

I bought it from him for two rupees. It was made of a mixture of metals, similar to the Indian *khānsī*. It was a plain cross with beams of equal length, and at the end of each beam was found a double spiral as an ornament. As I was told by another man from Rubshu, there are ruins of ancient settlements and watercourses all over the country. They are found on high hills in Rubshu, and are ascribed to a tribe of Mon, the pre-Tibetan inhabitants of the country. These Mon must have been marvels of endurance. How they could have cultivated fields at those altitudes, is a mystery. The barley fields of the bKor-rdzod monastery are in Mr. Drew's opinion the highest in the world (Plate XXII, b). But those of the Mon settlers must have been higher still. According to Survey maps,¹ the altitude of bKor-rdzod is 15,600 feet, but according to Drew it is only 15,000 feet high. Drew gives the following numbers with regard to this lake: length 15 miles, breadth 3 to 5 miles; depth 248 feet. It may sound incredible that there should have been fields still higher than the present fields of bKor-rdzod whose harvest sometimes fails. But I remember that also on one of my former journeys, in Zangskar, I came across the ruins of a Dard settlement at an altitude where it was icy cold even in summer.

Whilst we were encamped at bKor-rdzod, the chief of the Rubshu nomads visited me, and to entertain him, I showed him the pictures of my "History of Western Tibet." He enjoyed them thoroughly, but he was struck with emotion on seeing the portrait of the ex-king of Ladakh with his son and retinue. As the ex-king was married to his own sister, this picture represented some of his nearest relations, and he implored me not to go away without making him a present of it. There remained no alternative for me but to tear the picture out of the book, and hand it over to him. It was however, fortunate for us, to have placed under obligation such an important personage through this little present. For, if we had not been in his favour, it would probably have taken a long time before the nomads found yaks for us. As matters stood, the yaks turned up in good condition next morning. In the same way, it was also our good fortune to have met with the Assistant Commissioner in Spiti. Otherwise we should certainly have had difficulty in getting transport animals from Spiti to the lake. It must be remembered that animals as well as men are scarce in these frontier regions, that the roads are difficult, if not dangerous, and that these frontier people can hardly be reached by any authority. Last year, as Mr. Howell told me, transport was absolutely refused to a traveller in Spiti, who obtained it only by using desperate means.

As we have been travelling on yaks for some time, and as we have before us many more miles of yak riding, it seems the proper place to say a few words about these interesting Tibetan animals. The first yak ride we had on our way back from Shipke, and the second on the journey from Spiti to the lake. All those yaks had rings through their noses, and could in a way be controlled by them, for it requires great anger on the part of the yak to make him indifferent to the pain which would be caused by his tearing himself free and running away. But the yaks which we received for our journey

¹ Survey Map of 1874. Sheet 46 gives Karzok as 14,960 ft. [Ed.]