

After this description of the grave and our finds in it, let me enter into the question of its date and the nationality of the people who built it. As I have pointed out already, in connection with the rGya graves, the condition of these graves calls to mind at once the description of the form of burial practised in the "Empire of the Eastern Women," of the Chinese historians. There we read: "When a person of rank dies, they strip off the skin, and put the flesh and bones mixed with gold powder into a vase, and then bury it.....At the burial of the sovereign, several tens of the great ministers and relatives are buried at the same time!" The latter statement about this gruesome custom may account for the great number of skulls, sometimes as many as twenty, which are found in a single grave. As the grave contained large bronze buttons, obviously a mark of high rank, it is very probable that the Leh grave actually contained the remains of several "great ministers." This "Empire of the Eastern Women" has been described in the *Sui shu*, a book which was compiled in c. 586 A.D. Here it is called Nü-Kuo. Hiuen Tsiang also heard of this empire, and a little after his time, we read that the last queen died and was replaced by a king. The frontiers of this curious empire are given by the *Sui shu* as well as by Hiuen Tsiang. They are: Khotan, Sampaha (Ladakh), Brahmapura (Chamba State), and Tibet. From these definitions we may conclude that the empire comprised the Tibetan provinces of Guge and Ruthog, and possibly Eastern Ladakh. The empire was a Tibetan one, according to our Chinese authorities, and it therefore appears strange that the skulls of the Leh grave are not those of Tibetans, but of Aryans. My explanation would be that it is very probable that portions of Ladakh were for a time at least included in this empire. The value of our grave finds lies in this that they afford us a glimpse of the general state of civilisation which prevailed in this empire. As regards its date, the presence of iron besides bronze precludes the fixing of any very early date, say before the Christian era. The absence of any form of writing in the grave would perhaps point to a time earlier than 586 A.D., at which time, according to the Chinese, the Indian characters were used in the empire. In my opinion the grave dates from between 1 and 500 A.D.

Fortunately for me, I had finished my investigations, when Mr. Chatterji, Director of Archæology in the Kashmîr State, arrived in Leh with the message that it was the wish of the Maharaja that no further excavations of any kind should be undertaken in Kashmîr State territory.

The village of Skara (*sGa-ra* in native documents) is situated south of Leh and forms a kind of suburb of that town. On the 3rd September, I visited the ruins of the sGar-rtse Monastery at Skara. According to K. Marx this is the monastery "for four lamas only," founded by King 'aBum-lde, about 500 years ago. It was built on a crag resembling an elephant. This little monastery was destroyed by the Dōgrās, at least so I was told. There was also another small temple erected below the ruin, occupied by one lama who belongs to the 'aBrug-pa order. No tradition regarding King 'aBum-lde has been preserved in the locality.

The village of Skara was formerly situated on a rocky spur to the right of the Leh valley, where there are still many ruined houses. The chief reason for evacuating