

Report on the University of California Expedition to Kutang and Nubri in Northern Nepal in Autumn 1973

Michael Aris

The University of California Expedition to the Tibetan districts of Kutang and Nubri at the headwaters of the Buri Gandaki River in Northern Nepal during October and November 1973 originated from a more general scheme that had as its chief aim the microfilming of Tibetan Buddhist texts by several teams deputed to Nepal by the Group in Buddhist Studies of the University of California during the autumn of 1973. With financial assistance received from the National Geographical Society and from various departments within the University of California at Berkeley, it was intended that these teams should endeavour to preserve on microfilm rare texts concerning Buddhist philosophy, ritual and history that are known to have survived in private and monastic collections in the isolated Tibetan districts of Northern Nepal. Although firm relations had been entered into with Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, it later proved necessary to modify the aims of the project to one involving a general survey of Tibetan Buddhist culture in areas for which the necessary permits could be obtained. It was only in early October that it finally became possible to send the team originally intended for Dolpo to the districts of Kutang and Nubri instead. This, then, is a report on the work it carried out.*

The decision to focus our attention on these particular districts was made not only because of what we had been led to expect there in terms of a living Tibetan tradition, but also on account of geographical and seasonal expediency. This is true for almost all Himalayan travel but in our case was especially so due to the short time available for carrying out the work of our expedition before the onset of winter which would paralyse our efforts. From conversations with our local informants in the Kathmandu valley and from reading the works of Professor David Snellgrove of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, who has done so much to reveal the Buddhist culture and religion of these areas, we were given to believe that, after a long and arduous approach march up the Buri Gandaki, we would have sufficient time to explore both Kutang and Nubri for the purposes of our survey, these districts being contiguous to each other just south of the Tibetan border along the same river and having religious establishments close to the main settlements through which we would be passing.

* Mr. Hugh Richardson, the well-known English Tibetologist, very kindly read an earlier draft of this report and his comments are, for the most part, acknowledged where they occur.

At the same time it was apparent to us that this area had so far escaped close scrutiny from foreign scholars, with almost the single exception of David Snellgrove himself who has described his own passage through Kutang and Nubri in Chapter VI of his Himalayan Pilgrimage (1961), the last section of a journey which came after many months of arduous travel through the mountainous districts of Northern Nepal when, on his own admission, he and his companions had their hearts set on the long-missed comforts of the capital. His brief account of the local monasteries and villages served to whet our own enthusiasm and, basing our own research on the information contained in this work, we decided to try and add to it, in so far as time and our own abilities permitted. As it turned out, although certain important new features of the cultural life of this area may come to light as a result of our own efforts, our dependence on David Snellgrove's initial work and the enormous use to us which this has been must be properly recognised. Sprul-sku O-rgyan of Bodhnath (a well-known Nyingmapa lama from Kham) gave us a great deal of practical advice and information based on his many years of residence in Nubri. He also gave us a letter of introduction to his numerous disciples there, which later served to open many doors to us.

The members of our team were as follows: (1) Michael Aris; graduate of Durham University, England; former head of the Translation Department, Government of Bhutan; post graduate student of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University (Expedition Leader and Tibetan Language Expert); (2) John Cepelak; graduate of New York University; M.A. in South Asian Literature from the University of California at Berkeley (Nepalese Language Expert and Team Photographer); and (3) Joe Clack; graduate of the University of Wisconsin; Ph.D. Candidate in Buddhist Studies at the University of California at Berkeley (Team Medical Assistant). Before leaving Kathmandu, we recruited Phurba Sherpa of Junbesi as our Sirdar, whose invaluable experience on previous expeditions proved to be very useful. We also obtained the services of two more Sherpas, Namgyal as cook and Pemba as his assistant. Throughout our travels we were never given to regret our choice of them and, indeed, if any success can be credited to the expedition, it is in large part due to their almost limitless patience, their uncomplaining efforts under difficult conditions and total trustworthiness.

Preparations for our departure coincided with the Dasain Festival in Kathmandu which caused further delays. Although Kutang and Nubri do not seem to appear in any Government list as "restricted", because of the close proximity of these areas to the Tibetan border permits are not normally granted to foreigners. We had, however, won the confidence of the Ministry of Home and Panchayat Affairs and, on the basis of this, obtained the necessary permits from the Department of Immigration. Purchase of stores and equipment had been completed several weeks before, and only last minute details were left to be attended to during the

first week of October. Our food provisions, purchased locally, consisted of rice, flour, lentils, sugar, butter, biscuits, porridge, cheese, salami, tins of fish, milk powder, tea, coffee, jam and peanut butter. In addition to this we had stocks of American freeze-dried vegetables, Swiss packet soups and Japanese noodles. Our estimation of the quantities required for each item was based mainly on predictions of what we would eat each day and on the fact that we could not rely on buying much food locally during the trip. With the exception of sugar which we underbought and flour which we overbought, it in fact turned out that our estimations proved exactly right. As to camping equipment, we had two tents manufactured by Sierra Designs of California which were extremely light, durable and easy to erect. With the exception of odd nights spent in village houses and a long stay in a temple at our final destination of Rō in Nubri, we used these tents throughout our trip and were very pleased by their convenience and comfort. In Kathmandu we bought second-hand a small nylon tent for our Sirdar, a locally made canvas tent for the camp kitchen purchased from the British Botanical Expedition to Dolpo), a further canvas tent for our porters and Sherpa assistants, nylon rope, slings, pitons, carrabiners and two ice axes. The last items were intended for dangerous sections of the route but, as it turned out, only the nylon rope, slings and carrabiners were actually used; these were very useful in crossing the swirling torrents of the Buri Gandaki at two points, Tato Pani and Doban, to supplement the existing tuin, a local contraption consisting of a triangular wooden frame (in which the person sits or to which he straps his load) pulled by means of a loose rope along the length of a fixed rope from one bank of the river to the other.

The large bulk of these food provisions and equipment necessitated the hiring of fifteen porters who would accompany us during the outward section of the trip. This we entrusted to Phurba, who faced difficulties in finding the required number of men because of the Dasain Festival mentioned above. It was also impossible to arrange transport, except at the most extortionate rates, to Trisuli from where we were to start walking. We decided to wait three more days, and so it was finally on October 7th that we succeeded in despatching all our porters and Sherpa assistants, together with the loads by bus, and ourselves and Phurba by hired Land Rover along the Indian-constructed road to Trisuli. Our considerable relief at being able to leave finally, after so many weeks of frustration, was not even dampened by a mild attack of food poisoning, the symptoms which gradually began to appear with quite dramatic effect in all three of us soon after leaving Kathmandu. Fortunately after arriving at Trisuli, and after several hours of rest at our camp in the compound of the Indian hydro-electric project, we were quite recovered. The monsoon, which lasted this year for at least one month longer than usual, was still in full spate and our porters and Sherpas arrived very wet after dark with a story of how their bus had broken down on the way. By the following morning, all were in good spirits again

and ready to start trekking. Taken as a whole, our porters represented a broad cross-section of the Nepalese hill tribes: Tamangs, Sherpas, Magars, Sunwars and "Hill Brahmins". Later we also employed Gurungs from the Buri Gandaki region and Tibetans from Nubri. Our initial fears that frictions might develop among them due to caste differences were soon dispelled and, apart from the slight inconvenience of their having to cook their meals separately on different fires to avoid pollution, the arrangement worked very well. Without exception they all proved to be tough, dependable and good-natured and - in contrast to so many other Himalayan expeditions - we never had any trouble with them at all.

From Trisuli it took us ten days of continuous walking before we reached Jagat where the first vestiges of Tibetan Buddhist culture became apparent. Our route, to begin with, took us almost due west along the old footpath connecting Kathmandu with Gorkha, a route that is not often used now because of the existence further south of the Chinese-built road to Pokhara. The weight of our porters' loads, our own slack leg muscles and the monsoon's persistence slowed us down for the first few days, but gradually we became fitter, the rain began to ease and the continuous climbing and descending were accepted as a matter of course. On our sixth day at Arughat, an important Newari trade centre, we joined the Buri Gandaki River which stayed with us for the better part of one month. The trail from Arughat to Nubri along the banks of this river is notorious as being one of the most dangerous and treacherous in Nepal. In recent years it has been partly improved, but nonetheless remains a trial of endurance. Leeches, slippery footholds above deep chasms, narrow plank bridges and other obstacles including the dense sub-tropical forest itself can be counted among the more dramatic difficulties to be faced on this route. In the end, however, we realised that it was the sheer distance covered that brought about more exhaustion than any particular section or obstacle on the route. The cumulative effect of the natural hazards were such that, by the time we reached Jagat on October 16th, we felt justified in calling half a day's halt to give us a rest and Phurba, our Sirdar, a chance to recruit more porters to replace those wanting to return. This large Gurung village had a chöten in its central square, the first we saw, and some of its inhabitants spoke indifferent Tibetan. These were the first signs of influence from the north we encountered, apart from small groups of people from Tsum, Kutang and Nubri we had met on the path below who were making their way down to Trisuli and Kathmandu to sell dried herbs, some to be used medicinally and some in the preparation of incense.

At this "cultural watershed" of Jagat we parted company with two leaders of the local Khampa group in Tsum (the district further east from Nubri) in whose company we had been travelling from Arughat. After an easy half day's march we arrived at Pangshing, the first Gurung village on the west bank of the Buri

Gandaki to possess its own Tibetan Buddhist temple under the control of an hereditary lama. This is situated high above the village and, as expected, presented a picture of crumbling neglect and decay. The temple building is divided into the lama's residence and the temple proper. It is built of loose stone walls, flat stone roofing, two carved and painted supporting pillars and irregular wooden flooring. The altar occupies the eastern side of the temple and, from an inspection of the images thereon and a quick glance at the titles and colophons of a few of the lama's books, it was easily established that the temple belongs to the Byang.gter ("Northern Treasure") tradition of the Nyingmapa School. Three crudely painted clay images of Nyingmapa lamas were said by the present incumbent, an old Gurung called sKal.bzang rDo.rje to portray his ancestors, the founders of this temple. Apart from an annual festival of cham (sacred dance) which occurs during the twelfth month of the lunar calendar, there seems to be very little in the way of regular devotional ritual performed in this temple. Although nominally Tibetan Buddhists, the Gurungs of these villages also observe the usual Hindu festivals (some of which involve animal sacrifice). It is clear that certain animistic forms of religion are also practised and, because of this, they have gained the reputation of being skilled and dangerous sorcerers among the Tibetan peoples further north who call the people practising these arts "dzoki" (a corruption of yogin); later we met a few people in the district of Kutang who call themselves bon.po (adherents of the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet) owing allegiance to these Gurung "dzokis". The religious syncretism practised by the Gurungs of these upper reaches of the Buri Gandaki seems to provide a rough parallel to that found in other parts of Nepal, notably the Kathmandu valley itself. It is unlikely, however, that they have developed any formal rationale to explain their adherence to several opposing religious tenets, and the strongest impression gained of their spiritual traditions is its lack of philosophical maturity. A profitable subject of further enquiry (for which we lacked the necessary linguistic skills) would be to establish the nature of the missionary activities of Tibetan lamas in former times among the Gurungs of this area and the philosophical arguments put forward by them in the course of this work; some of the Tibetan sources we were to discover throw light on this subject, but we were unable to question the Gurungs themselves since none of us could speak their language, and their spoken Tibetan and Nepalese were rudimentary. Certainly the great number of old mani walls and various kinds of chötens north of Jagat on the west bank of the Buri Gandaki would seem to indicate a much stronger influence from the main centres of Tibetan civilization in the past than is apparent today.

This initial impression was strengthened on arriving the next day at Nyak, after a very strenuous ascent from the Chuling Khola, a tributary river which descends from the Himal Chuli (25,801 ft) and which we crossed after lunch by means of a natural rock

bridge. Nyak also has its own temple, which is in a better condition than the one at Pangshing. It is called Byang.chub dGon.pa ("The Monastery of Enlightenment") but also appears to have the name of Chos.dbyings dGon.pa after the name of its founder, bla.ma Chos.dbyings, a clay image of whom was pointed out to us on the main altar. Like the temple at Pangshing, this one also belongs to the Byang.gter tradition of the Nyingmapa School and is decorated inside with painted wooden panels in a manner common to all the monasteries and temples further north. These invariably depict the Zhi.khro ("Peaceful and Wrathful Deities") who make their appearance in the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Why they had become the favourite subject of the local painters we were never able to establish.

A day's journey in the mountains further west of Nyak, we were told, there is a sacred shrine of the female bodhisattva Tārā called gNas sGrol.ma dPal. An alternative name is dPal sGrol.ma. The shrine is in the form of a cave surrounded by twenty-one trickles of water, each representing one of the twenty-one aspects of this divinity. In former times, it is said, there was a monastery of the Drukpa Kagyü School there which is no longer standing. Although still respected by the local Gurungs as a sacred shrine, all that remains in the cave is a small ledge on which butter lamps can be offered. We therefore decided not to make a side trip to this place.

Between the last Gurung village of Nyak and the first village of Drang in the district of Kutang, we encountered some of the most difficult stretches in our entire trip, necessitating several ascents to places from which clear views of the mountains to the east in Tsum were obtained, followed by steep descents to the jungle-covered river bank. At midday on the 19th October, we arrived at Drang, a small impoverished hamlet of six or seven houses inhabited by people speaking the strange dialect of Ku.skad (=Ku.tang.gi.skad) which we now heard for the first time. Although recognisably Tibetan in character, this dialect is so obscure as to be completely unintelligible to the people of Nubri further north who speak a fairly standard form of western Tibetan. The fact that it contains a large number of loan words taken from other dialects and languages is suggested by its being called rku.skad ("stolen language") by people making a pun on the syllable Ku in the name Ku.tang. The antiquity of this dialect is hinted at in Milarepa's rDo.rje mGur.drug (of which more latter) in which the district is described as skad.mi.gcig.pa'i.yul - "a land of a different language". Certainly even today it is not easy making oneself understood in Kutang in standard Tibetan. Although a basic word list was noted, an exhaustive study of Ku.skad still remains to be done.

