

We arrived at the village of Namgya (spelt *s Nam-rgya* in an historical document) on the 6th July, after a hot march over very uneven ground.¹ Soon after our arrival, the village chief, called Hira, made his appearance and entered into conversation with me. He said, he was a descendant of a Tibetan family of *blon-po*, ministers, who had formerly been in charge of this district, and indeed, he had quite the bearing of a gentleman. In the course of our conversation he exhibited an extraordinary knowledge of things historical, in particular with regard to the battle of Basgo in 1646-47 A.D.² When I expressed my astonishment at such wisdom, he said that he was in possession of a document of ancient times. After much persuasion he produced it, and it turned out to be a copy of the treaty between Rājā Kēhari Singh (*Kyeris Sing* in Tibetan) of Bashahr and the Lhasa Government, headed by Galdan Thsang (Thse-dbang). This Galdan Thsang is the very general of the Tibeto-Mongolian army who had conducted the siege of Basgo. Of this most important document, I ordered a copy to be made at once and offered R1 for it. I said that I expected to get the copy on our way back from Shipke in a few days, to which the old gentleman consented. On our way back, I had to find out, however, that Hira was no longer a gentleman, as he would not hand over the copy, until he had extorted R2-8 from me. As our conversation on my return visit to Namgya was more heated than logical, it did not become quite plain from his talk, whether he had copied his paper from an old document in his possession, or from a copper-plate of the Rājā of Bashahr. If the latter be true, this would be the first copper-plate inscription in Tibetan, and the Rājā of Bashahr ought to be urged to open his archives to students of history. The manuscript gives a short account of the war between Ladakh and Lhasa in 1646-47 and contains a few, but important local names. The difficulty is to assign them their proper places on a map. That the document is not forged, is quite plain from its internal evidence.

The road between Namgya and Shipke is bad beyond description. I have had some experience of awkward roads during my thirteen years' residence in Indian Tibet, but I must say, the Namgya-Shipke road beats them all. Here we had not only to march by very unstable pathways along the face of the precipice, but had also from time to time to climb up and down pinnacles with almost no road under our feet. It reminded me of chimney climbing, sometimes inside sometimes outside a chimney. The continual ups and downs alone would have been quite sufficient to exhaust the strength of any traveller on an ordinary road.

The frontier of Tibet proper is marked by a little brook, where a meal is generally taken by travellers. Having passed the brook, the people of Namgya and Bashahr dismiss caste and, Mr. Schnabel tells me, are ready to eat and drink even with a European. On the Tibetan side of the frontier, people find a blue kind of zeolith embedded in the granite rock, which they call *rDo-khyu*, or *rDo-khyug*. This stone, according to their belief, possesses medical powers. They tie it over the eyes of sheep

¹ The earliest picture of Namgya (Namdja) is found in *Reise des Prinzen Waldemar von Preussen*, 1845, Plate, XIX.

² See my *History of Western Tibet*, p. 108.