

TRANS HIMALAYA

Discoveries And Adventures
In Tibet

IN
3
VOLUMES

Sven Hedin

TRANS-HIMALAYA

DISCOVERIES AND ADVENTURES
IN TIBET

BY
SVEN HEDIN



WITH 388 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS, WATER-
COLOUR SKETCHES, AND DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR
AND 10 MAPS

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II



GIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

New Delhi-110002

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XXXV

	PAGE
IMMURED MONKS	I

CHAPTER XXXVI

OVER THE CHANG-LA-POD-LA	12
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XXXVII

TARGO-GANGRI AND THE SHURU-TSO	25
--	----

CHAPTER XXXVIII

TO THE OUTLET OF THE CHAKTAK-TSANGPO IN THE BRAHMA- PUTRA	38
--	----

CHAPTER XXXIX

MUHAMED ISA'S DEATH	52
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XL

ALONG BYWAYS TO TRADUM	64
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XLI

A PEEP INTO NEPAL	77
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER XLII		PAGE
IN SEARCH OF THE SOURCE OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA		89
CHAPTER XLIII		
THE SOURCE OF THE SACRED RIVER—A DEPARTURE		99
CHAPTER XLIV		
A NIGHT ON MANASAROWAR .	.	116
CHAPTER XLV		
MORE LAK™ VOYAGES . . . . .	.	124
CHAPTER XLVI		
A STORMY VOYAGE OVER THE HOLY LAKE . . . . .	.	133
CHAPTER XLVII		
ON THE ROOF OF THE GOSSUL MONASTERY . . . . .	.	144
CHAPTER XLVIII		
OUR LAST DAYS ON TSO-MAVANG . . . . .	.	154
CHAPTER XLIX		
ADVENTURES ON LANGAK-TSO . . . . .	.	166
CHAPTER L		
THE SOURCE OF THE SUTLEJ . . . . .	.	178

CONTENTS

vii

CHAPTER LI

A PILGRIMAGE ROUND KANG-RINPOCHE	PAGE 189
--	-------------

CHAPTER LII

OM MANI PADME HUM	200
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LIII

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOURCE OF THE INDUS	207
--	-----

CHAPTER LIV

A RESOLUTION	215
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LV

A NEW CHAPTER	226
-------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LVI

UP TO THE HEIGHTS OF DAPSANG	237
--	-----

CHAPTER LVII

ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD	248
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LVIII

FORTY DEGREES BELOW ZERO	258
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LIX

IN THE SNOW	267
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER LX

	PAGE
DEATH OF THE LAST VETERAN	272

CHAPTER LXI

THIRTY DAYS OF STORM	282
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LXII

ADVENTURES OF OURSELVES AND PUPPY IN NAGRONG	292
--	-----

CHAPTER LXIII

THROUGH THE HIGHLANDS OF BONGBA	302
---	-----

CHAPTER LXIV

TSONGPUN TASHI	313
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LXV

BUPTSANG-TSANGPO, ONE OF THE LARGEST RIVERS OF THE HEART OF TIBET	321
--	-----

CHAPTER LXVI

IN THE ROBBERS' PARADISE	332
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LXVII

APRIL 24	343
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER LXVIII

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF SAKA	353
---	-----

CONTENTS

ix

CHAPTER LXIX

	PAGE
KAMBA TSE NAM, FATHER OF THE ROBBERS	364

CHAPTER LXX

THE SEVENTH CROSSING OF THE TRANS-HIMALAYA—TO THE HEAVENLY LAKE OF THE THRONE MOUNTAIN	374
---	-----

CHAPTER LXXI

ANOTHER JOURNEY ACROSS THE WHITE PATCH	385
--	-----

CHAPTER LXXII

THE LAST DAYS IN UNKNOWN COUNTRY	395 .
--	-------

CHAPTER LXXIII

THE TRANS-HIMALAYA	401
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LXXIV