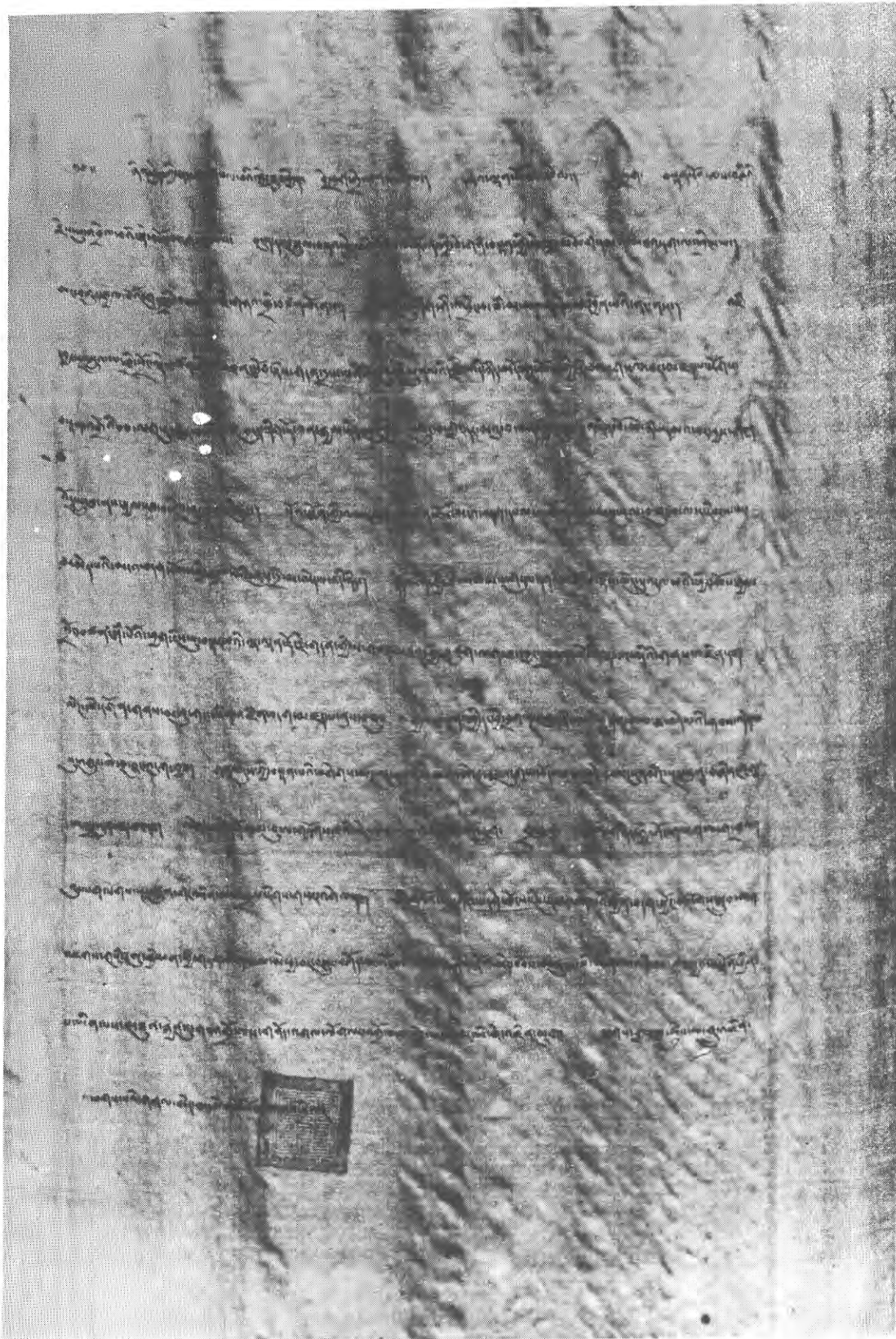
On the evening of the 19th, we arrived at the large village of Bi. At this point the Buri Gandaki finally changes from a north-south direction to a north-westerly one. The gorge begins to open out into a steep valley permitting a few flat and open fields alongside the narrow terracing on steeper land. After the close confinement of one week's trekking up the narrow confines of this river, we were overjoyed to find distant views all round and empty space above. The main track passes Bi below it but, by mistake, we took a side path that led up to the village. This presented an aspect of such settled calm and comfort that we decided to stop there for the night and also the following day - a decision which we were later very grateful for, as we should otherwise have missed some interesting finds.

Apart from differences in language and agriculture, the people and villages of Kutang closely resemble those further north-west in Nubri. In this respect, Bi is no exception. The houses are solid, two-storied constructions built of stone and timber, with a paved forecourt used for threshing and an external wooden staircase leading from the ground floor, where the domestic animals are kept, to the first floor which contains the family's living quarters. The houses are generally attached to each other in long lines with fields in between. The appearance of Bi is further enhanced by an enormous number of chötens and mani walls, and by the presence of three temples. The smallest of these is in the centre of the village and contains a very large revolving prayer wheel. The other two stand on the hillside just above the village - a common location.

What immediately focused our interest was the stone carving found on the mani walls. Besides the usual mantras, a profusion of saints and deities in all kinds of different forms were depicted. These included many local lamas, whose names were noted for future reference in trying to establish the outlines of the religious history of the area. Many of these carvings showed a delicacy and originality of touch that was very pleasing. The villages of Bi and Kok have preserved this art form undiminished in a long line of craftsmen, passing in succession from father to son. The popularity of this art in the adjoining districts is considerable, and carvings produced in this village can be found in the Gurung country to the south and in the villages of Nubri to the north west. An act of merit in itself, the depiction of particular deities on stone is often done for specific purposes and remedies. Thus, carvings of Tshé.dpag.med bring long life, of Nor.lha bring wealth; and a bya.khyung (garuda) will remove illnesses caused by the klu (serpent spirits). Among subjects chosen as general acts of merit, mention should be made of the Buddhas of the past who are known as "The Buddhas of Confession" (Sangs.rgyas lTung.bshags). These figures, together with their accompanying invocation, require so many separate stones for their carving that often an entire mani wall is devoted solely to them. This is the

case at Nyak, where a set had recently been commissioned and bought from a stone carver at Bi at the cost to the local Gurungs of three hundred Nepalese Rupees. We ourselves were unable to commission the same man as his wife would not allow him to neglect his work on their lands; the harvesting and threshing of barley was in full swing at the time of our visit. That section of the village which has the most mani walls is appropriately called Ma.ni sGang, "The Mani Hills", and we photographed several of the carvings which pleased us most. Our one cause of regret was that the local stone is of a hard variety that does not permit deep incisions. The fine relief work on slate that is associated with this art in, for instance, Bhutan cannot therefore be done here. Nevertheless, the overall effect of the "linear" carving of Kutang is certainly impressive, and gains power from the sheer profusion of figures depicted. The statuary and frescoes in the temples of the area are, by comparison, not nearly so exciting.

It was at Bi also that we came across for the first time another phenomenon of local art that seems peculiar to the area, but which is perhaps more interesting for historical reasons than for aesthetic ones. Inside the main gateway chöten standing next to the small temple in the centre of the village are painted wooden panels on four sides of its upper section, seen from below as one passes through beneath. This in itself is usually the case in such chötens and the deities depicted were also quite common ones. The point of interest here, however, was that on close inspection it appeared that these panels had been superimposed on an older set, which in turn had themselves been superimposed on a still older set, thus providing three layers painted at different times in the village's history. The reason for this was obvious; by retaining the old paintings behind the new ones, the merit accruing to their original donors is thought to persist. Usually such paintings are done on plaster-covered stone forming part of the basic structure of the chöten, and so a new painting requires the complete destruction of the old one. The use of wooden panels in this area, however, obviates this necessity as they do not form part of the chöten's original structure. While this system of preservation was devised for purely religious reasons, the resulting conservation may one day be of considerable use to art historians, who will thereby have a unique opportunity to study changes in style and execution. Whether dates could be safely applied to the various sets, it is not easy to imagine, unless supporting references from the local literature could be obtained. In some places during our journey after Bi, we noticed in some gateway chötens as many as four sets of panels superimposed on each other in this way, and it is probably safe to assume that several generations elapsed between each. Although with the aid of a torch we were able to see that, though somewhat faded, the older paintings were intact, it was not possible to see whether they portrayed the same figures as the out-panels.



Proclamation on silk issued by the 5th Dalai Lama
in 1661 to the mNga'.bdag clan of sPra.dun.rtse.
(See text for translation.)



Thangka of Mi.la Ras.pa with gDugs.dkar (Sītātpatrā) above; discovered in rNal.'byor Phug, the meditation cave of Mi.la Ras.pa in Nubri.

On October 19th we spent a day in the vicinity of Bi in order to survey its temples. The largest of these is Rang.byung dGon.pa ("The Self-Originated Monastery"), which was quite imposing after the small neglected Gurung temples to the south. An interesting feature of its external appearance was an odd horizontal band of brushwood set into its walls just below the eaves of the roof. Known as span bad, it serves as a decoration (rgyan-cha) and distinguishing mark of a religious building but while very common in Tibet, its incidence in the Himalayas seems to be restricted to a few border districts. In Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal religious buildings normally only display a band of red paint below the eaves in place of the span-bad and this, as Hugh Richardson has pointed out to me, is regarded as very third-rate in Tibet.

Founded by a lama called Padma dBang.rgyal, Rang.byung dGon.pa is manifestly Nyingmapa. The main image is 'Od.dpag.med on either side of which about five images of standard deities are placed. The main subject of the wall paintings are the Zhi.khro. Standing by an image of Padma dBang.rgyal is one of a certain lama from the famous Kagyupa monastery of Brag.dkar rTa.so in the Tibetan district of Kyirong across the border to the east. Unfortunately, the temple keeper was unable to supply his name or give us any information about Padma dBang.rgyal, the founder, but later we were to hear a great deal about the monastery of Brag.dkar rTa.so ("The white Rock like a Horse's Tooth") which plays such an important part in the cult of Milarepa.

Below Rang.byung dGon.pa is the little temple of Bal. po Chos.sgang ("The Religious Hill of the Newars"). The keeper was nowhere to be found and, as it was locked, there was no way of gaining entrance. This was a pity because its name implies that there are images of Newari craftsmanship inside. Although we tried to find the keeper several times later on, we were unsuccessful; the season demanded that almost everyone should be working in the fields from dawn till dusk.

On enquiring whether a lama lived in the village, we were told that there was none living in Bi itself, but there was one in the neighbouring village of Gyayul which lies at a distance of about half an hour's climb up a side valley behind Bi. Our American military map (NH 45-13; series U502), which is based entirely on the British Survey of India, marks this village as a black dot without a name. After lunch we decided to visit it, and were pleasantly surprised to discover there a settlement as large as Bi, also possessing three temples. We thought it best to introduce ourselves first to the lama, and soon located his house at the bottom end of the village. Expecting a venerable old man who might tell us about local history, we were at first a bit disappointed to see that the lama was in fact a very young man of nineteen. Speaking fluent Tibetan, however, he soon impressed us with his alert and sympathetic nature. He at once agreed to

accompany us to the various temples in the village, and so we climbed up to Ghos.gling dGon.pa, ("The Monastery of the Dharma Island"). The young lama, whose name is sKu.shogs 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho, explained how this temple had been built by one of his ancestors whom he called Mes.mes ("forefather") gSang.sngags, whose own father and grandfather had built a small shrine still standing to the side of the main temple. The main image within the temple is Padmasambhava and besides Mes.mes gSang.'dus (a local lama who lived in the 17th-18th centuries and whose biography we later found) and a clay image of a certain bsTan.'dzin 'Phrin.las, who appears to have belonged to the same lineage as our young informant - whose own father, who died about fourteen years ago, is also portrayed in another clay image. Clearly these hereditary lamas of Kutang belonged to a well established clan of some antiquity and so it was with some interest that we questioned the present young incumbent as to his family's history. His clan, he informed us, is that of the Khyung.po Rab.bzang dKar.po (Khyung.dkar, for short) which can be roughly rendered as "The Exceedingly Good White Garuda". Originally from Khyung.po in the eastern Tibetan province of Kham, the founder of the clan is supposed to have been born from the egg of a white garuda. Two other branches of the same clan, according to the legend, were born from the eggs of a black garuda and a "mottled" (khra.bo) garuda. The "white" branch has members not only in Gyayul, but also in the village of Trok further west, and in Tsum to the east. In Gyayul there is another clan called Khyung.nag, but whether this is the "black" branch of the clan or not he could not say. Two other clans, one originating from the village of Kok and another called Bongkel (?) also live in Gyayul. From among these four, the Khyung.dkar enjoy the position of highest precedence and authority, and its hereditary lamas are regarded as the spiritual overlords of the whole of Kutang. Written records of the family were said to have existed long ago but were later destroyed by fire. One cannot help wondering whether the Khyung.po clan as it survives in Kutang is an offshoot of the tribe bearing the same name which is commonly listed as one of the eighteen tribes of the Ldong (or Dong) who were themselves one of the "four original Tibetan tribes" (nang gi mi'u rigs) and who are supposed to have had their homeland to the north-east of Tibet. One also wonders what connection, if any, existed between the Khyung.po tribe and the district of that name which lies on the western borders of the Kham province, where this clan in Kutang claim to have had their origins.

The more common version of the mythical origins of this clan or lineage (rus) tells us of four eggs (white, black, yellow and green) being left behind by the ancestral garuda at the six-peaked mountain of Gyim.shod and it is from these four that a profusion of different tribes came forth. From among the Khyung.po clans some of the greatest contemplative minds of both the Buddhist and Bon.po traditions were produced, including Mi.la

Ras.pa and Khyung.po Nal. 'byor, the founder of the Shangs.pa dKar.brgyud.pa among the Buddhists and the famed gter.ston bLo-Ldan sNying.po and rTogs.ltan bkra.shis rGyal.mtshan among the Bon.po. In the 19th century it produced the prolific scholar kong.sprul bLo.gros mTha'.yas (1813-1899) who gives an exhaustive account of the origins of the Khyung.po in his autobiography. (See note 57 on p. 28 of Gene Smith's introduction to Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture, Sata-Pitaka Series Vol. 80; New Delhi 1970).*

The present young Lama of this clan typifies the traditional outlook of his forebears and it was clear that he still possesses considerable authority among his followers and benefactors; he retains the right to a form of conscripted labour in the village. As to his personal accomplishments, he was quite candid, admitting to a poor education in Buddhist ritual and philosophy. He has, however, spent a number of years at Rö in Nubri studying under certain lamas and has also undertaken periods of retreat. Ordained a full monk three years ago, he is indifferent to the idea of marrying in order to produce an heir to continue his lineage. He, his mother and sister were planning to go on a pilgrimage to the Buddhist sites in the Kathmandu valley and it was to be the first time that he would leave his own district for other parts of Nepal. I suggested he should try and gain admittance to sPrul.sku O.rgyan's new monastery at Bodhnath in order to pursue his studies more fully and he welcomed the idea, having already received teachings and initiations from that lama while he resided in Rö. On our return, I mentioned the idea to sPrul.sku O.rgyan, who also seemed to favour the plan. Since the traditional centres of study used by the Buddhists of these areas in Tibet no longer exist, they have come to depend increasingly on the facilities provided by refugee scholars now living in India and the Himalayan kingdoms.

* Mr. Hugh Richardson has kindly made the following observation; "References in the Tun Huang documents link the Khyung.po in the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries with West Tibet, Manasarowar etc., and also the Khotan region. There are indications of Khyung.po in A-mdo, Ri.bo che etc. and in Tun Huang itself. All the same it seems surprising that the Khyung.po of N. Nepal see their origin in the East, especially as the Khyung tradition around Kailash is still so strong. A leading Khyung.po family in Central Tibet is that of Ragashar, connected with the Zhabs.drung of sTag.lung".

