

Ladakh chronicles we read that one of their early kings had placed the bones of Buddha in his elephant incarnation on the top of the same hill. I made inquiries as to their whereabouts and was told that they had been deposited in a *mchod-rten* which was utterly destroyed by the Baltis about 1580 A.D. No trace of the relics remains.

On our way down from the top of the hill, we passed by the Great Palace of Leh which was erected by king Seng-ge-rnam-rgyal in c. 1620 A.D. As I knew from former visits, it is practically empty. We did not enter it, but photographed the carved wooden gate, the famous "Lion Gate" of Ladakh (Plate XXX, b). One of the rooms of the palace contains heaps of old manuscripts. All the paper is indigo-tinted, and the writing is in gold, silver and copper. As this collection probably represents the old royal library, or part of it, I asked Mr. Chatterji of the Kashmir State, to make arrangements to put the manuscripts into order again.

I heard rumours of the existence of ancient Indian Buddhist manuscripts at Leh and in other parts of Ladakh, Munshi dPal-rgyas, the representative of the To-go-che family being reported to be in possession of one. Fortunately for me, Munshi dPal-rgyas himself arrived in Leh soon after I had heard this, and readily showed me his old book. It was, however, not of Indian, but of Tibetan origin, being the eighth volume of the Tibetan translation of the *Prajñā-pāramitā*, and written throughout in 11th century orthography, gold on indigo-tinted paper. The wooden cover (Plate XXXVII, b) was ornamented with very beautiful ancient carvings, for which reason a photo was taken of the same. Munshi dPal-rgyas emphatically denied the existence of Indian manuscripts at the Hemis monastery, in spite of a rumour to that effect which had been brought to us. But he said that he had heard of the existence of a book, written in *Lafñthsā* characters at the Sanid (or Muni) monastery in Zaṅskar. This book may be identical with the old 'palm leaf' shown to the Rev. Mr. Bateson on the occasion of his journey through Zaṅskar in 1908.

Mr. Meebold¹ also makes the statement that he was shown 'palm leaf' books at the Rangdum monastery of Zaṅskar. These statements await verification. It is strange that Munshi dPal-rgyas should have bought his ancient book at Lhasa, as he says. The *Prajñā-pāramitā*, as already stated, was translated into Tibetan by Lama Rin-cheu-bzang-po, who was a West Tibetan, and most of the copies of his book were distributed among the West Tibetan monasteries of his time. Sending them to Lhasa would have been of no use, as Buddhism had practically disappeared from Central Tibet in the 11th century, being introduced into the country again from West Tibet and Khams. But at a much later time, possibly only a century or so ago, a number of important books were carried off to Lhasa. So I was told at the Alchi monastery where no ancient manuscripts now remain. The history of Munshi dPal-rgyas' book may therefore be as follows: It was originally written for one of the Western monasteries. Then it was carried off to Lhasa; and was there again sold to a pilgrim for a high price.

¹*Indien*, p. 264.