

## A Journey to Toling and Tsaparang in Western Tibet.

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### NOTE.

*In the spring of 1912, I was sent to Gartok, the headquarters of the Government to Western Tibet, to inquire into the delinquencies of a former trade agent of the Indian Government. The Rev. Father H. Hosten, of the Society of Jesus, heard of my going, and communicated to me, through our President, a number of notes on the Jesuit Mission at Tsaparang, and some unpublished correspondence of the Fathers, with the request that if possible I should contrive to visit the place. This I was able to do by returning to India across the Tangi-Kuno passes, a straighter though more difficult route than the usual one by the Hindostan-Tibet road and Shipki. As I left Simla at less than ten days' notice, with strict orders to accomplish my errand without loitering and to turn neither to the right hand nor to the left of my route, and as I did not and still do not know any Tibetan, my visit was a short one, and my impressions of Toling and Tsaparang necessarily those of a week-end tripper. My excuse for recording them is that Tsaparang has had not even another week-end tripper, since the Jesuits left it nearly three centuries ago. Much that is now known about the kingdom of Guge and the cities of Toling and Tsaparang, was not published or available when I read a short paper to the Society on the subject in June 1913. Accordingly, in preparing that paper for the Society's Journal (which I have only recently had leisure to do) I have taken the opportunity to re-write it. Acknowledgment of the principal authorities cited is made either in the text or in footnotes.*

*The orthography of Tibetan names presents some difficulty. The correct spelling as exemplified in Francke's "Antiquities of Indian Tibet" cannot be followed or pronounced, by anyone but a Tibetan scholar. I have tried to adopt, save in quotations from other writers, the phonetic spelling used in the same author's "History of Western Tibet."*

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The history of Catholic missionary enterprise in India during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is full of romantic adventures. Of these hardly any is more remarkable than that of the Jesuit Antonio d' Andrada, who in 1624 discovered a kingdom in the deserts of Western Tibet, established a mission and built a church there, and by his own account induced the king and his household to embrace Christianity. Andrada's story is supported by letters from other members of the mission, which apparently remained at Tsaparang for about seventeen years; but several writers have none the less doubted whether it could be true. There was ground, it

must be admitted, for these doubts. From the time that the Jesuits left the country until the other day, no European had visited Tsaparang,<sup>1</sup> the capital where Andrada's king reigned, and where the mission was founded. On the contrary, in 1783 another Jesuit, Ippolito Desideri, traversed Tibet from end to end in an attempt to re-discover the place, but met no one who admitted to having heard of it. The lama history of Tibet<sup>2</sup> has much to tell of a kingdom in those parts, but refers to a period six hundred years before the date of the Jesuit mission, and nowhere describes a king who could be identified with Andrada's patron. Moreover, the capital of this kingdom was not Tsaparang, but Toling, a few miles further up the bank of the Satlej. Tsaparang is not even named in any known Tibetan chronicle. In recent years, however, fresh light has been thrown on the whole subject from a variety of sources. It is the aim of this paper to describe what is now known of the history of Toling and Tsaparang from those sources, to recount briefly Andrada's story, and to supplement it with a narrative of the writer's own journey there in 1912.

The country in which Andrada's king ruled was, and is still, called by the Tibetans, Guge. This name strictly applies to a portion only of the upper basin of the Satlej above Shipki, though some of the kings of Guge actually reigned over a wider area, as we shall see. The known history of Guge begins at about 1000 A.D. Some twenty-five years before that time the whole of Western Tibet had been conquered by a Central Tibetan adventurer from Lhasa, whose name was Kyid De Nima Gon. His territories included Ladākh, now part of the Kashmir State, Spiti and Lahul, now part of the British district of Kangra, and the whole of modern Western Tibet. Before his death De Nima Gon divided his kingdom among his three sons. The particulars of that division are not altogether clear.<sup>3</sup> But at all events one of the new kingdoms was Guge, and the grandson of De Nima Gon's second son was reigning over this tract in his capital at Toling, about the last quarter of the eleventh

<sup>1</sup> In recent years occasional sportsmen have entered the Tsaparang district in pursuit of the *Ovis Ammon*; but for obvious reasons have not described their journeys in print. I believe that none of them ever went to Tsaparang itself, where the presence of a British officer unauthorized might indeed have embarrassed the Tibetan officials.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pag Sam Jonzang*, a history of Tibet from early times to 1745 A.D. By Sumpa Khampo Yeshe Paljor. A summary of this work, in so far as it relates to Guge, was kindly made for me by Negi Amin Chand of Kanam.

<sup>3</sup> Francke (*History of Western Tibet*, chapter VI) allots Ladākh to the eldest brother, Guge and Purang with other sub-Himalayan tracts to the second, and Zangskar, Lahul and Spiti to the third. But he admits (*Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, page 23) that the Zangskar dynasty was shortly afterward reigning at Toling in Guge: he also conjectures that the last two kings of Guge came from a younger dynasty at Daba, the capital of Purang. Amin Chand's version of the *Pag Sam Jonzang* gives the following partition; the eldest son, Mang Yul; the second, Purang; the third, Shangshung or Guge. The Tibetan name for Western Tibet, Nari Khorsum, or the three Provinces, commemorates De Nima Gon's division. The provinces are, Rudok (= Mang Yul?), Guge and Purang. There certainly was a line of kings reigning at Daba, whether they were distinct from, or an offshoot of the Guge dynasty in the first instance, and whatever their connection may have been with the last two Guge kings. Moorcroft (*A Journey to Lake Manasarovara in Undés*, 1812. *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. XII) quotes legends indicating that there were kings of Daba until the Central Tibetan invasion; and that that invasion was actually brought about by an appeal from the last Raja for help against the "Tatars" who had killed his father. He says that the rajahs of Daba were Surajbansi Rajputs. His account may be compared with the opening words of the Treaty made by Geldan Tsang with the Raja of Bashahr. "When the inhabitants of Nari Khorsum were still subject to the power of the lords of Guge, the king of Ladākh was wont to subdue the people of Nari Khorsum." Moorcroft's "Tatars" may have been the Ladakhis, or, possibly, the people of the neighbouring kingdom of Guge. Possibly, again, the kingdoms of Guge and Purang were at that time amalgamated, and the Daba legends refer to the last king of Guge and a son of his. The connection between these two kingdoms is almost as obscure as their origin.

century. This king, whose name was Khore, abdicated and became a monk. He is better known as Yeshe Hod, the name which he took after his abdication.

His period is famous in the annals of Tibet as one of religious activity and reform. Disgusted with the corrupt Tantrik Buddhism, which was then prevalent in Guge, he is said to have applied himself earnestly to the introduction of a purer and more authentic form of worship. He encouraged the immigration of Buddhist pandits from Kashmir, and it was from among their ranks that he obtained his foremost helper, the Lotsa Lama, Rinchhen Tsangpo, greatest of Western Tibetan saints, who was born in Guge of Kashmiri parents, probably about the beginning of the eleventh century. These two men founded many new monasteries in Western Tibet, and built a temple with a golden roof at Toling itself. The approximate date given by Sarat Chandra Das<sup>1</sup> for the construction of this temple is 1025 A.D. Rinchhen Tsangpo in time became the spiritual leader and chief ecclesiastical dignitary of the country under the kings who succeeded Yeshe Hod on the throne. He and his pupils translated many religious works from the Sanskrit, and earned the name of Lotsawa, that is, interpreter or translator. Rinchhen Tsangpo further qualified himself for this title, which is now peculiarly his, by compiling a Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary.

Yeshe Hod twice sent missions into India to study Buddhism, and to invite learned Buddhist divines to come to Guge. The first mission was a failure. Out of twenty lamas only three returned, among whom was Rinchhen Tsangpo. The second mission was addressed to the most renowned Indian pandit of the day, Atisha the Bengali, before whom the emissaries appeared bearing a great lump of unwrought gold. Atisha refused to accompany them to Guge, observing that there could be only two good reasons for his doing so, the gold, and the spiritual welfare of the Tibetans. He did not care for the one, and felt himself unequal to achieving the other. Disappointing as the answer was, it did not quench the enthusiasm of Yeshe Hod. In the hope that a larger offering would prove successful, he set out in person on a journey through Western Tibet to collect more gold. But in the course of his tour this unfortunate reformer fell into the hands of the king of Garlog, whom Sarat Chandra Das conjectures to have been either the Raja of Garhwal or the Raja of Kanauj. Amin Chand's version, however, makes him out the king of certain mountain tribes to the north-west: and Francke identifies Garlog with Turkestan. Whoever he was, he imprisoned Yeshe Hod, and held him to ransom for a life-size statue of his person in gold. Yeshe Hod's sons and great nephews, one of whom was by now King of Guge, extracted yet another contribution of bullion from their subjects, but it was found insufficient for a replica of Yeshe Hod's head alone. The King of Garlog accordingly refused to release his prisoner. Yeshe Hod, who was of the martyr strain, charged his followers not to amass more gold for his own rescue, but to use what they had and as much more as they could scrape together in a final effort to bring Atisha from India. Not long afterwards he died in prison.

