

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### SARAT CHANDRA DAS' JOURNEY TO LHASA.

In June 1879 SARAT CHANDRA DAS set out for Tashi-lunpo, accompanied by Lama YGYEN GYATSO, a Tibetan from Sikkim. They remained in Tashi-lunpo for six months. The route taken was the same as on his second journey.

In November 1881 he started on his second journey, again accompanied by Ygyen Gyatso, who acted as his surveyor »though much of the later work, including the extremely important survey of Lake Palti (Yamdo Tso), was done by the traveller himself», as ROCKHILL says.<sup>1</sup>

Tashi-lunpo was his head-quarters, from where he made excursions, — from Sakya in the west to Samye and Tsetang in the east. He also visited Lhasa, which had been done by native explorers only twice before, Nain Sing in 1866 and KISHEN SING in 1880.

After his exploration in the valley of the Yalung he returned to India, after a journey of 14 months. As a discoverer and publisher of Tibetan texts Rockhill compares him with Csoma de Körös.

Sarat Chandra Das left Darjiling, November 7th, 1881. He crossed the passes Kanglachen-la and Yaru-la. Between Kurma and Yago he passed the great watershed between the Arun drainage area and the Shab-chu, a tributary to the Tsangpo. He has not a word to say about it, seems not even to be aware of the importance of the place. On December 9th he reached Tashi-lunpo.

From there he made a trip up the Nyang-chu valley which he regards as one of the richest in Tibet; »it extends from Shigatse to about 15 miles beyond Gyangtse, a distance of from 60 to 70 miles, and has an average breadth of 10, every inch of which is cultivated». After having visited Dongtse and Gyangtse he returned to Tashi-lunpo.

On April 26th, 1882, he again left Tashi-lunpo, this time for Lhasa. Again he passed Dongtse and Gyangtse. Following up the Nyang-chu he ascended the Karo-la, »a lofty plateau from which we could distinguish to the north-east the snow-covered slopes of the Nojin-kang-zang . . . On this plateau, which is about five

<sup>1</sup> Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet. Edited by W. W. Rockhill. London 1902.