



*The «Gegen» or incarnate
Buddha in the lamasery
at Shaku sy.*

It was a windy and cold morning when we mounted our horses, but at midday beautiful, almost summer weather set in again. The mountains were once more wild, high and steep. For 7 or 8 miles we climbed up and down steep spurs of rock that seemed unending, and in between we crossed the river incessantly. It wound in innumerable curves along the valley, tightly enclosed by grey mountain sides, and we had to alter our course time after time with scarcely any breathing space. About 8 miles from Sasuma the valley grew slightly broader, the high mountains retreated and were replaced near the river by lower, grass-covered hills. Here we crossed the river without any bridge, the water not coming above the belly of my horse. Since yesterday bushes and low trees have been seen growing in the valley. During the first 8 miles of the journey firs, often coming right down to the bed of the river, grew on all the slopes that faced N. The firs retreated from the valley with the mountains and we could only see the dense brush of a firwood from time to time on the nearest slopes.

After seeing no villages for 8 miles, they began to appear again. They were small and had no trees. The only thing that caught the eye were numerous flagstuffs with their many-coloured scraps of flags. We met more and more pilgrims — mostly old men, but occasionally a young one. At times we came across small caravans laden with hides. The tinkling bells of the mules, their headgear decorated with red tufts and leather embroidery, enlivened the monotonous landscape. A couple of the drivers are always armed with rifles. An incarnation of Buddha was said to be approaching from the north. Groups of lamas in full dress were on the way to meet him. Their clothes of shining red print shone like silk at a distance in the sun and looked very effective. They wore Chinese fur caps on their heads with a tall knob of chased silver, ending in a blue ball of sapphire, lapis lazuli or, perhaps, glass, on top of its four dark strips of fur. Now and then we saw a group of Tanguts armed with rifles, the supports of which, made of two sticks, stuck out a good bit at the side.

*March 25th.
Labrang
monastery.*