SIMLA	415
-----------------	-----

INDEX	425
-----------------	-----

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
189. Sven Hedin	<i>Frontispiece</i>
190. Hermit's Grotto near the Chang-la-Pod-la	12
191. Robert and Rabsang by the Ice on the Way to the Chang-la-Pod-la	18
192. A Lhadse decked with Mani-Stones and Prayer-Streamers	18
193, 194. Nomads south of Targo-gangri	24
195. Mendicant Lama blowing on a Human Bone	24
196. Tibetan Boy	24
197. Kubi-gangri from Camp 201	26
198. Targo-gangri from a Hill near Camp 150	26
199. The Chomo-uchong Group from the Kinchen-la, May 23, 1907	26
200. Lundup's Squadron. To the left a part of Targo-gangri. Camp 150	28
201. Lundup (on horseback to the left) and his Retinue prevent me from proceeding to the Dangra-yum-tso	30
202, 203, 204. Targo-gangri from the South	32
205. The Shuru-tso, with Targo-gangri in the Background	34
206. On the Upper Raga-tsangpo	36
207. Angden-la	36
208. Chomo-uchong from the east	36
209, 210. Angden-la, a Pass on the Trans-Himalaya	38
211. Manis on the Way to the Angden-la	40
212. Chomo-uchong from Lamlung-la	44
213. Panorama from the Ta-la. The Brahmaputra Valley and the Himalayas in the Background	44

	PAGE
214. Beggar at Tashi-gembe	50
215. Young Tibetan at the Mouth of the Chaktak-tsangpo	50
216. Wandering Lama with a Wooden Glove in his Hand, such as is used to protect the Hands in the Prostration Pilgrimage round the Holy Mountain Kailas	50
217. The Corpse of Muhamed Isa	54
218. Muhamed Isa's Funeral Procession	56
219, 220, 221. The Interment of Muhamed Isa	58
222. Woman at the Mouth of the Chaktak-tsangpo in the Tsangpo	64
223. Tibetan of Saka	64
224. Lama in Saka-dzong	64
225, 226, 227, 228. Tibetan Boys and Girls of Saka- and Tradum	70
229. Woman of Nyuku	74
230. Two Tibetans	74
231. The Gova of Tuksum	74
232. Girl at Pasa-guk	74
233. View from the Kore-la towards the south-west	78
234. Gulam Razul's Tents in Gartok	82
235. Landscape in Upper Nepal	82
236. A Chhorten in Nepal	84
237. Group of Tibetan Women	84
238. Women in the Village of Namla	88
239. Inhabitants of the Village of Namla	88
240. Lama in my Boat	92
241. Loading the Boat with Boxes on crossing the Brahmaputra	92
242. Panorama of Kubi-gangri and the Langta-chen Glacier, with the Source of the Brahmaputra (from a height of 16,453 feet, July 13, 1907)	102
243, 244, 245. The Mountains at the Source of the Brahmaputra	106
246. Tibetans on the Bank of the Soma-tsangpo	110
247. Group of Natives of Langmar	110
248. Robert in the Boat	118
249. Sheep-shearing at Tugu-gompa on Manasarowar	124


ILLUSTRATIONS

	xiii
	PAGE
250. The God of the Lake rising from Tso-mavang	130
251. Temple Hall of the Lake-God of Tso-mavang	134
252. Chenresi's Image in Tugu-gompa	134
253. The Lhakang Hall in Tugu-gompa	138
254. Lama with Prayer-Drum	140
255. Lama before the Temple Door in Tugu-gompa	140
256. Yanggo-gompa	146
257. Interior of the Temple, Tugu	146
258. A Dreamer. Lama in Yanggo-gompa on Manasarowar	148
259. The old Nun in Yanggo-gompa	150
260. The Holy Lake Manasarowar from Tugu-gompa, with Kailas- in the Background <i>Coloured</i>	152
261. Boy on the Upper Tsangpo	162
262. The young Prior of Langbo-nan	162
263. Temple Vessels in Chiu-gompa	166
264. Two Children in Shigatse	166
265. Kailas behind Nyandi-gompa	170
266. My Pack-Sheep	170
267. Part of Kailas	174
268. Kailas from Diri-pu	182
269. Confluence of the Two Arms of the Indus	182
270. Tibetan Female Pilgrims at Kailas	188
271. The Gova by whose help the Source of the Indus was discovered (seated) and Tibetans at Kailas	194
272. Gulam Razul beside Bales of Chinese Brick-Tea	198
273. Tibetan Tent	202
274. Monastery of Gar-gunsa	202
275. Images at Chushut	202
276. The Policemen from Simla	206
277. My Boat on the Indus	206
278. Ladaki Women	206
279, 280, 281. At the Monastery Door in Tashi-gang between Gartok and Ladak	210
282. Dancing Women in Chushut, a Village on my Way back to Ladak	210

