

### III. Tabo : the Himalayan Ajanta

Dr. D. L. Snellgrove in the preface to his book *Buddhist Himalaya* stated that 'The Himalayas can still testify to its activeness, for these regions (Nepal valley and Kashmir) which once saw the passage of Buddhism to Tibet have now become dependent on Tibet for the life of their religion. The source in India has long been dead and only the Tibetans possess the living traditions which can enliven the ancient places.' Recent history, however, has robbed the above remark of its validity. Tibet no longer plays any part in the domain of Buddhism so far as the Himalayan region is concerned. It is once again India that is providing the cultural substratum, as of old, for the understanding of Buddhism. In this context I thought it worthwhile to present before this scholarly gathering an account of the monasteries in the Spiti valley of Himachal Pradesh so as to promote renewed interest in the study of Himalayan art.

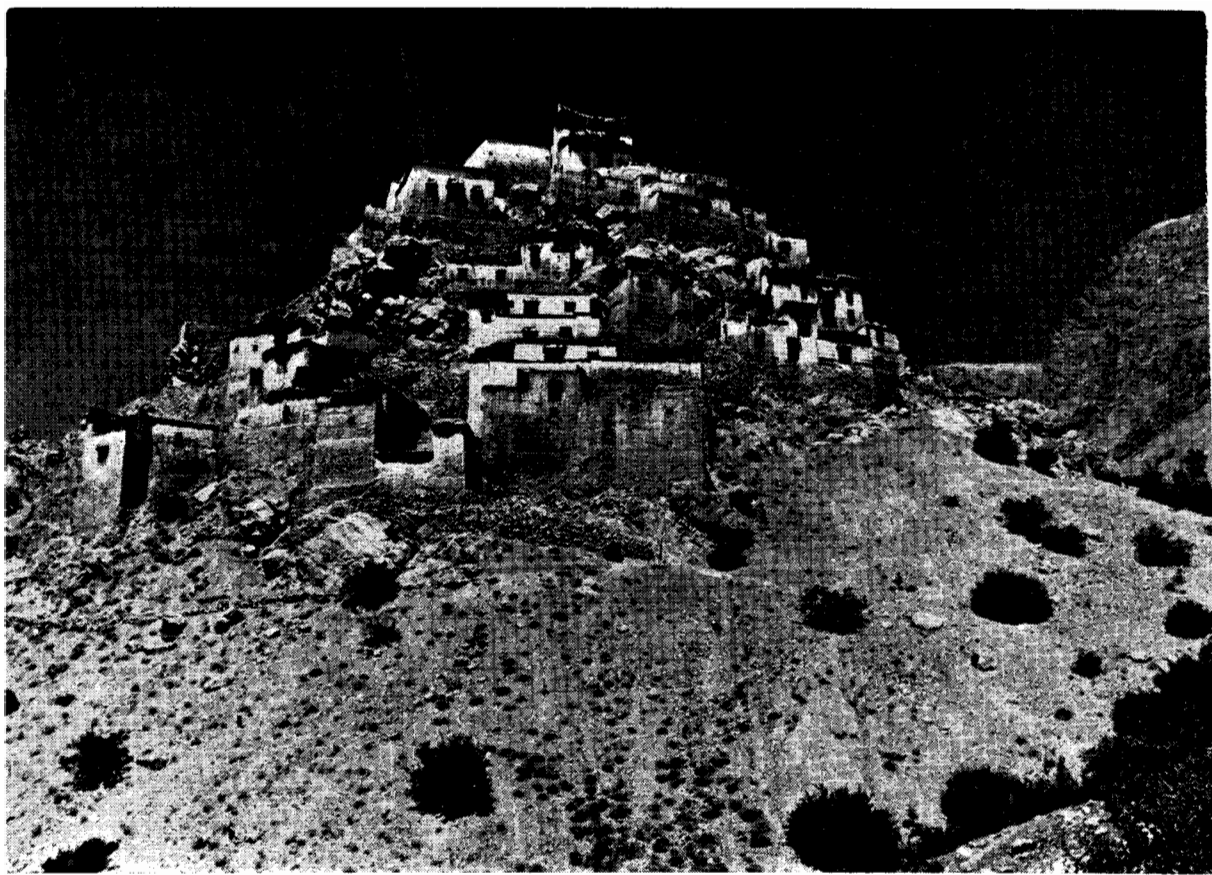
It was in 1914 that Dr. A. H. Francke of the Moravian Mission wrote his work *Antiquities of Indian Tibet* and this was published by the Archaeological Survey of India. In this work he gave an account of his journey in the Himalayan region undertaken in 1909 and onwards. In the companion volume of his work published in 1925, Dr. Francke collected together Chronicles of Ladakh bearing on the history and antiquity of the region with special reference to the spread of Buddhism in that region. Tabo and Ki monasteries find a reference in these two works. The only other work that was undertaken thereafter appears to be by Giuseppe Tucci and Snellgrove. Unfortunately, no proper documentation of the various *gomphas* in this region was made nor was any effort made for their protection. It was in the year 1965 that I visited the *gomphas* in the Lahul and Spiti region in order to draw up a plan for their proper conservation. As a result of this visit, the *gomphas* at the Tabo have been brought under the protection by the Archaeological Survey of India and I am glad to say that the work of preservation of the paintings and the structures has made satisfactory progress.

