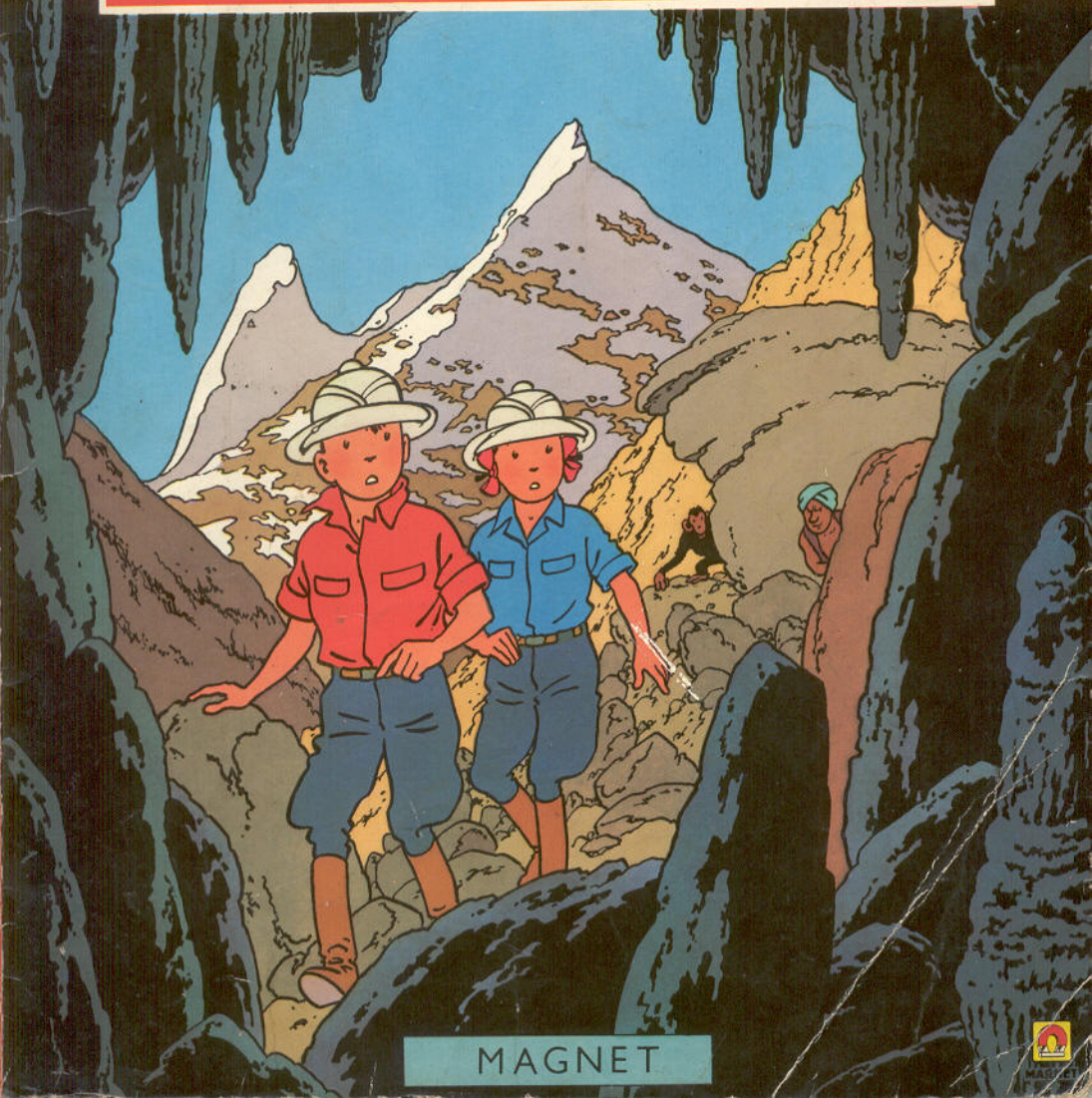


HERGÉ

THE ADVENTURES OF JO, ZETTE AND JOCKO  
BY THE CREATOR OF TINTIN

# THE VALLEY OF THE COBRAS



MAGNET





# THE VALLEY OF THE COBRAS

## People and Places

The exclusive French ski-resort Vargèse (Haute-Savoie) counts among its guests the Maharajah of Gopal, ruler of the tiny independent Himalayan state.

His Highness, an accomplished sportsman, is a master of the art of skiing. His style is the envy of all. Brimming with confidence, he attacks the slopes each morning and it

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By Kali!... Who are those upstarts?... The cheek of it! To go faster than me!... Stop!



Little demons!... You dare to pass ME?

But... I... we...



I order fifty strokes of the cane on the soles of their feet ...

?

?



What?... Are you by any chance questioning my orders?...



May the gods forbid, Highness!... I just wanted to remind you that we aren't in Gopal, we're in France, and the law here ...

By Kali! And have I no right to punish these rascals?



We'll see about that!... I shall punish them myself!



He's crazy!... What did we do to him?

I don't know... I don't understand.



You haven't hurt yourself, Highness?

Villains!



And you?... Well?... What are you waiting for?...



There, Your Highness...

Excellent!







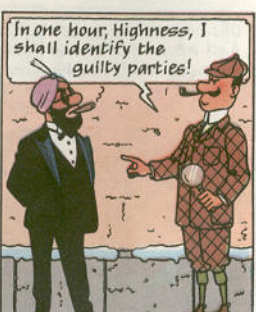




















... is irrevocable: to leave the hotel. The servants are already packing the trunks.











I forbid you to intervene!

Excuse me, Highness, but I'm the children's father, and I think I have the right to know why you beat them.

They failed to show proper respect... An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! I insist they must be punished!

But what have they done, Your Highness?



I went out skiing, and they overtook me! And they threw a snowball! It hit me, there!



Is that true?

Yes, Papa. That's what we told you. But the snowball that hit the Maharajah wasn't meant for him. It was an accident, and we're very sorry... and we really do beg his pardon...



Highness, you are right: these children deserve to be punished. I suggest that you overtake them on skis, and that you throw a snowball at them.



You dare to mock me?

Certainly not, Highness. As you said: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. I'd add: a snowball for a snowball... that's logical...



Koushik Chakraborty

An eye for an eye... A tooth for a tooth... A snowball for a snowball. Quite right!



Very good. I accept. My skis are at the hotel, so we'll begin with the snowball.

