

The most interesting group of frescoes is that which represents what I believe to be priests of the Bon-po religion (Plate XLI, a). One of them is represented in almost life size, whilst the others are smaller. They are all clothed in white undergarments and striped gowns. The large figure, and one of the smaller ones, show a gown with black and blue stripes, the other small figures have black and grey stripes. The large figure is shown wearing a blue hat, like a European soft felt-hat with a broad brim. The smaller figures have hats of the same shape but of black colour. There are but few early references to the dress of the Bon-po priest; but in most cases it is described as being black. There are, however, a few passages which make mention of the blue colour of their dress.¹ These relics of the Bon religion at Lamayuru are of some importance; for, as we know from Sarat Chandra Das,² the present day Bon-po priests of Central Tibet cannot be distinguished from Buddhist priests, their dress being exactly alike.

Above the Lamayuru Bungalow, there are several modern and two ancient gateways. They are called *Khagani* (Khanggani). As the ceilings of the old ones are painted all over with blue Buddha-like figures, we may ascribe their origin also to Bon-po times.

Moorcroft³ in 1820 discovered in the Lamayuru monastery several letters of protection issued by Aurangzeb, Mughal officers, and even by one of the Balti kings.

On the 30th September we marched from Lamayuru to Kharbu by the ordinary trade road across the Phothola Pass, 14,000 feet high. The castle of Kharbu is situated on the top of a rocky hill above the present village of Kharbu. It is all in ruins, and rather difficult of access. Puntsog climbed up to it, but he could find neither ancient implements, nor inscriptions. One of the ruins appeared to be an ancient temple, built of sun-dried bricks. But even here no ancient remains were discovered, nor any traces of raised medallions on the walls.

The old town of Kharbu lies on the rocky plateau above the present village, but below the castle (Plate XL, b). It is easier of access than the latter, and was probably deserted, between circa 1620 and 1630 A.D., when King bDe-ldan-rnam-rgyal wrested it from the Khri Sultan of dKar-rtse. According to the chronicles, the conqueror carried all women and children away into captivity, so after this war it was probably never re-occupied. Captain Oliver, the present Joint Commissioner of Ladakh, informed me that a man at Dras who is now one hundred and eight years old, told him that the fort or ancient town of Kharbu was taken by storm in the Dōgrā war. But I feel very doubtful with regard to this statement which is not confirmed by the Ladakhi chronicles, nor by Basti Ram's account. Moreover, Moorcroft in 1820 A.D. found the old town in ruins. At the eastern end of the old town, not far from two small whitewashed *mchod-rten*, there is an inscription of the times of King Seng-ge-rnam-rgyal carved on the rock.⁴ It is very indistinct, and extremely difficult to decipher. The rough surface of

¹ Cf. *J. A. S. B.*, Vol. L, pp. 198 and 211.

² *Journey to Lhasa*, p. 207.

³ *Travels*, Vol. II, p. 14.

⁴ I discovered this inscription in 1906, and published it as No. 55 of my *First Collection of Tibetan Historical Inscriptions*. It seems to contain a reference to Shāh Jahān's attempt to conquer Ladakh.