



Mrs. Naik Komisheva, the Tibetan, Who Found the Petticoat Government of Her Native Land Intolerable, and Who Is Now Leading a Movement for Freeing the Enslaved Men.

Where Suffragettes Have Everything Their Hearts Desire

Mrs. Naik Komisheva, from Tibet, Asia, Explains How Women Have Ruled the Men for 600 Years, Do All the Proposing, and Send Their Husbands to Monasteries Whenever They Tire of Them



"If a man tires of sharing his married life with several husbands his one refuge is the priesthood, where he can dress like this to drive away evil spirits."

AN amazing account of conditions in Tibet, the mysterious land, which for centuries has kept its doors closed to the rest of the world, is given on this page by Mrs. Naik Komisheva, the first native Tibetan woman to visit America. Women have enjoyed political and social supremacy in Tibet for nearly 700 years. Polyandry is only one of the surprising results which have followed their control of affairs, and it was because Mrs. Komisheva found herself unable to conform to this custom by having more than one husband that she fled from her native land and became an active anti-suffragette. She presents here her reasons for believing that Tibet would be better off if her own sex were not the masters of the men.

By NAIK KOMISHEVA,
The First Native Tibetan Woman to Visit America.

WHILE in Tibet woman suffrage is an antiquated story, I find it here an exciting novelty of the day. Our women have not only enjoyed political equality, but supremacy for seven hundred years, and for about the same length of time we have had a feminist tyranny in its last word.

Nu Kuo State, in Eastern Tibet, has always been the backbone of all our feminist fads. There a man can never be a ruler, a judge or a general of the army. In some of our western States men have only recently been made the nominal administrators, but in reality women are the power behind the curtains. I find that your American women are demanding only equality in political affairs. Thus did the women of Tibet in 1286, nearly 700 years ago. As our women did, thus yours will soon demand the supremacy. And they will get it, too. In our country a woman is the master of everything. She is not only the head of the family, but the head of every more or less conspicuous social institution. She commands the man obeys.

If you ask me whether our men like their inferior position, I must reply: They have grown indifferent in their social ambitions, and do not care whether a cow or a woman is on the throne.

The women of Tibet did not gain in one generation their social-political

supremacy. It took them a century to become the masters of the situation. They got their victory by a religious trick in directing all the attention of their men on Lamaism. In Tibet a man has limited property and political rights. As long as he is unmarried he is under the guardianship of his mother, but after the marriage the wife is the master. When a wife dies the man inherits her property only when she has no children. Yet, in spite of that, the men are obliged to take care of earning the means of living for the family. In the upper class the men figure as the ornaments of society and attend all the religious rites, instead of their women. On other occasions they are housekeepers, nurses, servants, cooks or practitioners of a certain profession. They are nothing but commercial automatons. Our men serve in the army as common soldiers while women are always the generals.

In the various arts women maintain the same supremacy that they have in social and political affairs. Our artists in sculpture, printing of books, painting, decorating and carving are predominantly women.

Our women have a larger freedom in their conduct than our men. They can go out at night, sit in the cafes and visit the theatre at any time. But a man has to pray after sunset and stay at home. Men who linger after sunset in our public parks or on the streets are considered immoral and are severely dealt with by the women police officers.

This peculiar woman rule in Tibet has resulted in polyandry. A woman can have as many husbands as she is able to manage without any trouble. But usually our women have only two or three husbands.

When I was a girl of eighteen my mother said to me that it was time to look for a husband. But I already was in love with a young musician at Latang, the highest town in the world, being fifteen thousand feet over the sea level. I told the secret to my mother and she said I should go and make the proposal, as that is the tradition of Tibet.

I made the long journey to Latang, where the ideal of my romantic dreams was employed as a teacher and musician. Like all the young men, he was very bashful and shy when I called on him in his apartment.

"Ritsig, I love you and want you to become my husband," I said.

Dropping his eyes he whispered: "Miss Komisheva, you make me happy. I feel confused at your sweet message, but shall try to be your obedient servant as long as you love me."

I threw my arms around his neck and kissed him for the first time. He felt greatly embarrassed, for in all romantic affairs women take the initiative and men for that reason are coquettish and effeminate. He was a very handsome and fascinating youth of my age, and I asked him why he had not been married by some woman before.

"Three women proposed to me before, but they were all married and

already had two husbands, so I refused. As a musician in the temple service I can refuse proposals of married women. But your proposal makes me truly happy," he replied.