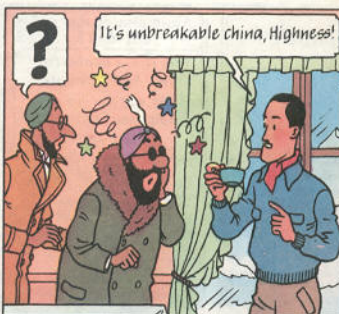
As you wish, Your Highness.







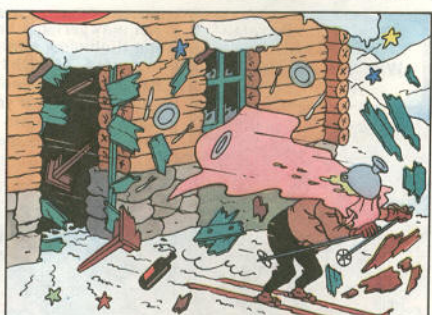








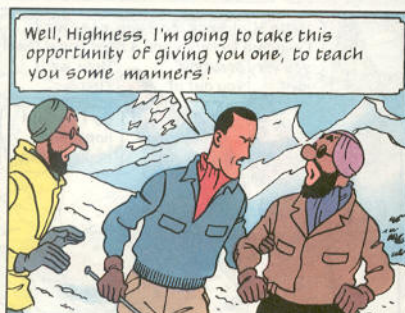














Why? What do you mean?

Well, as he left the hotel the Maharajah called me "my friend". And that isn't all: he gave me a hundred francs...



He called the page "my friend"... And gave him a hundred francs! More and more peculiar!



There he is!... But what are those parcels?



Just as I feared! He's heading towards the Legrand chalet...



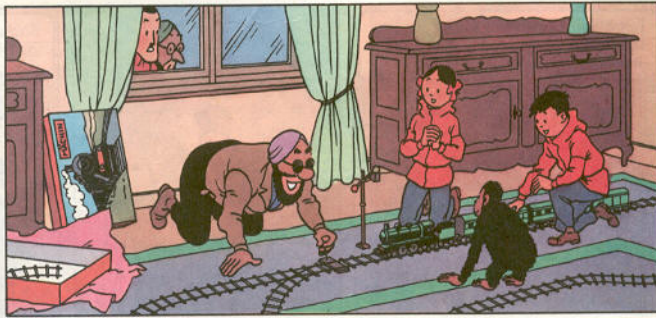
By the gods!... Those parcels! ... Heaven knows what sort of revenge he's cooking up! What can I do?...



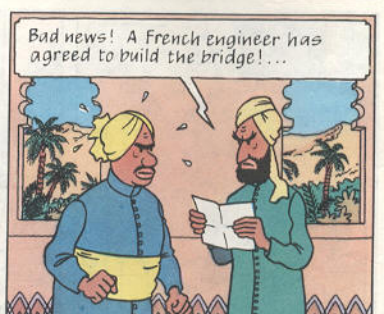
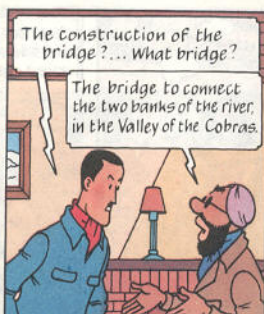
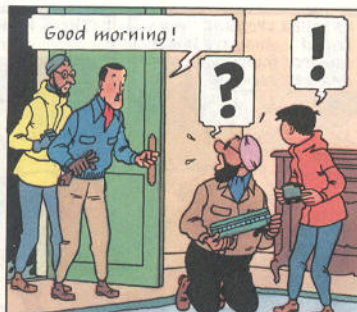
Saved!... Saved!... There's Monsieur Legrand.



Good morning, Monsieur Legrand... I... er... Excuse me, but... well... I've just seen His Highness going up the path towards your chalet... And after what happened yesterday... you understand... I'm worried...









Next morning ...

Well, Highness, what are your instructions?

You do as you wish. You have a free hand.

This is what I suggest. I go with you to have a look at the job on the spot. Then I come back to Europe to order materials and to hire the technicians ...

Agreed!

We leave the day after tomorrow. The arrangements are made.

Good. Au revoir, Highness

Has he gone?



Good day, Highness...

Good day...

I simply can't remember where I put my catapult ...

Your catapult? ... But you gave it to the Maharajah yesterday ... He was so keen to have it...

It's a complete mystery! ...



# The day of departure...

So that's the plan: I'll be home in two months. Then we all go back together...



All aboard!



Goodbye, then! And you, Jo and Zette, you be good!

Goodbye, Papa... and watch out for the crocodiles!

Goodbye, Papa!



I'm sure you must be happy to be going home...

Of course... although I have no worries about the way the country has been governed in my absence.



The reports from my Prime Minister have been excellent. He's a very remarkable man, and I have absolute confidence in him!



# Meanwhile in Gopal...

So, they are on the way...



Soon I'll have to take orders again from that fat fool, and put up with his tantrums... I'm sick to death of it! ...I've had a taste of power while he's been away... and who's to stop me keeping it?



I've already exploited the unrest caused by the new taxes... very cleverly! ...I explained they were to pay for the Maharajah's gallivanting... The people grumble, but against the Maharajah!



And now this plan for the bridge... Ha ha! I must see Rabindrah tonight...



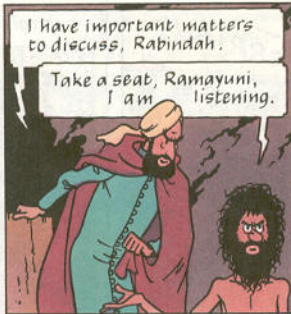




Ah, there he is in his cave.



Greetings, Rabin-dah, mighty fakir!



I have important matters to discuss, Rabin-dah.

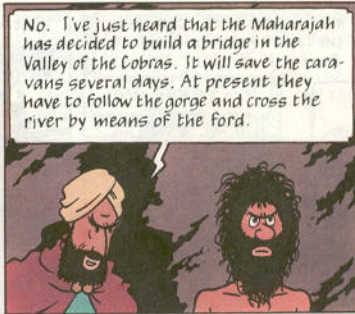
Take a seat, Ramayuni, I am listening.



YEOWWWW!



Is that all you wish to say?



No. I've just heard that the Maharajah has decided to build a bridge in the Valley of the Cobras. It will save the caravans several days. At present they have to follow the gorge and cross the river by means of the ford.