Atisha did eventually come to Tibet by way of Nepal, and remained for three

<sup>1</sup> "Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow." Calcutta, 1898.

years, teaching and diffusing a general air of sanctity at Toling. It is said<sup>1</sup> that Rinchhen Tsangpo refused at first to rise from his abbot's chair and pay respect to Atisha. But when he found that the Bengali was able to recite the name and attributes of every idol in the monastery temples, and offer appropriate praise to each, he acknowledged his superiority and did obeisance to him. There are at the present day several thousands of statues of different gods and goddesses at Toling, and if there was anything like the same number in Atisha's time, his performance must have been very creditable.

The successors of Yeshe Hod as Kings of Guge were Song Ne, who died a few days after taking over the government, Lha De his son, and Hod De his grandson. Hod De's two younger brothers, Jangchub Hod and Shiwa Hod, took vows of celibacy. It was they who with their brother brought Atisha to Guge during Hod De's reign. Jangchub Hod is sometimes referred to as if he were king, and seems to have held a special position very similar to that of Yeshe Hod. On leaving Toling, Atisha went to Central Tibet, and died there ten years afterwards at the age of seventy-three. Hod De was succeeded by his son Tse De, in whose reign and under whose auspices a grand Buddhist synod was held at Toling, and attended by pandits from Central Tibet. This was the last noteworthy event in the golden age of Toling, which corresponded more or less with the eleventh century of our era. It synchronized also with the life of Rinchhen Tsangpo who attained the great age of ninety-five, and may be said to have reached its zenith in the visit of Atisha. The historian, a Central Tibetan Lama, has hardly anything to relate of the Kings of Guge after its close. The reason of his silence is probably this. The Buddhist revival associated with Atisha's name had its origin, as we have seen, in Western, not in Central, Tibet. Kashmiri pandits played a great part in it, and other sages from India, who need not be mentioned here, came to Guge, not Lhasa, in the first instance. Atisha himself entered Western Tibet through Nepal, where he spent a year, and it was only after three years' residence at Toling that he departed for Central Tibet. When the reformation, which Atisha personifies, had spread to the valley of the Brahmaputra, it took root there independently, and soon lost its connection with the country of its birth. At any rate the history of Guge becomes, after Tse De's reign, little more than a genealogical tree. There are nine kings of the De dynasty subsequent to Tse De, and they are followed by nine kings of a Mal dynasty, with very un-Tibetan sounding names, such as Jinda Mal, Kalan Mal, Pertab Mal, and Prati Mal. One of the "De" kings has a name, Dragpa De, synonymous with the last part of the name of Andrado's convert. But as he is only the eighth king after Tse De, he can scarcely be identified with a man who was reigning in 1624. Francke gathers<sup>2</sup> (but does not mention his authority for doing so) that on the extinction of the Mal dynasty, a member of a junior branch of the De dynasty was re-imported from the neighbouring kingdom of Purang. I was able to collect information which to some degree tallies with this conjecture, and

<sup>1</sup> Amin Chand is my authority. He may be quoting from the Pag Sam Jonzang or from the Life of Atisha. Sarat Chandra Das does not mention this incident in the work already cited.

<sup>2</sup> "Antiquities of Indian Tibet," Vol. 1, page 23.

shall refer to it again later. It is enough to note here that the Tibetan history mentions no kings of Guge subsequent to the Mal dynasty, and that Andrada's king certainly did not belong to that dynasty.

Such, in brief, was the previous history of the country towards which Andrada was making his way from Agra, in the spring of 1624. He himself, of course, had no knowledge even of the existence of Guge. But it was commonly believed at that time that, in the undefined territory lying north-east of India and vaguely called Cathay, there had once been great and prosperous Christian churches, and that remnants of them still survived. These rumours, of which the legend of Prester John is the chief example, were doubtless based on travellers' descriptions of Buddhist monastic orders and ritual,<sup>1</sup> which in many particulars closely resemble those of Christian churches. When therefore the Jesuit Fathers of Lahoré, with the permission of the Provincial at Goa, organized an expedition, consisting of Andrada, one other Father, and two attendants, for "Cathay," it was in the hope rather of re-discovering ancient churches than of converting the heathen.

The party attached themselves to a pilgrim caravan bound for Badrinath and the sources of the Ganges. Fifteen days after leaving Delhi they arrived at Srinagar in Garhwal, whence their route lay over the Mana Pass into Tibet. They were forced to cross at a very early season of the year, for if they had stayed longer in Garhwal, they might have been stopped altogether by the Raja, who suspected that the Jesuits had designs on the Tibetan trade. The Fathers therefore pushed on speedily, and after encountering fearful hardships (Andrada himself was incapacitated for a time by snow-blindness), struggled over the range, and descended upon the high plateau beyond. There they found themselves in the province of Guge, the territory of a king whose capital was at Tsaparang in the gorge of the Satlej, three marches away. The appearance of the Fathers excited the liveliest interest, for no such foreigners had been seen in that country before. The king sent a deputation to meet and escort them to the capital. When they arrived, they found the whole town awaiting them, and as the little procession passed up the street leading to the citadel, the queen and her ladies were seen watching eagerly from a balcony. The king, like the Raja of Garhwal, at first mistook the Fathers for traders, whom he was as eager to welcome as the Raja had been to turn them back. Indeed, when he heard that they were only missionaries, he refused to see them for two days. But he had already swallowed his disappointment, if it were such, when they came before him. With great affability, he introduced them to his queen, and ordered that they should be well housed and fed. This, notwithstanding the efforts of an evilly disposed Kashmiri interpreter to discredit Andrada, and misrepresent what he said. The next morning the Fathers were summoned again, and there began a series of daily theological discussions, which lasted all the time that they were there. The effect upon the king was most striking. After twenty-five days Andrada, having no authority to remain

<sup>1</sup> Inaugurated by Tsongkapa, the great reformer of Buddhism, who lived at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries. Wilson mentions a legend that he was taught by a "long-nosed lama from the west" to account for the similarities in Buddhist and Catholic ritual.

in Tibet, announced that he must go. The king consented with reluctance, and took an oath of the Fathers that they would return the next year. Before they left he gave them a charter, which began thus: "We, the King of Potente"—that is, Bhutan, one of the Indian names for Tibet—"rejoicing at the arrival of Father Antonio the Feringhi in our land, take him for our chief Lama, and give him full authority to teach the holy law to our people. We shall not permit any to molest him in this, but shall issue orders that he be furnished with a site whereon to build a house of prayer, and with whatever further help he may need." The document concludes by earnestly beseeching the Great Father, that is the Provincial at Goa, to send the said Father Antonio back next year.

With such a passport, Andrada easily obtained the required permission from his superior. In the summer of 1625, he recrossed the Himalaya. During his absence the king had had a number of victories, which were ascribed to the auspicious influence of the Jesuit. It was remarked that the commander-in-chief, who was the king's brother-in-law, had gone into the campaign wearing on his breast a cross which Andrada had given to him. The return of the missionaries was a triumphal progress. They were escorted with honour for the last four marches, their personal property was exempted from all dues, and they were lodged in one of the royal palaces. The king was about to start on another expedition. When he returned a month later, once more victorious, he applied himself in real earnest to the study of Christianity. This naturally brought about a conflict with the lamas, who were beginning very naturally to feel jealous. It was however in vain that they persuaded the king to retire for several weeks to a monastery, and to exercise himself there on the mysteries of his own religion. He went unwillingly, and invited Andrada to see him often in his cell.