It was already evening, so I asked him: "Could you come with me to a show and have supper with your bride in a restaurant?"

Kissing my hand tenderly, he whispered: "I have never dared to go to any public places after the sunset. But I shall be happy to accept your invitation."

In Tibet a man can never invite a woman to any public amusement place if she is not a close relative or wife. But a woman can always invite a man. We had an enjoyable evening, and I bought him some pretty presents from the jeweller. It was late at night when I accompanied my fiancé to his home and bade him good night. After six months I married him and he came as my husband to me.

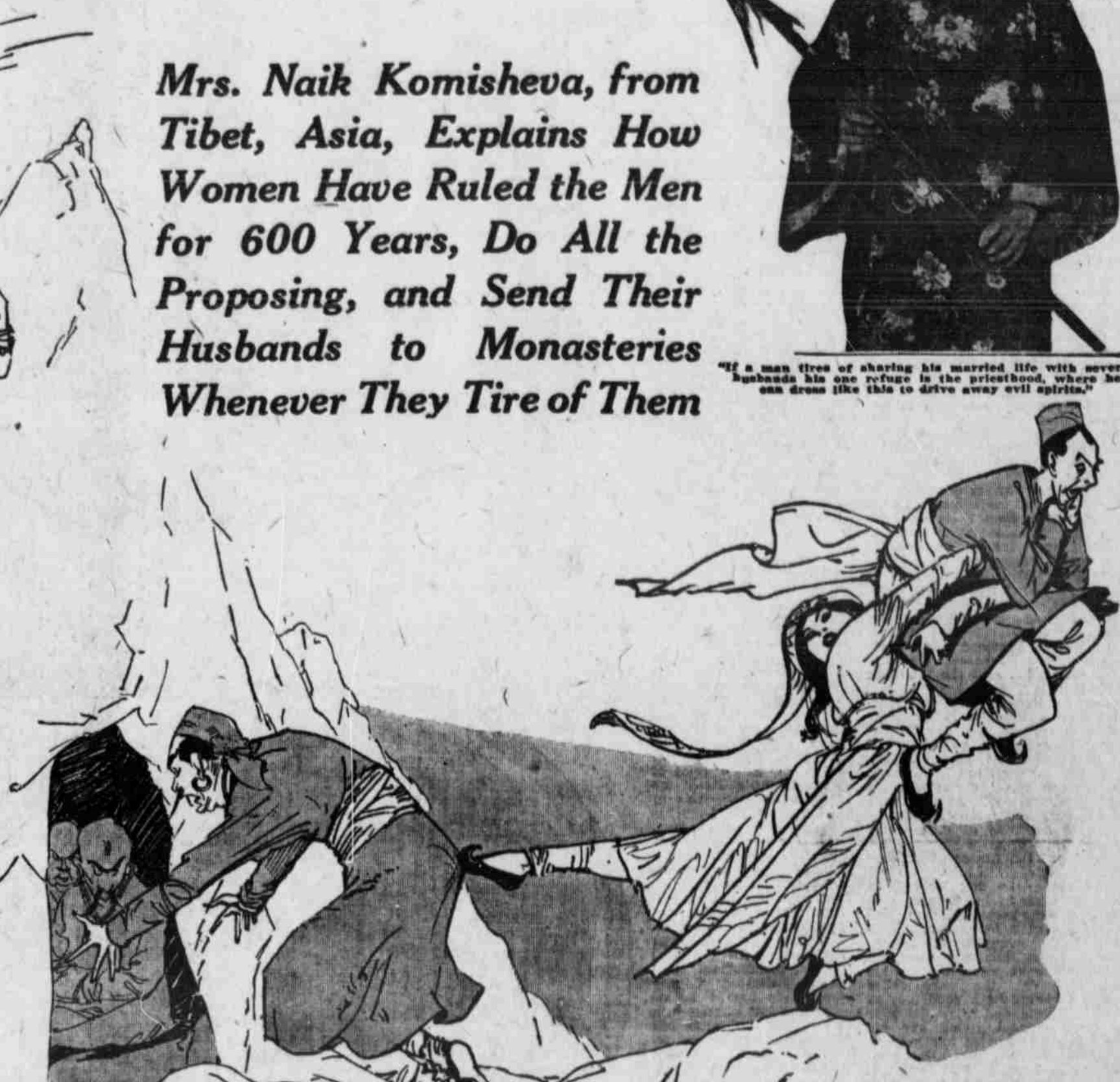
I occupied the position of a tax collector of our town before I was married. But after my marriage, which was considered in our town a successful match, I was also elected alderman. Those official functions kept me away from home much, and my husband volunteered to help me. But kissing him tenderly, I replied: "Please take care of the household and do not mix yourself in the affairs of women of which you are ignorant."