During the course of my visit to this region, I inspected, besides the monasteries at Ki and Tabo, the monasteries at Tanguit and Khoksar. However, I shall confine myself to a general description of Ki and a somewhat critical evaluation of Tabo. The *gomphas* of Tabo are extremely important for the appreciation and understanding of the art of the Gu-ge style which flourished in the region of western Tibet from the tenth century to almost up to the end of the seventeenth century. It is well known that the Gu-ge kingdom disintegrated as a result of repeated campaigns of king Segne-nam-gyel of Ladakh and only about sixteen years later both Gu-ge and Ladakh were at the mercy of Central Tibetans and the Tibetan frontier just excluded Tabo.

The paintings at Tabo are fortunately better preserved and vie in splendour with those of Ajanta and the monastery can be described as the Himalayan Ajanta. This does not, however, mean direct stylistic relationship with Ajanta as they are separated by almost six hundred years. The paintings also differ in another respect, namely that the carrier of the Tabo paintings is not the rock as at Ajanta but consists of pressed-clay walls of the monastery. The paintings have a family relationship to those at Tsa-pa-rang, mTho-gling and Mang-Nang-Nang in Gu-ge proper and owe to a great extent to the art of Kashmir and to some extent to the Pāla school of art which influenced Nepalese and through it the Tibetan art. The Gu-ge style is represented at its best at Tabo and in the present political context they assume great importance as the only surviving representations of the Gu-ge style in India. Perhaps the Alchi monastery in Leh may have some early paintings influenced by the Gu-ge style.

Before we actually describe the monastery it will not be out of place to briefly review the politico-religious conditions which favoured the spread of Buddhism in the Spiti region. At the end of the tenth century, western Tibet came under the rule of a new dynasty known as the kings of Gu-ge. Of the line of kings of this dynasty, Ye-she-ö (light of wisdom) is important to us for the understanding of the spread of Buddhism. Further names of two significant personalities of this period come to our mind. These are: (1) the renowned Tibetan scholar Rin-chen S'ang-po (A.D. 958-1055) and the Indian Master Atīśa (A.D. 982-1054). Rin-chen S'ang-po was one of the twenty-one youths sent to India by Ye-she-ö, the king of Gu-ge. He studied in Kashmir for many years and visited Buddhist centres in central India. He had as many as seventy-five masters. He initiated a whole school of Tibetan scholarship by translating many Indian works in Tibetan. Rin-chen S'ang-po must have travelled into India down the Sulej valley and across the foothills to the Beas valley and then north-westward to Kashmir or perhaps he might have taken the northern route through the Spiti and the Chandra valleys. The Tabo *gompha* is attributed to Rin-chen S'ang-po and there is inscriptional evidence of this fact in one of the painted inscriptions in the *gompha*. The inscription reads: 'This temple was first founded by the ancestor of the Bodhisattva, in the ape-year and now 46 years later the Royal Descendant the Mighty One Ch'ang-Chup-ö, motivated by the thought of enlightenment, has carried out repairs to this temple'. This record clearly indicates that the kings of Gu-ge, Ye-she-ö and his nephew Ch'ang-Chup-ö took special interest in Tabo. In this *gompha* are set on the wall twenty-four stucco images of divinities of the *Vajradhātu mandala* of which the central figure is a fourfold image of Vairochana. Two images of Rin-chen S'ang-po are placed near the image of Vairochana.

Atīśa arrived in Gu-ge when he was 60 years old. Having got his initiation at a very young age into the Hevajra cult from a *yogin* named



*Plate XV. Ki monastery: general view*

Rāhula-gupta he went to various monasteries and travelled to Tibet through Nepal. He stayed for three years in Gu-ge as the Chief Religious Guide and thereafter went to central Tibet. After visiting Lhasa and Yer-pa he finally settled in Nye-thang. He died in 1054 and *Chö-ten* was erected over his relics. He was responsible for influencing the religious thought of Tibet to a very great extent.