Andrada's narrative<sup>1</sup> is a valuable commentary on Western Tibetan manners and customs. In his account of the country, its savage climate and barren soil, the superstitions of its scanty and priest-ridden population and the appalling cruelty of the government can be recognized the mark of absolute authenticity and withal of an observant and sympathetic mind. Here are extracts describing his passages at arms with the lamas.

"Everybody resorts to them to know the future, including the king, although he pays little attention to their words, and much to ours . . . . Still, on state occasions he continues to consult them. Once, wishing to know what had happened to one of his armies, he sent for a certain lama who was held in great esteem . . . . This man made various diagrams, from which he affirmed that on a certain date, which he gave, the army had been victorious, and was by that time returning heavily laden with spoils. Seeing what a charlatan the man was, I turned to explain to the king the falsity of his pretensions. I pointed out that he could not have arrived at this result by diagrams, but only by witchcraft, and the help of the devil. To which the lama replied hotly that he held such things in utter abhorrence: all that he had

<sup>1</sup> In a letter written from Tsaparang in August 1626, and published in Italian at Rome in the Jesuit series of letters from China and Tibet, 1628. I am indebted to Pather Hosten for all the facts about the mission which are not derived from this letter.

said was contained in his book, the precepts of which were such, that in following them he could neither deceive others, nor be deceived himself. A few days later, however, news arrived that the army was not only not victorious, but, having found the enemy too numerous to be attacked with safety, had not even engaged him. Upon this the king was much annoyed, and abused the lamas, saying that they made these statements in order to obtain alms, without knowing in the least what they were talking about.

On one occasion Andrada fell ill owing to the chilliness of his lodgings. Whereupon "the king offered me a chamber in his palace, but as I refused to accept it on my account for various reasons which can be understood, he told me that there was attached to the palace a chamber of his priest's, which was very warm, but which he did not offer me as it was haunted by evil spirits. It was not inhabited, but had been used as a store-room for several years. I answered that if he had offered it me, I should willingly have accepted, and gone there at once, and that I was not afraid of evil spirits, which would have taken fright and fled as soon as they saw the Holy Cross. The good king feared that evil might happen to me, and would not consent. But on being reassured, he had the place emptied and set in order, and made it over to me, not without some trepidation. Yet it pleased God that I should not be molested by anything at all. The king, seeing this result, said to a number of the lamas, 'You ascribe great virtue to your holy water which you sprinkle over houses . . . . I tell you for certain that it has no more virtue than the water which flows in the river yonder.'

The king's enthusiasm for the Fathers was unbounded, and he never missed an opportunity of impressing their excellencies on the lamas. On one occasion Andrada interceded for a Garhwali thief, who was in prison. The man was set free, but returned to his old ways immediately. He was re-captured, and subjected, according to Tibetan custom, to revolting tortures, from which he died. Andrada's critics jeered at him, and said that if he had not got the thief out of prison, the latter would never have suffered torture and execution. But the king, who was present, replied that the Father was carrying out his duties as a Father, which was just what the lamas neglected to do. If the thief refused to profit by it, so much the worse for him. "In truth," writes Andrada ecstatically, "one cannot say too often how highly this great man esteemed and protected us."

He dwells with gentle irony on the lama's appetites. "They were astonished," he says, "at the severity of our fasting. They have a particular fast on which they eat only one meal, and do not drink tea, which is for them a great mortification. On that day they do not talk at all, but use gestures. . . . . On ordinary fasts they break-fast twice in the morning, eat meat at midday, and thereafter sweets, milk, raisins *et cetera*. They call it *fasting*, because they eat meat only once in the day, though they drink tea in huge quantities as usual. And they say that they do God a great service by this tea-drinking, inasmuch as it loosens their tongues and enables them the better to glorify the divine majesty." Andrada however admits that he himself found fasting extremely difficult in the climate of Western Tibet, and would have failed altogether, but for direct help from Providence. He also excuses the lamas

reasonably enough. "It happened one day that finding myself in the house of the Grand Lama, we discussed the question of fasting. He opined that their excessive eating of meat was due to the lack of fish and fresh vegetables. Some lamas, he said, in order to make their fast stricter eat only very little meat. In Utsang (Central Tibet) they abstain from it altogether. They find it hard to live on nothing but bread, peas and turnips in winter-time. Even these they would not have if they did not store them at the right season, and preserve them for their needs."

One day Andrada rode with the king to a city not more than half a day's journey from Tsaparang, on a visit to the king's mother who had gone there on a pilgrimage. Here he says, "there are many temples and five hundred lamas. But on that day a large number had also collected from the surrounding country, so that there were more than two thousand assembled. We found them ranged two and two together, just like our monks in processions, all chanting after their manner, and the more important of them carrying various insignia in their hands. On seeing them the king dismounted instantly, and made three reverences to the community on a silk cloth which they had spread for him . . . . After that, the gathering made six reverences to the king in the same fashion. Such is the respect in which His Majesty holds his lamas when they are in conclave. When they are alone he heeds none of them, save only the Grand Lama, his brother."

Although Andrada does not say so, this place is Toling. It is worth noting that there were as many as five hundred lamas there in his day.

Of angels he says, "Theirs are variously represented, some beautiful, and some hideous, fighting with demons." The notion of bestowing a repulsive appearance to St. George as well as the dragon would hardly occur to a western painter, but I saw more than one such group among the frescoes of Toling. He continues, "I saw one angel, however, depicted as a young man wearing a breast-plate, and threatening the devil, whom he had beneath his feet, with a sword. Him they call the principal angel, and great interpreter between God and man. He would therefore appear to be the Archangel Michael, except that he has neither scaly armour nor wings." This can be none other than Rinchen Tsangpo himself, who is credited with the suppression of a demon named Sang Gyi Kargyal, and whose title of Lotsawa means, as we have seen, an interpreter. He is in fact the Lotsawa *par excellence*, and his later incarnations, who enjoy in Western Tibet a sanctity not much inferior to that of the Tashi Lama, or even of the Dalai Lama himself, have always borne the name. Thus Alexander Gerard writes in 1821: "The third in order" (after the Dalai and Tashi Lamas) "is Lochawa Rimboche. These three personages . . . are never supposed to die, but, on the dissolution of the body, the spirit is thought to take possession of another tenement."

Notice the underlying comparison with Catholicism throughout the last few passages. Andrada is still searching for traces of a lost Christian church.

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<sup>1</sup> "Account of Koonawur in the Himalaya," London, 1841, page 121. In the same passage Gerard seems to suggest that the line of incarnations was only forty years old in his time. He may have been wrongly informed, or have misunderstood his informant. To-day, at all events, Western Tibet traces the line back to Rinchen Tsangpo.



In course of time the king and most of the members of his family were baptized. In April 1626 he and his brother-in-law came to Andrada, and said that the moment had arrived for building a church in Tsaparang. A site was found, and the same month saw the laying of the foundation-stone. Next morning news came that two of the king's armies had won victories over petty Rajas, and that his chief enemy, the Raja of Garhwal, was dead. Andrada pondered long that day on God's mercy, which "granted to the king the tidings that he most desired, on the day after he had resolved to consecrate a church to God."

The church was a small but pleasing structure of *kachchā* brick. All the royal household gave something towards it, and the king especially disgusted the lamas by pulling down houses belonging to his father and grandfather to provide the necessary timber. Nor can the Lamas have been much pleased when a giant cross was erected on a summit above the town, proclaiming to all and sundry the king's change of faith.

Other Fathers were sent in time to Tsaparang, and the mission prospered. Then, however, the Grand Lama, who was the king's brother, died, and Andrada himself was called away to take up the office of Provincial at Goa. The two men seem to have been good friends, and, so long as they were together, to have averted anything like a serious collision between the rival creeds. But now the king, egged on by his military brother-in-law, determined to make the lamas' position impossible. He confiscated their estates and reduced their monasteries, endeavoured to prevent novices from joining the order, and even went so far as to command every existing lama to abjure his vows of celibacy and take a wife. This seems to have been the last straw. The angry monks appealed to the King of Ladakh, the suzerain of Western Tibet, to come to their aid. He, nothing loth, invaded Guge in 1629, as we learn in one of the later letters from the mission. The King of Tsaparang was deserted and betrayed by his subjects, and left to defend himself with a mere handful of followers in his citadel. After a short siege he was forced to capitulate, carried off a prisoner, and never heard of in Tsaparang again. The King of Ladakh bore the Fathers no grudge, and did not interfere with them. The lamas had probably given him the pretext for an expedition that he would in any case have made. But the missionaries' power at Tsaparang was now broken. The lamas lost no time in stirring up the people against them, and their converts fell away. Several of them returned to India, and those that remained were persecuted. They withdrew themselves with difficulty, one, at least, dying in Tsaparang, and another in Bashahr on the way back to India. Soon after 1640 there were no Jesuits left in Western Tibet.