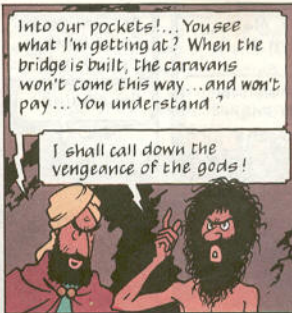


You realise what this means? Now, when the caravans come you demand money. You tell them it is to secure the blessing of the gods for a safe crossing...

As you know, the money allows me to offer sacrifices to the spirits of the valley...



A little bit goes to feed the cobras which infest the land by the ford. What about the rest, eh?

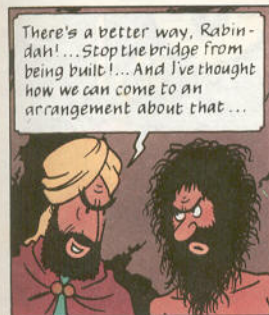


Into our pockets!... You see what I'm getting at? When the bridge is built, the caravans won't come this way... and won't pay... You understand?

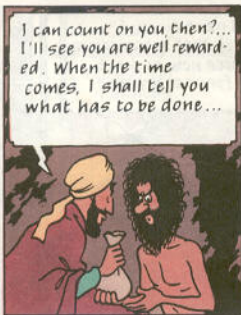
I shall call down the vengeance of the gods!



That won't prevent them from using the bridge, and it won't bring you any money either... as you very well know!



There's a better way, Rabin-dah!... Stop the bridge from being built!... And I've thought how we can come to an arrangement about that...



I can count on you then?... I'll see you are well rewarded. When the time comes, I shall tell you what has to be done...



Play along with me, old fool! I can easily get rid of you later!

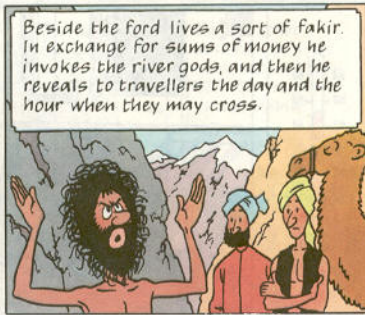
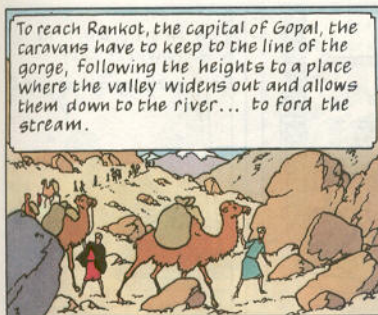
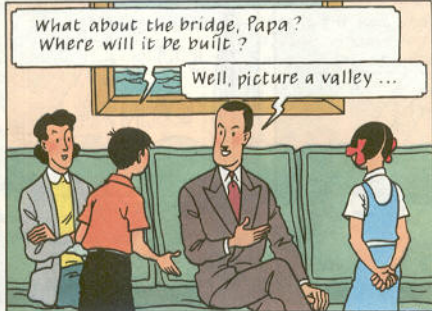


Yes, I'll help you, you traitor... But I'll be having the last laugh!

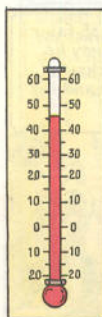
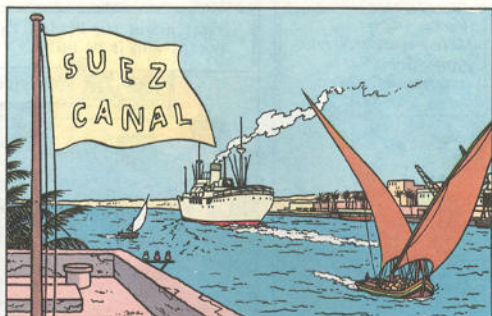
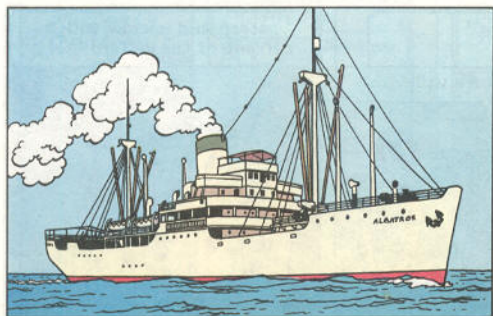




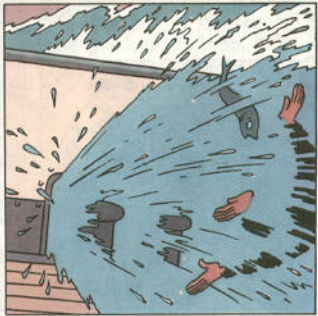
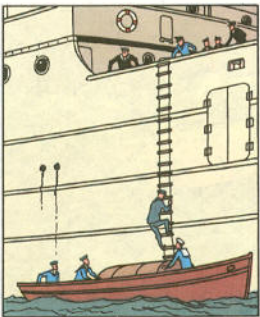




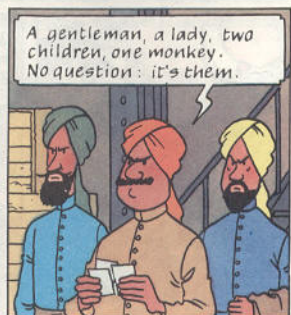
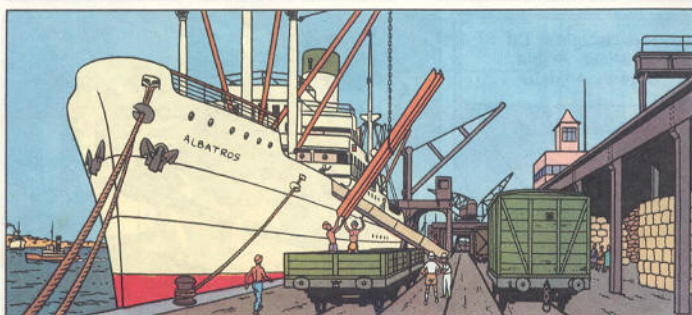
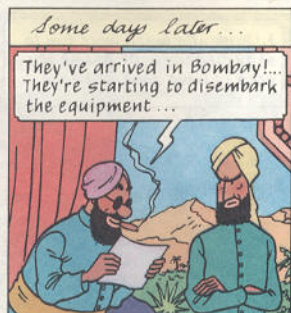
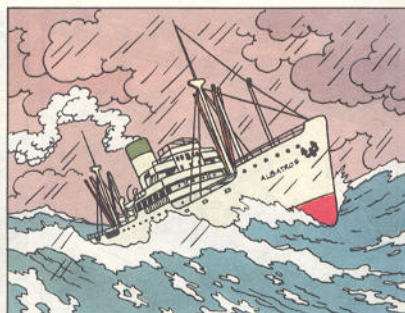