Following our experiences at Bi, we were not surprised to discover that the two other temples of Gyayul - namely Byu.ru dGon.pa ("The Coral Monastery") and Khyung.po Chos.sgang ("The Dharma Hill of the Khyung.po Clan") could not be entered because their keepers were away harvesting. A point of interest at the latter temple was a stone carving outside of the "Protectors of the Three Families" (Rigs.gsum dGon.po) to which a fourth image of a garuda devouring a snake had been added. This, it was confirmed, was the emblem of the Khyung.dkar clan whose particular temple this is.

During the course of our conversation with the lama, we heard for the first time the exciting news that a day's journey to the north-east lay a "hidden valley" (sbas.yul) of Guru Padmasambhava called sKyid.mo.lung ("Valley of Happiness") within which there was a large and beautiful temple called Serang. The cult of the "hidden valleys" of Padmasambhava, where the faithful will take refuge at times of future strife when contending with the enemies of the dharma, and where they will find a land of peace and plenty, is found in a number of isolated inaccessible places throughout the Himalayas. We had not expected to find one here and were thrilled at the discovery. Kyimolung, together with its main temple of Serang, had so far escaped the notice of the outside world because it lies at some distance from the main routes. David Snellgrove certainly heard the name of Serang, as it appears on his map, wrongly placed between the villages of Tsak and "Gak" (which should be amended to "Kok") but there is no mention of it in his text.

The lama promised that, if his mother gave him permission, he would accompany us to Serang on the following day and spend the night there with us. To ensure that our experience with locked doors would not be repeated, he gave me directions to a house in Bi where the keeper of Serang lived and so, with considerable anticipation at what we would find the next day, we returned to Bi to make the necessary arrangements for this side trip. Joe Clack decided not to come with us as he was not very well at the time, and so we arranged for him to continue up the track and wait for us at Namdru with the bulk of our porters. Taking two of our Sherpa porters and our cook, Namgyal, John Cepelak and myself set off the next morning with the aged keeper of Serang who had agreed to come with us. We first went back to the lama's house in Gyayul to see if his mother had given him permission to come with us and were very pleased to find that she had done so. She turned out to be a most hospitable old soul, and insisted that we should spend a night in her house on our return.

We then descended to the tributary river below Gyayul in order to cross it and ascend the mountainside opposite, behind which Kyimolung lies. Just before the long rigorous climb, the young lama indicated to us an old man sitting in a little open

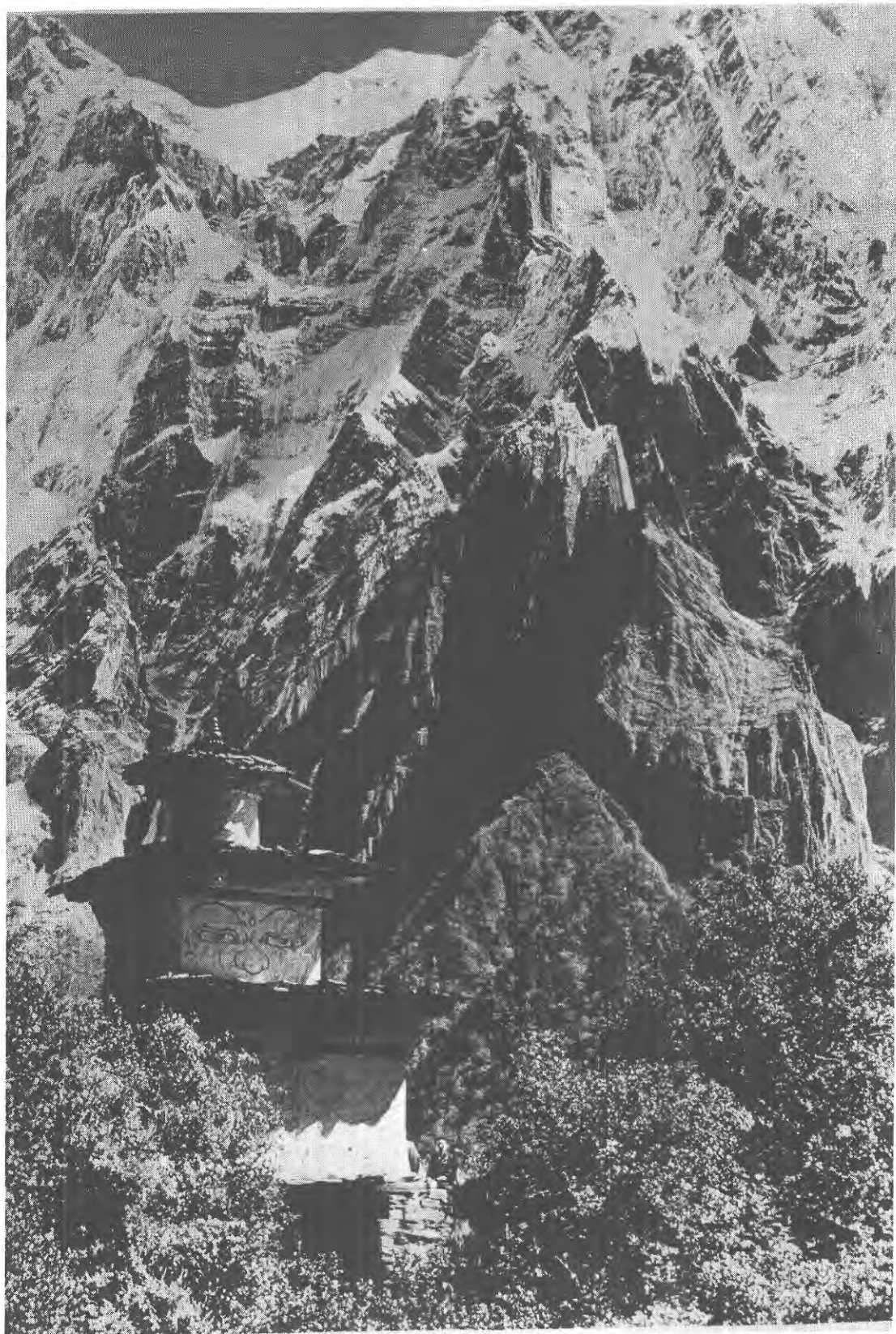
house on stilts by the river, and said he was one of a few bon.po who inhabit his village - a bon.dkar ("white bon") as opposed to the bon.nag ("black bon") who are said to be found among the Gurungs. These labels are applied to practitioners of bon in the sense of 'virtuous' and 'evil' the former reputedly being similar to ordinary Buddhists and the latter practising ancient occult arts. In point of fact, the distinction is almost meaningless today, and what we find now has come to be called "assimilated bon" - that is to say, a corpus of ancient non-Buddhist rites that have become adapted to the basic tenets of Buddhist philosophy and practice to such an extent that its character is almost indistinguishable from that of the 'unreformed' schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Time did not permit any delay so we postponed talking to the old man till our return on the following day.

From the river we climbed for about three hours up an extremely steep path. At various points we were shown natural formations on the rock which were said to be connected with Padmasambhava's activities in this "hidden land" and which, on account of his magical powers, had taken their shape in stone. These included the following: (1) the "inner" door (nang.sgo) to the hidden land, (2) a "self-originating" conch shell and long trumpet, (3) a holy spring (sgrub.chu), (4) a stalagmite said to be the Guru's lingam and (5) a footprint of a dakini on a stone, imprinted there as she worshipped the Guru on the hillside above. All these are typical of the mythical paraphernalia associated with these "hidden lands" and are found without exception, but with some considerable variety, in all their locations throughout the Himalayas. Later we were fortunate in finding and copying several versions of the guide book to Kyimolung and these contain an exhaustive catalogue of all its marvels. A comparative survey of all the literature and oral legends surrounding these sbas.yul is very much a desideratum to which our own efforts may eventually make their contribution.

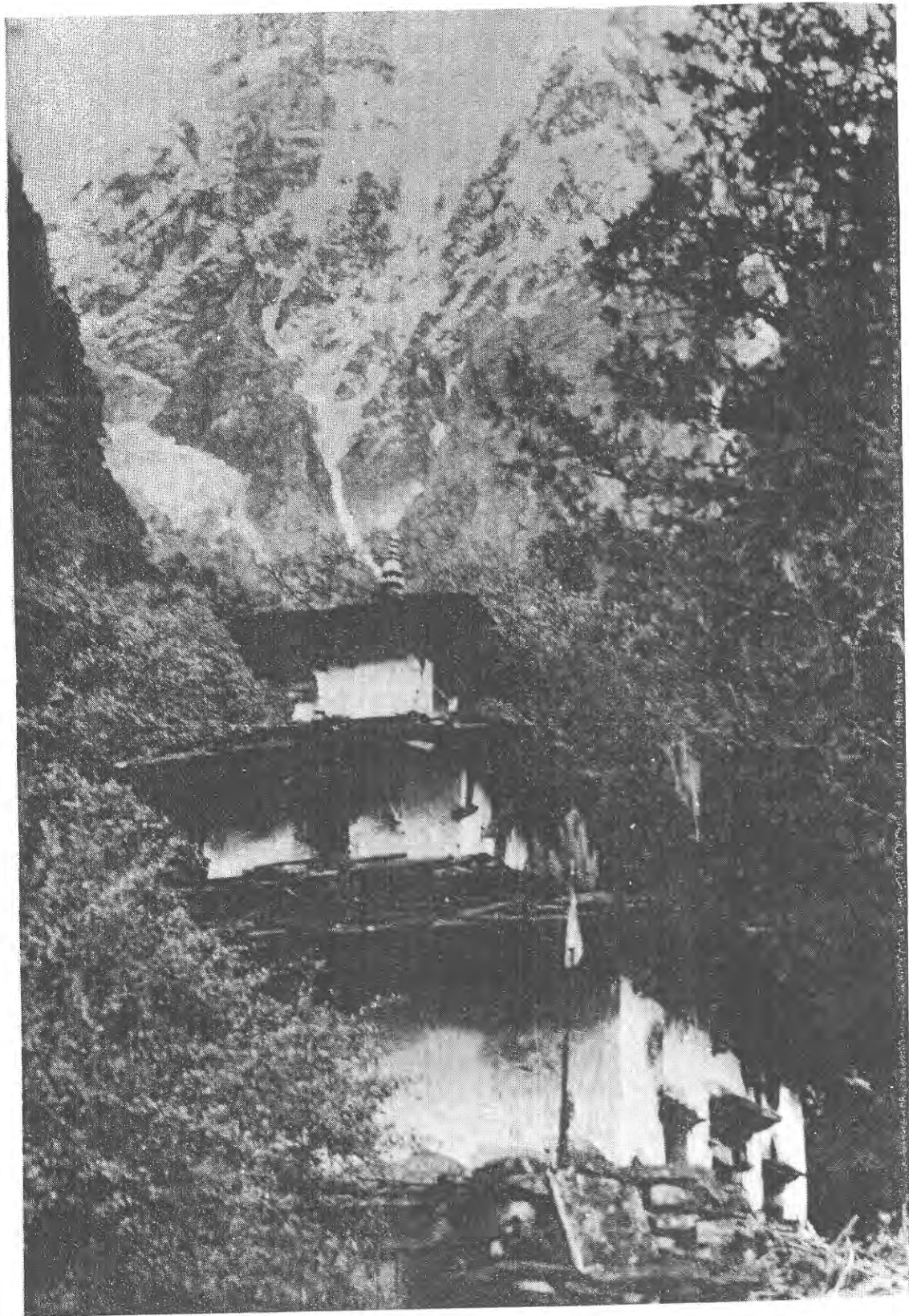
After three hours climbing, we arrived at the village of Sharang (whose inhabitants are actually from Bi down below) and there we stopped for lunch. It was at Sharang that we first witnessed a touching little ritual that seems to be practised throughout the area. The peasants came up to their young lama, 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho, each picked a wild flower growing nearby and, bending low, presented this to him, who blessed them by touching his head to theirs. The natural grace and spontaneity of these gestures of offering and blessing impressed us very much; throughout Tibetan Buddhist areas, incidental offerings are made in terms of cash or kind, their quantity being prescribed by traditional codes of behaviour, but in the case of Kutang and Nubri it is simply a flower - surely the purest symbol of offering - that is presented to the lama. It is interesting to note in this regard that the common circumlocution used in literature for offerings made in terms of cash or kind to a high religious personage is in fact the word "flower" (me.tog).

While waiting for our Sherpas to prepare lunch, we visited the small temple of Gol.dpon dGon.pa which has by its side an enormous complex of ancient mani inscriptions and carvings. Inside the temple, we found a fairly large collection of books. There was nothing very unusual about their contents (mainly standard doctrinal works) but, as it turned out, each volume had appended to it a dkar.chags ("catalogue") which were in fact extended colophons which explained the circumstances under which the copying of the text was commissioned. Each contained interesting references to local history such as, for instance, the visit to Kutang of the famous 17th-18th century lama from Dolpo, bsTan.'dzin Ras.pa of the Kagyüpa school. Also a cursory inspection revealed many descriptions of Kyimolung and its relation to other places. We arranged with the keeper to copy these on our return.

After lunch we continued our ascent through a forest. Although clouds began to blow across the sky, a beautiful panorama of snow peaks appeared all around. From the highest point of the path, before we started to descend again, we gained a view of the whole "hidden land" of Kyimolung. It is a horse-shoe shaped valley divided by one central river which is fed by a number of small tributaries. The open end of the horse-shoe lies to the west, where it merges with the Buri Gandaki, but all the other points of the compass are blocked by giant snow peaks and glaciers. From our vantage point the lama pointed out the temple of Serang far below us on a hanging valley between two glaciers and set in a pine wood. Our excitement at being (to the best of our knowledge) the first westerners to visit this place was considerable, especially in view of the fact that the temple was reputed to be the chief one among all those in the Kutang district, and also because of the unique position it occupied, thus set so dramatically in a steep wood between snow glaciers that descended to a level actually below that of the temple itself. The light of the evening sun shining down between and clouds and the peaks onto this "hidden land" gave it the most romantic feeling of unreality and it was easy to understand why it had been chosen in the past by recluses as a sanctuary for their vocational pursuits. In the biographical literature of some of these recluses which we were later to find, these mountains are repeatedly described as nges.med, literally "not certain"; that is to say "wild and undefined" and that is precisely the feeling they convey. On our map, the range was called the "Sringi Himal" and the main river coming down from it was the "Sringi Khola". It dawned on us that night that this "Sringi" was in fact Serang itself, a typical example of the rather clumsy renderings of local names in the Himalayas on the part of the Survey of India. The mistake could not have been noticed before for the simple reason that nobody seems to have come this way prior to our own visit. "Sringi" may have been taken as a misrendering of seng.ge, snow lion, whereas it should properly be either gSer.thang or gSer.brang ("Golden Field" or "Golden Fly")



A gateway chöten in Kyimolung with part of the Serang Himal in the background.



The three-tiered temple of Serang in the "hidden land" of Kyimolung in Kutang.

respectively). These two alternative spellings are a subject of local debate but, whichever one is correct, it has now become corrupted in local speech to "Serang". The three main peaks in the range above Serang are called by the local people Gang bKra.shis dPal.bzang, Gang bKra.shis Lha.dar and Gang bKra.shis Grum.bu and these names are also to be found in the local biographical literature we discovered. A further name, sKu.la Pad.gzung, is sometimes added. The presiding guardian deity of these mountains goes by the name of 'Dzoms.lha dKar.po ("The White God of the Assembly"). He is portrayed as a warrior holding a banner and galloping on a horse.