We have now to identify this king, and the other persons mentioned in the Jesuit's story, as far as we can, from the Tibetan side. Our authorities are Francke's History of Western Tibet, and two inscriptions discovered by the same scholar in Spiti in 1909, with his notes on them.<sup>1</sup> The King of Ladakh was Sengge Namgyal, who reigned from about 1590 to 1635, and made two expeditions against Guge, one

<sup>1</sup> The second volume of "Antiquities of Indian Tibet," which will contain these inscriptions, is not yet published. I have a manuscript translation of them, and some notes by Francke from which I have ventured to quote.

in his youth, and the other towards the end of his life. In the latter, according to the Ladakhi Chronicle, "he deposed the chief, the owner. Then he seized Tsaparang, and the *Los Long*." "The expression *Los Long*," says Francke in a note containing this passage, and communicated to me by Father Hosten, "is of particular interest, for it means 'the really blind one.' It evidently refers to the Christian King of Guge, who had been blind enough not to see the beauty of Buddhism. The Tibetans often use the word 'blind' in similar connections."

The inscriptions are still more informing. The first refers to two chiefs, father and son, of Drankhar, the capital of Spiti, who were subjects of the King of Tsaparang. It mentions a great "king of faith," by name Shri (?) Trashi Dragpa De, who resided "on the summit of the great palace of Tsaparang, to the right of the murmuring Satej" (that is, on the right hand as one approaches from Spiti, Tsaparang is on the left bank of the river. It speaks of a time when this king's "helmet was high," and, apparently, of a later period, when he was wandering about, and was helped by the two chiefs referred to above. The second inscription, only a fragment of which was taken down by Francke, also mentions the great king of faith Trashi Dragpa De, and contains the significant words "Graciously forgive" (or "Thou who makest clear") all the apostasy and darkness at the great palace of Tsaparang Tse. Francke's discoveries have thus vindicated Andrada, firstly, by giving us the name of his king, which is nowhere mentioned in Tibetan chronicles, nor in any of the mission letters, and secondly by establishing the fact that the apostate king did reign at Tsaparang. These discoveries however were not published when I was in Western Tibet in 1912. The Abbot of Kanam in Bashahr, who is the present Lotsawa and successor in incarnation of Rinchen Tsangpo, told me that Tsaparang had been the winter capital of Guge, and that Daba, the chief place in the province of Purang to the east, was the summer capital. Tsaparang used to be, he said, a large city, with ten thousand inhabitants. More than this the abbot did not know. The Changsud, or lay manager, of the Toling monastery said that the last king of Tsaparang and the king of Daba were brothers, and that the king of Tsaparang was conquered by the King of Ladakh, who thereupon absorbed the province of Guge into his own kingdom.<sup>1</sup> These statements, though conflicting somewhat, bear out Francke's view to the extent of showing that there was, at any rate, a connection between the ruling houses of Daba and Tsaparang. The Toling monks said that the last two kings of Guge were father and son, and reigned at Tsaparang; all previous kings had reigned at Toling. There is a temple in Tsaparang in which there are two central figures of the seated Buddha, one behind the other, instead of the single principal image which is usual. My guide at Tsaparang, a peasant of the place, told me that the two kings of Tsaparang, the father and son, had each set up one of these idols. The last king is affirmed on all sides to have built the iron chain suspension bridge which spans the Satej at Toling, and the story of his siege and fall is common knowledge there as well as at Tsaparang. I asked the Toling monks for the king's

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<sup>1</sup> Compare this with Moorcroft's story of the King of Daba in the note on page 178 of this paper.

name; they answered "Chodak-po," which Francke told me is merely a dynastic title, meaning "Great Lord." It must have been in general use, because it is also mentioned in one of the letters from the mission, in the only passage of the whole Jesuit correspondence in which the king is named; and the monks also told it me without being prompted. I then inquired what was the name of the Grand Lama, the king's brother, but obtained nothing more satisfactory than "Jang Chub," who was, you may remember, the brother of Lhade and the host of Atisha. I am not sure whether this obvious error arose out of mutual misunderstanding between the lamas and myself, or whether, as is quite likely, they confuse the period of Yeshe Hod and Rinchen Tsangpo, of which they have a written history, with the second great age of Guge, of which they have none. In either case it looks as though "Chodak-po" were a designation usual to the kings of Guge. The Abbott of Kanam and the Changsud of Toling alike knew, or professed to know, nothing of the king's conversion to Christianity, and their ignorance was shared by such of the peasants of Toling and Tsaparang as I was able to interrogate. Realizing that it would be useless to put the direct question to the monks of Toling, I asked them whether they had any tradition that the king whom they called Chodak-po had persecuted their order. The shot went further than I anticipated. It produced a noisy altercation; and my interpreter, the Trade Agent, who listened carefully, said that one or two had suggested that there was something wrong with the king's religious beliefs, and that others were violently repudiating this, presumably with an eye to me. I give this dialogue for what it is worth: it was conducted with about twenty clamorous and not altogether friendly monks through an Urdu-speaking interpreter. If however I have reported it correctly, it illustrates a characteristic of Tibetan historiography, and helps to show why Andrada's story remained so long unconfirmed. The priest chroniclers of the Old Testament are content to write down a king who dabbles, as did Ahab for example, in a foreign religion as one of those that "did evil in the sight of the Lord," and to paint his career accordingly as black as they can. The lama's revenge in a similar case is at once more subtle and more thorough. He omits the monarch's name and doings from his written histories: he obliterates all trace of him from such inscriptions as he can find and damage: and he persuades the common people never to speak of him again. Francke instances three separate princes of Ladakh, who either embraced or showed leanings towards Islam, and whose very names have been suppressed by the lama historians in consequence.<sup>1</sup> The boycott of the Tsaparang king seems to have extended to his father as well, with the result that a whole dynasty and the name of its capital city have fallen out of the record.

Some time after the deposition of the Tsaparang King, a son of the King of Ladakh, by name Indra Bodhi Namgyal, was made vassal King of Guge. There are no traditions of him, so far as I know, in Toling or Tsaparang. It seems likely that he was a nominal and absentee ruler, and that the King of Ladakh preferred

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<sup>1</sup> History of Western Tibet, pages 109-110.

to keep the control of the province in his own hands. After Sengge Namgyal's death in about 1635, a period of anarchy and confusion may have set in. Twelve years later came the invasion of Geldan Tsang, as a consequence of which the whole of Western Tibet except modern Ladakh, Spiti and Lahul came eventually under the Dalai Lama, and was governed, as it is to this day, by officials from Lhasa. Guge proper is now a Dzong or district (literally fort), under a Dzongpon or district official whose headquarters are at Tsaparang. The adjacent province of Purang is similarly under the Dzongpon of Daba.

We do not hear again of Tsaparang for some time. The Jesuit Ippolito Desideri travelled through Tibet in 1715, hoping to rediscover the place, and, if possible, to revive the mission. He started *via* Kashmir, apparently mistaking Andrada's Srinagar in Garhwal for the better known city on the Jhelum, whither he went accordingly. From there he marched through Leh along the Indus Valley asking every one whom he met for Tsaparang. Somehow he missed it, though it was even then the headquarters of a district, and lies not more than five marches from Gartok, through which he must have passed. It is conceivable that his intention of restoring the mission was suspected or known, and that he was on that account deliberately misled. At any rate he reached the head waters of the Indus, crossed the divide by the Mansarowar Lake, and went on eastwards down the valley of the Brahmaputra, still asking for Tsaparang. In the end he reached Lhasa, where finding a Capuchin mission temporarily vacant—Tibet, it must be remembered, was not closed to Europeans much before 1816—he concluded that he had at last discovered Andrada's city and church. From this conviction the Capuchins, who returned soon afterwards, were unable to dislodge him; and the question whether Lhasa was or was not Tsaparang was actually referred to Rome. The Pope gave his decision against Desideri, who thereupon gracefully withdrew.

