

## THE SLEEPING PORTER

**Laxmi Prasad Devkota**

*Laxmi Prasad Devkota was born on the 12 November 1909 in Kathmandu. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Patna University in 1929. He was a renowned poet and storyteller of his time. In 1948, he presided over the first national poetry festival of Nepal organized by Nepali Sahitya Parishad. Immediately after this poetry festival, he exiled himself to Varanasi, India, to edit Yugvani (The Voice of the Age), which was a mouthpiece of the Nepali Congress. In Nepal, his house and properties were confiscated by the government.*



**A. Work in small groups and discuss the question given below:**

- 1. Suppose you have to climb up the fourth floor of a building with a heavy load on your back. Will you feel any trouble doing so? Talk about the trouble that you will face.**

**THE SLEEPING PORTER**

A twenty-five kilo load on his back  
spine double bent  
a six-mile climb up in the snows of winter  
naked bones, skeleton-like frail frame  
yet facing an uphill task  
he is challenging the mountain.

He is wearing a black cap  
dirty, sweat-stained  
his body is an abode of fleas and lice  
his mind very dull  
although it emits a sulphur-like sour smell  
but what a stout human figure!

Like a bird  
his heart is twittering, panting  
he is sweating and out of breath

**B.1. Answer the following questions very briefly:**

1. How much load does the Porter have on his back?
2. What distance does the Porter cover in the snows of winter?
3. Who is challenging the mountain?
4. What type of cap is he wearing ?
5. What type of smell does the Porter emit ?



A hut on the cliff  
his son shivering with cold  
woes of hunger  
the mother searching for nettles and vines.

Beneath this hero of the mountain  
the proud conqueror of nature  
are the snow-clad peaks  
above  
only the star-studded lid of night.  
In this night  
the porter is in deep slumber  
"reigning over the rich kingdom of sleep.

**B.2. Answer the following questions:**

1. What is there on the cliff?
2. What is the mother searching?
3. Who is the hero of the mountain?
4. What is meant by 'lid of night'?
5. Who is 'reigning over' the 'rich kingdom of sleep'?

**GLOSSARY AND NOTES**

**spine** (n) : the back bone

**naked** (adj) : unclothed, uncovered, nude

**skeleton** (n) : the bony frame work of the body

**frail** (adj) : weak, infirm

**frame** (n) : a structure, shape

**uphill** (adj) : ascending, difficult

**sweat** (n) : perspiration

**stain** (n) : mark

**fleas** (n) : a kind of small jumping insect

**lice** (n) : pl. of louse; a parasitic insect

**stout** (adj) : strong, brave

**twittering** (adj/n) : uttering interrupted sound

**panting** (n) : gasping

**woe** (n) : grief, sorrow

**nettle** (n) : stinging plant

**vines** (n) : the creeper which bears grapes

**conqueror** (n) : one who conquers, a victor

**clad** (adj) : clothed

**studded** (v) : p.t of stud adorned with studs

**lid** (n) : the cover for the top of something

**slumber** (n) : a short sleep



### C.1. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. The poet has focused on trials and tribulations of the porter. Elucidate.
2. A mother is searching for nettles and vines who is she? Why is she searching such things?
3. Determination, hard work and continuity win the race. Do you agree? Write your opinions with reference to the poem "The Sleeping Porter?"

### C.2. GROUP DISCUSSION

1. The porters are the symbols of hard work.
2. All human beings are porters on this earth.



**C.3. COMPOSITION**

1. Write a letter to your mother explaining how labour never goes in vain.

**D. WORD STUDY****D.1. Dictionary Use**

1. Write the meanings of the words given below:

rule	a luggage-carrier	curse
under	consisting of two	spot

2. Write the antonym for each of the following words:

load	hill	honest	correct
far	dull	dirty	natural

**D.2. Word Formation**

Read the following lines carefully:

“A twenty-five kilo load on his back spine double bent.”

‘Bent’ is the past form of ‘Bend’; other words derived from bend are as follows:

bend, bent, bends, bendable, bender, bending.

Write as many words derived from the following verbs:

hope      write      do      help      jump

**E. ACTIVITY**

Do a project work on the life of coolies on a Railway station.

**F. TRANSLATION**

Translate the poem into Hindi or any other language that you know.

**C.3. GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. The porter are the symbols of hard work.
2. All human beings are porters like this. ...