Climbing down once again, we soon came to the temple of sBas.phug dGon.pa ("The Monastery of the Hidden Cave") which was founded in the 17th century by a local lama, Padma Don.grub, who usually has the epithets of Pha ("Father") (since he was the founder of a local lineage) and Bya.gtang Ras.pa ("The Cotton-Clad Renunciator of Worldly Actions"). Padma Don.grub's teacher was the famous Padma 'Phrin.las (1640-1718), the second Rig.'dzin Chen.po (Mahavidhyadhara) of the rDo.rje Brag monastery belonging to the Nyingmapa school in Tibet and a famous scholar of his day whose principal benefactor was the Fifth Dalai Lama himself. Padma Don.grub was the founder of one of the most important disciple lineages of Kutang, and five autobiographical works pertaining to this lineage we eventually located and copied through the kind offices of Mr. Milan Melvin. It was here at sBas.phug that we first learnt of the existence of these works, but we were unable to find out anything about their present location. Later at Rö, we made further enquiries and were told that they were at Kok. A messenger we despatched there to prepare for our arrival met us below Kok with definite information that they were now being kept at rNal.'byor Phug, but all our arrangements to leave had been finalised and further delay would have been impossible. By a stroke of good fortune, several days after our departure, we met Mr. Melvin who was making a trip to the areas we had visited and who promised to try and secure copies for us of these works on his own film and on what remained of our own stock. I hastily wrote him a letter of introduction to sLob.dpon 'Gyur.med at Rö, requesting him to assist Mr. Melvin in making photocopies, and several months later these reached me safely in Rangoon. They were later developed at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and copies have now been deposited in the library of the School and at the East Asiatic Library in Berkeley, together with the rest of our textual discoveries. These are listed separately in the appendix to this report but a discussion of the contents and general significance of this autobiographical literature would not seem to be out of place here, before returning to the story of our trip to Kyimolung.

The five works represent a single manuscript collection (marked ka, kha, ga, nga, ca) some 415 folios in all. They consist of (1) the autobiography of Padma Don.grub, (2) the autobiography of Padma dBang.'dus, (3) the spiritual songs (mgur.ma) of Padma dBang.'dus, (4) the autobiography of O.rgyan bsTan.'dzin and (5) the "secret autobiography" (gsang.ba'i rnam.thar) of O.rga bsTan.'dzin. The works are undated but cover a period of approximately one hundred years from the mid-17th century to the mid-18th century. The three lamas who wrote these works all wrote in much the same style, one which is relatively free from elaborate figures of speech and the rather pompous tone which mars so much of the later biographical writing in Tibet. Spelling mistakes (no doubt due to scribal errors down the ages) dominate throughout, except in a few notable passages (e.g. p.129b et seq of (2) above) but this is compensated for by a refreshingly simple and straightforward account of what they considered to be the major events of their lives; the main feeling conveyed is that they wrote "straight from the heart" as it were. All three of these lamas were inveterate travellers making arduous pilgrimages throughout Tibet and to parts of Nepal and Sikkim as well, always on foot and in all seasons of the year. These travels brought them into contact with many of the great religious personages of their day and for us perhaps the main interest of these works lies in the account of these journeys and in all the adventures that befell them on the way. There is always a careful explanation of the motives that lay behind these wanderings and these include the search for teachings and the blessings of holy shrines. Sometimes, however, it seems that journeys are undertaken for their own sake, with the intention of turning anything encountered on the road into a means of spiritual profit. This is best expressed in the phrase gang shar lam khyer, "to bring to the path (to enlightenment) whatever may happen". The journey is itself therefore regarded as being of equal importance to its goal and, in a metaphysical sense, this idea has strong echoes in the philosophy of the Mahayana which tends to reduce the inherent duality between the path to enlightenment and its ultimate realisation. In practical terms, this attitude when applied to travel presented practical difficulties to the pilgrim, as we see when Padma dBang.'dus makes a pilgrimage to the holy mountain and lakes of Kailash in western Tibet; he refuses to waste time enquiring for the right path and he and his two companions (who are full of misgivings) become completely lost in a vast uninhabited tract of land in a snowstorm for days on end with no food provisions to sustain them. Eventually, on the point of death, it seems, they meet some Gorkha soldiers who have been on a campaign in Tibet and are put on the right track and given some food. The whole experience is seen as fruitful and worthwhile by Padma dBang.'dus and the idea that he might have been improvident never even occurs to him.

When incidents such as this one are related, they are often followed by a mystical song spontaneously composed to mark the occasion or requested by patrons or disciples who were present. This is a tradition, perhaps more of the Kagyüpa than of the Nyingmapa, but although these lamas belonged to the latter school, their affiliations with the former were also very strong. Padma dBang.'dus describes himself as a follower equally of the Nyingmapa and of the Drukpa sub-school of the Kagyüpa. His greatest teacher in the latter tradition was bsTan.'dzin Ras.pa of Dolpo who, as noted earlier, was active in Kutang in the 17th century and whom he visited in Dolpo on at least one occasion. The account of his journey there through Manang and Lo (Mustang) is of considerable historical interest for his meeting with a representative of the King of Jumla and his involvement in a local war. His main teacher, Padma Don.grub, the founder of sBas.phug dGon.pa, came from a family that had strong connections with the Drukpa of Bhutan, and is said to have become wealthy through acting as the interpreters between the Bhutanese and the Kings of Gorkha. We must remember that this was the period when the theocratic rulers of Bhutan came to enjoy considerable ecclesiastical patronage in Nepal, with grants of religious estates and other privileges. Although these were later lost when a faction in Bhutan allied itself with Tibet against Nepal in the 19th century, the connection still persisted though in a reduced form. Even in this century, a famous Bhutanese lama founded several monasteries in Nepal, two of these being situated close to the areas we explored, in Tsum, the adjoining district to the east. We had intended to include these monasteries in our journey (and were kindly furnished with letters of introduction by the lama's nephew who continues to administer them) but unfortunately in this case the permits were not forthcoming. In the districts we did visit, the impression given to us in conversations was that the Kagyüpa (and the Drukpa in particular) had been far more active in the past and had established communities at Rø, Serang and Ne Droma Pel. Of these nothing now remains. However, the present day adherents of the Nyingmapa school are just as ready to pursue teachings at the feet of Kagyüpa lamas as they are from those of their own school, as indeed they have been throughout history. This is certainly evident from the works of our three lamas of Kutang who lived in the age when the foundations of the eclectic tradition of Ris.med ("Non-Partiality") were first being laid. The great supporter of Padma Don.grub's teacher, Padma 'Phrin.las of rDo.rje Brag, was the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag.dbang bLo.bzang Gya.mtsho (1617-1682) who, while standing at the apex of the Gelukpa government of Tibet, is well known for his high regard for the Nyingmapa school; it was he who not only edited a number of Padma 'Phrin.las' works but also wrote the biographies of his predecessors in the rDo.rje Brag incarnation lineage. In Padma 'Phrin.las' own autobiography (which can be found in Volume 37 of the Smanrtsis Shesrig Pendzod series, reprinted in Delhi in 1972) there is no mention of his disciple from Kutang and the

work is wholly taken up with the subject of his own education and so forth. Indeed, he must have had many far more illustrious disciples than Padma Don.grub who was an obscure figure from one of the furthest outposts of Tibetan culture. Yet this contact was to have a deep effect on the subsequent religious affiliations of the Kutang people; the disciple lineage started by Padma Don.grub came to enjoy pre-eminence in Kutang and its succeeding incumbents claimed to represent in an unbroken line the traditions of the rDo.rje Brag school as handed down from master to disciple. However, they seem to have remained eclectic in their educations and attitudes. There is a fascinating account on p. 119a of Padma dBang.'dus' autobiography of how he met a Bon.po scholar with whom he had a most sympathetic and enlightened philosophical discussion.

Undoubtedly another major source of interest in these five works lies in the mass of incidental information they reveal concerning the local life of Kutang and its neighbouring districts. Agricultural pursuits, family relationships and geographical information (including the spelling of place names) all find frequent mention. The Gurungs to the south are not specifically mentioned, but several of their villages (viz. sNyag, sPang.shing and Phe.blon) were places where Padma dBang.'dus tried to convert the local people from the practice of animal sacrifice. (See p. 134a of this work). It may be mentioned here that on p. 359 of his Ethno-Geographical Observations on the Nepal Himalaya (in Peoples of the Himalaya: Scientific Results of the Japanese Expeditions to Nepal Himalaya 1952-53, Vol. III, edited by H. Kihara; Kyoto, 1957), J. Kawakita, who with the exception of David Snellgrove seems to be the only other scholar to have spent any time in the area, quite inexplicably provides a list of nine villages in Kutang and Nubri in which he claims that these are inhabited by Gurungs, "Lama-Gurungs", Magars and Tamangs, with the single exception of Bartsam which he says is "Bhotiya". One can only assume that his interpreters or informants were playing a joke on him or else his notes on Kutang and Nubri became confused with those on some quite different area, as all these villages are manifestly Tibetan (or "Bhotiya" if you will).

Politically, there is no doubt that this area was regarded as being part of the province of mNga'.ris in Western Tibet. When questioned on their travels, the lamas are always careful to point out that they come from "sBas.yul sKyid.mo.lung" in Kutang which they say is in mNga'.ris and on a number of occasions there are mentions of Tibetan officials in the area. At what date it came under the sway of the Gorkha dynasty and became part of Nepal proper, it cannot yet be said with any degree of certainty. In practice, however, the area is so remote and inaccessible that for all intents and purposes its people always seem to have managed their own affairs independent of governments. It is a matter of regret that the very short duration of our stay did not

permit us to enquire closely into the forms of administration that prevail in the area, but it was noticed that, as in so many areas of "cultural" Tibet, the duties of local administration were incurred on a rotational basis among the village elders and not on any hereditary basis. Needless to say, none of the five works of these lamas of Kutang have anything to say on this subject; points of secular interest, when we find them at all, are incidental to their main concern which is to show the unfolding of spiritual vocations. On these grounds alone they merit further study and it is very much to be hoped that a critical edition and translation might one day appear. As in the case of Snellgrove's Four Lamas of Dolpo (Oxford, 1967), however, close collaboration with local scholars would be necessary before this could be achieved. In the case of the short final work in the collection, the "secret autobiography" of O.rgyan bsTan.'dzin, this collaboration may not be necessary. It is a work of extraordinary interest for its detailed and faithful account of all the dreams and visions he experienced throughout his life, carefully recorded in clear lucid prose. This minor work belongs to a genre of mystical writings, rare in itself, which has not yet received much attention from scholars in the west and which should help to throw light on the particular "values" of the rich symbolism that lies at the heart of the Tibetan spiritual tradition.

But to return now to sBas.phug dGon.pa where, it will be recalled, we first heard of the existence of these writings. The main temple was locked and the keeper was at his home in Kok and so unfortunately we gained admittance only to a small upper temple. After offering scarves, we continued down, pausing to inspect a lovely gateway chöten below the temple. This was decorated with the two "all-seeing eyes" and also, unusually, with the crinkled-up nose of a guardian deity. As we passed through underneath, a beam within its structure seemed to shift for no apparent reason, making a loud noise that caused the young lama to jump in fright. He blamed this odd occurrence on the guardian deity, 'Dzoms.lha dKar.po, who probably wanted to display anger over his territory being invaded by foreigners for the first time; at least that was the explanation he gave us. But, he said, we were not to worry as he had this deity under his control. Mumbling invocations and scattering roasted maize as an appeasement offering (and making me do likewise), he gradually regained confidence and on we went. It was quite clear that nobody had been this way for a long time as the old temple keeper of Serang who guided us down had to stop every so often to remove fallen branches from the path. We forded three streams in the forest before arriving at a high ravine, which we crossed by means of long wooden planks and, climbing up once again, we soon reached a clearing. In the centre of this stood the three-tiered temple of Serang, the destination of this side-trip. To welcome us there was an aged nun, sister of the temple keeper, the sole inhabitant of this "hidden land".

The sun had set and we pitched our tent by the side of the temple next to the "soul tree" (bla.shing) of 'Dzoms.lha dKar.po. We then made offerings inside the temple and, with the aid of torches, surveyed its contents. Of particular interest was a single image known locally as "Atsara" (Skt. Acharya) contained within a box shaped like a stupa on the floor above the main temple. It depicted a black yogin in meditation posture, within which we were told the ashes of a "former King of Gorkha" are deposited. The lama said that one of his own ancestors had been this King's guru. Another, obviously spurious, explanation we were to hear later had it that the famous Prime Minister of Nepal, Jang Bahadur, made a visit to Serang and this "Atsara" represents his tutelary deity. However it may have been, the presence of this strange Hindu image in Serang points to religious connections with the south, and we were told that as a result of this contact, the people of Kutang were exempted from paying cattle tax (phyugs.khral) to the Government. Instead, they paid it to this temple in the form of butter as fuel for the altar lamps. This custom is said to persist to this day.

The main image in the temple on the ground floor is a copper gilt Padmasambhava with his two consorts. These are obviously of Newari craftsmanship. On either side are five subsidiary figures of various Nyingmapa lamas, among whom three may be mentioned: (1) bsTan.'dzin 'phrii.las, founder of Serang and a local lama of the Khyung.dkar clan; (2) bSod.nams dBang.rgyal, another local lama, the teacher of the present incumbent's father, Ye.shes 'Phrin.las, and disciple of (3) the famous rTogs.ldan Shakya Shri (1853-1919), a lama from Kham still remembered for his restoration of the Buddhist monuments in the Kathmandu valley and whose last remaining disciple is sLob.dpon bSob.nams bZang.po (born 1893) of Bhutan.

The frescoes, painted on oblong wooden panels, are fairly typical of all those found in the area. Those on the west wall depict the wrathsome tutelary deities of the bKa'.brgyad according to the Byang.gter tradition and those on the east wall the deities of the dKon.mchog sPyi.'dus ritual cycle. Also on the east wall are found paintings of the eight types of chötons whose forms, it is claimed, can be traced back to various classical Indian prototypes. The ceiling of the temple has a number of mandalas painted on it, but these we could not identify because the light was so poor. To the left of the altar is a large bookcase containing a complete manuscript edition of the rNying.ma rGyud.'bum, the most important collection of tantras for the Nyingmapa school (recently reprinted by Dil.mgo mKhyen.brtse Rin.po.che in Delhi) and suspended from the ceiling on a sort of trellis was a smaller collection of books which we arranged to look at the following day.



sku.shogs 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho, head lama of
the Khyung.dkar clan in Kutang, and villagers
at Sharang.



Stone carving of 'Dzoms.lha dkar.po, guardian deity of the "hidden land" of Kyimolung.

