

brother of Seng-ge-rnam-rgyal. The village of Sheh (*Shel*) on the right bank has also many attractions. It was apparently the capital of Ladakh, before the old kings of Leh, the professed descendants of the mythological king Kesar, were expelled. Here are the most ancient royal rock inscriptions, but the best preserved of them, will probably remain inaccessible for some time for the natives of Sheh, being afraid of a devil who has his abode exactly in front of the best of them, have erected a wall which conceals the entire inscription.

We crossed the Indus at Choglamsa. The water was so high, that it flowed over part of the bridge, and we had to ride through deep water for several hundreds of yards on the bridge as well as on the left bank. At Choglamsa we met two ladies of the Mission who had come to the bridge to welcome Miss Schurter, and on the road through the sandy desert below Leh we were welcomed by several more members of the Moravian Mission. We rode along the long royal *mani* walls south of Leh which had astonished Moorcroft ninety years ago, and entered Leh with thankful hearts, for we were all much in need of a good rest. Here in Leh we again received letters, the first since leaving Poo four weeks before, and also a remittance. But a more powerful inducement to continue our work was the approval of our past doings, which found expression in Dr. Marshall's letters.

b. LEH.

The name of *La-dvags* is not mentioned in the Tibetan chronicles before the reign of king Nyi-ma-mgon, c. 900 A.D., when it is stated that it was in the hands of Gesar's descendants. The kings Lha-chen-she-srab and Khri-btsug-lde (c. 1350 – 1400 A.D.) seem to have resided chiefly at Sabu; and only the kings from 'aBum-lde onward, (after 1400 A.D.) resided permanently at Leh. As has already been mentioned, the original name of the town is not *sLel*, as it is now-a-days spelt, but *sLes*, which signifies an-encampment of nomads. These nomads were probably in the habit of visiting the Leh valley at a time when it had begun to be irrigated by Dard colonizers. Thus, the most ancient part of the ruins on the top of the rNam-rgyal-rtse-mo hill at Leh are called 'aBrog-pai-mkhar (Dard castle), and of the supposed Dard graves at Leh, we shall have occasion to speak again.

The first European to visit Leh was apparently the Jesuit Desideri who visited Ladakh in 1715 during the reign of King Nyi-ma-rnam-rgyal whom he calls Nima namgial. The Jesuit was kindly received by the king, but as the Muhammadan traders plotted against him and undermined the king's confidence, he soon left the town and travelled to Lhasa. I regret to say that I have not yet seen a satisfactory account of this interesting and important journey.¹ A relic of Desideri's mission was discovered by the next European visitor to Ladakh, Moorcroft. He found at Pashkyum an old Bible on which he makes the following remarks:² "A Sayid, who seemed to act as his [the Pushkyum Raja *i.e.* vassal chief's] ghostly adviser, produced a book which had descended

¹ The best seems to be: Carlo Puini, *Il Tibet, secondo la relazione del viaggio del P. Ippolito Desideri*.

² *Travels*, Vol. II, pp. 22 ff.