#### *Ki Monastery*

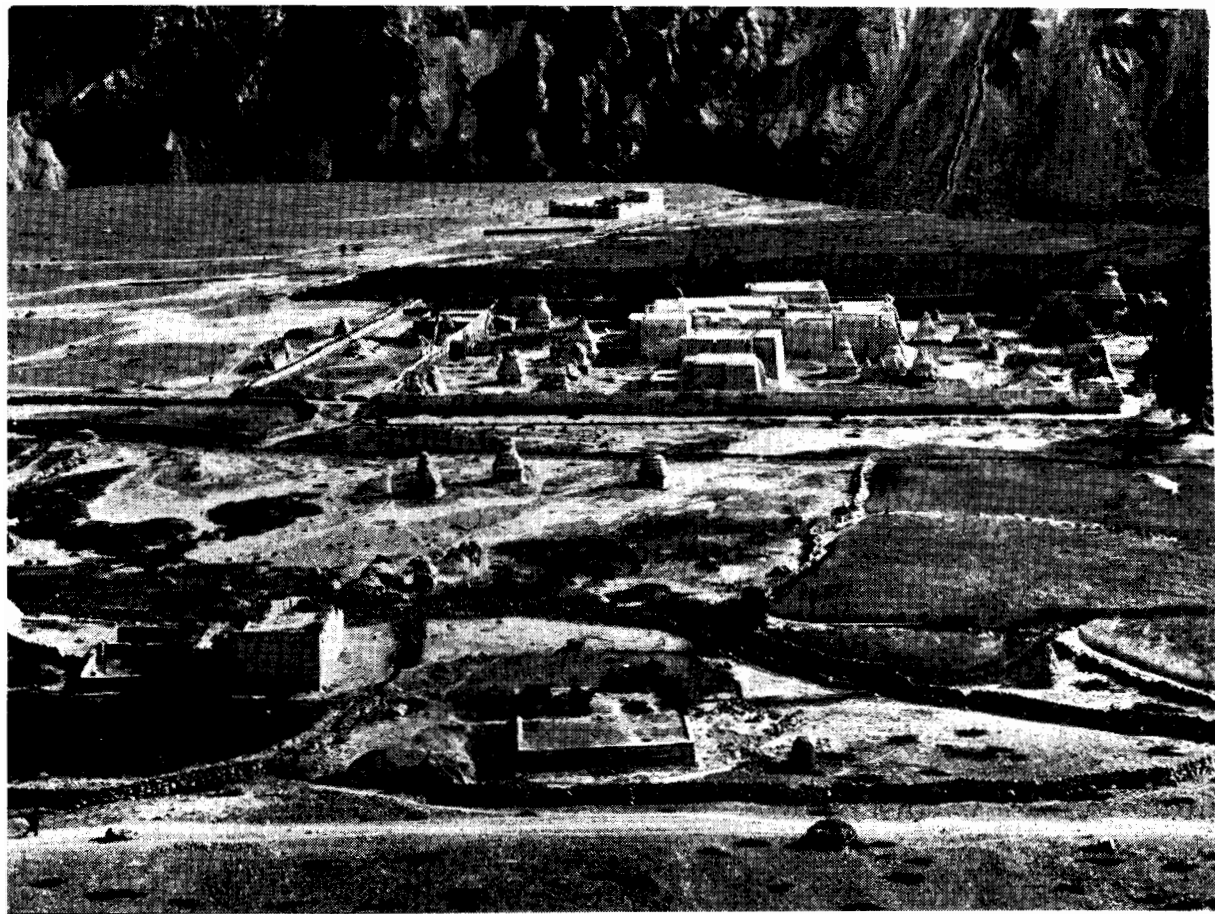
Situated on the conical hill about 300 metres high from the river-bed on the eastern bank of the Spiti, the Ki monastery (plate XV) is a picturesque pile of buildings looking from a distance like a hill fortress. It is approached by a difficult pathway from Kaza, the subdivisional headquarters of Lahul and Spiti District along the left bank of the Spiti river and leads to the Ki village at the foot of the hill. A steep climb from the village Ki leads one to the gate of the monastery which consists of an unostentatious structure of mud bricks with a low gallery atop. From the entrance to the summit, a winding and uneven stepped passage leads from one tier to the other through the residential quarters of the Lamas. The tiers are constructed in random rubble masonry in mud mortar.

The houses are built out of mud bricks or pressed clay each with a small wooden door frame and a window, door jambs of which are decorated with a raised and burnished black coloured decoration. The door frames are also surmounted by some wood-work. The monastery on the top of the hill consists of a set of buildings on three sides of a small courtyard. The *gompha* known as Mane-lang is an isolated and independent structure on one side of the courtyard. Opposite Mane-lang is a building on a high plinth called Du-khang which is the principal place of worship and a place of religious instruction for the young Lamas. On the eastern side there is a double-storeyed structure consisting of buildings called Nagpo-gurusam, Chum-jhin, Zhin-shung and Ku-lung with several interconnected passages, apartments for the stores, kitchen and sacred chambers of worship not usually accessible to outsiders. From the archaeological and artistic point of view, Mane-lang and Nagpo-gurusam are of special interest as both of these contain remnants of old paintings, while the Chum-jhin contains a large number of ancient *thangkas* of great artistic and iconographic interest. The monastery was ravaged many a time during wars and the Dogra invasion of 1837 caused great damage to the monastery.