According to our traditions a woman can make love to men behind her husband's back, and it is not taken as seriously as when a man makes love to another woman. But our men, as a rule, are very obedient, and we have hardly any family scandals or divorces. As women are the judges, they never pay any attention to family troubles, but send couples to priests.

When a woman of the middle-class has been married a year or two she sends her husband to a monastery, where he has to pray, study the masculine virtues and stay until she invites him back. In the meantime she marries another man, lives with him until she sends him in turn to a monastery and invites the first husband home.

After she feels that the husbands are religious enough to make her happy, she gives them different commercial instructions and keeps them always so busy that only one husband at a time is a home. Frequently the two or three husbands of a wife live half of their life and never meet each other. But there are women of the upper class who keep for their various husbands luxurious apartments, and do not give them any religious or commercial functions.

A woman who



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"When a Tibetan woman has been married a year or two she sends her husband to a monastery to pray and study the masculine virtues. In the meantime, she marries another man. When she tires of him she hands him over to the monks and takes the first husband back again."

has only one husband is considered abnormal and ridiculed behind her back. For that reason my mother said to me after I had been married a year:

"My dear daughter, it is time that you got a second husband. Have you anybody in view?"

"Mother," I replied, "I shall not marry another husband as long as I am happy with the one I have."

"But you must, or I will accuse you of monogamy, and the law will forcibly give you a husband, regardless of your affections or consent. Meanwhile your first husband will be put in jail and kept there until you regret your sin and live according to tradition."

Shocked by such a vulgarity, as these new conditions seemed to us, we left Persia for Russia. The Russian custom of monogamy appealed to us, and we both began to study music in St. Petersburg.

I have become an anti-suffragette for the reason that I know from the seven-hundred-year experience of our nation that the role of women in politics and art means the social ruin of a country. It leads a people to polyandry and the same weakness that I have seen at home. As long as Tibet was masculine it was a great and vital country, of which the ruins of old cities and palaces give an evidence. But when the woman becomes masculine and the man effeminate the sexes lose their natural fascinating romanticism and become prosaic. If you would give me all the power and riches of Tibet I would not marry their effeminate men.

The women of Tibet were very pretty when they had a masculine system of life and the men manly. Our old sculptures and paintings speak of an era when there was a romance and poetry in the relation of a man to a woman. But I assure you there is nothing of that kind in present feminine Tibet. The women marry men as they would perform any trivial social function—without the least show of romanticism. When a man kisses a woman they do not feel a microscopical part of the aesthetic sensation that is the case with lovers when the man is masculine and the woman feminine.

As soon as I am through with my musical engagements here in the West I shall make a trip to my native land, where I shall meet my husband, who went there to begin a rigorous masculine movement. He is now publishing a weekly paper in which he is advocating that the men should be at least equal to the women politically. He is organizing a vigorous campaign against polyandry by publishing caricatures of our ridiculous families. And when I return I certainly will join him and say: "Down with petticoat politics!"

How Rudel!

The occupants of the railway carriage were listening with joyful interest to the tales of the young man in the corner. He had been all over the world several times, apparently, and his adventures had been marvellous.

"Coolness and courage are the thing," he was saying. "Take this case. We were in Central Africa, travelling among cannibal tribes. One evening, above a rock in front of me, I saw the heads of three natives who were watching me. What was I to do? My gun was at the camp. To turn back meant having spears thrust through me. In a moment I decided. I closed my eyes and fired them with all my force at their heads. Every one found its mark, and the three natives dropped like sheep. I always take a good aim, and it served me well then.

Then the red-faced man opposite, who had been listening carefully, chimed in:

"Ay! wot did yer win, gov-nor, a cigar or a packet of cigarettes?"

Little Facts.

There's more danger in getting stung by a wasp than by a busy bee.

Of course matches are made in heaven; they're not needed in the other place.

The same man who wouldn't hunt more than three minutes for a screw-driver with which to put on a screw-door will tear around two hours hunting for a corkscrew.



"Like all the young men in Tibet, my future husband was very shy when I first called on him. 'Ritsig,' I said, 'I love you, and want you to marry me.'"