After him it was nearly two hundred years before a European visited either Toling or Tsaparang. The late General Rawling, on his journey from Lhasa to Simla through Gartok in 1904, digressed from his route in the depth of winter to spend one day in Toling, and has given a description, admirable as his always were, of the place itself and the surrounding country. He did not however see Tsaparang. Sven Hedin passed through Toling on his way to Simla in 1908; but the fame of that explorer had preceded him to such purpose, that he was forbidden to approach the monastery, and compelled to pitch his tents in a ravine half a mile away. He too did not visit Tsaparang. Tibetan research might have profited immensely if Francke could have gone there in 1909, as he wished; but he was not allowed to penetrate beyond Shipki. Three years afterwards an official errand gave me the opportunity denied to him.

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I left Simla on April 22nd, 1912, and on the 9th of May reached Kanam in Bashahr, four marches beyond Chini. The monastery contains a famous library

where the Hungarian Czöma di Körös lived and studied about ninety years ago. I asked for recollections of him, and found that he was remembered as a Musalman. At the time of my visit an even more interesting and much older personage than Czöma di Körös himself was staying in the monastery. This was the Lotsa Lama, now in his twelfth incarnation or more from Rinchhen Tsangpo. Kanam is now his principal monastery, but he owns others in Spiti. Toling has a separate Abbot or Khanpo of its own. Several generations ago (the Lotsa Lama could not say exactly when), it ceased to be controlled by Rinchhen Tsangpo's successors, and came under the authority of the Dalai Lama. The Lotsawa is always re-incarnated somewhere in Guge or Kanawar, but he seems to live generally at Tashi Lumpo, the seat of the Tashi Lama near Shigatze. Gerard, in the passage about the Lotsa Lama from which I have already quoted, mentions three successive incarnations (the last a double one) of his time, all of whom were summoned in due course by the Tashi Lama to Tashi Lumpo, and made their residence there. The present incarnation was the Tashi Lama's tutor and spiritual guide, and lived for twenty-nine years at Tashi Lumpo. Sven Hedin, while at Shigatze, met this lama, whom he describes as being very anxious to return to Western Tibet. The Tashi Lama would not however let him go. The Lotsawa eventually obtained leave and came to Kanam in 1912. His journey through Western Tibet had been one long triumph and no little source of profit. The villagers for miles round hastened to throw themselves and most of their possessions at his feet, and one shepherd, who had no money to hand, is said to have offered him five hundred sheep. It was estimated that he went back to Tashi Lumpo where, by the way, his influence with the Tashi Lama diminished considerably as the result of his excursion, with sixty thousand rupees—more coin than one would imagine to have existed in the country. He was evidently a man of wealth, and his baggage mules were finer than any recently seen in those parts. The veneration in which this lama is held in Western Tibet is clearly due to the fame of the first incarnation, and to the circumstance that every succeeding Lotsawa has been a native of the district. If we consider also that the line claims to stretch back to the eleventh century, while the incarnations of the Dalai and Tashi Lamas date from the fifteenth only, the great prestige of the Lotsawa is not really so very astonishing.

I had a long talk with him on a balcony of the monastery at Kanam. He is a handsome, saintly-looking priest with charming manners, and was dressed in robes of apricot and black flowered silk, and long black velvet boots. His knowledge of the history of Guge was drawn, as one might expect, from the lama chronicles, and from the Tibetan Life of Atisha, copies of which he possessed. He had seen Tsaparang, which he described as having been in former times a very large city with a population of ten thousand. He is interested in Christianity, but he had heard nothing of Andrada or of the mission in Tsaparang.

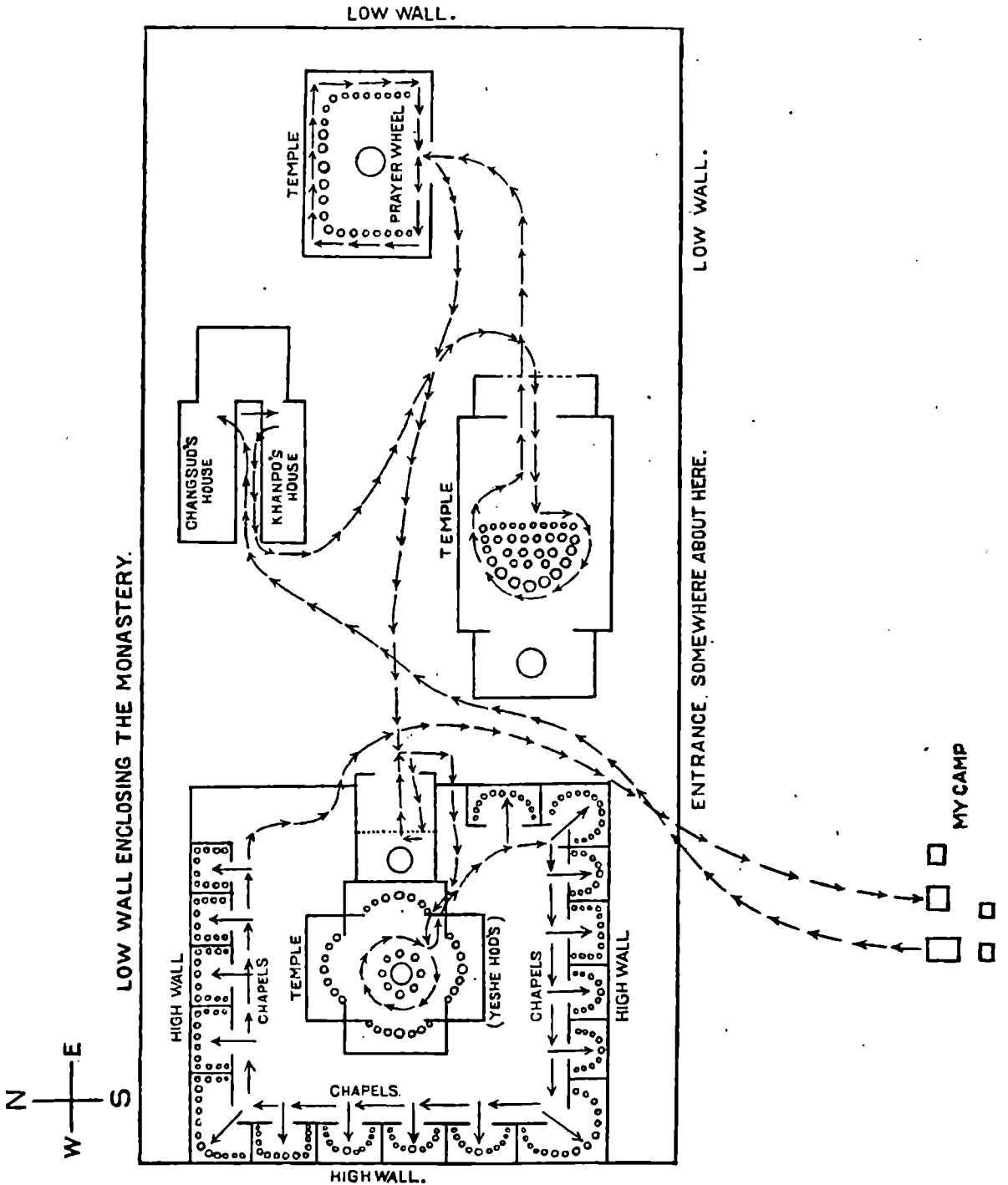
Beyond Shipki my line of march ran through a part of Guge. At Shangtze, seven days after crossing the Satelej, I met the Dzongpon of Tsaparang who had come across from his headquarters to see me. After Shangtze I left Guge for a