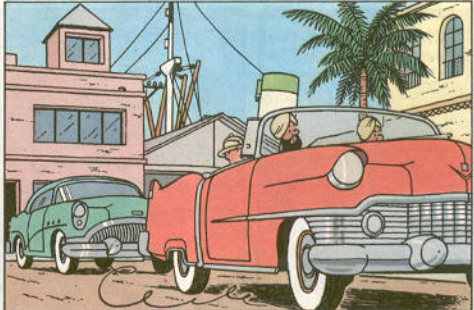






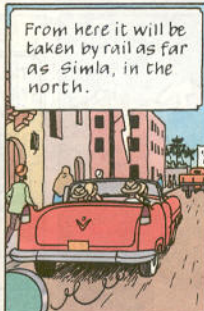


Mr Legrand?... His Excellency the Maharajah of Gopal has sent us. We are here to welcome you. Will you come this way? We are leaving by car for Simla.

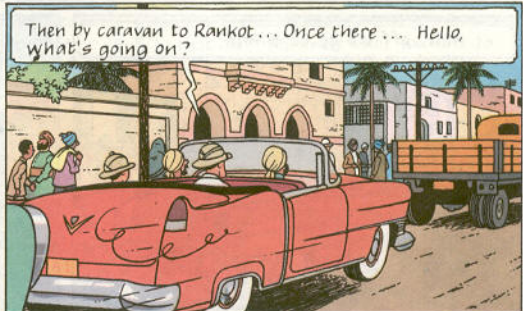


The equipment, Papa?

It will be unloaded immediately...



From here it will be taken by rail as far as Simla, in the north.

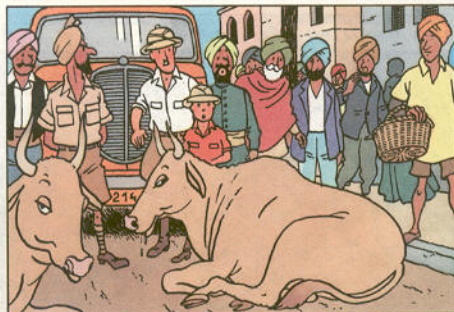


Then by caravan to Rankot... Once there... Hello, what's going on?



A hold up of some kind... You stay here, Sahib, and I will see.

We will come too.



Nothing can be done, Sahib... We must wait until the cows get up.



Wait till they get up?... Someone can move them along!

Indeed no, Sahib. They are sacred cows. One must be patient, until they move in their own good time!

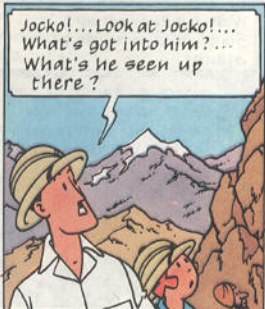
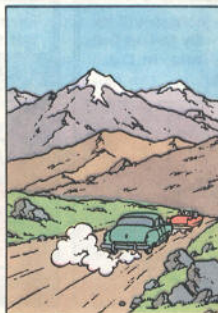
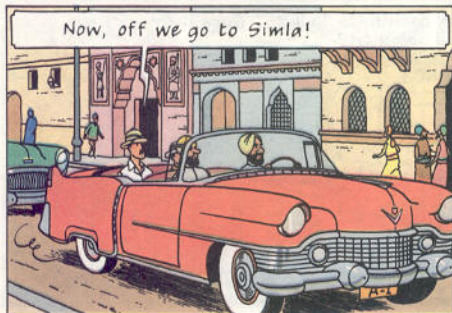


How very strange!... Well let's go back to the car

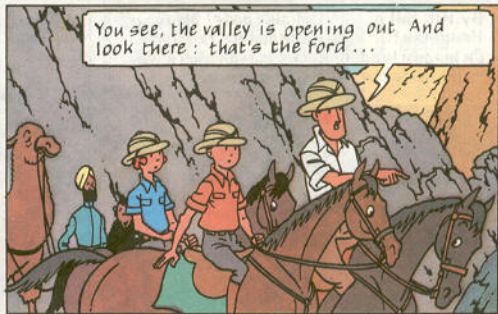


Papa, look!











Noble fakir, I fully understand. But I simply must cross by the ford now. So I hope the gods will be forgiving, just this once.



Stranger, beware! You will bring their anger down upon yourself and your companions...



I'm sorry. That's enough talk. You are very kind, but we have no time to lose.



Er... excuse me, Sahib... but I...we prefer to wait for a more favourable time.

Oh? Well, I'll soon show you there's no danger... Jo and Zette, follow me.



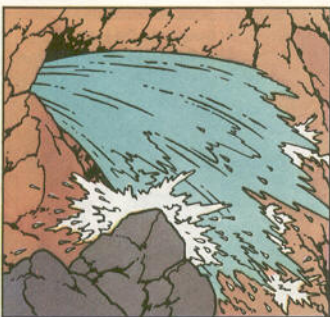
By the tail of Hanuman!... On his own head be it! He asked for it!



Mighty gods! May your vengeance fall upon the blasphemers who dare to defy you!



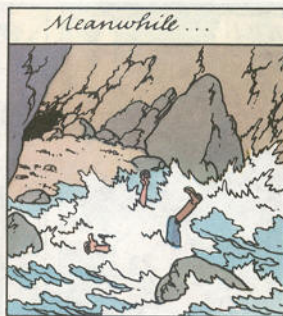
He's raised his arms! It's the signal!



