A SPECIMEN OF THE KUMAUNI LANGUAGE.
(Extracts from the Compositions of Kyishnà Pándé.)
(Translated by Ganga Datt Upreti.
Communicated by G. A. Grierson.)

Introductory Note by G. A. Grierson.

The three great administrators of Kumaun were Mr. Traill (1815-1835), Mr. Batten (1848-1856) and Captain (afterwards Major-General, Sir Henry) Ramsay, all of whom are remembered with affection by their fellow-countrymen. After the conquest of Kumaun by the English, there were several short settlements of the land-tenures, the first being in 1815-16, the second in 1817, and the third (for three years) in 1818. Kyishnà Pándé, the author of the following verses, was a contemporary of Mr. Traill, and shared with his fellow-countrymen of those days a strong dissatisfaction at the new English régime. In some of his poems he fiercely attacked the new rulers and Mr. Traill, the first chief of the district. Mr. Traill, nevertheless, patronized him and, it is said, used to go unattended to the village assemblies and hear the songs sung in his presence. Kyishnà Pándé's more political songs are not here printed. What are now given, are his verses lamenting the condition of his country, and attributing its state to the evil influences of the Kali Yuga, or Iron Age. They have been collected by Pandit Ganga Datt Upreti, and are published with his introduction and translations as taken down by him from the lips of villagers of the present day. A few notes on the grammar of the Kumauni language have been added by me and are enclosed in square brackets. Another poem by the same author will be found in J. R. A. S. for 1901, p. 475 ff.

Introduction by Pandit Ganga Datt Upreti.

A few verses of the poem of Kyishnà Pándé, resident of village Patiyá, Mallá Súnará, Killaíi Almora, in the hill dialect known as Kumaun, have been collected by me from the lips of people, owing to my having been unable to obtain them from his descendants or the members of his family. The poet is said to have died some sixty years ago, but there are many people who still remember some fragments of his poem. When a boy, I saw him singing his Pahári Songs (Baidás and Bhagmayás) and these verses of his at fairs, in the company of hundreds of villagers. The villagers were very fond of him, and crowded round him wherever he went, owing to his being very dexterous and well-versed in extemporising new Pahári songs of various sorts and descriptions. It is a pity that we cannot get them now from his family. He was a good Sanskrit scholar of his time, and was also of a very frolicsome disposition. He used to dance with the villagers to the beat of drums, sometimes beating drums himself, a conduct which did not behove a person of the Bráhma caste. I believe his talents, songs, and conduct were not unknown to the British officers of that time. In reality he did not seem to have ever intended his verses for sedition or dissatisfaction against Government, but sang them satirically to make his audience laugh. All his predictions are based on those in the Hindú Scriptures in regard to the whole world, and he translated them rhetorically into attractive Pahári verses referring to the state of Kumaun only, to please the illiterate people of these hills.

1. Múlakíma kari kali súga iti.  
Párr kuádzi báanch ber ² hástha lêkha ¥¥ I ² I ²

O my countrymen, see the approach of the Kali Yuga. Sell off your houses and land. Write out deeds of relinquishment (and leave the country).

1 Bér is the suffix of the conjunctive participle. Ëuchi-bér = báeñ-karlé.
2.

(The fertility of the soil is decreasing day by day).

\[ गुलक कुमारी ने बड़ी नारी चैन। \]
\[ नौ नालिक बेर छई नाली नैन। \]

There are a good many agricultural operations going on in the land of Kumaun, the result of which is that if nine nālis (18 seers) are sown, the yield is but six nālis (12 seers).

3.

(Interest on a loan of grain, paid in kind, is exorbitant. The principal is increased at compound interest, by a third every year, so that after a few years a loan of a small amount of grain becomes an amount large enough to purchase a girl for marriage.)

\[ दो नालिक धान ने स्वारी ब्रैह्मण। \]
\[ एक नालिक मुखर ने स्वारी ब्रैह्मण। \]

Two-half seers of paddy procure a (high-caste) Dhanuli, and a single half-seer of millet gets a (low-caste) Manuli.

[Dhanuli and Manuli are the names of castes. The former is high-caste, while a Manuli is a girl of the Dūm caste.]

4.

(The wretched poverty of the Brāhmaṇa caste, of which the poet was a member.)

\[ ब्राह्मण बारी को धो बड़ी सान। \]
\[ मुखर मानिर विन बर घर चान। \]

The mighty knowledge of my friends, the Brāhmaṇas, has come to this, that they are begging and seeking for millet (a coarse and cheap grain) from every house.

5.

(The poet refers to the present bad times. The most unnatural and impossible things are taking place.)

\[ तल घर किमस्था को बड़ा बिनार। \]
\[ मला घर गोविन्द को बड़े लालिन धार। \]

In the lower house the bullock of my elder brother Khimā has become pregnant, and in the same way, in the upper house, the wife of my elder brother Gōpī has flown away to the mountain-ridge.

6.

(The poverty of the people is due to their sins.)

\[ गुलक कुमारी ने बड़ी नारी चैन। \]
\[ घर कुरुड़ बेंच बेर इटान छाप। \]

There is much sin in the land of Kumaun, in consequence of which everyone has to sell his house and land on stamped paper.

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1 Bhāin is 3rd plur. masc. past of hānd.
2 Aī-chh = āit-hai.
3 Chān=āeñhit hoī.
7. (Indifference of people towards God and religion).

