

at Leh as a missionary. But the late Dr. Shawe of Leh was the first to draw attention to the fact that there are traces of circular medallions on two of its walls. In that respect rGya-mthsa reminds us of the ruined monasteries of Basgo¹ and Chigtan. Inside and below the medallions, Dr. Shawe noticed holes in the wall, as if sticks had once been stuck into it. He even found fragments of wood in two of the holes (according to his letter of the 27th October 1905). He supposed that these sticks had once served to support images. Our observations at the Tabo monastery of Spiti fully confirm Dr. Shawe's supposition. As will be remembered, in the Tabo monastery we found thirty-two raised medallions on the walls of the temple hall, and an image placed in front of each of them. After digging only a little way into the mass of débris below one of the medallions at rGyamthsa, we came across several pieces of plaster composed of clay, straw, and linen. This is exactly the material these images are made of. From our observations it follows that rGya-mthsa is probably of the same time as the Chigtan, Basgo and Tabo monasteries, *i.e.*, of the times of Rin-chen-bzang-po (c. 1000 A.D.). But let me add that my assumption is not supported by popular tradition. The present inhabitants of the valley do not even believe that the ruin is that of a temple, but assert that it once served as a summer house for a minister (*bkā-blon-gyi-dbyar-sa*).

On the other side of some adjoining fields, there are several ancient ruined *mchod-rten*. In one of them I found cremation tablets of the "miniature *stūpa*" type. When I threw one of them to the ground, it broke to pieces, and out of it came a very neat little tablet with an inscription in an ancient form of Śāradā. The inscription again contains the *Yē dharmā* formula, and its characters belong to the 11th century. Owing to its extraordinary receptacle, the characters of the inscription were as distinct as any I had seen up to this. I made an accurate copy of the inscription on the same day, and I am glad I did so. For, when my collection of clay tablets arrived at Simla several months later, the distinctness of most of the inscriptions had suffered much, in spite of very careful packing. Although I opened several more "miniature *stūpas*" in search of inscribed tablets, I did not find any other specimens.

On the 17th September, I visited Munshi dPal-rgyas in his own house, called *To-go-che*, at Leh. Mention has already been made of his old Tibetan book. This time he showed us some of the contents of his private temple, several printed flags of no particular importance, a few idols of the ordinary type, and a mask of an *Agu* (hero) of the Kesar-Saga (Plate XXXIII, a). This *Agu*, dGra-lha, who is worshipped in the Munshi's house, is also represented among the frescoes of Changspa. As I am told, several more masks representing Agus of the Kesar-Saga can be found also at the Lamayuru monastery. According to popular tradition, Lamayuru used to be the centre of the Bon religion of Ladakh. Munshi dPal-rgyas told me plainly that he was fully convinced that the religion of the Kesar-Saga and the Bon religion were absolutely the same. As will be remembered, the study of the Songs of the *Shar-rgan* festival at Poo leads to the same conclusion.² Then Munshi dPal-rgyas showed us the head of an

¹ See also beneath pp. 86, 100.

² Cf. above p. 21.