while, to return to it when I had finished my business at Gartok. On June 14th, I started homewards, striking out across the Bogo La for Toling. I had with me the British Trade Agent, two Gurkha orderlies, one police constable from the escort which I had brought from Simla, some chaprassis of the Agency, and servants. Three marches brought me over the Pass and across a wide sloping plain to Dongpo, a village lying at about 13,000 ft. in the upper end of a ravine leading to the Satlej. The village is part of the Toling monastery estate. From Dongpo the path follows a *nala*, which soon narrows, deepens and loses all sign of vegetation. We had left the plateau, and were re-entering the Satlej country. The weirdness of this neighbourhood has been picturesquely described by General Rawling and by Moorcroft before him. It was once a lake, the bed of which in the course of ages gradually silted up. Through the sandy strata the river's tributaries have carved for themselves gorges of immense depth, which meander aimlessly in all directions. Their edges are crumbled into shapes so elaborate and grotesque that they seem more like freak buildings than the work of nature. Now and again when in this country, I rubbed my eyes to see a real castle in ruins, its jagged outline merged indistinguishably in the ridge from which it sprang.<sup>1</sup> Often, at the bottom of the *nala* by the stream, there were boulders incredibly passed on slender columns of earth, like the glacier-tables of the Alps, but ten times as high.<sup>2</sup> It seemed an interminable march, but at last the path crawled out into the Satlej valley. The river bed is here a scorching waste of rocks and dust about a mile wide. Fantastic precipices bound the view on all sides. The monastery of Toling stands opposite, on a shelf overlooking the Satlej. Its long crimson walls, set off by a few brilliant poplars in full leaf, its rows of white pure *hortens*, and, high above, its gold roof sparkling in the haze, struck just that crowning note of unreality which the whole scene demanded. On the plateau I had had the sensation, common in Tibet, of wandering in another world. At Toling I thought that I was dreaming as well; and if Rinchen Tsangpo himself, in black and yellow satin, had appeared then and there, grappling with his dragon on the bank of the river, I doubt whether I, or any of us, for that matter, would have been surprised.

What did take us not a little aback was the heat. True, the Satlej Valley is notorious as a sun-trap throughout its course in the hills; but at 12,000 ft. above sea level in these latitudes one feels aggrieved at a temperature rising well over 100°, even in June. We reached the Satlej at about eleven o'clock in a melting condition, and were exasperated to find that the bridge lay, not in front of us, but a mile and a half upstream. This is an iron chain suspension bridge, the only one of its kind, I believe, in Western Tibet. Nain Singh, the survey pandit who saw it in 1865, brought back a tradition that it was built by Alexander the Great, of all people.

<sup>1</sup> There are two such ruins, for instance, at Nu, close to the Satlej, on the way between Shipki and Gartok. Local tradition has it that they were built by the Moas; but Nu possesses a more ancient civilization in the Amazon kingdom which, according to Chinese historians, once existed there (see Atkinson's Gazetteer of the Himalayan Districts of the United Provinces, Vol. II, pp. 452, 457, 458). One would like to assign these great stone castles to that kingdom, but so attractive a conjecture must almost certainly be incorrect.

<sup>2</sup> I have in mind especially the Meiyang *nala*, two marches from Shipki, where there are crowds of these tables.







General Rawling was informed that it was the work of the last King of Western Tibet, that is, of Guge; and the Toling monks told me the same. Rawling's personal opinion from an examination of the bridge was that it was then less than a hundred years old. But Gerard mentions its existence in 1821,<sup>1</sup> and would probably have heard if it had been a recent structure in his time. On the other hand this kind of bridge seems to be Central Tibetan in origin, and the Toling bridge may therefore have been built after the invasion of Geldan Tsang. It is made of stout timbers, which are now however rickety and warped. My yaks were not taken across it, but forded the river at Toling. I looked round the bridge and the rocks close by for inscriptions, but did not notice any.

The next morning the Changsud, the lay manager of the monastery and its estates, came to see me. He told me some facts which I have already mentioned about the history of Guge. After breakfast I returned his visit. He has a comfortable house in the precincts, but was voluble in dispraise of the climate, as being unbearably cold in winter, and intensely hot in summer. I presented the monastery with money, and was rewarded by being shown round the temples very thoroughly. First, however, I was taken to the Khanpo's house. The Khanpo himself was away on a pilgrimage. When in residence, he sits all day in a large handsome room, on a railed dais; before him on a table are a hundred and eight brass, or possibly silver-gilt, bowl lamps. There is also in the room a cabinet containing some very beautiful gold or gilt statuettes, and the Khanpo's spare hats. From there we went round the temples. The first was evidently the principal place of worship, living room, and refectory of the lamas. We entered through a verandah, at each end of which was a horrific black stucco demon. The portals of all the large temples are guarded by similar figures. Inside was a huge gloomy hall, its ceiling supported by a great number of lofty wooden pillars. Long benches, on which the lamas sit reciting prayers and drinking tea, ran down the middle of the room. Silk banners and robes were hung in profusion, and on various parts of the floor were stacked piles of books, with many printing blocks of carved wood. An odour of greasy tea hung about the place. At the far end stood a platform, on which were mounted large gilded idols, and, at the back of all, a gigantic seated Buddha, also gilded. A sky-light above threw into prominence the cold repellent smile of its primitive features, and shed a half light on the grouped statues beneath. One of these, a gilt figure of a female deity, probably Tara, about eight feet high, was not without beauty. There were many other images of deotas and chortens, some of brass, others copper—or perhaps silver-gilt, ornamented with turquoise. Behind the head of the central Buddha there was a gilt screen forming a sort of reredos to the idol, very richly carved. We made the tour of this and all the other temples in the conventional manner, walking round behind the images from left to right. The passages are almost pitch dark, and there is nothing to guide one, but the echoing footfall of the monks and the sound of their monotonous chant. In the first temple the lamas jostled round me

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<sup>1</sup> Account of Koonawur, page 35.

in a rather threatening way, being apparently afraid of my dodging back and looting some object from the temple, though that would have been quite impossible. I heard one of my Gurkhas mutter an order to the other to stick close to me and have his *kukri* ready, and I must say that the faces of some of the lamas were unpleasant enough to justify almost any precaution. Exactly behind the main Buddha in this temple was a great recess containing a yet more colossal Buddha of gilt stucco.

From here we went to another large square building, conspicuous also for its wooden columns. But it was not nearly so high as the first temple, and was well lighted; it looked more like a museum than a temple. There was the usual cluster of divinities round a seated Buddha at one end, but there were also great numbers of stucco figures and of stumpy clay bricks bearing images in relief. Hundreds of these bricks were quite small, and were laid out on tables. Precisely similar ones may be found packed into the pedestal of any brass or copper Tibetan idol. Others were much larger. In the centre of the room stood an enormous prayer-wheel like a great barrel, draped with flags. The feature of this temple was, however, the frescoes which covered its walls. The main scheme of decoration was a row of Avatars seated on lotus thrones, surrounded by representations of beasts and birds. The intervening spaces, and those above and below the principal figures, were filled with designs of elephants, horses, birds, and various scenes. There were groups of saints fighting with devils, as Andrada records, and the wall, in which the entrance was, displayed the usual panoramas of heaven and hell. The colours of these paintings were as fresh as if they had been laid on the day before. The principal tints were red and gold, but blues and greens were also prominent.

We now came to the most important of the buildings—the temple of Yeshe Hod and the chapels surrounding it. The whole forms a separate walled enclosure. We passed through a porch into an immense vestibule, the far end of which was screened off. Behind the screen I found a seated Buddha of stucco, partly gilded, and not less, I should think, than twenty-five feet high. Beyond this building is the principal temple, which is square, with a chapel opening out from each side. The famous gold roof is merely the canopy of a sky-light in the centre. Directly under this opening there is a statue of a female goddess, presumably Tara again, with attendant images. The pillars seem to be of pine-wood; in one of the side chapels the main prop has given way, and has been replaced by the trunk of a poplar. The ceilings are panelled, richly carved and painted. The side chapels each contain a large stucco figure with smaller statues round it. One of these is the chapel of Rinchen Tsangpo, and the image in the centre is his portrait. The monks informed me that he had built the whole of Toling and many subordinate monasteries. The power of the first Lotsawa was apparently such, that he could erect a monastery in a single day—no mean contract for that, or any, age. One wonders whether the time limit included the provision of timber. The huge, square-cut beams of the Toling temples, whether they are of deodar, spruce or blue pine, must have come from forests at least ten marches away, and over some of the loftiest passes in the world. It is a mystery to me how they ever reached Toling.

Round Yeshe Hod's temple are some twenty chapels built against the enclosing wall. Of the central figures, some of which are of great size, I noticed in particular a physician god, surrounded by lesser doctors. There are innumerable brass statues and chortens in these chapels, varying from six inches to three or four feet in height. Many are studded with turquoise, and several seemed to be gilt. The figure of Shiv is hardly less frequent than that of the Buddha himself. The worship of this Hindu god is known to have spread to Western Tibet from the Himalaya many centuries ago.

