

according to my observations, played the part of the *Ōm maṇi padmē hūm* among the Ladakhi Buddhists of those times. The Indian characters, used by them, bear a remarkable resemblance to the Tibetan characters, for which reason I have come to the conclusion that the Tibetan script was developed in the western parts of Tibet, probably under the influence of Kashmir and Turkestan Buddhism.¹ This inscription may possibly give a clue to the date of the Maltese crosses found by Dr. Shawe in the vicinity.² Christianity in its Nestorian form was somewhat powerful in Turkestan about 900 A.D. and, although I do not venture to assert that there was a Christian community at Drangtse in those days, I think it not improbable that the ancient inhabitants of Drangtse had become acquainted with Christian forms of crosses. It is very probable that trade connections between Ladakh and Turkestan existed as early as 700-900 A.D. The Ladakhis were probably ready to try the efficacy of the Christian crosses for the sake of experiment, just as they swallow pages of Christian books nowadays, if swallowed pages of Buddhist writings have not the desired effect.

I was told that there was another deserted Mon settlement above Nyoma on the left bank of the Indus. When our caravan started for Phuga on Monday the 16th August, I made a special trip to this old site which is called Staglung. On my way thither I passed by the village of Ngod (*Mud*, or *Mad* of the maps) on the right bank of the Indus, which is known for its monastery. I was told that the Ngod monastery was of more recent date than the Nyoma one, and that it was erected by Ngag-dbang-rnam-rgyal, the step-brother of Seng-ge-rnam-rgyal who had been obliged to take religious orders. Staglung is about seven miles distant from Nyoma (or better Nidar) and is situated in a very dry side valley near the Indus. There I found a rocky hill covered with ruins of houses, the single rooms of which were very small. As there are no traces of ancient fields round about, it is probable that Staglung was not a village, but a monastery. Below the rock is a number of ancient *mchod-rten* (about 15 to 20) and several rows of 108 small *mchod-rten*, all of which are built of sun-dried bricks. In two of the larger *mchod-rten* we found cremation tablets of clay, painted red. Two of them contained an inscription of the *Yē dharmā* formula in an ancient type of Tibetan character. This would point to Tibetan influence before the abandonment of the establishment.

As the word *'aBrog-pa* (Dard) is never used here at Nyoma, nor in Rubshu, to signify the pre-Tibetan inhabitants of the country, I believe that the word *Mon*, which is here always used for them, refers to the Dard settlers of Rubshu and Nyoma district. At any rate, the Dards of Da state expressly in one of their songs that they once colonised Rong-chu-rgyud, which is the site of the present village of Nyoma and

¹ See my article: *The Kingdom of gNya khri btsanpo*, in *J. A. S. B.*, Vol. VI. p. 93.

² These crosses were again examined by Rev. S. Schmitt of Leh in 1911. Mr. Schmitt found inscriptions in an unknown script, running from top to bottom, in the vicinity of the crosses. Professor A. Grünwedel of Berlin points to the similarity between the Drangtse inscriptions and the Nestorian tomb-inscriptions treated by Chvolson of St. Petersburg. Dr. A. von Le Coq pronounces the language of the inscriptions to be Soghdian. The word *S[a]mark[a]nda* may be read without difficulty. According to Professor F. W. K. Müller, the Drangtse inscriptions were carved by pilgrims and dated.