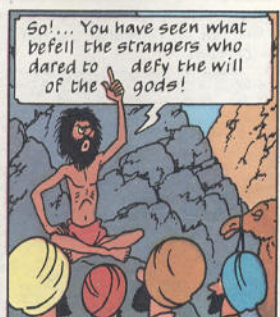
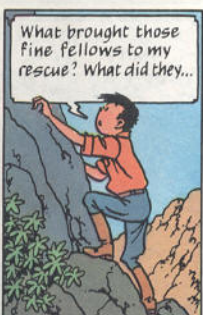
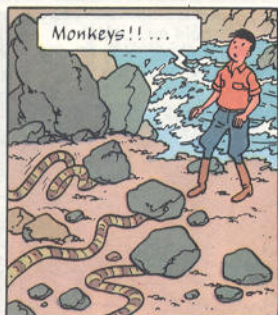
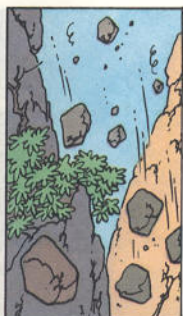
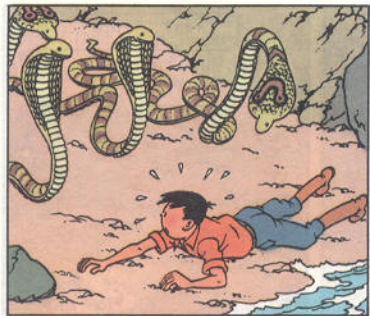
HA! HA! HA!



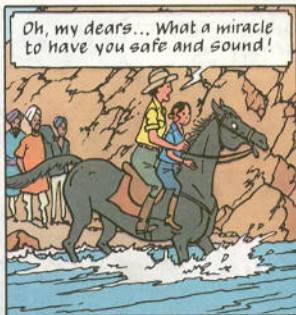
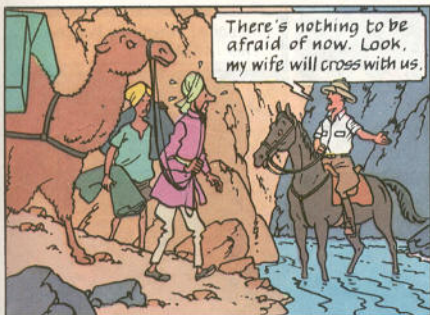
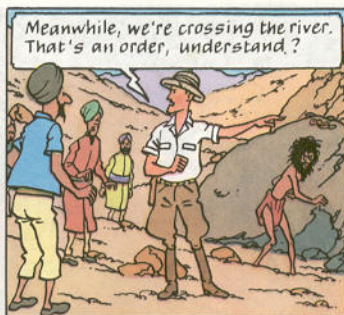
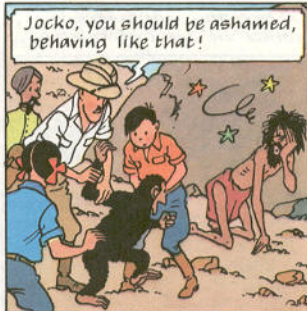










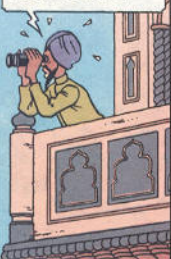




Next day, the caravan comes in sight of Rankoot...



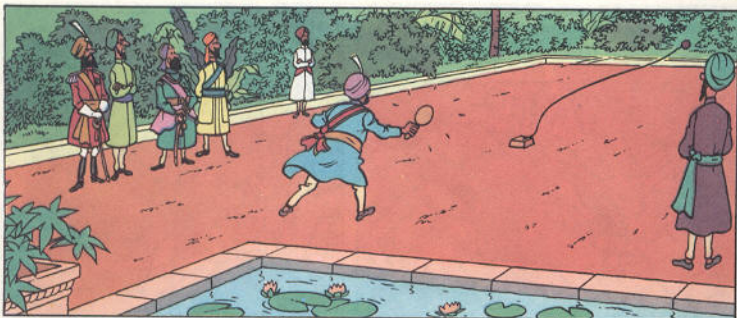
There they are!  
No mistake!



His Highness must be  
informed without delay!



His Highness? Playing  
jokari, in the garden.



HIGHNESS! HIGHNESS!



What?... What is it?... Who  
dares to interrupt me?



BING



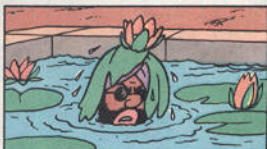
Imbecile! Have him beaten,  
this instant!



Your Highness's gracious  
pardon, but the caravan  
is in sight...



The caravan?... Hooray!...  
I'll go at once! They  
must be welcomed  
with due ceremony!





If you would not mind waiting, Sahib. His Highness is just coming...



Ah, there you are!... I'm so happy to see you!... Now, you'll be starting work on the bridge at once, won't you?



At once?... Well, Highness... that is to say...

What's the meaning of this? You refuse...



Certainly not, Highness. But I must explain...

Oh, good! Badalah, have some refreshments brought in... and cigars.



Now, about the bridge... You see, when I get something on my mind, whatever it is...



IT'S A FROG!!



By Kali!... Someone get rid of that horrid creature this instant... How dare it...



Where's it gone? I command you to find that treasonable toad... NOW!



Calm yourself, Highness. Forget about it. Won't you present me to your friends, and propose a toast?



I am honoured, Monsieur Legrand. I am Ramayuni, His Highness's Prime Minister.

Your Excellency...



My Friends, I drink to your health, and the success of our enterprise!





Highness, we very nearly didn't get here alive... When we came to the crossing on the Cobra River the fakir who controls the ford forbade our passage...

What?! He dared...

You know this upstart, Ramayuni?

I have heard tell of him, Highness. But it is the first time anyone has advised me of such an occurrence. But evidently you crossed none the less?

Certainly, but at the risk of our lives. Just as we crossed the ford a tremendous wall of water hurtled down from the mountains. The children and I were swept away...

... We managed to save ourselves, and here we are. But to come to the point, tomorrow while the workmen are making camp I'd like to go back to the river, and get to the bottom of this peculiar business.

You are right, Monsieur Legrand, and you have my approval, but on one condition: you do not go alone. Take someone with you who knows the area... Wait, I can recommend a guide, he will take good care of you...

Next morning...

This is the guide I mentioned to you. You can trust him absolutely.

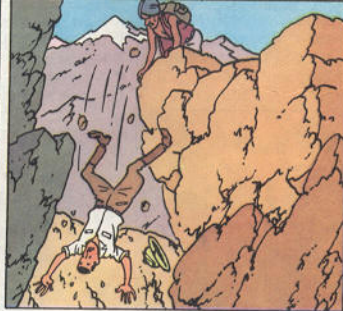
Have you ever heard talk of a dam, a natural or man-made one?

No, Sahib, never.