Our guide and informant, the young lama, explained how the original temple of Serang, founded by his ancestor, bsTan.'dzin 'Phrin.las, was destroyed by fire some generations ago and later rebuilt on a somewhat smaller scale but in the same style as the original. The plan is said to be based on that of a temple in Kyirong (the adjoining Tibetan district to the east) that contained the ancient image of the Jo.bo Wa.ti bZang.po, one of the four sandalwood figures said to have been obtained from the Indo-Nepalese border during the reign of King Srong.btsan sGam.po who ruled from c.627 till 650 A.D. This figure was recovered from Chinese-occupied Tibet by our host in RÖ, but more of that later. The distinctive triple-roofed style of Serang is, then, directly traceable to a Tibetan model, one which perhaps had its own inspiration in the common depictions of the heavenly palace of Padmasambhava which is often thought to exhibit strong Chinese influence in its architecture. This ancient so-called "pagoda style", which reached its apotheosis in China, is itself said by some scholars to be ultimately derived from certain buildings in the Kathmandu valley, and it is possible that we have here a case of this style travelling around almost in a full circle.

In front of the temple are the ruins of a little Drukpa Kagyüpa monastery which, it was alleged, had been built in the 17th century by dPag.bsam dBang.po of 'Brug gSang.sngags Chos.gling, the enemy and rival of Zhabs.drung Ngag.dbang rNam.rgyal the first Dharmaraja of Bhutan. dPag.bsam dBang.po is supposed to have come into conflict with bsTan.'dzin 'Phrin.las and this led to the defeat of dPag.bsam dBang.po. The story may have some basis of truth in it, but the role of dPag.bsam dBang.po seems doubtful in the extreme; there is no record of his ever having visited these parts.

It had been a very long day and, despite the lama's apprehension at our tent being pitched so close to the "soül tree" of the guardian deity, we slept very soundly. We rose at dawn and after breakfast began to look at the books kept in the temple. These were on the whole rather disappointing. However, we did find a future phrophecy (Ma.'ong lung.bstan) of Padmasambhava in the form of a "treasure text" (gter.ma), inside which there had been interpolated in a different hand a guide to Kyimolung - an obvious example of textual counterfeiting, but most fortunate for us. The guide, as we later discovered, was the standard one for Kyimolung and it had been inserted in this other work in order to add to its respectability. A copy of this was quickly made and also that of a "Eulogy of the Holy Place" (gnas.bstod) of Serang composed by sLob.dpon 'Gyur.med of RÖ who had established a retreat centre (sgrub.sgrwa) some years ago at sBas.phug dGon.pa and whom we were shortly to meet. This eulogy contains an invective against the use of alcohol by the local people who are very bibulous and hospitable. I was sorry that no more literature concerning

Serang, its founder and his lineage came to light but, as it had been explained, these were destroyed by fire long ago.

We would have liked to linger on in this lovely place but time was pressing. While our Sherpas were repacking our things, John went for a walk in the wood behind the temple where he saw a herd of deer. I walked down through the trees to the edge of the snow glacier a few hundred yards to the east of the temple. The sun had yet to make its appearance above the peaks which were just turning into pure gold in its first rays. Nothing moved in the still, cold air of the morning except a slight breeze. The deep peace of this sanctuary, so well hidden from the outside world, could be felt as a tangible force all round and it was with much regret that we had to go on our way, having taken leave of the old temple keeper and his sister, the nun, who both remained behind.

Intending to spend the night at the lama's house in Gayul, we retraced our steps on the same path as the day before and stopped for lunch at Sharang. As arranged, we copied five texts at the temple of Gol.dpon dGon.pa and several hours later arrived at Gayul just before the sun set. We were given a very warm welcome by the lama's mother and sister, and were invited to pitch our tent on a reed threshing mat behind their house. It was very pleasant after the strenuous walking of the last two days to relax in such friendly company, and our hosts were solicitude personified. An old man of the village came to present a flower to the lama in the manner already described, and I was very touched when he also presented me with one, word having gone round that I was some sort of religious person on a pilgrimage to these parts.

The following morning, John and I were awoken in our tent by the lama's mother who brought us a pitcher of steaming hot and very potent arak which we were unable to refuse. The effect on one's system of drinking this brew for one's breakfast was quite stunning and persisted for some time. Before leaving, we offered some money to the lama and asked him to use part of it towards the expenses of his forthcoming pilgrimage to the Buddhist sites in the Kathmandu valley and part of it towards the restoration of Serang which was being planned at that time. We begged him to see that this was done as carefully as possible. Finally, exchanging scarves and expressing our hopes to meet again, we took our leave of him and his family, feeling very grateful that chance had brought us together in this way.

We were now anxious to catch up with Joe, who was waiting for us at Namdru and whom we hoped to meet much recovered. This meant following the Buri Gandaki up its course for another day without stopping to visit the villages on the way, and so we arrived there in the evening. At Namdru, before reaching Joe's camp, we reported to the police check-post and, after our passports and

permits had been scrutinised and found to be in order, we had a happy reunion with him and the rest of our porters. His fever had passed and he was once again in fine spirits. It was now October 22nd and we decided to press on to our final destination of Rō (or Samargaon, as it is called by the Nepalese). We all then proceeded together the next day through the lower villages of Nubri, intending to leave these for closer inspection on our return journey. The trail took us through fields of ripening barley and little scattered villages which were mostly deserted, all the villagers being employed cutting grass on the hillsides for winter fodder. Three monks from the Drukpa Kagyüpa monastery in Tsum who had just crossed the high level pass from Tsum to Bi, and who were on an autumn begging expedition, told me that so far they had been unsuccessful as no one could be found in the villages who might have given them alms. Continuing through the settlements of Sho and Lö, gradually more and more snow peaks came into sight. By now anticipation at arriving at Rō, just before the peak of Manaslu (26,658 ft) itself and the object of our long journey, was increasing with every step we took. We descended into a gorge on the other side of Lō and made our way up again through a thick forest, the trees brilliant in their autumn colours. Halfway through this, we caught up with Joe who had been ahead of us and we stopped for a very late lunch. A man from Rō who was sitting there with him turned out to be a cousin of the head lama of Rō, bKra.shis rDo.rje, to whom, together with several other lamas of Kutang and Nubri, our letter of introduction from O.rgyan sPrul.sku of Bodhnath was specifically addressed. He introduced himself as Rig.'dzin rDo.rje and he at once offered to look after us for the duration of our stay at Rō. During lunch he tried to explain the relationships of his large extended family which, bearing the clan name of mNga'.bdag ("Ruler"), claims descent from a western branch of the ancient Tibetan royal dynasty. Since moving to Rō in Nubri from their traditional estates centred around the temple of Byang sPra.dun.rtse (the Tradun of the maps, west of Saka Dzong), its members have come to enjoy the status of important hereditary lamas of the Nyingmapa school, surpassing in influence even the Khyung.dkar clar in Gyayul, Trok and Tsum. It is apparent from the biography of Padma dBang.'dus (pp. 137b-140a) that they were already well established in the 17th century. The present chiefs of the clan are the children of four brothers, all of whom studied under distinguished scholars in Tibet. Of these four brothers, only one, bLa.ma rGya.mtsho, the father of Rig.'dzin rDo.rje, is still alive today but their children are all active. Before we left Kathmandu, O.rgyan sPrul.sku and his son, mChog.'gyur gLing.pa Rin.po.che, both of whom spent several years in Nubri after fleeing from Tibet, had told me about this influential family and it was one of my aims to enquire into their history. So it was with little hesitation that I accepted Rig.'dzin rDo.rje's offer of assistance during our stay in Rō as this would enable us to observe and question his relatives most conveniently. As it turned out, he was our most considerate host during the nine days we spent at Rō and I never had cause to regret accepting his spontaneous offer.

Leaving John, Joe, the Sherpas and our porters to follow, Rig. 'dzin rDo.rje and I went on ahead after lunch, I riding his horse and he walking behind. In his middle fifties, of rather unkempt appearance, straggling long hair and wearing rather tattered clothing, it was difficult to imagine him as the descendent of the illustrious kings of Tibet. Although a layman, the position he occupies and shares with the rest of his family had become apparent to us during lunch, when a man passing by prostrated before him as a mark of respect and which he acknowledged with gestures of long habit. Riding up through the woods that lead eventually to Rō, he told me the exciting story of how he had recovered the sacred image of the Jo.bo Wa.ti bZang.po from its temple in Kyirong in 1959 in order to protect it from the Chinese who were on the point of reaching that place. I have since discovered that, by a stroke of pure coincidence, my friend Mr. Samten Karmay of the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris witnessed the removal of the image from Kyirong when he arrived there from Lhasa following the Tibetan revolt in that year. Rig. 'dzin rDo.rje, in company with a number of others, carried the image on his back to safety in Tsum. From there he brought it to Nubri, where each village had insisted on keeping it in its temple for a few days. Finally, it was taken to the little temple of sPungs.rgyan below the sacred peak of Manaslu where, he said, a flock of vultures had swooped down to reverse the image. Eventually it had been escorted by soldiers of the Khampa resistance to the principality of Lo and thence to India, where it is now in the safekeeping of the Dalai Lama. Rig. 'dzin rDo.rje retained for himself the wooden container it had been carried in, which we were later to see in his little private temple where we stayed. He recounted this story with obvious pride at having been able to render such service to his faith and with deep gratitude that his karma should have permitted it. The legends surrounding this image and its relationship with the even more famous Lha.sa Jo.bo is to be found in the Ma.ni bKa'.'bum, the rGyal.rabs gSal.ba'i Me.long and many other works.

Deep in the woods, Rig. 'dzin rDo.rje indicated to me a building erected as the headquarters of the local branch of the Khampa movement. Their leader, a man called Tendar, he said, was extremely pious and occupied himself nowadays with building chōtens and mani walls. We had a letter of introduction to this man from his associates in Tsum, with whom we had travelled part of the way up the Buri Gandaki from Arughat, but, as it happened, we never had occasion to meet him. Later on, Joe was asked to treat one of the Khampas who had sustained frostbite in one of his feet while crossing the pass from Samdok to Rō. Since the Khampas are now forced to limit their activities in Nepal to minor intelligence work on the border, they seem to be busy "beating their swords into ploughshares".

Riding on up the trail, we eventually climbed a small crest, left the wood and there below us lay the entire broad valley of Rō, dominated by Manaslu and its subsidiary peaks. The sun was

on the point of setting behind the mountains, casting a beautiful, translucent light over the whole scene. Dotted over the pasture were herds of yaks and horses, their bells ringing in the clear air. At the top of the valley lay the compact village of RÖ itself, and above it the main temple and monastic buildings. To come to this beautiful spacious panorama of high snow peaks, yak pastures and blue skies after the weeks spent toiling up the narrow jungly confines of the Buri Gandaki gorge gave a tremendous lift to the heart. It was now getting quite cold as the sun rapidly disappeared and Rig.'dzin rDo.rje and myself hurried on to his house in the village, where we were to spend the night before moving to more comfortable quarters near the temple. On the way down we met his cousin, bKra.shis rDo.rje, who was making haste to officiate at a funeral ceremony at Lö. Although bKra.shis rDo.rje is regarded as the head lama of RÖ due to his age and experience, in fact the present incumbent is his young nephew, Karma, who succeeded bKra.shis rDo.rje's elder brother, 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho, when he died some years ago. On reading our letter of introduction, bKra.shis rDo.rje beamed and said he would return from LÖ as soon as possible to meet us properly and meanwhile his cousin would provide for our needs. Dressed in the habit of a married sngags.pa of the Nyingmapa school, and much tidier in appearance than his cousin, bKra.shis rDo.rje impressed me at once as a kind, intelligent person of strong character. We offered him the horse I had been riding as he still had a long way to go, and we proceeded on foot. On reaching the village, we went straight through its narrow lanes to Rig.'dzin rDo.rje's house, which lay at the rear of the village. By the time the rest of the party had arrived, I had already consumed several cups of hot butter tea. The scene inside the house was pandemonium, with all our porters trying to warm themselves at the one small fire and cook their meals on it at the same time. Our long-suffering host was not in the least put out by all this, but clearly sleep would have been impossible inside the house, so we pitched our tents in the courtyard and, after supper, slept very soundly, knowing that we had finally reached our journey's end.

There followed eight days spent in RÖ, during which time we made a number of side-trips to places of interest in the area and conducted researches among the mNga'.bdag lamas. We had occasion to meet them all on the first day of our stay when, having paid off all our porters and retaining only the five Sherpas, we moved up the hill to quarters which Rig.'dzin rDo.rje provided for us in his little private temple. This formed part of a large complex of religious buildings surrounding the main temple, all of which had been built by the mNga'.bdag family at different times. In order to clarify the present relationships of this large family, it would be as well to set forth their lineage here as it was explained to me. It should be pointed out that this lineage covers the period subsequent to their migration to RÖ from Byang sPra.dun.

rtse, information prior to this not being available. I have omitted their various epithets and titles (e.g. grub.thob, mkhas.grub, rig.'dzin etc.) except in three cases where these may be part of their personal names.

The Lineage of the mNga'.bdag Clan of Rö

- (1) bKra.shis rNam.rgyal
- (2) Seng.ge rNam.rgyal (contemporary of Padma dBang.'dus - see above)
- (3) ('Gyur.med) Padma mThu. stobs
- (4) (Mi.'gyur) Padma bsTan.'dzin
- (5) (Kun.bzang) Ye.shes 'Gyur.med
- (6) Thub.bsten rDo.rje
- (7) bsTan.pa'i rGyal.mtshan (alias 'Jam.dbyangs)
- (8) 'Gyur.med sNyan.sgrags (alias bsTan.'dzin rDo.rje)

rGya.mtsho (alive)	(9) 'Phrin.las 'Od.zer (alias Chos.grub)	Khams.gsum	Ngag.dbang
-----------------------	---	------------	------------

Rig.'dzin rDo.rje (alive)	bKra.shis rDo.rje (alive)	(10) 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho	bsTan.pa'i rGyal.mtshan (alive)	'Gyur.med (alive)
---------------------------------	---------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------------	----------------------

(11) Karma
(alive)

It can be seen from this chart (which is by no means exhaustive and should merely serve as a rough guide) that, of the four sons of 'Gyur.med sNyan.sgrags (a disciple of the late Karma.pa Mkha'.khyab rDo.rje (1871-1922), only the youngest, bLa.ma rGya.mtsho, the father of our host, is still alive. Now a great-grandfather, he spends much of his time in retreat at the sPungs.rgyan hermitage. Of the four male grandchildren of 'Gyur.med sNyan.sgrags still alive today, two of them, Rig.'dzin rDo.rje and bKra.shis rDo.rje, are married sngags.pa; the latter, as mentioned earlier, fulfilling the responsibilities of head lama during the minority of his nephew, Karma. The other two, the slob.dpon(s) 'Gyur.med and bsTan.pa'i rGyal.mtshan, are both fully ordained monks and fine scholars in their own right, each abbot of his own small monastic community in Rö. These are situated in close vicinity to the main temple, close to where we are staying. sLob.dpon 'Gyur.med's community consists of eleven monks forming a sgrub.sgrwa (a retreat centre for meditation and ritual) called mTsho.skyes Yang.dben bDe.chen Chos.'phel gLing. sLob.dpon bsTan.pa'i rGyal.mtshan's community consists of a number of young

novices forming a bshad.sgrwa (a study centre) called dPal 'Og.min Lhun.grub Chos.sdings. Thus in a sense both institutions complement each other as catering to the two facets of the Buddhist path as it is traditionally conceived, in terms of study and practice, though in effect these continually overlap. The standard of discipline in both places was impressive and it was gratifying to see evidence of spiritual vitality where we had rather expected to find the reverse. Both abbots were extremely well disposed to us and provided continual help throughout our stay.

