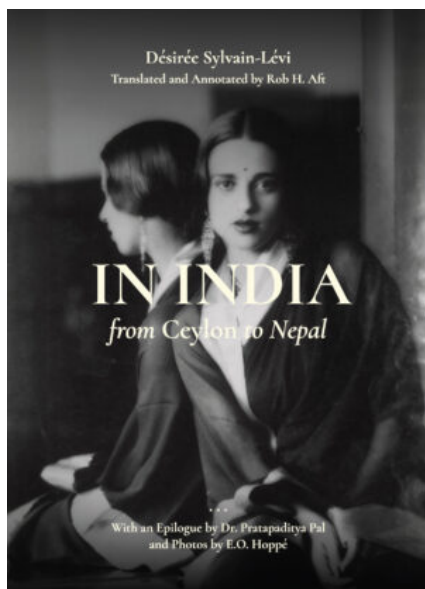


In India: From Ceylon to Nepal | Désirée Sylvain-Lévi | Translated and Annotated by Rob H. Aft | Epilogue by Dr. Pratapaditya Pal



Author: Désirée Sylvain-Lévi

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About the Book

Désirée Lévi's intelligent and passionate description of her 1921-1922 journeys, *DANS L'INDE: DE CEYLAN AU NEPAL*, was first published in Paris a century ago and appears here for the first time in English translation.

Madame Lévi's honest, unvarnished prose paints a vivid, detailed picture of India's cultural, political, and social life at a crucial moment in the struggle for independence and recognition. She had a front-row seat to Gandhi's anti-colonial efforts, visited Hindus, Jains, Parsees and Sikhs in their homes and temples, and socialized with the common men and women too often ignored by Europeans of the period. Thanks to her husband, Sylvain Lévi, a renowned Sanskrit scholar and author of a monumental history of Nepal, she gains access to aspects of life in India and Nepal that otherwise would have eluded her. Their four months as humble visiting professors at Santiniketan, Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's sprawling campus at the epicenter of the Bengali Renaissance, gave her access to India's intellectual, cultural, and political elites. A completely different experience awaited them in Nepal, where, after a harrowing trek over the Himalayas, they enjoyed four months of luxury and scholarly work in Kathmandu as guests of the royal family. Short visits to Sri Lanka and intrepid journeys across India and Nepal in every conveyance known to man completed their year-long odyssey she faithfully recorded in this book.

Illustrated with period photos by E.O. Hoppé, and enhanced by Pratapaditya Pal's valuable observations, Désirée's great-great-grandson, Pascal Fuchshuber's family insights, and extensive notes by the translator, *IN INDIA: FROM SRI LANKA TO NEPAL* is an important contribution to the scholarship and understanding of India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka of a century ago.

About the Author

Désirée Lévi (1867-1943) did not set out to be an adventurer, anthropologist, sociologist, political scientist, or author, but she became all of those. Born Désirée Bloch to a Jewish family in Paris in 1867, she married M. Sylvain Lévi, a renowned Sanskrit scholar and historian of Nepal. Her narrative of their adventures in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka in 1921-1922 was published in 1925 as *DANS L'INDE DE CEYLAN AU NEPAL*. It was her only book, and stands as a monument to her intelligence, humanity, and the beauty of her writing.

About the Translator

Rob Aft worked as a literary translator in Paris in the 1980s and continues to produce translations in a variety of genres including film scripts and recently a graphic novel (manga) for Tokyo Pop. He chaired the Southern Asian Art Council at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and works with many arts groups in both Los Angeles and Southern Vermont.

About the Contributors

Dr. Pratapaditya Pal is a leading Indian art historian and author of many books including the complete catalogs for the Indian and Himalayan collections at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art where he spent 25 years as curator.

Dr. Pascal R. Fuchshuber MD is a thoracic surgeon in Antioch, California and the great-great-grandson of Désirée and Sylvain Lévi. He grew up in Europe hearing family stories and legends of his famous forebears that he shares in his chapter on Lévi family lore.

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