

there seemed to be ruins of five other houses, though doubtful, as the stones were in great disorder. No tools or utensils of any kind could be found, and none of the slabs with the usual formula *om mani padme hum* had been hewn. The walls may be very old and they may remain as they now are for many centuries.

So far as my observations go, this place is situated at $84^{\circ} 24'$ East long. and $34^{\circ} 43'$ North lat. But it is very difficult to tell what object these old houses have served. If the walls have only served as a solid frame or foundation for very small tents, these tents cannot possibly have been inhabited by simple nomads or hunters, for they never take so much pains at a place where they are staying only for a few months, not even if they return to the same spot every year. On the contrary, their camps have always a very temporary character. On the other hand it is very unlikely that the walls we found should have been the foundations for stone houses, which now have disappeared. Nobody would have had any interest in pulling down abandoned houses.

Even as late as in 1792, an old road was reported to exist, which diagonally crossed the whole of Tibet from N. W. to S. E. It is entered on the Ta-ch'ing map as published by Dutreuil de Rhins, who calls it »Route de Khotan à Lhassa». We find it, for instance, on the map of Tibet in Stieler's Hand-Atlas for 1875, where one point on it comes so near to my *Camp XLVIII* as: $84^{\circ} 24'$ East long. and $34^{\circ} 49'$ North lat. The road begins from *Khotan* and proceeds to *Polu*, crosses the *Kwen-lun* System, and continues over a series of named places, nearly all of them unknown to us, as *Ilitsi (Ilchi)*, *Aritau-tun*, *Atan-gol*, *Suget*, *Imam-Mula*, *Sari*, after which it follows the northern shore of *Chargut-tso* to *Nakdsong* and finally proceeds to the western shore of *Tengri-nor*. Still on Stieler's map of 1901, this road is to be found, though the point that should be identical with my *Camp XLVIII*, now is placed at 35° North lat. between *Suget* and *Imam-mula*. The latter place is represented as being surrounded by six small lakes. In the edition of 1904 of the same map, the old road has definitely disappeared. However, this road is, no doubt, the same one by which the famous general of Tsevang Rabtan, Tsering-dondob, marched in 1717 from *Khotan* across the *Kwen-lun* and the whole Tibetan plateau-land down to *Tengri-nor*.¹

Now it does not seem unlikely at all, that the ruins of *Camp XLVIII* were a kind of halting-place or station on this extraordinary and impossible military highway. If this be true, this road must necessarily have followed the eastern part of the great latitudinal valley I have described, but probably not farther than the lake of *Camp XXXIII* or the region thereabout, from where it must have been in some comparatively practicable communication with *Polu*, *Keriya* and *Khotan*. The country

¹ Compare Vol. I, p. 264, and Vol. III, p. 38 and 55.