Mane-lang is a small oblong structure having a half-open verandah and has a covered circumambulation path around the inner room which opens into the verandah. The room contains a huge round colourful prayer-wheel set rotating by a mechanical device. It contains on the inner side the sacred *mantra* 'Om Mani Padme Hum' and other religious texts. The Lama operating the prayer-wheel (*Dhug Jur*) is supposed to mechanically repeat the scriptures with each rotation of the drum. On the four walls of this building are painted figures of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. The rear and the southern walls have two rows of paintings, the lower row containing larger figures, each with a halo behind the head. The paintings on the eastern wall also consist of two rows of figures. Female deities with many hands are also seen on the eastern wall. Three-headed male and female figures also find place among the painted subjects. The proper identification of the subjects painted on the walls will have to wait till such time as the paintings are cleaned, photographed and subjected to a critical study. There are no paintings from the ground level up to the height of three to four feet (0.92 to 1.22 m.) the surface being merely ochre washed. There is a painted band of inscription along the top bordering the paintings four to eight inches (101.6 to 203.2 mm.) below the ceiling.

The outer front wall of the verandah flanking the doorway was also once painted and the surface has suffered a lot of damage and only traces of paintings can be seen which do not help in a proper assessment or recognition of the subjects.

The structure consists of compact mud in layers with a flat roof of earth-work supported on wooden frame-work and rafters and beams.



*Plate XVI. Tabo monastery: general view*

The building proper stands on an artificially raised floor to form the topmost tier and is about nine (2·74 m.) to ten feet (3·05 m.) high and appears to be one of the latest additions to the monastery-complex and may not be older than one hundred and fifty years or so. But all the same, it deserves protection on account of the paintings it contains. The building with its circumambulatory path can be compared with the Lha-Lun temple in Spiti (Lilung on the Survey map) described by H. Lee Shuttleworth in *Lha-lun Temple, Spy-ti*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 39. Unlike the Lha-Lun temple, Mane-lang is a later structure but retains the ancient architectural tradition.

The structure known as Nagpo-gurusam is situated to the east of the courtyard. It contains ancient paintings, but these are now restricted to the southern wall surface, the rest of the paintings on the other walls having been obliterated by damage or subsequent plastering of the surface. The painted surface is almost completely covered from view by the stucco figures kept on a raised platform against the wall. The paintings in the Nagpo Gurusam appear to be earlier than those in Mane-lang.

The subjects painted consist of Buddha in various attitudes.

Above Nagpo-gurusam is a hall known as Chum-jhin which is a veritable mine of old *thangkas*. Most of the *thangkas* are of Tibetan origin and are religious offerings from Tibetan Lamas. The monastery has besides a fairly good collection of brass and silver ware required for daily use and for ritualistic worship. Some of the objects are of delicate workmanship and the artisans engaged in preparing the pots and pans still practice this ancient avocation. The orchestra containing a variety of musical instruments is equally interesting. The masks and costumes used by the dancers are colourful and gay. The pinnacle, with the *triratna* and *munḍa* is considered the lord of the soil and is perched on the top of the monastery complex.

### *The Monastery at Tabo*

Enclosed within a fairly high compound wall of rubble masonry and pressed clay about 100 yards square (83·61 m.), the monastery at Tabo (plate XVI) is a picturesque group of mud-brick structures (plate XVII) that have defied the ravages of time for the last many centuries. The group consists of the following nine structures of importance.