This ended the round of the buildings at Toling. In the bewildering succession of chapels and images there was far more than I had time to see or remark, and a Tibetan scholar would probably find enough to occupy him for weeks. From General Rawling's book, and from a conversation which I afterwards had with him in London, I gather that he was shown much less than I was at Toling, and that he did not enter some at any rate of the temples, but remained in the monastery courtyard while various objects were brought out for his inspection. These included the wooden throne of Guge, which I do not remember noticing. There were political reasons for the difference in our treatment. Rawling visited Toling just after the expedition to Lhasa, in which he had himself taken part, and at a time when feeling in Western as well as Central Tibet was very sore against the British. It was for some reason impossible to disabuse the lamas of the fear that an officer with an armed escort would forcibly carry away any thing of value that took his fancy. By 1912 the example of Rawling himself and of the few officers who visited Western Tibet with or after him had largely dispelled that fear, and the people were also much gratified at the hospitable reception given to the Dalai Lama on the occasion of his flight to India in 1910. Orders had been issued facilitating my journey in every way; and the lamas of Toling, although their demeanour was rather surly, did not object to the Changsud showing me everything that there was to see. I may add that it was only the lamas who were ever in the least unfriendly. The laity was invariably pleasant and hospitable.

In the afternoon I determined to visit the place that General Rawling calls "Old" Toling. Readers of his fascinating book will remember the photograph of a towering mud cliff with a silhouette of ruins along the crest; also Ram Singh's description of the way up. General Rawling himself had not time to go there. I was told that the place was not "Old Toling" (the original monastery was the one that I had just seen), but an outlying monastery which had been used as a summer resort, and was now deserted. Francke also conjectured this independently from his own knowledge of other temples built by Rinchen Tsangpo, which, he says, are always on level ground close to a stream. Warned by Ram Singh's description of the track, I took with me, besides a local guide, two Kanawari chaprassies of the Agency, who could climb like monkeys, my Gurkha orderlies, and several lengths of good rope. My guide assured us that the rope would be unnecessary, and so, as a matter of fact it was. Half a mile's walk among broken ravines brought us to a steep slope of fine *débris* at the foot of the cliff. Near this point we saw the trenches

which Sven Hedin had dug round his tents five years before. It was heavy going up the slope. Where the cliff itself began, there were the remains of a half-tunnelled stairway and arch at right angles to it. The steps had crumbled away, and we had to clamber for about twenty feet; but that was the beginning and end of the climb, if such it could be called. From there onwards an excellently graded path led to the top, zig-zagging across the face of the cliff. There is a cluster of cave-like dwelling houses in good preservation near the crest. Further on is the temple, a square hall as usual, with slender wooden pillars painted bright red. There is a large stucco Buddha under the sky-light, and round it other clay statues, one of them headless. Gaudy frescoes on a blue background adorn the walls. Smaller images are scattered about in corners, some of painted stucco, others of a kind of *papier mâché* consisting of layers of paper, apparently pasted one over the other on to a solid mould, which is afterwards broken up; these figures are painted in staring colours with a high polish. The wooden reredos behind the Buddha has been dismantled, and probably used for fuel by shepherds, traces of whose camp fires are to be seen on the floor. Small fragments of brass and copper panel work lie buried in the dust of ages. The lamas of Toling never come here; they are too lazy and overfed to scale the cliff side, and our guide assured us that none of them had seen the place. Beyond this temple is another, adorned with dark stucco images of Shiv, riding or, in some cases, standing on an emaciated buffalo, and wearing a string of painted skulls. More interesting than either temple was the library, knee-deep in loose paper, for the book covers have been taken away, and the leaves tumbled anyhow on to the floor. There were masses of indigo-tinted sheets, with writing on them sometimes in gold, sometimes in gold and silver in alternate lines. I found no copper or brass idols in either of the temples. If there ever had been any, they were removed to Toling when the monastery was abandoned. A few of the stucco and *papier mâché* statues, some fragments of woodwork, and considerable sections of books, still awaiting a translator, are now in the Lahore Museum. The story of their getting there would swell this paper to yet more inordinate length, and, though exciting, must be left untold. It was essential that the lamas should not know, for while these gentry take no interest in relics which they and their predecessors have neglected for centuries, they would rather leave them to decay than let it be known that a European had carried them off. Such an event would lower their dignity. This sentiment is admirable when applied to the treasures of Toling itself; and I appreciated the lamas' contemptuous refusal of the big prices which I offered them for one or two small statuettes in the side chapels there. But the objects in the ruined monastery had neither an owner nor intrinsic value, and their removal to a place where they would be appreciated and cared for aroused no qualms in my conscience. As the guide, whose assistance was invaluable, had predicted, a few lamas were found doing nothing particular in my camp when I returned. But we were all empty-handed just then, and they moved away satisfied.

Next morning I went back to the monastery and questioned the monks about the history of Guge. I have related the conversation above. That over, we started

on the march to Tsaparang. The distance is something under nine miles.<sup>1</sup> The road, following the left bank of the Satilej, is broad and smoothly graded as befits a highway between the temporal and ecclesiastical capitals, and quite different from the tracks to which we were accustomed.

Tsaparang stands on and around the base of a steep promontory which juts out like a buttress from the plateau into the river bed. The foot of the cliff is perhaps a mile from the stream. The ruins of the city are extensive, and guarded on the outer side by a chain of small round mud forts. Terraced fields, no longer cultivated, lie round about. Near the cliff stand the Dzungpon's house, a temple with a single lama in charge, and the dwellings of the four families which constitute the population of Tsaparang. I spent the afternoon and evening among the ruins. The temples are in good preservation, and are kept by the Dzungpon under lock and key. An inhabitant showed me round them. They are in general smaller than the great Gompas of Toling, but surpass them in beauty and wealth of decoration. The two largest, on the slopes of the ridge, are particularly fine. The central figures are seated Buddhas of gilt metal, two in one temple, and one in the other. Their technique is superior to any thing on the same scale at Toling. Smaller images, if they ever existed, have all been removed; but there are still the gilt screens and reredoses of wood or metal work, with carved figures of animals and flowers, showing considerable taste and freedom of design. The frescoes are not entirely confined to religious subjects, but contain also groups from the everyday life of Tsaparang. There are Tibetan warriors, Kashmiri and Ladakhi merchants, and even banias from Hindostan. Besides these temples there are one or two dedicated to Shiv, where the idol of the god is a splendid piece of brass work lavishly decorated and to all appearances heavily gilt.

A well-paved roadway, almost a stair in places, winds up towards the palace, tunnelling here and there through the soft cliff. A hundred feet or more below the palace the path is crossed by a low block house, the only stone building in Tsaparang. This is the fort built by the Ladakhi army during the siege. There is a deep gap in the ridge behind the palace, preventing escape on to the plateau beyond. At one side I saw a funnel-like chasm, down which, my guide told me, men of the garrison used to creep at night for water. It was, I suppose, the regular means of supply for the palace, and it may be that the Ladakhis brought the siege to an end by occupying the spring or by making this path impossible. The principal rooms in the palace are, an audience hall—a wide chamber that must once have had pillars to carry the roof: a temple with the usual frescoes of Avatars: and the king's and queen's own apartments. Opening out of the king's room is his private chapel,

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<sup>1</sup> Andrada calls it "half a day's journey." Gerard, whose information was always very accurate, says "half a stage or five miles." I made it more, but the going is very easy, and the journey is about equal to half an ordinary march in Kanawar. Fraser was told that Toling lay half-way between Tsaparang and Gartok, with other particulars which he himself considered "vague and unsatisfactory." He does, however, mention a Raja of Tsaparang, whom he seemed to think was reigning at the time. He says that he is called "Cotock" (=Chodak-po?). Neither Gerard nor Fraser say anything about the Jesuit Mission. See Alexander Gerard, "Account of Koonawar," 1814, page 146, also page 49; and Fraser's "Himala Mountain." London, Rodwell and Martin, 1820, page 291.

containing not a sign of his Christian beliefs, but, on the contrary, a collection of obscene statuary in painted wood. Clearly the king, after his conversion, still cherished a house of Rimmon. From the queen's room I stepped on to a carved wooden balcony looking over the city, the very spot from which she saw the Fathers climbing the hill for the first time, nearly three hundred years ago.

