

*answered on
14th April 1953 + sent
back his story with letter
from me by Registered Post -
to Darjeeling*

From: Brig. V. JAYAL, DSO.
Comdr. HQ 201 BDE AREA
PO. JALAPAHAR
Distt. DARJEELING.

7 Apr 1953

Dear Mrs Roerich,

It was indeed a great pleasure for my wife and myself to make the acquaintance with your author Brother-in-Law, your distinguished artist husband and above all with you. We were most impressed with your kind hospitality and homliness with which you welcomed us. We do hope that you all would be coming to DARJEELING soon and we shall be able to do something for you.

I do advise you to spend a little time here, because the day's journey from KALIMPONG and back, up and down that steep road would be arduous. Please remember that somehow I can put up you all in my humble abode.

I was most interested when you told me what you were doing to encourage and support Art and Drama. In my humble way I also am supporter of the same. I request first of all your frank comments on one particular subject, and perhaps patronage later on.

Some years ago, I wrote a short story called "RAMI-BAHURANI". This short story was first published in the United Service Institution journal under my pen-name "Vidyapati". The editor of the "Garhwali", a journal of the Garhwal Rifles, which is being published in England, asked the editor of the United Service Institution journal to obtain my permission to publish it in the "Garhwali". Colonel Lowndes, a very famous Garhwali British officer, who was the editor of the "Garhwali" congratulated me very profusely on the story. It never

occurred to him that an Indian had written it, and he connected the author with a Major Gregory, whose father was in the Garhwalis, and who also had served with them in the Second World War.

Later this story was published in the "LEADER" ALLAHABAD. I am herewith sending what appeared in the "LEADER". This story has been vetted by many quite well known writers and the general opinion is that it could be developed into a film story. Of course, a great deal of padding up will have to be done and many side shows will have to be added. The story is a complete concoction with one exception. In Garhwal there is the famous song of Rami-Bahurani. Its basis was that a man went to the plains in search of employment. He did not come back home for many years and decided to put to test the chastity of his wife. He disguised himself as a Sadhu and found his wife virtuous. To commemorate this, the song in dialogue form was made. In Garhwal this is an old song and a classic one.

I am not certain how an Indian picture dealing with modern War would be received by the Indian public. To my knowledge such an Indian picture has not yet been produced. It might be a novelty or it might be a failure, because Indian public knows no better than the rattling of swords and the deeds of those fantastic "Phalwans". However, it would have some redeeming features which are:

- (a) The depiction of Hindu culture, fidelity and morality, culminating in SATI.
- (b) It would give an insight into the way of life of the people of Garhwal, a land held in high reverence from time immemorial.

- (c) A variety of scenes varying from HIMALAYAS to ENGLAND, to GERMAN occupied French coast, to MALAYA, to the death railway of SIAM and back to the HIMALAYAS.
- (d) Film may have the political significance of having the effect of becoming a "mutual admiration society" between the British and ourselves.

The story as it is now has one great disadvantage and that is that a PREM SINGH who was taken a prisoner of War did not go over to the side of the JAPANESE, while the Indian public applauds the actions of the INA. However, this could be suitably changed for the film purpose.

As far as the War scenes are concerned, a great deal of back ground shots could be obtained from Historical Section in SIMLA because the Indian Army Photographers have taken several thousand feet of films on Indian troops exploits in the Middle East, Burma, Siam and Malaya.

I am afraid I have made this letter too long and I must be taxing your patience. However, I do feel strongly that when an idea like this is placed in the hands of celebrities like you, it may be to the good of the country for which we all are working in our different ways. This is just a nucleus, an acorn, which you may be able to make an oak.

I close with my apologies for bothering you on only yet casual acquaintance and offer you all our kindest regards.

Yours

Sincerely,

To:- Mrs. Rerie Roerich
(Shrimati Devika Raniji)
KALIMPONG.

V. Jayal

answered
28 April 53

Mrs. V. Jayal ⚡
Bellevue Hotel
Darjeeling
25. 4. 53

Dear Mrs. Roerich,

Here with sending this
photograph. I believe my husband has
already written to you about it and I
hope you will like it.

Please give regards to your
husband and brother-in-law both.

Hoping to see you in
Darjeeling soon.

yours Sincerely
Basanti Jayal