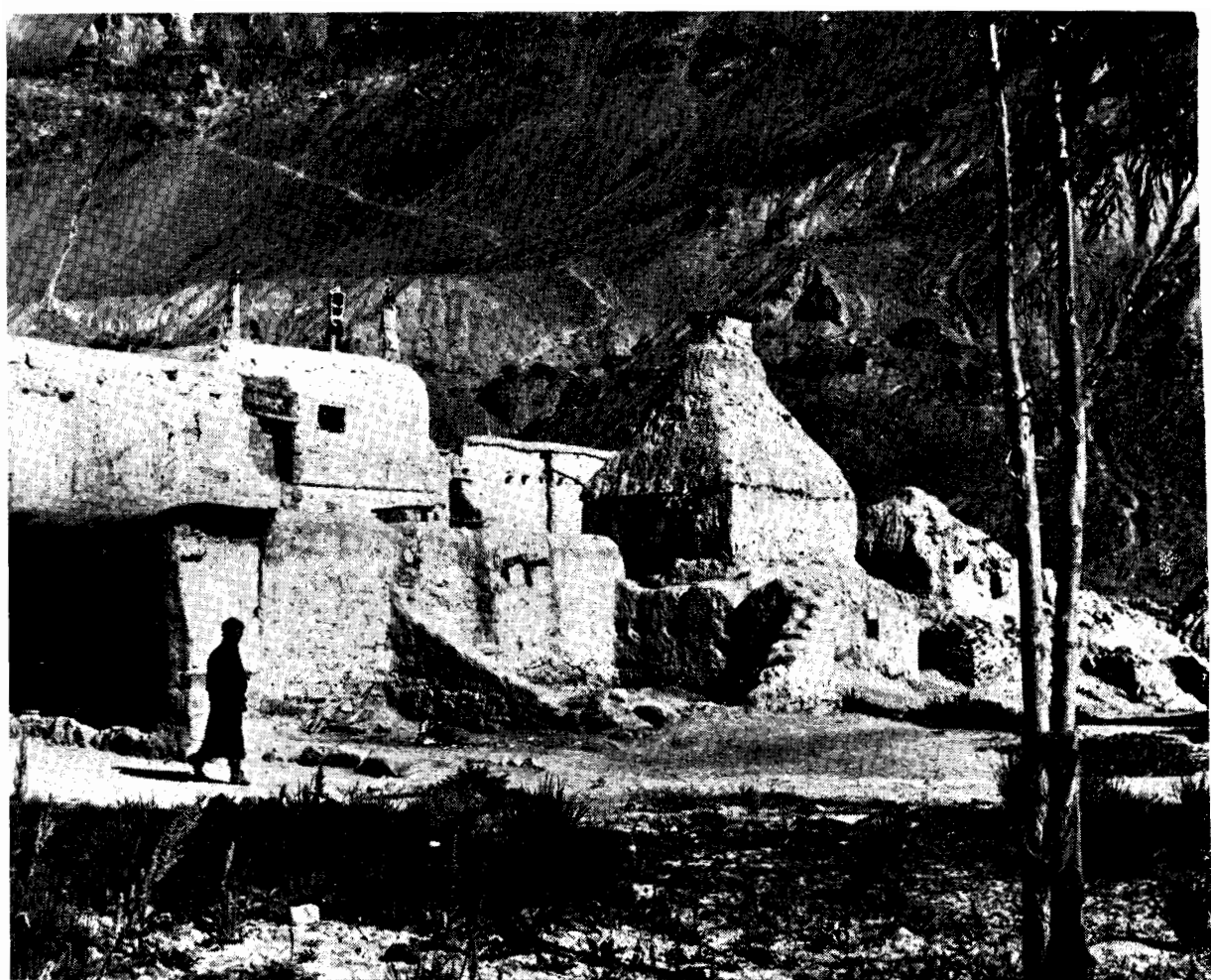
1. Du-wang.
2. Zelāmā (after the painted image of Zelāmā on the wall).
3. Gon-khang (a place of worship).
4. Chambā Chibo (The hall containing the image of Buddha).
5. Dom-lang.
6. Lang Chedbo (the big hall).
7. Ser-lang (Ser meaning gold and, therefore, a *gompha* with profusion of golden colour).
8. Chil-khang (middle room).
9. Lankar chung (formerly used for the initiation of nuns).

There are besides a large number of *stūpas* or *Chot Tens* within and outside the monastery.

The part of the monastery forming the portion of Du-wang, Zelāmā, and Gon-khang are interconnected and form the most ancient part of the monastery. The Zelāmā which appears to be a later addition, now affords entrance to the Du-wang and Gon-khang. The monastery belongs to the Ge-luk-pas or 'yellow hat' sect.

#### I. *Du-wang*

Entered from the hall known as Zelāmā and facing east, one enters a dark corridor known as *gotha*, the walls of which are covered with paintings of miniature Buddha figures. The main *gompha* beyond the corridor has two rows of octagonal wooden pillars, four in each row, having carved stone bases of inverted lotus. The top of each pillar has a carving of *pūrṇa-ghata* supporting a *tarāṅga* capital. Besides these



*Plate XVII. Tabo monastery: close up of the gamphas*

pillars, a few more round pillars have been added in later times to support the falling roof. At the end of the hall is the sanctum with a circumambulatory path. It contains an image of Buddha kept on a lion-throne. A four-faced image of Vairochana is kept on a high seat in front of a wooden platform erected against the last set of pillars. The hall measures 63' × 34' (19·2 × 10·36 m.) approximately.

*Paintings and sculptures on the wall*

The wall surface is divided into two parts by a row of thirty-two projecting stucco figures at a height of about 6 feet (1·82 m.) each held in position by a peg driven in the wall from the body of the sculpture. The sculptures represent male and female deities each with a tiara and seated on a lotus seat. These fine sculptures form the divinities of the *Vajradhātumandala*, the central divinity of which is Vairochana set on



