition 1955," Stuttgart, 1957.*)
1956. David L. Snellgrove, a British Tibetologist, widely traveled in 1956 through the Inner Himalayan district from Dolpo to Tsum of the upper Buri Gandaki areas via Mustang, Thak(Lower KaliGandaki), Nyeshan (Upper Marshandi), Nar(Phu), Gyasumdo(upper Marshandi), Nup-ri and Kutang (North of Manaslu). In Thak and Mustang, he visited most of the temples and monasteries along Kali Gandaki for his study on the Tibetan Buddhism,with the limits of Chharang. (*"Himalayan Pilgrimage. A study of Tibetan religion by a traveler through western Nepal". Oxford, 1961.*)

- 1958 J.Kawakita and others made the first ethnological researches in Thorbo(Dolpo), including Thakali peoples of Thakkhola. (*"The Land of Birds- Funeral. Exploration in the Secret Himalaya"* text in Japanese. Tokyo, 1960. And many other books and articles.)
1962. An authority on Asian anthropology, Christoph von Furer-Heimendolf entered to lower Mustang. He stayed at Tukche village for nearly a year studying the culture and customs of the Thakali people. 14 years later he also visited Lo Manthang in 1976. (*"Exploratory Travels in High Land of Nepal."* New Delhi, 1989. *"Himalayan Traders. Life in Highland Nepal"* London, 1975.)
1963. Gerhart Fuchs, Austrian geologist entered to Thakkhola area in 1963, as a member of Austrian Expedition to Dhaulagiri. He made geological exploration in Lower Kaligandaki and southern Dolpo. (*"Zum Bau des Himalaya."* Wien. 1967). In 1967, he also organized the Austrian Geological Himalayan Expedition and entered into the same areas together with Wolfgang Frank. (*G.Fuchs; collaborated with W. Frank: "The Geology of West Nepal between the Rivers Kali Gandaki and Thuro Beri."* Jahrbuch der Geologischen Bundesanstalt Sonderband 18. Wien 1970)
1963. Peter Aufschnaiter was a well-known mountain climber and explorer. He was arrested on his return way from Nanga Parbat in 1939, when the 2nd World War broke out. In 1944, he escaped from British internment camp in Dehra Dun and made the famous long fugitive journey to Lhasa with H. Harrer. After the end of the war, he visited the mountains in Nepal Himalaya many times; Langtang, Solu Khumbu and etc. In 1963, He visited Mustang to explore the unknown area too and surveyed peaks that surround Lo Manthang. Also he visited

Chudzong and Luri Gompas during the trip in Mustang as probably the first foreigner. (*"Peter Aufschneider, sein leben in Tibet, Bearbeitung, Zusammenstellung und Herausgabe Martin Brauen"*, Innsbruck. 1983.)

1964. Michel Peissel, French writer, stayed in Kathmandu in 1959 and wrote a book on Boris Lissanovich as "Tiger for Breakfast". In 1964, he made the journey to Mustang in the spring of 1964 and stayed two and a half month there. He wrote an article on his journey and reported the discovery of local historical book, "Molla" of the kingdom: genealogy of kings of Mustang from Ame Pal in the early 15th century to the present king. (*"Mustang, Remote Realm in Nepal."* *National Geographic Magazine*, vol. 128, 1965.)

During his journey, he encountered Khamba soldiers at Samar, where they had influenced power at that time. On the way back, he visited Luri Gompa east of Kali Gandaki. He published more detailed travelogue in 1967 which was translated in several languages in Europe and gained the public fame. (*"Mustang. the Forbidden Kingdom. Exploring a lost Himalayan Land "* *New York, 1967.*)

Regarding the raise and suppression of Khamba in 1960's in Mustang, he published another book. (*"Cavalier of Kham. The Secret War in Tibet". London 1972.*)

1964. Kazuhiro Itoh, Japanese botanist, made his research for medical plants and came to Lo Manthang as an adviser to the Dept. of Medical Plants, Ministry of Agriculture of Nepal. In 1963, he had made a long and extensive researches in Mid Western and Far Western of Nepal. In 27th of July in 1964, he arrived at Lo Manthang and spent a few days for investigation in the villages near Lo Manthang. He returned to Kagbeni on 2nd of August. On his way to Lo Mustang, he happened to see Peter

Aufschnaiter near Birethanti who hurried down to Pokhara. Also he often encountered many Khamba troops along the route in Mustang. (*"Nepal. Its nature, people and Religion" text in Japanese. Tokyo, 1979.*)