

July. It presented a most lovely blend of pastel shades: the great red cliffs against a clear blue sky and at their foot the red and white buildings amidst the green of the trees; nearby there rushed a milky-coloured stream and all around was an expanse of golden corn and the pink bloom of buckwheat. Beyond Tr'ang-mar we climbed up again into the bare grey-brown mountains and traversed the wilderness of their flanks (pl. XXXIV*a*), descending at last to the head of another valley. Here grass was growing and just ahead we saw a monastery surrounded by trees. While we were resting a lama with three attendants passed by; we hailed him politely and asked where he came from. He replied that he came from Nup-ri and had been on pilgrimage to Mustang. We answered his questions about ourselves and said we would be visiting his country in due course. This preliminary meeting with him proved to be of great help later on.

### Ghar Gompa...referred to as Lo Gekar

We made our way down to the monastery, a great red and white building with rows of new prayer-wheels round the outside walls and four new chötens at the corners (pl. XXXIV*b*). We learned later that these were all gifts of the Lama of Shang, who often stays here and has made this place his own. It is known as LO GE-KAR, 'Pure Virtue of Lo'. The sacristan was deaf and dumb, but two Tibetan monks and a nun were staying there, as well as several ordinary pilgrims. We erected a tent on the grass sward in front of the buildings and prepared a little food before investigating further. Some of the pilgrims came to beg alms and went away content with measures of tsamba and small coins. One little boy stayed to eat some of our rice (pl. XXXVII*b*).

Lo Ge-kar differs from all the other monasteries we have seen in that it is planned inside rather after the style of a private house. There is no main temple, but several rooms on two floors, all more or less of the same size. Thus from a bare entrance-hall one enters a room on the right. The walls are painted pleasingly with the four kings of the quarters, the god-

desses of the offerings, the gods Brahmā and Indra, supported by a layman and a monk, all bearing gifts. The far wall opens into a deep dark alcove, in which with the help of our torch we discerned two life-size images, one seated on an ox and the other on a horse. They are fierce protective goddesses and the monk who accompanied us, identified the white-faced one on the horse as 'Mother with Good Things' (*ama legs-ldan*) and the blue-faced one on the ox as 'Fierce Lady with Good Things' (*legs-ldan drag-mo*). The nun opened a newly made and brightly painted cupboard (another present of the Lama of Shang) and displayed a set of sacrificial cakes (*tormas*) that she had made herself. From the doorway of the next room, where we now stood, we saw at the far end the brass tiers of an altar with butter-lamps illuminating the images of 'Lotus-Born' (*Padma-sambhava*) and his two wife-goddesses. The rest of the room was quite dark, but with the help of our torch we observed that the walls, once covered with frescoes, were now blackened from the smoke of the lamps that burn continually. There are other *terra-cotta* images of 'Lotus-Born', the 'Fierce Master', the 'Lion-Headed' *Dākinī* and of eight other special manifestations of 'Lotus-Born'. This dark shrine-room and its antechamber were altogether awe-inspiring. On the other side of the entrance hall there is a kitchen and a store-room. One then ascends to the first storey where there are four rooms, the walls of which are all covered with rows of small paintings on flat stones set within wooden frames. We had seen paintings of this kind before, but never in such great numbers. Thus one room contains all the 'Tranquil and Fierce' divinities and the set of twenty-five pundits (*rJe-'bangs*). Another contains the eighty-four great yogins (*siddha*) and the sixteen arhats. The third and fourth contain numerous replicas of 'Glancing Eye', 'Adamantine Being' and other buddhas. The first two rooms, where all the paintings are different, are the most pleasing, each painting deserving careful study (pl. XXXVb). There was a sense of living intimacy about this monastery and we understood why the Lama of Shang should come here often; of all the places we

have seen in this whole area, it is here we would stay most readily.

### Down To Tsarang...

The next morning our party separated. Pasang and Takki Babu continued northwards on a brief visit to the city of Mustang while Lopsang and Karchung accompanied me down the valley by Marang (SI: Māhārāṅ) to TSARANG (SI: Chārāṅ). This township, dominated by its fort and its monastery, is built on an eminence above the junction of this valley and another which descends from the direction of Mustang half a day's journey to the north. We approached through fields of pink buckwheat; the red and white buildings were silhouetted against yellow-brown cliffs beyond. Karchung led the way to the house of a family-acquaintance, where everyone was busy thrashing peas (pl. XXXVIIa). While we were setting up a tent and establishing ourselves in a corner of the courtyard, the 'incarnate' Lama of Tsarang came to see who we were. He was dressed for work in the fields and so was in no way distinguishable from any other well-to-do villager, but I recognized him from an earlier photograph of Professor Tucci's. He is the second son of the King of Lo (Mustāṅ-rāja) and now about thirty years old. After enquiring where I had come from, he invited me round to his house. It is a new one, which he has had built in the village, for having recently married, he lives in the monastery no longer. We sat and talked a short while and with Lopsang's assistance I explained where we had been and what we had been doing. His wife was meanwhile preparing enormous balls of moistened tsamba for the field-workers. She reheated the earthen tea-pot and served us with buttered tea. I asked to see the monastery, so the Lama summoned an old woman and handed her a key. She led the way up to the massive red building, which surmounts the bare ridge at the southern end of the village. The walled compound was guarded by a fierce half-starved mastiff, to whom she threw a ball of tsamba brought expressly for that purpose, followed by a well-aimed stone or two. The creature snarled and yelped and even though it knew