

experience of desert travelling it is very pleasant in the evening to branch off from the Satluj valley into a side valley which is irrigated by the glacial stream of Kanam; The green waving fields, the many willow, poplar, and apricot trees refresh the eye of the traveller and invite to a short rest in their midst.

We spent the night between the 30th June and 1st July at Kanam. Although Tibetan is very well understood here, it is not yet spoken among the peasants themselves. They speak a language of the Kanāwarī type. But the village as well as the monastery presents a purely Tibetan appearance. This monastery (Plate VIII) was the first on the road which by the natives themselves was asserted to be of ancient origin. It is said to go back to the days of Lotsaba Rin-chen-bzang-po (Ratna-bhadra) 964—1054 A.D. No relic of these ancient days, however, remains. The monastery consists of three separate halls situated in different parts of the village.

The uppermost of them is called *dGon-pa* or monastery proper. It is a building of the ordinary Tibetan type, constructed of undried bricks with a flat roof. It contains the cells of the lamas who belong to the Ge-lug-pa sect, and an insignificant temple. In the latter is found an image of Buddha, gilt bronze with blue hair of the pin-head type. This image was brought from bKra-shis-lhun-po (*vulgo* Trashi lunpo) about seventy years ago, so I was told. The wooden garlands which are behind this image of Buddha as well as behind some other images, may be older. The chief attraction of the Kanam monastery lies in the fact that the pioneer of Tibetan studies, the Hungarian Csoma de Körös spent several years in it, studying the Tibetan language. According to Duka's *Life of Csoma de Körös*, he lived here from August 1827 to October 1830<sup>1</sup>. In 1829, Csoma was visited at Kanam (spelt Kanum in his report) by Dr. Gerard, who gives a very interesting account of the Hungarian's life and work in this out of the way place. Let me quote a few passages from his account—

"I found him at the village of Kanum, in his small but romantic hamlet, surrounded by books, and in the best health.....The cold is very intense, and all last winter he sat at his desk wrapped up in woollens from head to foot, and from morning to night, without an interval of recreation or warmth, except that of his frugal meals which are one universal routine of greasy tea; but the winters at Kanum dwindle to insignificance compared with the severity of those at the monastery of Yangla (in Zangskar) where Mr. Csoma passed a whole year.....There he sat (at Yangla) enveloped in a sheep-skin cloak, with his arms folded, and in this situation he read from morning till evening without fire, or light after dusk, the ground to sleep on, and the bare walls of the building for protection against the rigours of the climate.

"The cold was so intense as to make it a task of severity to extricate the hands from their fleecy resort to turn over the pages,.....he is poor, humbly clad, and reserved, unless stimulated to animation by some temporary interest."

The chief attraction of the little village of Kanam, for Csoma, rested in the fact that the monastery contains complete copies of the *bkā-ūgyur* and *bstan-ūgyur*, the great

<sup>1</sup> See Duka, *Life of Csoma*, pp. 82 ff.