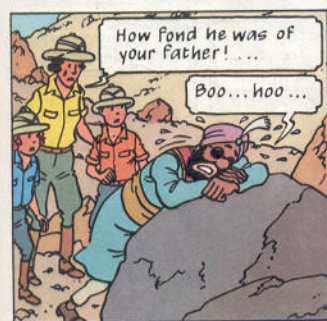
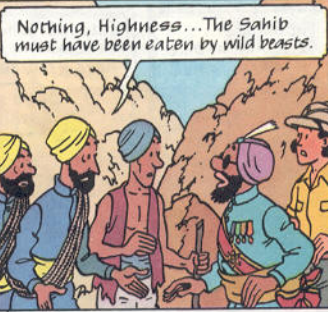
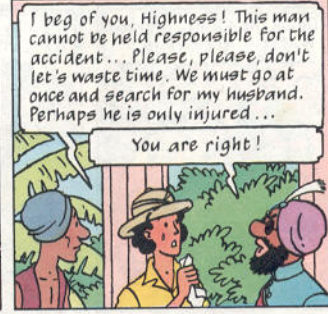
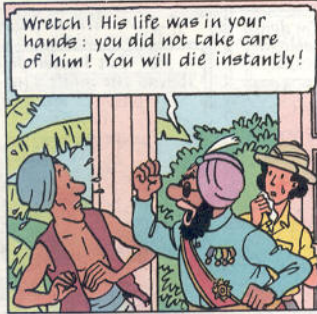
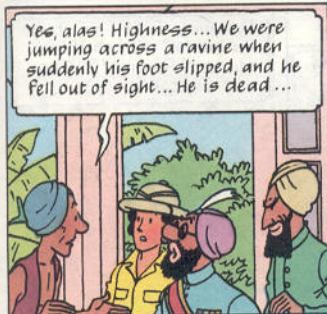
Brrr... A fall here would be awful!

Take care, Sahib, it is difficult. I will go first. Then I will give you my hand and you can jump across.

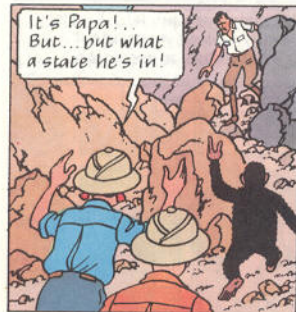
There... Jump, Sahib!











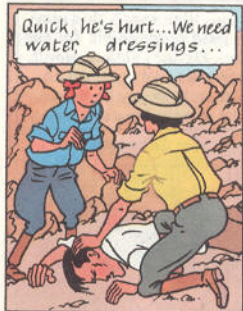
It's Papa!...  
But...but what  
a state he's in!



Oh, he can hardly stand!...



But Papa... PAPA!...



Quick, he's hurt...We need  
water dressings...



If I stay I'm done  
for! Get going, fast!



*A few minutes later...*

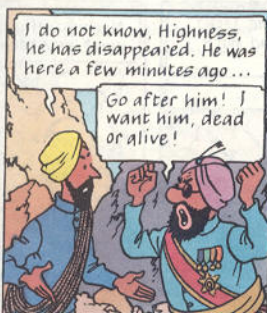
...Me? But I never slipped.  
It was the guide: he  
pushed me into the  
ravine.



The guide?...You say it was  
the guide?... By the ten  
heads of Ravana!... The  
vile wretch!...



The guide!...  
Seize him at once!  
... Where is he?



I do not know. Highness,  
he has disappeared. He was  
here a few minutes ago...

Go after him! I  
want him, dead  
or alive!



You see Zette,  
Jocko was right  
about that traitor.



We came to a difficult bit.  
As I said, instead of helping  
me the guide pushed me over  
the edge. Luckily, as I went down  
I grabbed some bushes which  
broke my fall. I must have hung  
there...Heaven knows how long...



...When I came to I managed  
to scramble down the rock face...  
It's lucky you found me, I was  
just about all in ...



I feel better now. We can  
go on ...  
Very well.

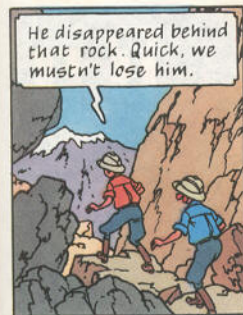
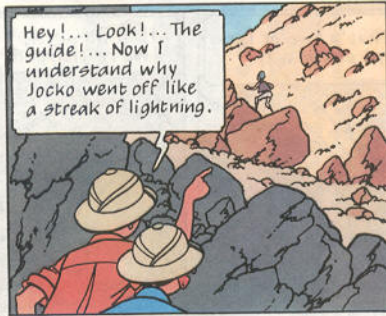


Jo? Zette?  
Where are you?...  
We're going ...

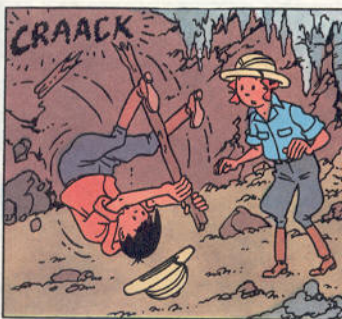
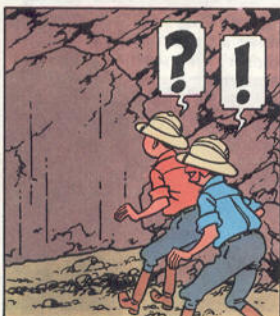


For goodness sake,  
they've disappeared!

