

said to Pindi Lal : " You see, popular tradition connects this monastery with Rin-chen-bzang-po who lived 900 years ago, and an inscription at Horling showed us that such traditions were also current in the 15th century. But what is the use of all these traditions ? We must have literary proof that a monastery actually goes back to those early days ; if possible, we must have a document of those very times, on which it is plainly stated that the erection of the monastery actually took place at that time. I wonder if ever we shall be able to prove any such assumption!" As I said this, I little thought that a few hours after, I should have ample proof in hand.

In the vicinity of the Tabo monastery are many rows of 108 small *mchod-rten*, but one of them numbered at least 216 (Plate XIV, b). They were the forerunners of the *mani* walls in Western Tibet. Besides these rows, there are many ruined *mchod-rten* round about, and countless rock carvings. The latter represent mostly the ibex and the *svastika* and are possibly of pre-Buddhist origin. On the hill side, almost like cave dwellings, are the winter houses of the lamas.

The temple buildings are found on the plain above the river. They are surrounded by a high mud wall. I made a plan of the whole establishment and these are some of the measurements taken. Extreme length : 313 feet, 7 inches ; breadth 257 feet 3 inches. Within this enclosure exist seven temple-halls, and a great number of *mchod-rten*. The monks took me from one temple to another without showing me the principal hall. They said that only a Commissioner (the highest personage they have ever heard of) could be permitted to enter there. I tried in vain to convince them that, with regard to their treasures, I was in as high an office as a Commissioner, until I produced two rupees. Then the doors to their holy of holies were thrown open, and I presume that nothing of interest was purposely concealed from us.

The principal hall is called rNam-par-s nang-mdzad. The length of this hall with additional apse is 63 feet, 14 inches and its breadth 34 feet, 10 inches. The principal image is a white stucco statuette of rNam-par-s nang-mdzad (Vairōchana) consisting of four complete figures seated back to back (Plate XV, a). Along the walls, 6 or 7 feet above the ground, there are thirty-two raised medallions with exceedingly well executed stucco figures of life size (Plates XV, b ; XVI and XVII, b). Nobody in the monastery at present knows whom they represent. But I am inclined to believe that they represent the thirty-three Hindu gods.¹ The figure of Gaṇeśa, which would make up the full number, seems to have lost its original position above the door. It is now found on the altar, below rNam-par-s nang-mdzad (Plate XVII, a). One of the figures by the side of the door was recently furnished with a new head like a modern Lamaist dancing mask, the old head having been lost (Plate XVII, b).

In the apse, behind rNam-par-s nang-mdzad, there are four standing stucco figures and a seated figure of Buddha on a lion throne. Above it there are exceedingly well executed figures of flying spirits (Gandharvas?).

¹ This identification seems to me to be open to doubt as, according to the Brahmanical conception at least, " the thirty-three gods" include no goddesses. Neither is Gaṇeśa one of them. Their number is made up by 12 Adityas, 8 Vasus, 11 Rudras, Indra and Prajāpati : *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 11, 6, 215. The *Rāmāyaṇa* (3, 20) substitutes the Aśvins for the two last mentioned deities. [Ed.]