

The famous monastery of Alchi is situated to the east of the village. It is called rNam-par-s nang-mdzad, and according to popular tradition is of Rin-chen-bzang-po's times. We could distinguish the following six different temples:—

(1) Lha-khang-so-ma.—It is an insignificant square hall with a small *mchod-rten* in the middle, but several of the frescoes appear to be of ancient date. Some of them refer to the Buddha legend, whilst others seem to represent persons of the times when the pictures were painted. The head-dress of these people is quite unusual, and at first I took it for a kind of white top hat. A closer examination showed, however, that it represented a certain type of turban. What looks like the top of the hat, is in reality the turned-up end of the linen of the turban. I noticed two inscriptions in this hall. They were written in a kind of Ṭākārī character; but I have not yet met any one who was able to read them.

(2) gSum-thsag, meaning "Three Stories."—This temple has three stories, each narrower than the one below, and the general appearance of the temple is that of a stepped pyramid. The ancient temple of mTho-lding in Guge was probably of the same type. gSum-thsag is the only temple at Alchi on which the old wooden gallery and the trefoiled wooden arches have been preserved (Plate XXXVII, a). It gives us an idea of the appearance of the ancient Buddhist temples of Kashmīr. All the woodwork, especially the many columns, were covered with mythological carvings, and all the columns had on the inner side of their richly decorated capitals figures of jumping animals, apparently lions, stretched forth towards each other. But what reminded me of Kashmīr most of all, were three trefoiled arches under high pointed gables, exactly like those of the ancient stone temples of that country. On closer inspection it became evident that only the middle arch was of perfect shape, and that the two on the right and left were rude imitations of it. The middle one contains a wooden image of a Buddha seated in the earth-touching attitude, the one to the right (of the spectator), the green Tārā (sGrol-ma), and the one to the left, Vajra-sattva (rDo-rje-sems-dpa). I am of opinion that these two statues were inserted later on in place of two more ancient ones. All the woodwork is painted red, except the arch of the green Tārā, which is blue. Inside the temple are three stucco images, larger than life size, of the following Bōdhisattvas: Vajra-pāṇi (Phyag-rdor) which is painted yellow; Mañjuśrī (*aJam-dbyangs*), the tallest, which is painted red; and Avalōkitēśvara (*sPyan-ras-gzigs*) painted white. At the feet of Avalōkitēśvara we found an inscription recording the restoration of this temple under King bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal in the 16th century. It is interesting that in this inscription, the amount of red, blue, and gold colour which was contributed by various peasants of the neighbourhood, is mentioned. King bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal's court painter was apparently an Indian who knew the Mughal art of painting. When he restored the temple, this artist preserved the old outlines of the 11th century as far as possible; but in the choice of colours, he was more original than the old masters had been. For a large part, the walls had been covered with endless repetitions of the Buddha figure in the same colours. He brought variety into their dress, haloes and backgrounds. Whenever a picture had disappeared altogether, he invented new