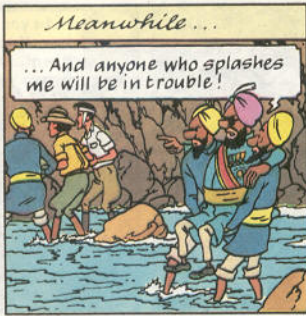
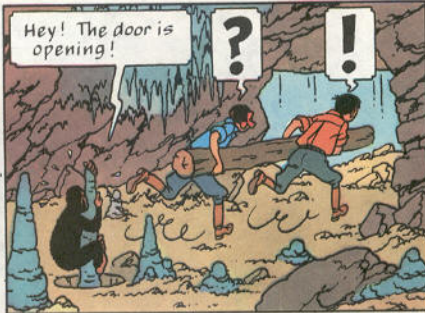




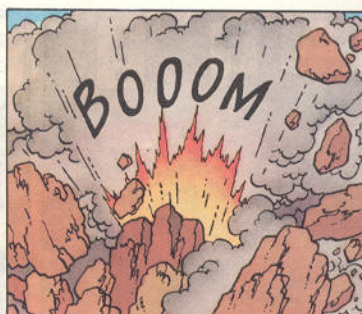
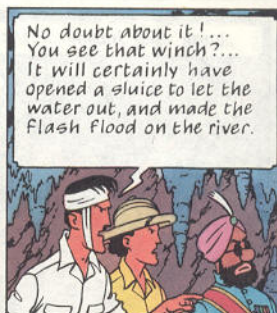
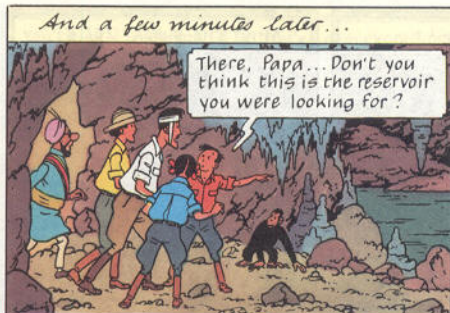






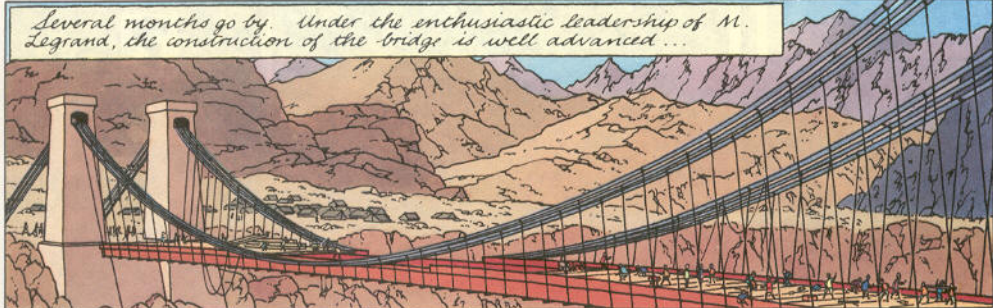








Several months go by. Under the enthusiastic leadership of M. Legrand, the construction of the bridge is well advanced...



One evening...

I'm very satisfied at the way the work is going...



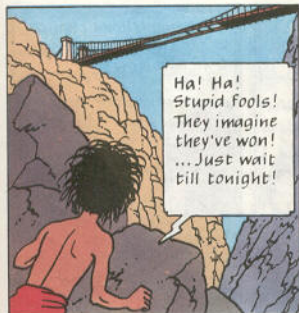
Most of the reinforcing girders are fixed to the suspenders... Laying the roadway is only a matter of days...



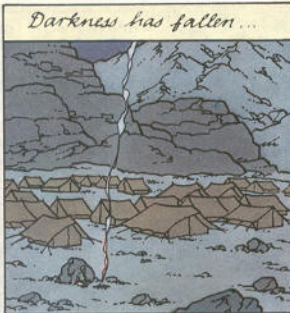
... then, when the load tests and the paintwork are finished, the bridge will be ready for the state opening by the Maharajah!



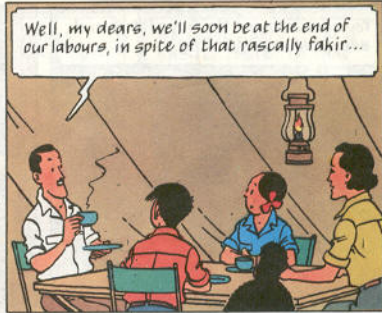
Ha! Ha!  
Stupid fools!  
They imagine  
they've won!  
... Just wait  
till tonight!



Darkness has fallen...

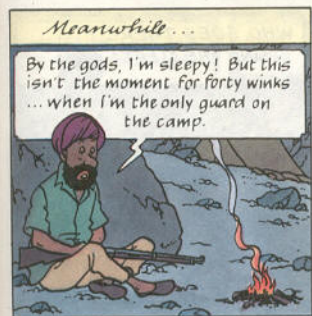


Well, my dears, we'll soon be at the end of our labours, in spite of that rascally fakir...



Meanwhile...

By the gods, I'm sleepy! But this isn't the moment for forty winks ... when I'm the only guard on the camp.



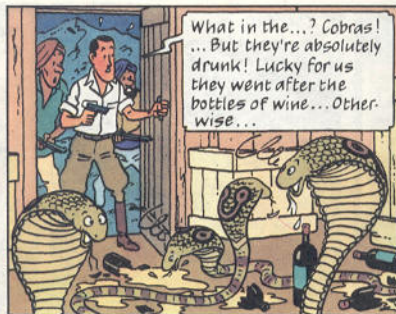
No, I can't go to sleep... No I can't... No I... No...



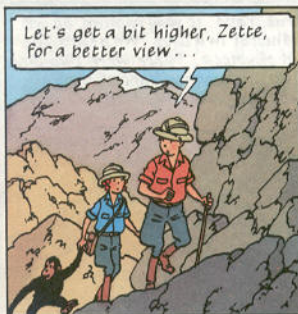
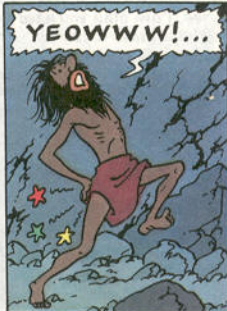
zzzz  
zzzz  
zzzz













Yes, I am glad you have come.  
What I have to tell you is of  
the utmost importance.

Speak, I am listening.  
We are alone.

Very well. The situation  
is grave, Hoonda.  
The bridge built by the  
European threatens us  
all...

*An hour later...*

Papa!... Papa!...

Now what is it?

It's terrible, Papa, terrible!...  
The camp, and the Maharajah's  
palace, are to be attacked  
tomorrow morning!

What nonsense  
is this?

It's true, Papa. It was raining, so we  
took shelter in a cave. We heard the  
sound of voices. There were two men  
talking in another part of the cave.  
One of them was called Hoonda...

And the other?

I don't know, except it was a  
voice I've heard before. But it's  
absolutely certain that the one  
called Hoonda will attack the camp  
tomorrow morning with his tribes-  
men and will destroy the bridge,  
while other tribesmen will attack  
the Maharajah's palace...

Good Lord!... How can we  
upset their plan?... Fight?...  
But then the blood will flow...  
and we can't have that at any  
price... What can we do?...

