

IX. The Chronicles of the Chiefs of Ko-loñ in Lahul

When stationed at Kye-lañ, Lahul, as a missionary, I asked Thākur Amar-Chand of Ko-loñ to show me his family chronicles, if he had any. He said that his father, Hari-Chand, had compiled a chronicle in 1880 A.D., but that the information contained in it was drawn from older documents. Amar-Chand recently brought it up to date. Amar-Chand very kindly had the chronicles copied for me in the original Urdū, and he also ordered his munshi to prepare an English translation for my use. Besides the Urdū chronicles Amar-Chand produced also a genealogical tree of his family in Tibetan, and several other Tibetan documents. A number of letters by Kuḷū kings to the chiefs of Ko-loñ were discovered at Ko-loñ by Mr. Howell. Stone inscriptions containing the names of several former chiefs of Ko-loñ have been discovered in the vicinity of the castle of Ko-loñ.

Ko-loñ is situated on the right bank of the river Bhāgā, about 16 miles above the confluence of the rivers Chandrā and Bhāgā. Ko-loñ was the capital of a small chieftainship, which in its best days extended from the confluence of the Chandrā and Bhāgā to the Baralatsa pass, on the right bank of the river. This narrow strip of land was their own property, but since the reign of Mān-Siñgh of Kuḷū, 1674–1717 A.D., they had to watch over the interests of the Kuḷū kings in the whole of Lahul. Lahul then, as now, comprised the valleys of the Chandrā, and the Bhāgā, and of the united rivers down to Tirot.

The chiefs of Ko-loñ are never mentioned in the chronicles of the neighbouring countries, but Lahul as a whole is referred to occasionally in the chronicles of Ladakh and Kuḷū. Under the first great king of Ladakh, Ni-ma-mgon, a country called Spi-lcogs is mentioned. According to K. Marx, Spi-lcogs probably stands for Lahul. Later on two Tibetan conquests of Kuḷū are described, under the Ladakhi kings Lha-chen-Utpala and Tshe-dbañ-rnam-rgyal I. In both cases Lahul was apparently included in the conquest, although it is not specially mentioned. Then, during the reign of the last independent Ladakhi king, Tshe-dpal-rnam-rgyal, Lahul is repeatedly referred to under its Tibetan name Gar-za. Let me add that the name Lahul is entirely unknown among the Tibetans.

In the chronicles of Kuḷū Lahul is repeatedly mentioned in the first legendary chapters, and again in the chapter referring to the conquest of Lahul by the Kuḷū kings in the seventeenth century. Here the name Lahul is used for the country.

The first European who published a pedigree (in Urdū) of the chiefs of Ko-loñ was Col. Massey. In his publication the pedigree begins with No-no-Chuñ-nun (Chogan) and Señ-ge. To the pedigree is added a brief account of the conquest of Ladakh by the Dogras, which would be rather out of place here.

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