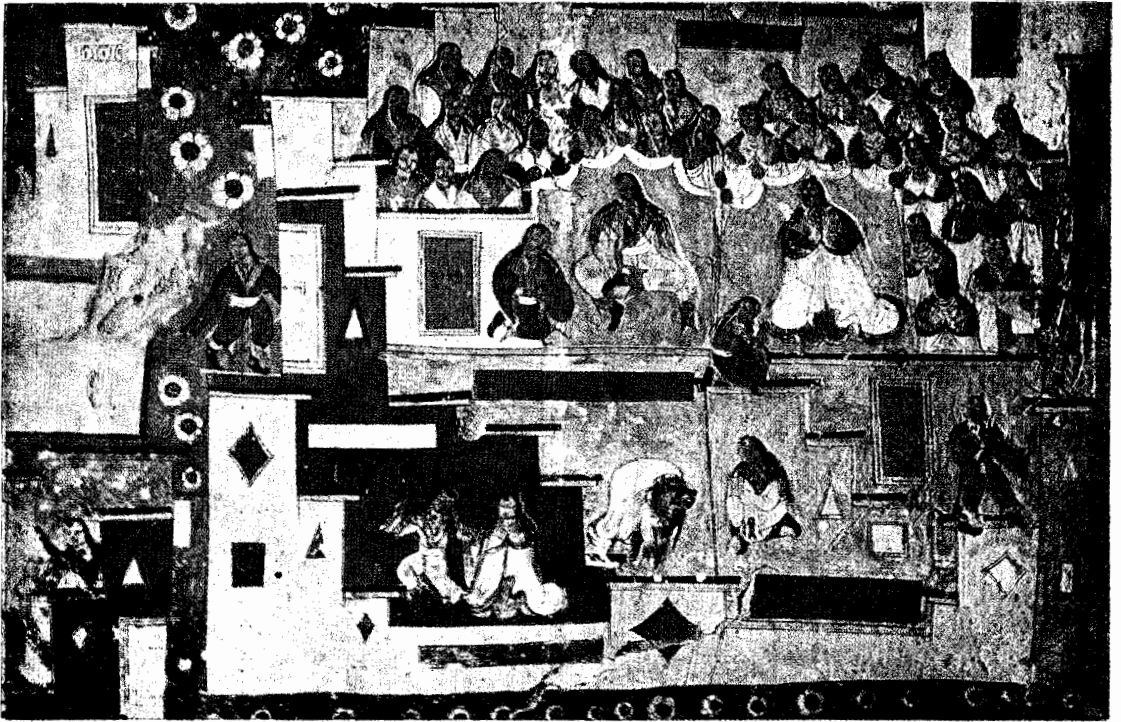


Plate XVIII. *Tabo, Du-wang : unidentified scene from the story of Nor-Sang*



Plate XIX. *Tabo, Du-wang : unidentified scene from the story of Nor-Sang with label inscriptions*



the altar and already referred to above. Set against the wall are four Buddhas of direction each of them flanked by Bodhisattvas, two to the left and two to the right. Among the divinities are eight divinities: Vajra-gaiety, Vajra-garland, Vajra-song, Vajra-dance, Vajra-perfume, Vajra-flower, Vajra-lamp and Vajra-incense. The four fierce male divinities are: Vajrāṅkuṣa (Vajra-hook) Vajra pāśa (Vajra-noose), Vajrasphoṭa (Vajra-burst), Vajrāveśa (Vajra-fury). The portion above the sculptures is covered by the paintings of large and small Buddha and Bodhisattva figures. The portion has not suffered much, but could not be photographed for want of light. The lower portion has suffered the most, but a continuous Jātaka story is depicted on the southern wall surface while the northern wall depicts the story of Buddha from his birth to *parinirvāṇa*, though portions have subsequently been retouched extensively. Some of the renovation work has been done by a competent renovator who has understood his limitations and executed only the line-work. While in recent times, all damaged portions have been indifferently plastered and covered over with incongruous colour patches showing trees in blue and green. Among the paintings on the southern wall, it was possible to identify a scene from the *Vessantara Jātaka*, where the children of Vessantara are delivered to Vessantara's father by the greedy Brahmin Jūjaka. The other paintings deal with the story of a benevolent young prince Nor-Sang and the different scenes yet remain to be identified with the help of the label inscriptions appearing at several places (plates XVIII-XX).

The wall surface of the *pradakṣhinā-paṭha* is employed for the depiction of the theme of the Thousand Buddhas.

Among the paintings depicting the story of Buddha on the northern wall, the procession showing Māyā in a chariot proceeding to Kapilavastu is remarkable for its vigour and rich imagery (plate XXI). The conception of Māyā and the birth of Buddha are also very beautifully depicted. The panel on north-east corner showing Buddha addressing the assembly of Śākyas is also remarkable. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa* of Buddha is depicted on the wall facing west.

The paintings on the walls of this hall are by far the most ancient at Tabo (*circa* eleventh century A.D.) and stylistically owe their inspiration to the classical tradition practised in India, though it has developed its regional peculiarities. We have already seen that the Tibetans not only invited religious teachers from India but craftsmen who transmitted the Indian tradition of painting to this region. The recent excavation of the Vikramśilā site has also brought to light murals and this university played an important role in the spread of Buddhism in Tibet.

## 2. *The Zelāmā*

The structure, which is square on plan, is centrally supported by four pillars with central opening in the roof for the light. The paintings on

the walls are very recent, having been executed by the Head Lama, Sanden Dorje, about five years ago. The old painting of Zelāmā on the wall facing east at the north-western corner has also been retouched by him. The room has as such lost much of its importance.