*Next day at dawn...*

You understand? Kill the  
foreigners, disarm the  
rest, and destroy the bridge.

Master... all our men are  
ready for action.

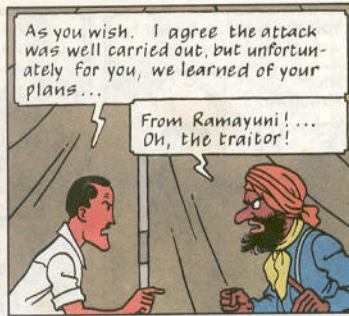
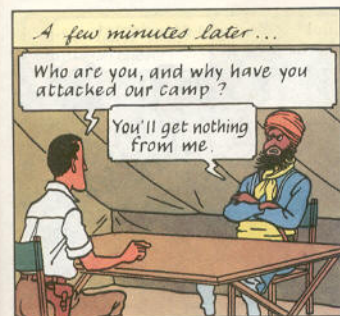
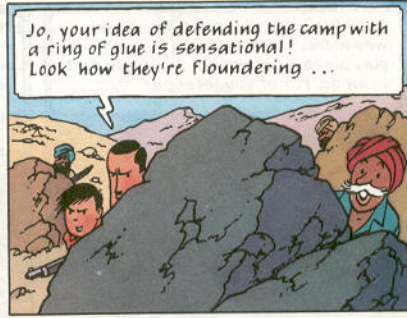
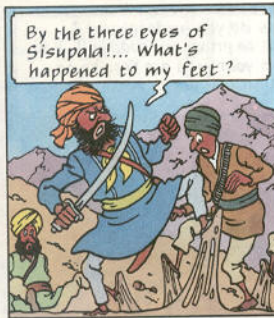
Good! Attack!

FORWARD... CHA-A-ARGE!

AYAAAA!

AYAAAA!







Take it easy, friend! Put away your dagger, and don't force me to use violence...



Now sit down calmly and listen to me.



Ramayuni didn't sell you out... Quite by accident, my children overheard the conversation you had with him in the cave.



But when you'd gone, and Ramayuni was alone, they heard him say: "You play along with me, old mountain goat. I can get rid of you later on!"...



Now do you understand?... And to prove my goodwill, you and your men are free to go. Return in peace to your homes.



Thank you for your generosity. Hoonda will not forget. If you need me, send word: I shall come!



*A little later...*

Now, all speed to the palace...



Ah, my dear friend. How happy I am to see you! Victory! Victory!



Everything went splendidly. Quite unaware we were waiting for them, the rebels fell into our trap. They were all taken prisoner.



Excellent... But do you know who's at the bottom of it all?... Your Prime Minister, Ramayuni!

WHAT?!!



By Kali!... Traitor!... Plotter!... Wretch!... To prison this very minute!!



You are right. He must be arrested at once.

What's that? Ramayuni?



Certainly not!... You, vile slanderer!... Guards, seize him!





Find the Prime Minister at once. Let him decide this villain's fate.



Highness, I assure you

Silence! You are nothing but a liar!



Highness!... Highness!...

Well? What is it this time?



His Excellency Ramayuni fled, taking your jewels with him, immediately after the tribesmen attacked!

By the gods!



So it was true!... The wretch!...



I... I... I am terribly upset... Forgive me!

Don't mention it, Highness...



Boo... hoo... My own Prime Minister!... Betraying me!...

Never mind, Highness... There are other fish in the sea!



Some days later...

Jo and Zette, would you bring me the roll of plans out of the big tent!

Of course, Papa.



Ooh! A mongoose...



Jocko, come here, Jocko!



Jocko, leave that animal alone!



Jocko!



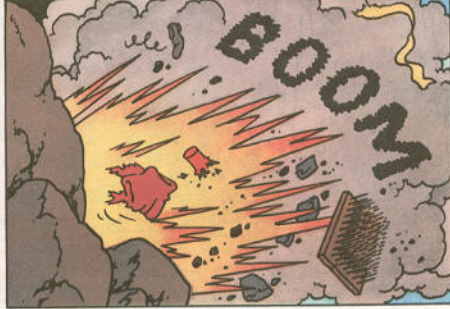
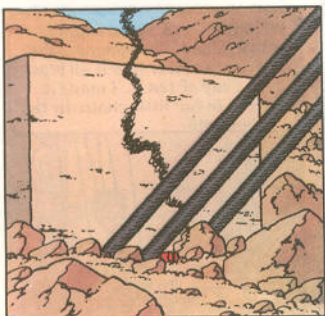
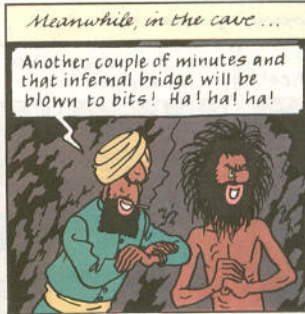
OH!













The day of the opening comes at last...

Here we go, Zette!  
Time for the speeches!

Your Highness, ladies and  
gentlemen! ...



...Such a beautiful speech, Highness...  
I've been practising for six months!..I'll...

No, no, that's enough chatter.  
Deeds speak louder than words!  
Give me the scissors!



I, the Maharajah of Gopal declare  
this bridge open to traffic!



Well, Highness, we're ending  
with a glass of champagne... But  
do you remember how it all began  
over a cup of tea? ... I made it  
for you in our little chalet in the  
mountains.



Yes, Madame, and I bless the day  
your children overtook me on skis.  
Thanks to them I met your husband  
... And he built this bridge, from  
which my people will reap so much  
benefit ...

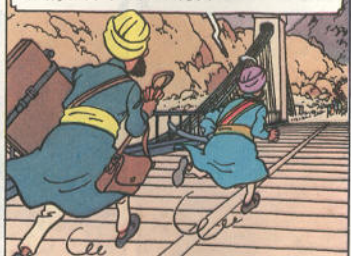


Oh, look, there's a  
caravan already, about  
to cross the bridge.

What? Already! There  
isn't a moment to lose!



Hurry, Balgar! Run! We simply  
must be there first!



TOLL CHARGES  
PEDESTRIANS: 1 RUPEE  
CAMELS: 2 RUPEES  
SOLDIERS: 4 RUPEES  
CHILDREN: 1/2 RUPEE



Now, my dears, our work here  
is finished. All we have to  
do is pack our bags... We  
are going back home!



THE END

