

I. The Chronicles of Zañs-dkar

INTRODUCTION

In 1907, when stationed at Kyelang, Lahul, I made the acquaintance of a member of a family of chiefs of Ste-sta (Ti-sta) in Zañs-dkar, who passed through Lahul on his journey to India. As the chiefs of Ste-sta claim to belong to the family of the former kings (vassal-kings) of Zañs-dkar, I asked their representative to tell me if they were in possession of a chronicle. The kingdom of Zañs-dkar came to an ignominious end in the Dogra War, and at Dpañ-gtum, the capital, no ancient documents seem to have escaped the ravages of time. The chief of Ste-sta said that his family kept an old chronicle at Ste-sta, which, as he believed, was somewhat similar to the *La-dvags-rgyal-rabs*. The latter assertion does not hold true; but my informant had probably never taken the trouble to read the document.

When the Rev. G. Hettasch of Kyelang, in 1908, went on an itinerant tour to Zañs-dkar, I asked him to make inquiries about the chronicle at Ste-sta, and, if possible, to have it copied. Mr. Hettasch did according to my wish, and had the chronicle copied by my munshi, Bzod-pa Bde-chen of Kyelang. The accompanying text is based on Bzod-pa's copy, which consists of two folio sheets of Tibetan paper.

As a glance at the copy shows, the original at Ste-sta must be in a perilous condition. Whole passages are in quite the wrong place, and the orthography leaves very much to be desired. In many parts the writing is almost illegible, and Bzod-pa had to re-write many words and even sentences, which he had at first misunderstood. The text contains a great number of local names, which in many cases it would have been impossible for me to recognize as such, had not Bzod-pa thoughtfully marked a good number of them by adding the word *yul* ('land,' 'town') above or below them. In the same manner he also marked the clan names, by adding the word *rus* ('bone,' 'clan'), and some of the house-names, by adding the word *gron*.

As we learn from a note at the end of the MS., the Ste-sta chronicle is only an extract from a larger book, which once existed (or still exists?) at Phug-thal. The book of Phug-thal is called *Bo-yig* (more correctly *Hbo-yig*), which means 'letter of measure.' It is apparently a book containing a list of the numbers of bushels which each peasant in the dependent villages had to send annually to the Phug-thal monastery. For this reason the historical portions of the book centre about Phug-thal. They tell the story of the various grants that were made at various times to that monastery.

As regards the history and archæology of Zañs-dkar very little has as yet been done. I may mention an article of my own entitled 'Kleine archäologische Erträge einer Missionsreise nach Zangskar in Westtibet' (*ZDMG.*, vol. lx, pp. 645-61, and vol. lxi, pp. 645-7). Then a note on some ancient sculptures at 'A-tiñ in Zañs-dkar appeared in the *Indian Antiquary*, 1908, pp. 332-3; and, in addition, I am in possession