### 3. *The Gon-khang*

A small room used for *tana mana* (religious worship) contains a wooden stool on which are kept a few images made of *sattu*, the main object of worship being Kali whose wooden image is kept on the pedestal.

#### *The paintings on the walls*

The paintings on the western wall consist of three figures of Kāla on horse-back. Brandishing a sword, he rides a horse and wears a skull-bedecked head-dress and a flowing costume. Below are depicted eight auspicious symbols and miniature Bodhisattva figures above and along the sides.

### 4. *The Chambā Chibo*

It is called Chambā Chibo on account of the large (*chambā* image of Buddha in *pralambapāda* in the sanctum sanctorum. Facing east, the hall has a small portico with an ornate wooden door-frame with Goṇeśa on the *lalāṭa-bimba*. Above the *lalāṭa-bimba* are seven wooden panels in relief of which the alternate ones contain figures of Buddha, while the other four are standing figures in *tribhaṅga*, the exact identification of which is not possible in their present damaged condition. Above the central panel is carved a *kinnara* couple while on the door jambs is carved a beautiful floral pattern and a row of standing Buddhas on either side. At present only six figures can be made out, but there may be a few more in the portions now buried in the ground. The wooden door-frame is a work of artistic execution and may compare with the wooden temples of Chamba. It is not unlikely that the workmen came from the Chamba region.

The main hall, together with the sanctum containing the large image of Buddha in the *Dharamchakra-pravartana-mudrā* has a very high ceiling (about 6 metres). The ceiling is supported by six pillars, three in each row all resting on sculptured stone pedestals carved with tiger and elephant figures. The huge figure of Buddha has undergone repairs in recent years when the surface was painted in red and yellow colours. The paintings on the walls in the sanctum sanctorum except a portion on the northern wall containing old paintings have been retouched and varnished. The paintings in the main hall are of a later period and may hardly be 100 years old. The old paintings referred to above deserve to be cleaned and preserved.



Plate XX. *Tabo, Du-wang* : scene from the story of  
*Nor-Sang depicting tortures in the hell*

The ceiling was also painted with geometric designs of which traces are still extant.

### 5. *Dom-lang*

Provided with an ornate wooden door-frame having Buddha in *dharmachakra pravartana-mudrā* on the *lalātabimba*, the Dom-lang shrine has a narrow entrance passage leading to a more or less square hall centrally supported by one tall wooden pillar set on a stone pedestal.

The paintings on the walls are of special note on account of the unified compositions. The paintings belong to the last period of Gu-ge style. On the back wall is a large-sized figure of Buddha in *bhūmiśarśa-mudrā* holding a begging bowl in one hand with an attendant on either side holding a begging bowl. The figure of standing Bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya, with drapery distinctive on account of decorative design are painted on either side of the central composition.

The side walls have the compositions separated by miniature figures of which one large-sized figure composition with the principal figure of Vairochana having four heads in *dhyāna-mudrā* attracts attention on account of delicate line-work. The paintings have suffered damage by profuse leakage of water from the roof but can be retrieved by chemical treatment and structural conservation. The wooden ceiling is painted with floral figures, celestials with scarfs in hand and animal figures.

### 6. *Lang Chedho*

This oblong hall with a sanctum of slightly smaller width is noteworthy on account of the beautifully decorated ceiling supported by brackets resting on the six octagonal pillars, three on each row. The ceiling decoration on the wooden planks set between the rafters is a distinctive feature of this *gompha*. Celestial beings, lotus medallions, floral patterns, religious symbols like the *śaṅkha*, geometrical patterns, make the ceiling extremely variegated and colourful.

Paintings on the walls are of large size like those in Dom-lang. The central figure on the back wall of the sanctum has been redone in recent years. But the figures on the side walls of the hall are older though later than the earliest paintings in the Du-wang. The paintings usually depict Buddha in various *mudrās* with attendant figures in frontal poses.

### 7. *Ser-lang*

Provided with a porch and a plain wooden door which may be a later addition, the rectangular hall has a definite indication of a sanctum. The hall is supported by four pillars square in section and has a ceiling

equally colourful like that of Lang-chedbo. The paintings on the wall are similarly large-sized and, therefore, suggest that the *gomphas* 6 and 7 belong to the same period. The paintings here, however, are untouched by later renovations and they are fringed at the lower end by running *vajra* pattern and decorative writings.

In the back wall the central figure is a Buddha in *bhūmisparśa-mudrā*, with attendant figures on either side. On the proper left of the figure is a Bodhisattva Maitreya carrying sword and a book on lotus. The most distinguishing feature of this figure is the very intricate design on the garment worn by it. The paintings are remarkable for the minute workmanship of drapery and ornamentation.

The other walls also have large-sized compositions. In this hall masks are kept on stools and tied to the pillars. There appears to be some special ritual significance for such display of masks in this *gompha*.