किस्मत पूर्ण व्यसु कौलेखणों की जान।
हर नाम लीक्या जो नै रूपनि कांस। ॥ ॥

It is the duty of Krishnā Pāṇḍe to write down (exhortations), but no one cares to take the name of God.

8. (The neglect of religion, virtue, and honesty, these being superseded by belief in the great shrines of Badarinātha and Kēdāranātha.)

ब्रह्म केशर ब्रह्म नया ॥ धाम ॥
भगे कामे किन के न्याति 'काम' ॥ ॥

Badarinātha and Kēdāranātha are (supposed to be) great shrines, but no one has any notion of virtuous deeds.

9. ब्रह्म केशर ही जना ॥ धाम।
कलि लुग जे गोरी ॥ के न्याति जान ॥ ॥

Badarinātha and Kēdāranātha are two (famous) shrines, but no one knows that the Kali Yuga has come.

10. (The selfishness of bad people.)

पातर नौक जी बड़ि भारि जान।
पर कति कम वर सुख गि द्वाल ॥ ॥

My elder brother’s friend, the harlot, has great cleverness. She robs a man of his house and chattels, and then does not speak to him (i.e., becomes cool and indifferent).

11. (The perversity of the times.)

मुज़क़ कुमारौं ने कुयां ॥ बासी।
वङे कन हे-नबो खान की खासी ॥ ॥

The cuckoo sang in the land of Kumaun, and the husband has become a nuisance to his wife.

12. (The world is topsy-turvy, and there is no respect for elders.)

हालिया बारे कलिया बालो।
कायो का हार ले बान मार खालो ॥ ॥

My jolly friends, the father will be beaten by his own son when the Kali Yuga comes.

13. (Family dissensions.)

भाई जिसारे पर पर मार।
इलाक़ कुमारौं ने पर्दा गोबो छार। ॥ ॥

Brothers and kinsmen assault each other in every house. Ashes and dust are cast upon the land of Kumaun.

6 Phām = fahm.
6 Bhāya = hūd. Nāhi is the negative verb, substantive, ‘is not.’
7 Chān = hān.
8 At gā-chn = a gāya-hān.
9 Kā = kīst kād. Eulōn = bulōn-hān.
10 The kāpūr is a kind of pigeon. It is an omen of evil to hear its song.
11 Hauē seems to be a corruption of hawātih. Ād and kharī are futures, equivalent to Hindi āsād and khādā.
14.

भाड़ विराहर पर घर मार।
भव्याक्षर ली बेर उत्ते लागि पार। || १४ ||

Brothers and kinsmen assault each other in every house. The wife has flown away to the mountain top, taking the iron pot (the only cooking-vessel of the family) with her.

15.

( Ruinous extravagance in dress.)

बिनैक यक्षा का बाहुआ कोट।
पीछे कारी बेर ख़ुदः चोट। || १५ ||

People get their coats made of English cloth, and thus they incur debts and lose their houses and lands.

16.

(Ingratitude for what is now done with toil and expense, contrasted with the simplicity of former times.)

सौभाग्या जै बेर प्रायः चरों।
थारारे दी बेर ख़े न्याति सुपुरा। || १६ ||

The salt is brought all the way from the snowy hills (i.e., Tibet), and the wife is not grateful for the skirt given to her (by her husband, though it cost him a good deal).

17.

कलिति लोगो कोट हु सुपुरा।
थारारे दी बेर ख़े न्याति सुपुरा। || १७ ||

My countrymen, listen to the effects of the Kali Yuga. The wife is not grateful for the skirt given to her.

18.

कलिति बारी कोट हु सुपुरा।
रसा बेर दी बेर ख़े न्याति सुपुरा। || १८ ||

My jolly friends listen to the effects of the Kali Yuga. The wife is not grateful for the food and clothing given to her.

19.

(Village officials neglect their duties.)

एक गाँव का नौ दिव्या पधान।
पाँच वेजामों की न्याति फाम। || १९ ||

There were nine head-men for a single village. The village has become barren, and no one beeds it.

20.

बेकः बेक में नौ नौ पधान।
घाटु बाहुआ कि बा न्याति फाम। || २० ||

There are nine head-men in each village, and no one takes care for building cowsbeds.

15 Jai-bær=ja-karkh. 16 Ay-thi=ay-hat. 18 Chhiya=thd. It is masc. plur. of chhiyā.
21.

The Ganges can be crossed with the help of gourds (used as floats for crossing narrow streams), and brothers and kinsmen assault each other in every house.

22.

Brothers and kinsmen assault each other in every house, and the wife has separated herself from her husband.

23.

Religion and virtuous acts are buried in ashes, and, for want of kauri and jhungurd (two coarse grains) the wife has flown away to the mountain top.

24.

Krishna Pancha has disclosed the effects of the Kali Yuga, and warned the people against them, the land of Kumaun will be reduced to a skeleton.

25.

(Exhortation to the people to become devotees.)

O my countrymen, remember the name of God. Sell your wives and children by means of giving a stamped document (and give up all desire for worldly prosperity).

26.

O my brother’s wife, repeat the name of God for a few days (while we are in this world). The name of God will help us in our next lives.

27.

O my countrymen, take the name of God. Krishna Pancha has warned you against the effects of Kali Yuga.

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16 Khasam-hai = khasam et.
17 Hati gê-chh = hê gal hai.
18 Khôlô = khôlô, but kôlô = kôlôd.
19 Kauri = kauri, but kuri = kuriyô.
20 Pancha = pancha.
21 Lô is the postposition of the agent case = nô.