After leaving the palace I entered every house in the city that I could, but found no trace of a church or mission. Most of the houses are amazingly well preserved, although the roof timbers have been taken long ago for fuel, except in the temples themselves. The lamas no doubt abolished the mission buildings just as thoroughly as they wiped out the king's name from their chronicles. Judging by Andrada's account, the church must have been somewhere near what is now the Dzungpon's house. The inhabitants profess, truthfully I daresay, to have no tradition whatever of the Jesuits or of the king's conversion. I had already sounded the Dzungpon when I met him at Shangtze; I tried him again now, but with no better success. The next morning I had to continue my way to the passes and to India.

The existence of all the riches and civilization implied in the remains of Toling and Tsaparang is at first sight astonishing. But we must remember that Western Tibet, though in many respects the most desolate country in the inhabited world, has always had two great sources of wealth, its gold and its wool. The first is famous from the very dawn of history—from Herodotus and the Mahabharata onwards.<sup>1</sup> The early legends of Guge reflect, as we have seen, the rich output of the country's gold, and the Ladakhi chronicles mention great quantities that came as tribute from Guge to Leh. Whether any of the smaller statuettes at Toling are of solid gold, as they are alleged to be, or not, it is obvious that in both places gold is the commonest and most easily obtainable medium of decoration. There are statues of every size, woodwork, and metal panels plastered with it, to say nothing of the gilded roof, gold paint on the walls, and hundreds of books written in gold ink. We know from history that the traffic in wool and *pashm* also between Tibet and India, either by Kashmir or by Kanawar and Kulu, was at one time very great. The fame of the Rampur *chadars* continues to the present day; and the wool trade, though now mostly diverted to Almora and Garhwal, still furnishes the big manufacturing concerns in India with a large part of their supply. The Indian name for Western Tibet is Un-des, the wool country. Besides gold and wool Western Tibetans possessed

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<sup>1</sup> The gold-producing area of ancient history is more strictly identified with that part of the Indus valley which lies about and below Leh, and is inhabited by the Dards. But the upper valleys of the same river are rich in gold, right up to their sources. As regards the well-known fable of the gold-digging ants (Herodotus, Book III. chapters 102 to 105), Francke discovered two local legends of such ants at Kalatse, and was even shown the creatures themselves. He somewhat tantalizingly omits these legends from his book, but tells us that the ants which he saw were of normal size, and not, as Herodotus says, "smaller than dogs, but larger than foxes." Rawlinson, who cites a parallel story of gold-digging ants from the Mahabharata, states that the idea probably arose from the crouching figures of the natives digging for gold. These are formidable authorities, and I do not know whether any other theory has been advanced to explain the fable; but anyone who has seen the sites of ancient gold workings in Western Tibet can hardly fail to be struck with the resemblance of the marmots, whose burrows abound there, to Herodotus' ants. The marmot corresponds very nearly to his description of size; and it is its habit to disappear into its earth during the heat of the day, and, indeed, at any time at which it is startled by the approach of a human being. See Francke. History of Western Tibet, pages 12 to 14.

useful commodities in their sturdy breed of ponies, and in the yak, which is an even more serviceable creature than is claimed for it in Belloc's rhyme. Silver, iron, brass and copper are to be had in plenty in the neighbouring Himalayan tracts, and there is little doubt that mines were worked also in Guge itself. At Toling the lamas said that the metal for their idols came from Luk, five marches from Shipki on the Gartok road. The timber however must have been brought laboriously, from India, and it is obvious that even in its hey-day Tsaparang was short of wood. Andrada's king had conquered territories in the Himalaya from which he could draw. This we may infer from traditions of a Tibetan invasion in the Baspa valley of Bashahr, and from a reference in Andrada's letters to grapes which were brought to Tsaparang from a place recently conquered, and about twelve marches distant. This description fits Chini, where vines are still cultivated.

The styles of sculpture, painting and decoration at Tsaparang struck one, in contrast to Toling, as being uniform and belonging to a single period of art. It is reasonable to assume that, as the period of religious reform belongs to Yeshe Hod and Rinchen Tsangpo in the eleventh century, so the great era of prosperity, and expansion in the sixteenth was the achievement of the last two kings, who set up a new capital at Tsaparang. The probable reasons for the collapse of this prosperity can only be touched on here. The capture and dethronement of Andrada's enterprising friend was the first. Then followed the invasion of Geldan Tsang, and the subjugation of the country to Central Tibet. Under the illiberal and grasping rule of Lhasa, directed by Peking, the land has been steadily squeezed for the benefit of its conquerors, whose own ignorance and superstition, however, have prevented them from making use of its resources. Little has been effected but the impoverishment of its inhabitants. Near the beginning of the nineteenth century the country was visited by successive epidemics of smallpox, with disastrous consequences to a people for whom existence is at the best of times a hard struggle. Finally there is the perpetual drain of lamaism on the manhood of the country. The lama toils not, neither does he spin; but he is assured of a good house to live in and an abundance of food and tea. His hold on the superstitious peasantry is such that he can easily get anything done for or offered to him. His monastery owns practically all the culturable soil in the neighbourhood. Small wonder that the best of the young men become lamas as soon as they can; and, since lamas are strictly celibate, that the race does not multiply or prosper. It must have been a perception of the lama difficulty that prompted the last king to fling himself into the arms of the Jesuit Fathers. His own initiative and the hardihood of his subjects had secured, and were consolidating for him, the subjugation of his neighbours and the expansion of his wealth. To maintain these he required a permanent and dependable supply of warriors, to which lamaism was the gravest obstacle. To a practical man the lamas were a swarm of worthless tea-swilling drones. They would neither work for him themselves, nor beget others who would; and their growing numbers alarmed him. It is true that the Jesuits' creed also demanded a celibate clergy, but that was a difficulty that could be tackled later. The main thing was to break up the monas-

teries at once, and to force the lamas to work and to breed citizens. It was the latter injunction, you may remember, that finally goaded them into revolt. The king failed, like many another who tried conclusions with an established church, but I cannot help thinking that the course of history would have been different if the people of Guge had comprehended his aim, and rallied to him. The Ladakhis would have been defeated, and when, some eighteen years later, the Central Tibetan invasion came, the army of Guge might have proved too tough a nut to be worth the cracking. A treaty might have been made with Tsaparang, and not, as actually happened, with Bashahr. It were idle to guess what might then have been the career of a strong, compact, enlightened, and, incidentally, Christian monarchy in that wild region.

Enough however is known of the past of Toling and Tsaparang to stimulate further curiosity, which can only be satisfied by the despatch of a competent Tibetan expert to both places, with full permission to study their antiquities at leisure, and to hunt for inscriptions. Unfortunately this is not so easy as it sounds. Apart from our Government's engagement to prohibit Europeans from entering the country except upon official business, it is doubtful whether any available Englishman could undertake the task. The Moravian Mission contains several Tibetanists, worthy successors of Francke, who could do so, and would, moreover, be welcomed by the Tibetans, as they are highly qualified in medicine. On this last account a Moravian Missionary at Poo has been more than once invited by the Tibetans of Guge to enter their district. Here, however, political considerations of another kind arise, since the personnel of the mission is mainly German. A native of Indian Tibet, well versed in the religion of his country and in the rudiments of archaeology, would be ideal, if he could be found. He would be unlikely to meet with difficulties from the Tibetan Government or the lamas, and, if he did, would enjoy British protection and assistance through the means of the Trade Agency at Gartok. There is still much to be learnt of the great age of Toling, when its golden monastery radiated light and learning through all Tibet from Kashmir to Assam: of the history of Guge between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries, of which we know nothing but the occasional record of a successful invasion or levy of tribute by Ladakh: and, lastly, of the rise of the Tsaparang dynasty, its conquests and splendour, and its dramatically sudden fall.

The pleasure of these discoveries may some day reward a scholar who is capable of making them. For the casual visitor if another ever visits Tsaparang, there is, or was, a solitary object from which fancy may conjure a relic of the mission. A row of whitewashed chortens stands near the Dzongpon's house. One of them, some forty feet high, towers above the rest; and on its summit there lies horizontally a weather-beaten cross of wood. It may be that that chorten was being built while the lamas were demolishing the church close by; and that some one, carelessly, or perhaps thinking to lay up treasure for himself in two heavens, planted the rejected emblem on the Buddhist tomb. In all else the work of destruction was complete, and nothing is left to remind men that a Christian once reigned in Tibet.