#### 8. *Chil-kang*

Known as Chil-kang or the middle *gompha*, this small hall is remarkable for a different pattern of paintings of ritualistic intent. Here, for the first time, we come across *maṇḍalas* (plate XXII) the worship of which on *thangkas* gained currency in later times.

The southern wall depicts a *maṇḍala* with Buddha in *dharmachakra-pravartana-mudrā* in a circle in the centre with eight small Bodhisattva figures around him. Outside the circle and set within a rectangle are twenty-four figures of Bodhisattvas, six in each corner. The rectangle is again circumscribed by a circle with three figures of Bodhisattvas in the outer quadrant. Correspondingly, there is another *maṇḍala* on the northern wall with nine figures in a circle and twenty-eight figures in the enclosing square which is again set within a circle at the four ends of which two deer with *dharmachakra* are painted suggesting the first sermon of Buddha in the deer park at Banaras. The back wall also has a large *maṇḍala* set around a three-faced deity enclosed in a circle.

The *gompha* is considered to be one of the earliest structures and is interesting as it provides an idea of the prevalent mode of worship.

The ceiling is decorated with variegated paintings of birds, animals and floral patterns etc.

#### 9. *Lankar Chung*

Used for the initiation of nuns, this small oblong hall, centrally supported by four round wooden pillars, faces east and has a low wooden entrance. The paintings on the walls are described below:



Plate XXI. *Tabo, Du-wang* : scene depicting royal procession and the birth of Buddha in Lumbini grove



Plate XXII. *Tabo, Chil-kang* : Buddhist mandala



### *Western wall*

On this wall is depicted a panel showing Buddha figure on lotus in *bhūmiṣparśa mudrā*. To the proper left is seated Bodhisattva Maitreya carrying a sword and book on lotus on either side.

On the southern wall are also three principal large-sized figures with rows of miniature figures on sides. Of the two rows of figures, seven in each row, one set has been completely damaged by leakage of water.

On the walls looking west on either side of the entrance are figures of Kālī wearing a skull-bedecked *mukuta*.

### *Bronze images and other objects at Tabo*

The monastery has a small but an interesting collection of bronze images showing Buddha seated in *vajrāsana* with hands in *bhūmiṣparśa mudrā*. In one case, he also holds the *vajra* in his left hand. There is also an image of Vajrasattva holding a *vajra* near the heart. The images are of both Indian and Nepalese origin.

The collection of masks used in the performance of the *Chamb* dance is equally interesting.

### *The hillside monastery at Tabo*

The remains of a deserted and dilapidated monastic establishment are noticeable on the mountain side about two furlongs to the north of the Tabo monastery and about 200 feet (60·96 m.) above the ground level. This monastery was used in winter by the Lamas of the lower monastery, but in view of its extremely bad state of preservation, it now serves only the purpose of a fair held in the winter and lasting for a week or so. The monastery consists of caves partly excavated in the conglomerate formation and partly built in rubble masonry.

Of the many *gomphas*, the one that is in a tolerably good state of preservation is known as Du-wang. It is partly rock-cut and partly structural with ancillary structures forming a kitchen (*chand-sa*) store (*schoit*) and latrine (*cheit*). The central room of Du-wang contains a number of paintings of fairly good workmanship. They are, however, later than the paintings in the Du-wang *gompha* of the lower group. The figure of an eleven-headed Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara on the western wall is worthy of mention.

Besides Du-wang, there are six rudely-cut caves on the eastern side, either circular or oval in plan. The façades of these caves are almost completely fallen and the cells are full of débris. These caves are known as *Shenoya-phoo* (eastern side residential rooms). In the western half, there are also about nine cells in a very damaged condition including quarters for the head Lama. The monastery group on the hillside also

deserves protection especially the Du-wang *gompha* which contains interesting paintings.

#### *The technique of paintings*

The paintings have been executed in tempera on mud plaster. Generally, the mud-wall serves as the 'carrier'. We came to know from the local Lamas that the binding medium was glue derived from the sheep-skin. In most cases, the mud plaster was found and reinforced with bits of straw, husk and other fibrous material. The plaster is powdery and friable. On the plastered surface is a very thin coat of white ground and has been laid directly over the mud plaster after smoothening the prime coat of plaster. It appears that lime and clay were used for giving this white wash. The mud plaster is being examined in the Survey's laboratory to determine the contents and also to find out the contents of the material of which the pigments were made.

The oldest paintings at Tabo are contained in the Du-wang monastery and can be attributed to the tenth-eleventh century A.D. The paintings in the Gong Khang, where angry deities are represented, belong to the fifteenth-sixteenth century A.D. and those of Ser Khang to a still later period. The paintings in Chilkang belong to a class by themselves and contain *mandalas*, the worship of which gained importance in the middle period. It will thus be seen that the Tabo paintings present a stylistic amalgam where the Kashmir style and the Pāla style (of illustrated manuscripts) have been fused together with Tibetan influence. All these together form what we may call the Gu-ge style.

The paintings have another importance in the matter of study of costumes and the way of life in the bygone centuries and would call for a detailed study. □