Apart from these two permanent communities, which were founded in recent years following the return of their abbots from their studies in Tibet, there exists a loosely-knit fraternity of all the religious persons of Rō which assembles on specific occasions throughout the year for the performance of certain rituals under the overall direction of bKra.shis rDo.rje. These rituals combine the major festivals of the Buddhist calendar with those of local origin, and may be set forth as follows:

DATE	RITUAL/FESTIVAL
15th day of 1st month	The <u>sMon.lam Tshogs.chen</u> : "The Great Prayer Assembly" of the New Year.
15th day of 2nd month	The <u>dus.mchod</u> ("anniversary offerings") in memory of a certain lama from Kham called Padma rGya.mtsho who lived in Nubri
3rd month	Reading of the <u>bKa'.'gyur</u> . There are two editions kept in their own temple, and these are read on alternate years. Also the <u>dus.mchod</u> of bsTan.'dzin rDo.rje (see above) falls in this month.
14th-16th days of 4th month	The <u>Myung.gnas</u> , a ritual during which fasting is observed, performed on three consecutive days according to the <u>rgyal.po'i lugs</u> ("the royal tradition") in celebration of and purification for this sacred month of the <u>sa.ga zla.ba</u> , a composite anniversary of five important events in the life of the Buddha
10th day of 5th month	The <u>Bar.chad Kun.sel</u> ("The Total Removal of Obstacles") is performed in honour of Padmasambhava's birthday, known as the festival of <u>sPre.zla Tshes.bcu</u> ("The 10th day of the Month of the Monkey").

- 4th day of 6th month The dus.mchod of bLa.ma 'Jam.dbyangs (see above). Also a general pilgrimage to sPungs.rgyan (Manaslu) takes place in this month.
- 28th day of 7th month The dus.mchod of bLa.ma 'Jma.dbyangs (see above).
- 29th day of 7th month The dus.mchod of bLa.ma 'Phrin.las rGya. mtsho (see above).
- 10th day of 8th or 9th month The Da.ze Tshes.bou ("The 10th Day of Dasain Festival") during which the whole population offer butter lamps for the animals sacrificed by the Hindus of Nepal during this festival.
- 15th days in 10th or 11th month The sgrub.chen ("extended ritual") of either the Bar.chad Kun.sel or the Thugs.grub Yid.bzhin Nor.bu or the sMin.gling rDor.sems or the Byang.gter rDo.rje gZhon.nu. This is the longest ritual of the religious calendar in Rō and was introduced as an annual practice by the late mChog. 'gyur gLing.pa Rin. po.che. during his residence in Nubri.

In addition to the above, there are also performances of dance dramas (A.che Lha.mo) on seven consecutive days once every five years. These are chosen from the standard repertoire and include the stories of Dri.med Kun.ldan, rGyal.po Nor.bzang, Ka.la dBang.po, and A.zhe Nang.gsal. About thirty performers are selected and trained by bKra. shis rDo.rje himself, and the performances take place below his residence, a large house in the village known as the bla.brang. Festivals of sacred dance also occur on about four or five occasions during the year. Apart from a list of the dances performed, no other information on these was recorded. The list itself, however, may be of some interest (The number of performers is indicated for each item of 'cham) (1) Pu.tra (or Ging.po), (2) sGo.ba Yab.yum brgyad, (3) Khro.bo bcu, (4) Khrag.'thung Rigs.lnga, (5) bTsan.gyi Rol.pa bdun, (6) Dam.can Gar.ba Nag.po, (7) Thar.pa rGyal.mtshan, (8) Dur.bdag Yab.yum, (9) sGo.ma bzhi, (10) Zhwa.nag bcu and (11) Ging.po Yab.yum.

The list of rituals and festivals above does not of course include the private rituals that may take place at individual behest throughout the year, or those that recur on the auspicious days of each month, but rather it should serve to indicate those devotions which are the general concern of the whole religious fraternity of Rō under the leadership of the mNga'.bdag clan. On several occasions, such as the sgrub.chen ceremony, these devotions involve the participation of almost the entire adult population of the village, monastic, semi-monastic or lay. This is true also for the festivals of dance and pilgrimage which take place in a general holiday spirit. During our stay it happened that there was no chance of our witnessing any of the ceremonies listed above, it being a time of year when almost everyone is busy in the fields



Stone carving of Padma dBang.'dus, 17th-18th century lama from Kutang.

and pastures before the onset of winter. Half way through our stay we did, however, sponsor the performance one afternoon of the Bar.chad Kun.sel in its medium form by sixteen members of the fraternity including all the Mnga'.bdag lamas with bKra'.shis rDo.rje at their head. This we did mainly as a gesture of gratitude for all the help they had given us, but it also enabled us to witness and participate in one of their most popular rites. Strangely enough, the text of this ritual had been given to me by the young mChog.'gyur gLing.pa Rin.po.che in Bodhnath; it was the first incumbent in his lineage who had composed it and the incarnation prior to himself who had introduced its practice into Nubri. Seated between bKra. shis rDo.rje and bsTan.pa'i rGyal.mtshan, they both encouraged me to follow the text with them. The ritual followed the set pattern of (1) certain preliminary invocations not included in the text, (2) the sbyor.ba dang sems.bskyed ("Preparation and Arisal in the Mind") which had seven sub-sections, (3) the dnchos.gzhi, the "real basis" of the ritual which again consists of seven sub-sections (briefly, those of the three samadhis, of obeisances and offerings, of praising, of "bringing to consummation" by means of the mantra, and finally the initiation itself) and (4) the rjes.kyi bya.ba ("The concluding Actions") with which the ritual is terminated, again in seven sub-sections. Apart from the accompanying music, the entire ceremony itself had a superbly "orchestrated" feeling about it and this was due in part to the precentor's role in introducing and leading each section. Highly intricate in its form, the whole performance yet conveyed a sense of measured balance and of a fine synthesis of verbal, mental and bodily activity, something which is considered essential to the tantric path. It also served to reassure us once again of the vitality of the spiritual life in these remote parts, since it is so often in the external forms of its ritual that staleness and a lack of continued inspiration in a religion first become apparent. The qualities of mindfulness and inner discipline seemed ever-present. Following the distribution of the tshogs offerings at the end of the ceremony, and after we all consumed large quantities of hot butter tea, bKra.shis rDo.rje presented me with his copy of the Bar.chad Kun.sel.

It should not be supposed that, even though its pre-eminence is quite undisputed, the mNga' bdag is the only clan of importance in RÖ. There are three others which may be mentioned. The Khyung.mon is by far the largest clan in the village and its members are said to be the descendents of settlers from RÜ, a district just over the Tibetan border near the last Nubri village of Larkya (also known as Babuk). Whether this clan bears any relation to the Khyung.po of Kutang and Tsum, as its name might suggest, nobody could say. Secondly, there is the dPon.bzang, who claim descent from the legendary king rGyal.po Khyi.kha Ra.thod, a strange figure who often appears in the folklore of the Himalayas. The members of this clan say their original home was in a place

called Bar.pa but our informants could not tell us where that is. Finally, there is the Yor.gong clan, smallest in number, who claim their descent from a certain Ras.pa bSam.gtan dBang.phyug who, they say, was a disciple of Mi.la Ras.pa and came from Nubri. More will be said later concerning Mi.la Ras.pa's connections with Nubri but suffice it to say here that, although these clans undoubtedly exist as distinct bodies in the life of the village, their claims to respectable origins are regarded by the mNga'.bdag lamas as more or less spurious. It was pointed out that no written evidence exists in support of their claims but rather they are founded on oral traditions (gtam.rgyud) that often tend to contradict each other. In the light of this scepticism, I was interested to find out whether the mNga'.bdag clan itself possessed any evidence in support of its own claims to be descended from the Kings of Tibet. To that end I asked sLob.dpon bsTan.pa'i rGyal.mtshan to compose an essay on the history of his clan and on the religious history of Kutang and Nubri in general. To assist him in this, I prepared a draft outline suggesting some suitable headings which he might expand on in this short work. He was interested in the idea but said he would have to consult his relatives in the clan before he could agree. On the following day, he came to see me and explained that in their consultations they had decided that there were insufficient literary sources to base this work on and, unless it were thus properly authenticated, it might become the subject of ridicule among scholars. He regretted having to decline the idea, but said that since we were obviously motivated by the best of intentions in trying to find out their history, and since they too wanted to establish their right to use the illustrious name of mNga'.bdag, he had a document which they wished they wished me to examine, copy and show the important lamas of the Kagyüpa and Nyingmapa schools when I should next see them. He then produced from his sleeve a piece of old yellow silk which he unrolled to reveal fifteen lines of writing in the cursive script, at the bottom of which the seal of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag.dbang bLo.bzang rGya.mtsho (1617-1682) had been affixed. As this perhaps constituted one of our most interesting finds, here is a translation of the section most relevant to the history of the mNga'.bdag:

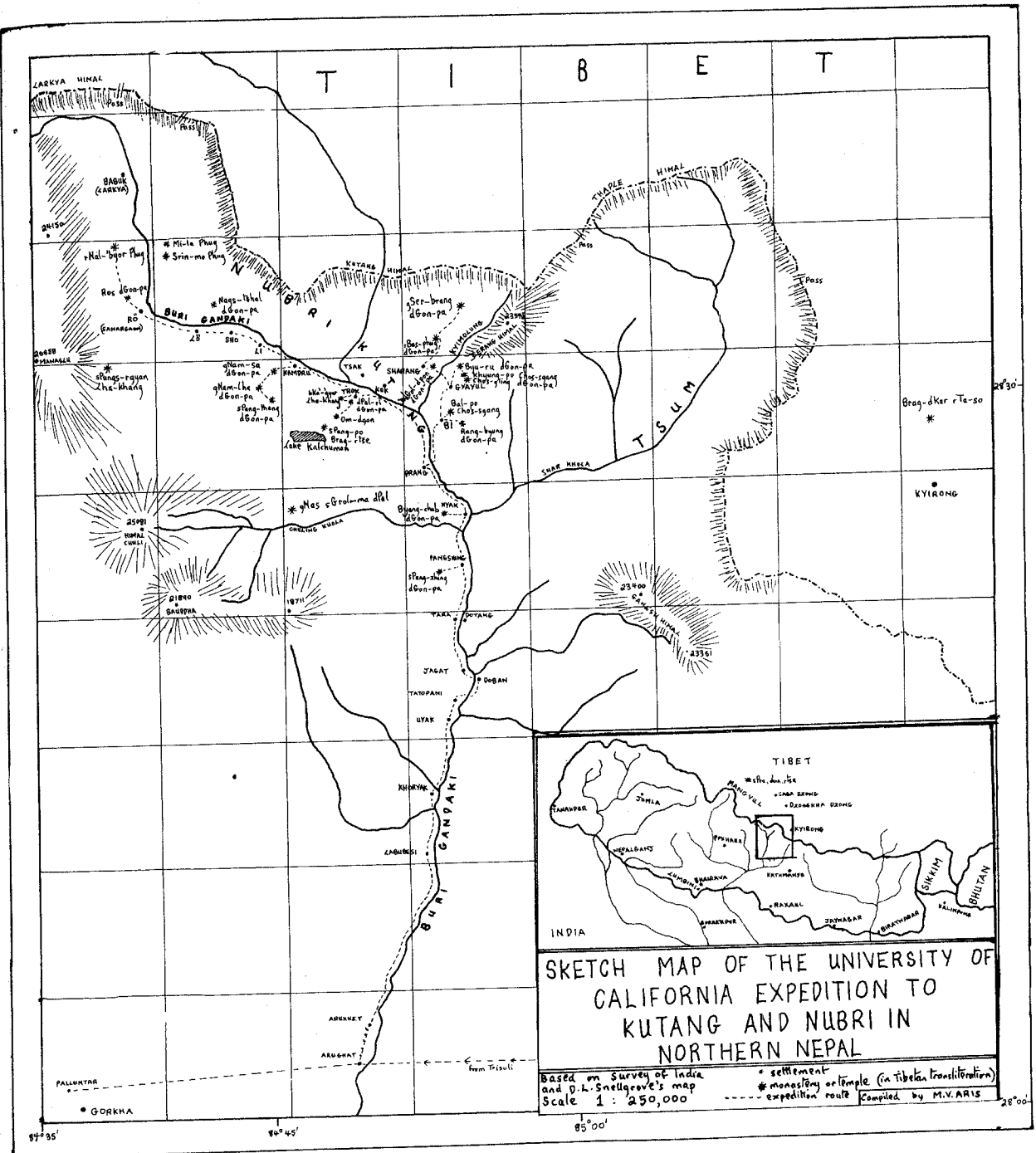
"From the Lord gNya'.khri bTsan.po who belonged to the undefiled lineage of the "King Honoured by Many" (Mang. bkur. rGyal.po) there arose successively an uninterrupted line of kings like a string of pearls. From among these, Khri.srong lDe.btsan, the emanation of Mañjuśri, invited abbots and teachers to the country of Tibet, this land of darkness, which they illuminated by means of the sun of the Dharma (as it is revealed in) the sutras and tantras. These and other actions became the root of the Teachings and of beings. Then the demon Mara was born into the royal family; gLang.dar.Ma 'u.dum.btsan caused the precious teachings of the Muni to decline and from (the reign of) 'Od.srung onwards,

the royal lineage became fragmented. At this time the Ruler (mNga'.bdag) dPal.mgon took control of Mang.yul on account of the strong karmic force of aspirations made in previous lives. Thenceforth, in order that it might convert those beings on the district frontier between sTod and Mon who were difficult to convert, this undefiled lineage extending in a line from the Rulers (mNga'.bdag), the Religious Kings, acted as the incumbents (gnas.'dzin) of this temple of Byang sPra.dun.rtse, an "academy to tame the border" and a vital place (in its relation to) the lotus seat of Lha.ldan (=Lha.sa) which had been arranged in order on the plans drawn up by the Religious King Srong.btsan sGam.po, and (also) as the proprietors ('dzin.bdag) of the monastery of Legs.rtse, both its mother house and daughter house. From that time onwards there arose great achievements in not inconsiderable works of service to the Teachings of the Jina in general and to the Teachings of the sNying.ma School of the Early Translations in particular. However, as a result of temporal circumstances there has (now) come about a great decline which constitutes an obstruction to the Teachings. With a view to the welfare of subjects in Tibet (it has been decided to) establish (the system of taxation and administration in these places) in accordance with previous practice."

There follow here some details concerning the taxation of the monastic estates attached to the temples of sPra.dun.rtse and Legs.rtse (which has not been identified) and how the traditional rights and privileges of their incumbents are to extend over all the local population with the exception of those people under the control of the Sakyapa and Gelukpa schools. The document is dated the 1st day of the 3rd month in the Year of the Iron Ox (1661) and is issued from the Potala Palace in Lhasa. It is interesting as an example of the Fifth Dalai Lama's efforts to systematize the administration of monastic estates in his day, and how his policy in these matters was favourably disposed towards the Nyingmapa school. It also stands as fairly convincing evidence in support of the claims of the mNga'.bdag lamas to be descended from the line of "Religious Kings" through one of its many branches in western Tibet founded after the dissolution of the early dynasty in the 10th century. In its mention of dPal. (gyi.)mgon (c. 930-960) and his connection with the district of Mang.yul, the document follows one of the best-known versions of Tibetan history current in later times. The whole question of the descendants of 'Od.srung, the son of gLang Dar.ma (d.842) is fraught with difficulties, but the following statement (chosen here for its accordance with the version contained in this document) belongs to a famous Sakyapa tradition that would seem to bear some recognised validity: "The descendants of dPal.(gyi.)mgon, the eldest among the three sons of sKyid.lde (Nyi.ma.mgon) who was the youngest son of dPal.'khor.btsan, are the princes of Mar.lung". (From the appendix to Tucci's edition of the Deb.ther dmar.po, Rome, 1971. My translation). It is clear, then, that the Fifth

Dalai Lama (or whoever drew up the document on his behalf) was in a well-established tradition when he pronounced on the ancestral lineage of these lamas of sPra.dun.rtse which was itself founded as one of the "academies to tame the border" by the great king Srong. btsan.sGam.po. This particular temple is meant to have been built on the left knee of a demoness that was hindering the propagation of the faith in Tibet. Each of the demoness' limbs were pinned down by one of these borders temples whose sites were marked by geomantic features. In the case of sPra.dun.rtse it was a tortoise (presumably in the form of a rock) that determined its actual location. (See, for instance, f.60a of the rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long by Grags.pa rGyal.mtshan (1147-1216). sDe.dge edn.) That some of the descendants of this king should have chosen to settle there after being ousted from central Tibet would seem to be in the fitness of things, and it is not unlikely that they would have continued the practice of Buddhism in that place (as implied in this document) until its great revival in the 11th century by Atisha who was invited by one of dPal.gyi.mgon's nephews, Lha.bla.ma Ye.shes 'Od. Be that as it may, the whole tone and content of this proclamation expresses very well the constant preoccupation of Tibetan historians with the concept of the uninterrupted continuity of their Buddhist heritage through at times tenuous (though, it would appear, well-authenticated) lines extending from the glorious age of its inception down to the age in which they lived.

As already noted above, the mNga'.bdag lamas were already established in Nubri in the 17th century when this proclamation was issued in 1661 and it would seem, therefore, that it was a branch of the sPra.dun.rtse family that settled at Rö rather than a migration of the whole family. Two further documents issued by the Panchen Lamas of Tashilhunpo (one of which can be dated with certainty to 1810), which we were shown and which we copied, indicate how this Nubri branch further increased their authority by gaining control over the monastery of Shel.phug Chos.rdzong, founded by the Nyingmapa gter.ston Gar.dbang rDo. rje sNying.po in a neighbouring district across the present border close to Kyirong. On f. 46b of the block-print of this lama's biography (see appendix), which we also copied, there is mention of his connection with Nubri and Kutang and of a certain mNga'.bdag zhab.drung who may be an ancestor of the present lamas in Rö. Gar.dbang rDo.rje'sNying.po's dates are not certain (b.Iron Dragon; d.Wood Bull. No mention of the sexagenary cycle) and how the mNga'.bdag gained legitimate control of his monastery is not clear but during this they were accountable to the Panchen Lamas who, it should be remembered, had been offered secular control and sovereignty over large parts of western Tibet by the Manchu emperors in order to act as a counterweight to the power of the Dalai Lamas in central Tibet. In particular Kyirong and other neighbouring rdzongs were granted to the Panchen in 1728 and it was only the 13th Dalai Lama (1876-1933) who resumed them. Both



the third and fourth Panchen Lamas (bLo.bzang dPal.ldan Ye:shes, 1738-1780, and bLo.bzang bsTan.pa'i Nyi.ma, 1782-1853) figure in these two further documents which deal with various legal squabbles; judgements are passed in favour of a certain mNga'.bdag bSod.nams Chos.'phel against his litigants. It also appears that in 1810 Nubri was still under the control of Tibet as the second of these two documents is addressed to the rdzong.dpon of rDzong.dkar (or, more correctly, rDzong.dga') and to the local tax collectors in Nubri. (viz. "... nub ri snyam (possibly an abbreviation of Nya.nam or Nya.lam) khul gyi khral sdud pa song..."). It may only have been in 1856 or so, after Jang Bahadur's war with Tibet, that Nubri became politically part of Nepal but we found no references to this at all.

To sum up - the presence of the mNga'.bdag clan in Nubri today presents us with a strange case of survival through all the vicissitudes of Tibetan history, a survival which is all the more poignant in view of recent events in that country. Although the clan acquired a religious character so long ago, its chief members today are still styled as "Prince" (sras.po - pronounced, according to local form, "hrepo") and the documents which came to light during our stay in Rö would seem to substantiate their claims to illustrious antecedents. It should be noted that, until recently, there were a number of religious clans in Tibet called mNga'.bdag who made similar claims and the competition to receive official recognition (such as is conveyed by the 5th Dalai Lama's proclamation above) must have been considerable. In the case of our Nubri lamas, however, more information will have to become available on their early history at sPra.dun.rtse before we will be able to pronounce on their evolution with any strong degree of certainty.

To return now to the account of our stay in Nubri: on 26th October we made a trip to the little temple of sPungs.rgyan (the local name for Manaslu and its guardian) which is situated on a broad plateau at the foot of the peak itself. Before setting off on horses borrowed from our host, we stopped at the bla.brang where bKra.shis rDo.rje had invited us for a meal of buckwheat pancakes and butter tea, and so it was only in the late morning that we arrived at the plateau having climbed up from the valley below. A new stream of freshly-melted snow trickled towards us across the open pasture and this was declared a very good omen both by our host and the young temple keeper who were accompanying us. Every few minutes we could hear and see avalanches tumbling down the mountains around us. High above the tree line and encircled by glaciers and snow peaks on all sides, the plateau is used as summer grazing for herds of yaks and horses from Nubri, but now it was totally deserted except for one stray horse. It is also the scene of a large gathering of people from the whole area who assemble at the small temple for a festival on the fourth day of the sixth month every year. Many stay there in tents and huts for a number of days, singing and dancing in the temple forecourt

every night and making a round by day of all the natural rock formations said to be associated with Padmasambhava and the deity sPungs.rgyan. These are of the same kind as we saw in Kyimolung and include the "key" to the places where Padmasambhava hid treasures, his throne, the imprint of a snake on a rock (the local deity having taken the form of a snake when opposing the Guru who subsequently exorcised and converted him), the "treasure box" (gter.sgrom) of dPal.ldan Lha.mo, a "self-created stupa" (rang.'byung mchod.rten) and many other objects, all of which are supposed to bestow blessings on the faithful. Manaslu and Kailash are regarded locally as "brothers", both are called the palace of bDe.mchog (Samvara) and both are the objects of special pilgrimages in the Year of the Horse. We were told that since Kailash is no longer accessible, its "younger brother" Manaslu has come to replace it as the holiest mountain where Tibetans, Nepalese and even Indians can make pilgrimages today, it being sacred, like the shrine of Muktinath (Chu.mig brGya.rtsa) further west, to Buddhists and Hindus alike.

The story of how the temple of sPungs.rgyan was destroyed by an avalanche some years ago and later rebuilt is found on pp.245-7 of Snellgrove's Himalayan Pilgrimage, although he did not visit the temple itself. Although its structure is new, its contents were partly recovered and placed in the new temple. This includes all the images except the main one of Padmasambhava and the smaller one to its left of Ma.gcig and some of the painted wooden panels. Of special interest among the latter was the small painting of sPungs.rgyan himself, his consort and son, Thugs.dkar rGya.mtsho. These were placed to the right of the main door as one enters. Around the temple hung four poetical compositions in praise of the mountain, one of which, written by sPrul.sku O.rgyan, we copied. Also kept in the temple were the blocks of the future prophecy by Padmasambhava and the usual twelve volumes of Prajñāparamita literature. With the help of our host, we made a list of all the paintings and images and he was especially pleased to point out to us a clay image of his grandfather, bsTan.'dzin rDo.rje (alias 'Gyur.med sNyan.grags), the disciple of the previous Karma.pa incarnation whose collected works, incidentally, are preserved at sLob.dpon bsTan.pa'i rGyal.mtshan's monastery in Rō. He also showed us the group of hermitages on a cliff face near the temple where his aged father, bLa.ma rGya.mtsho, was soon to start his annual retreat for the whole winter in total seclusion.

On the following day we made another trip, this time north of Rō, climbing up to the temple of rNal.'byor Phug ("The Yogin's Cave") which is said to have been used in the 12th century as a place of meditation by no less a person than the great Mi.la Ras.pa himself. As in the case of Kyimolung and sPungs.rgyan Lha.khang, as far as we know no foreigners had visited this place prior to ourselves, and this was confirmed by the local people.

The literary source concerning Mi.la Ras.pa's association with this cave is found on f.66 of the Zhigatse edition of his rDo.rje mGur.drug ("Six Adamantine Songs") which forms part of a collection of his works that include his famous biography and his "100,000 Songs" which have become so well-known now in the west. The relevant passage tells us how he converted a local demoness and composed one of his songs to celebrate the occasion. The oral legend as told in Nubri has it that this demoness tried to seduce Mi.la Ras.pa unsuccessfully; instead he thrust a stone phallus into the rock in which she resided, thus exorcising her. Another version explains how they indulged in a competition of magic; the demoness extracted a huge boulder from the hillside and threw it to the opposite side of the valley, challenging him to compete. He did so and threw a much larger one which fell in such a way as to form an overhang. This is the "Yogin's Cave" of rNal.'byor Phug which was later built up as a temple by people from Kok, from where it is still administered to this day. Padma dBang.'dus of Kyimolung also restored it, as we learn from his autobiography (ff. 136a-137b). We were shown on the opposite hillside two caves which were said to have been formed by the extraction of the boulders during the magical contest; these are called srin.mo Phug and Mi.la Phug. The whole aspect and situation of rNal.'byor Phug and the surrounding country reminds one of Mi.la Ras.pa's love for the natural beauty of his mountain retreats, a rejoicing in wild solitude which pervades all his poetry so strongly and which gives it its distinct and evocative tone. There is no particular reason why we should doubt the authenticity of this site as Mi.la Ras.pa was certainly active in the neighbouring Tibetan districts and also in other parts of northern Nepal. The present temple is undoubtedly the one built by Padma dBang.'dus in the 17th century as the list of images he records as having been installed there conforms exactly with those we found. His list on f. 137a is as follows: rDo.rje 'Chang.chen/ O.rgyan gTso.'khor.gsum/ Rdo.rje Sems.dpa'/ dBang.phyug Mi.la Ras.chen/ Ka.rtog (error for Ka.thog) Rig.'dzin Chen.po. To these statues there were later added those of Padma dBang.'dus' own teacher, Padma Don.grub, and a further one which we failed to identify but which probably portrays Padma dBang.'dus himself. The painted wooden panels were unexceptional but one on the west wall of the temple showed Mi.la Ras.pa with his local disciple, Ras.pa bSam.gtan dBang.phyug, who has already been mentioned above. We were also shown an unusual little thangka of Mi.la Ras.pa with the figure of gDugs.dkar Sitatapatra above, presumably an allusion to some episode in his life. As night was falling, there was no time to look at the small collection of books kept in the temple and little did we know at the time that among these was the collection of autobiographical writings of the Kutang lamas discussed above, a copy of which we finally obtained through the kindness of Mr. Milan Melvin. We hurried back to Rö, taking a short cut down to the valley floor through a thick wood. As we approached the village, Rig.'dzin rDo.rje indicated to us a number of chötens built by his ancestors.

One in particular, he said, had survived numerous floods here at the headwaters of the Buri Gandaki, situated as it was on a small knoll of its own.

Our visit to rNal.'byor Phug, however, was not the last of our finds concerning Mi.la Ras.pa. On 31st October, the last day before we started on our return journey, there came to light in sLob.dpon 'Gyur.med's monastery the entire records of Brag.dkar rTa.so, a famous monastery in Kyirong belonging to the Bar.'brug tradition which had been built on the site of another of Mi.la Ras.pa's retreats. Not only was this monastery an important centre in the cult of Mi.la Ras.pa, but some scholars believe it to have been the place where the first edition of his writings was prepared. We had already noticed the name of this place appearing frequently in our discussions with local lamas and in the documents we had been copying. It was nevertheless very exciting when sLob.dpon'Gyur.med produced that morning two trunk loads of old papers relating to Brag.dkar rTa.so, explaining how these had been brought from Kyirong to his safekeeping some years ago when the Chinese had arrived in that district. He himself had spent a number of years there studying under the previous incarnation of that monastery, bsTan.'dzin Nor.bu, who died about twelve years ago and whose new incarnation is now residing at the monastery of Rumtek in Sikkim in the care of the rGyal.dbang Karma.pa. I requested the slob.dpon to select from these two trunks those documents which he considered to be of the greatest importance, as time did not permit us to inspect all of them. He therefore chose a number of official proclamations (similar in content to the one issued to the mNga'.bdag, discussed above) concerning the traditional rights and privileges of this monastery issued by successive rulers of Tibet and also a number of letters in Nepalese relating to the involvement of this monastery in Jang Bahadur's war with Tibet. The proclamations were issued by (1) a certain mNga'.ris Chos.rgyal Khri.lde bSod.nams dBang.phyug (an unidentified local ruler who would appear from his title to be of royal descent) from rDzong.dkar in the Year of the Dragon (14 lines; two seals), (2) the Fifth Dalai Lama (25 lines; seal; date illegible), (3) a further document issued by the Fifth Dalai Lama (6 lines; seal; dated Iron Dog = 1670), (4) Lha.bzang, Khang, the Mongolian ruler of Tibet from 1703-1717 (14 lines; seal; dated Iron Tiger = 1710), (5) rTa.tsag sPrul.sku Ye.shes bLo.bzang bsTan.pa'i mGon.po, Regent during the minority of the 10th Dalai Lama, Lung.rtoqs rGya.mtsho, during the periods 1789-1790 and 1791-1810 (6 lines; seal; dated Earth Snake = 1809), (6) a certain bsTan.rgyas.gling, presumably one of the De.mo sprul.skus of whom three were regents. Hugh Richardson has suggested it might be the middle one, bLo.bzang Thub.bstan 'Jigs.med rGya.mtsho (1811-1819) (14 lines; seal; Fire Ox = 1817?), (7) a further sealed document providing no clue to its issuing authority dated Earth Snake (5 lines). Generally speaking, these documents all deal with questions of tax exemption and the traditional rights of corvee. Some, notably the first two

listed above, contain a sort of historical preamble. There are many repeated prohibitions against fishing and hunting in the area, and exhortations to proper behaviour in the vicinity of the monastery. These injunctions are, strangely enough, repeated almost verbatim in the eleven pages of various letters issued under the seal of Jang Bahadur in 1855 (1912 according to the Nepalese system) which concern the protection of this monastery from the activity of his troops occupying Kyirong during the campaign of that year. H.R. suggests that special interest in the area may relate to Nepalese claims to Kyirong going back to the wars of 1788-1792. It is not clear why this monastery should have been singled out (as it would appear) for special protection and the translation into Tibetan of one of these letters by a certain Kha.sa.legs (also dated Wood Hare = 1855) sheds no light on this. The incarnation of that time was Tshe.dbang Karma, presumably the predecessor of bsTan.'dzin Nor.bu. It should be stressed that these documents we copied represent only a fraction of the whole collection and it is very much hoped that one day it may be studied in its entirety; the complete records of a Tibetan monastery such as this are uniquely important, both as historical source material and as a mine of information on monastic organisation. sLob.dpon Gyur.med has also in his safekeeping the relics and art objects of Brag.dkar rTa.so but we only learnt of this after our departure.

Plans to leave had been finalised and on the following day we set out on the long journey south, together with a number of porters recruited locally after taking leave from our kind host, Rig.'dzin rDo.rje, who had looked after us so well and who now proceeded to shed tears according to the local custom on such occasions. Exchanging scarves with him and all his relations in the mNga'.bdag clan, we were given a wonderful send-off while everyone expressed the hope that we would return one day.

It will be remembered that at this time we were still in pursuit of the autobiographical literature of the lamas of Kutang and, thinking that we would find these at the village of Kok, we had despatched a messenger there to locate the texts and prepare for our arrival two days later, having stopped on the way to inspect the temples at Namdru and Trok. The temples at Namdru of special interest lay high above the village and we made our way there on the morning of November 2nd, having spent the night in a village house down below. gNam.gru dGon.pa in the village itself was rather disappointing but gNam.lha dGon.pa above was found to be occupied by twelve monks, refugees of the Gelukpa monastery of sBug.brag in sTod, about three days journey from RÖ across the border to the west. sBug.brag used to be a large monastery attached to Se.ra in Lha.sa, having about sixty monks before the Chinese occupation. Twelve of these had fled to Nepal and had been invited to found their community here in Namdru where it appeared they established friendly relations with the local

population despite sectarian differences. They were offered the little temple of gNam.lha dGon.pa, which is said to have been built no earlier than three generations ago by a certain bLa.ma dBang.rgyal whose grandson is still alive today. Close by this little community stands the temple of sPang.thang dGon.pa built by a local chief of Trok called dPon.po Tshe.ring gYung.drung. The frescoes here were of a rather superior standard and it was interesting to see the Hindu deities Ganesh (Tshogs.bdag) and Kuvera (Nor.lha) painted on either side of the main door. The main point of interest in gNam.lha dGon.pa, apart from the presence of a refugee Gelukpa community, was that it had a separate temple dedicated to the guardian deities (mgon.khang), the only example of this we found in the whole area.

After an easy stage from Namdru to Trok on the same day, we arrived at the house of the hereditary chief of the latter village whose forebears seem to have acquired their authority fairly recently from the Gorkha dynasty. The bKa'.'gyur Lha.khang in the village, as its name suggests, revealed a complete copy of the Lha.sa edition of the bKa'.'gyur but dPal.ri dGon.pa, situated on a prominence above the village, was locked and the keeper unfortunately was nowhere to be found. John and I therefore decided to try and reach the retreat centre of sPang.po Brag.rtse before sundown and so we set off climbing the steep, wooded hillside behind Trok. This is a large community of meditators under sPrul.sku 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho who also belongs to the Khyung.dkar clan that has its main branch in Gyayul. Lacking its own hereditary lama, the people of Trok are supposed to have invited from Gyayul a certain lama of that clan called gSang.sngags rGyu.l dan four generations ago and it is from this man that 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho appears to be descended. However, he is also the incarnation of bsTan.'dzin rDo.rje (see above) of the mNga'.bdag clan and received recognition as such from the previous Karma.pa incarnation. Our letter of introduction to the local lamas was also addressed to him, and we had heard that he was presently residing at his retreat centre which has a permanent community of about twelve members. As it turned out, we miscalculated the distance to this place above Trok, and the sun was setting as we reached a little temple half way up called Om.dgon. The lama there, Kun.bzang rNam.rgyal, was most hospitable and invited us in for tea and dissuaded us from trying to reach sPang.po Brag.rtse; sPrul.sku 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho, he told us, had himself descended to the village to officiate at some rites for a sick person some hours previously. He also said that, even if we did reach the retreat centre, it would have been unlikely that we should have been able to meet anyone because the meditators were bound by strict standards of seclusion. After talking to him about his clan (he was also a member of the Khyung.dkar) and drinking several cups of tea, we returned to the village, stumbling down the path in the dark. A most uncomfortable night was spent in the chief's house and, after very little sleep, I went the

following morning to meet 'Phrin.las rGya.mtsho at the house where the ritual to relieve the sick man of his illness was still in progress. He was having his breakfast in a room hung with thangkas and invited me to join him. He was very interested in my account of the work we had been doing and it would have been useful to spend more time with this local dignitary, but time was pressing and I had to catch up with the others who had already departed. At the river below, we met our messenger with the news that the texts we wanted were not, after all, being kept at Kok but had been borrowed by a bLa.ma rGya.mtsho of Samdok in order to copy them, and that they were presently being kept at rNal.'byor Phug where that lama had recently been spending a period of retreat and where we ourselves had been only a few days ago. It was a typical example of how one's most careful plans can be thwarted by unforeseen circumstances in this part of the world due to lack of means for efficient communication - a natural hazard that has to be borne with patience but which was nonetheless extremely frustrating in view of our high hopes to obtain these books. Feeling very disconsolate, we abandoned our plan of going to Kok and decided to set off as quickly as possible on our return journey. Little did we realise at the time that the outcome, in the end, would be a happy one.

That night we arrived at Drang and the following day we covered the whole distance to Jagat; on the upward journey, this section of the route had taken two days. We had been spurred on by the memory of our spare stocks of food deposited with the headman of Jagat, and that night we had an enormous meal. Two days later, Joe was ill with a fever of 102° and we had to stop at Tato Pani for three nights while he recovered. Our camping site was greatly enhanced by the presence of a tiny hot spring of mineral water where we all took turns in bathing. On the second day of our stay there, we met Milan Melvin who was walking up to Nubri and made the arrangements with him to copy the missing texts with sLob.dpon 'Gyur.med's assistance in RÖ. Ample doses of Tetracyclin finally enabled Joe to walk on the 9th November, and that day we reached a pleasant camping spot between Labu Besi and Arukhet. In order to cut short the journey all the way back from Arughat to Trisuli, we decided to try and make our way to Palluntar, the small airport that serves Gorkha, and so, instead of crossing the Buri Gandaki at Arughat, we continued down on its west bank and branched off in a south-westerly direction on a path that took us through Kanchok and Tanti Pokhri, in both of which places we spent the night. Finally, on 12th November, twelve days after leaving RÖ, we boarded a tiny aircraft called a Pilatus Porter at Palluntar and soared up into the blue skies. Manaslu and its neighbouring giants seemed only a stone's throw away, and the week of toil getting there and back seemed puny in relation to the distance "as the crow flies". Yet, looking back the way had come, thinking over all we had experienced and found in Kutang and Nubri, and

(in my case) looking forward with great anticipation to being reunited once more with my wife and baby in Kathmandu, a real sense of satisfaction was felt by all.

NOTE

Tibetan names and words are rendered in this report as follows:

- (1) Place names of villages and districts are, for the most part, spelt as they are pronounced; their original orthography varies from one local text to another and, to avoid confusion, a simple phonetic rendering has been chosen except in cases of direct quotation.
- (2) The names of monasteries and temples are given in Tibetan transliteration with the initial or main consonant of each part of the name capitalised. Where appropriate, an English translation of the name follows, e.g. Byang.chub dGon.pa ("The Monastery of Enlightenment").
- (3) Personal names are also given in transliterated form, unitalicised except for titles and epithets.
- (4) Tibetan and Sanskrit words well-known in English (such as "chöten", "mani", "lama", "sutra", "dharma" etc.) are written as pronounced and this also holds for the names of the well-known schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Unusual words and terms are transliterated and italicised.
- (5) The names of divinities are treated in the same way as personal names.
- (6) The titles of texts and the names of rituals are both transliterated and italicised.

A few discrepancies may be apparent in the application of this system, for which apologies are offered.

APPENDIX

A list of works on the local literature of Kutang and Nubri in Northern Nepal located and photocopied by the University of California Expedition.

1. bdag bya btang ras pa padma don grub kyi chos byas 'tshul dang thob 'tshul dang bka' (!) ba spyad 'tshul rnam. Autobiography of Padma Don.grub. 72pp. dbu.can ms.
2. mkha mnyam 'gro ba'i rtsug brgyan padma dbang 'dus kyi rnam par thar pa gsal bar bkod pa la (?) rmongs mun thib po sal pa'i smon me. Autobiography of Padma dBang.'dus. 176 pp. dbu.can ms.
3. mkhams gsum 'gro ba'i bla ma rje btsun padma dbang 'dus kyi gsung 'bum las / nyams 'char gyi gdengs tshad rdo rje'i mgrur. The spiritual songs of Padma dBang.'dus. 47 pp. dbu.can ms.
4. rnal 'byor ras pa padma lhun grub bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho'i gsung pa'i rnam mthar (!) kun bsal me long. Autobiography of O.rgyan bsTan.'dzin (alias Padma Lhun.grub). 104 pp. dbu.can ms.
5. rnal 'byor ras pa padma O.rgyan bstan 'dzin bdag gi gsang ba'i rnam thar nyams dag snang gi bskor. The "secret" autobiography of O.rgyan bsTan.'dzin. 16 pp. dbu.can ms.
6. dkar chags rin.chen gsal ba'i sgron ma. "The Jewel Catalogue of the Clear Lamp". 4 pp. dbu.can ms.
7. dkar chags mthong ba 'dzum shor. "The Catalogue Which When Seen Makes One Smile". 3 pp. dbu.can ms.
8. dkar chags gsal ba'i me long. "The Catalogue of the Clear Mirror". 3 pp. dbu.can ms.
9. dkar chags gsal ba'i sgron me. "The Catalogue of the Clear Lamp". 4 pp. dbu.can ms.
10. dkar chags rin chen gsal ba'i sgron ma. "The Jewel Catalogue of the Clear Lamp". (different from (6) above) 2 pp. dbu.can ms.
11. skyid mo lung gi kha byang.....(illeg.)..... A guide to the "hidden valley" of Kyimolung in Kutang. 12 pp. (p.II is missing) dbu.med ms.
12. sbas yul skyid mo lung gyis (!) lam byang. A similar work to (II) above emphasising the approaches to Kyimolung. 7 pp. dbu.med ms.
13. sbas yul skyid mo lung gi lam byang. Another version of (12) above, taken from a ma.'ong lung.bstan (prophecy) of Padmasambhava found in Serang. The pages are marked ka + 8a to ka + 15b. dbu.can ms.

14. rje btsun mi la ras pa'i rdo rje mgur drug.....Title page and pp. 62a to 67b of Mi.la Ras.pa's "Six Adamantine Songs". Zhigatse blockprint. Selected for its account of Mi.la Ras.pa's visit to Kutang and Nubri.
15. Excerpts from two gnas.bstod ("Eulogy of the Holy Place") of Serang. Only the last passages in each are clear to the eye. Contemporary. The author of one is sLob.dpon 'Gyur. med of R6.
16. rnal 'byor gi dbang phyug bstan 'dzin ras pa'i zhal gdams mgur du gsungs pa rnams. The spiritual songs of bsTan.'dzin Ras.pa, 17th century lama from Dolpo. 67 pp. blockprint.
17. rnam rtog lam khyer gyi lhan thabs dang / dris lan ma rig mun sel. A philosophical work by bsTan.'dzin Ras.pa. 13 pp. Blockprint.
18. Three loose pages from the biography of bsTan.'dzin Ras.pa (pp. 8, 16 and 17). The complete work is available in Prof. Snellgrove's private collection.
19. sprul sku rigs 'dzin chen po gar dbang rdo rje snying po'i phyi'i rnam par thar pa nges don rgya mtsho. The "outward" biography of the Nyingmapa gter.ston Gar.dbang rDo.rje sNying.po by his disciple Padma 'Phrin.las. Dated: Iron Bird Year. Printed by gTsag.stod Padma Chos.bzang at Nyam Shel. phug. 57 pp. Blockprint. (p. 39b is missing).
20. Proclamations and correspondence relating to the monastery of Brag.dkar rTa.so in Kyirong. 13 exposures. (For details see text of the Expedition Report). Found in the monastery of mTsho.skyes Yang.dben bDe.chen Chos.'phol gLing in ko (Samargaon) where they were selected from two trunk loads of similar documents in Tibetan and Nepalese.
21. a rlung.rta yar.skyed (ritual performed on erecting a prayer flag), title illegible. 3pp. dbu.med ms. This bears no relation to the rest of the material. It was said to be of Khampa origin.

The items listed above are all contained in the microfilm roll now deposited at the East Asiatic Library at Berkeley and at the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. The order in which they are listed does not conform to the order in which they appear on the roll; for the sake of convenience related works have been grouped together but the original order is as follows: 1,2,3,4,5,6,11,12,14,13,15,7,8,9,10,16,21,18,20,17,19, In addition to these works a further six items were copied which, on account of the film used, are not contained on the main roll. These are as follows:

22. Proclamation relating to the mNga'.bdag clan of sPra.dun.rtse issued by the 5th Dalai Lama in 1661. 15 lines. (See above text of the Expedition Report).

23. Proclamation issued by an unidentified Panchen Lama relating to the rights of the mNga'.bdag over Nyam Shel.phug monastery. 8 lines. dated Iron Hare Year.
24. Proclamation by the IVth Panchen Lama, bLo.bzang bsTan.pa'i Nyi.ma, on the same subject as (23) above. 12 lines. dated Iron Horse Year 1810. dbu.med ms.
25. gnas.bstod of sPungs.rgyan by O.rgyan sPrul.sku 32 lines.
26. sgrub gling brag dmar chos rdzong bsngags pa'i gtam dbyangs can dgyes pa'i tambur. Eulogy of sBas.phug dGon.pa (whose literary name is Brag.dmar Chos.rdzong) by Ye.klong.pa (alias sLob.dpon 'Gyur.med). pp. marked 9a to 10b. dbu.can ms.
27. ... (illeg.) ... mthar bskul ba'i gtam/'chi med rnga dbyangs. Written by Ye.klong.pa at Rang.byung gSang.ba'i Ke'u.tshang. Similar eulogistic verse to (26) above but whose subject is not clear. From a volume marked nya. 3 pp. dbu.can ms.