	PAGE
283. Old Woman	216
284. Lama in Chushut	216
285. On the Way to Fankse	220
286. In the Indus Valley on the Way to Ladak	220
287. The new Horses and Mules at Drugub	220
288. Robert in Winter Dress	224
289. Abdul Kerim, the new Caravan Leader	226
290, 291, 292. Lobsang, Gulam, Kutus — my last trusty Followers	228
293. Beggars	230
294. Abdul Kerim's new Tent	230
295. My Brown Puppy with my Cook, Tsering	234
296, 297, 298. My White Ladaki Horse	234
299. Panorama from Camp 422, Bongba	238
300. Panorama from Camp 277, Shyok Valley	238
301. View from Camp 307 <i>Coloured</i>	258
302. The small salt Lake south of Camp 309 <i>Coloured</i>	258
303. Horses going to drink at the Lake near Camp 310. Abdul Kerim on the left <i>Coloured</i>	258
304. Mountain north-east of Camp 310; the freshwater Lake in the Foreground <i>Coloured</i>	258
305. Storm Clouds over the Snowy Mountains south of Camp 312 <i>Coloured</i>	258
306. Camp 307	262
307. Camp 333. The Beginning of a Storm	262
308. Camp 335. Lemchung-tso, looking east	262
309. Camp 401. Kanchung-gangri from the north	262
310. My Dying Pony	264
311. Lost beyond Recovery	268
312. "If this continues a few days longer, we are lost"	270
313, 314, 315, 316, 317. Panoramas from the Camps 318, 333, 335, 359, 360; in the last two, Sha-kangsham	284
318. The Author as a Shepherd	298
319, 320, 321. The Summits of Lunpo-gangri from Camps 379, 381, and 383	326

ILLUSTRATIONS

	xv
	PAGE
322. Wrestling	332
323. Two Guides	332
324. Boy with Hat	332
325. Shepherd Boy	332
326. Sonam Ngurbu, Chief of the Chokchu Province	334
327. Dorche Tsuen, Governor of the Saka Province	334
328. Man with a singular Cap, in Sonam Ngurbu's Escort	334
329. Tagla Tsering, the Chief who refused to let me go to the Dangra-yum-tso	334
330. Travelling Ladaki Merchant in West Tibet	340
331. Oang Gye, Son of the Governor of Saka	340
332. Panchor, the Yak-slayer, my Guide on the Journey to the Teri-nam-tso	340
333. Woman of Yumba-matsen	340
334. Tibetans with Yaks	344
335. Dorche Tsuen on the March	344
336. Farewell Entertainment for the Tibetans on May 5, 1908	348
337, 338, 339, 340. The Dancers at the Camp-fire: Tubges, Kunchuk, Suen	350
341. Inner Court of Selipuk	354
342. Dorche Tsuen and Ngavang on Horseback	354
343. The Author in Tibetan Dress	358
344, 345. Soldiers of the Garrison of Saka-dzong, belonging to our Escort	360
346. Armed Tibetan from the Country between the Teri-nam-tso and the Dangra-yum-tso	360
347. Boy with small Gun on the southern Shore of the Teri-nam- tso	360
348. Trooper of the Escort	364
349. Tibetan of Teri-nam-tso	364
350. Young Shepherd of Bongba	364
351. Guests at the Opening of my Tent on the Bank of the Teri- nam-tso	366
352. The Yaks fording the River Soma-tsangpo	366

	PAGE
353. Nima Tashi, Commander of the Government Escort on the way to the Teri-nam-tso	<i>Coloured</i> 368
354. Nuns of Mendong	<i>Coloured</i> 368
355. A High Lama of Chokchu	<i>Coloured</i> 368
356. The Prior of Selipuk	<i>Coloured</i> 368
357. Two Lamas of Mendong	370
358. My Sheep crossing the River Soma-tsangpo	370
359. Village below Lunkar-gompa on the Tarok-tso	<i>Coloured</i> 374
360. Mendong Monastery west of the Teri-nam-tso	<i>Coloured</i> 374
361. Selipuk Monastery south-west of the Nganglaring-tso	<i>Coloured</i> 374
362. Holiday Costumes and Ornaments of Tibetan Women of Kyangrang in the Trans-Himalaya	<i>Coloured</i> 374
363. Crossing the Kangsham River	376
364. The Village of Lunkar	378
365. Group of Tibetans at the Teri-nam-tso	378
366. The Village of Lunkar from the Temple Hill	382
367. The southern Shore of Manasarowar with grazing Yaks	382
368. Lunkar-gompa	386
	386
370. The Trans-Himalaya from Abuk-la	388
371. Storm over the Trans-Himalaya	388
372. Sonam Ngurbu and his Followers on Horseback	392
373. Some of our Horses on the Way to Kamba Tsenam's Tent	392
374. Lama of Chokchu taking leave of the Prior of Selipuk	396
375. Lama of Chokchu on Horseback	396
376, 377. Boys sitting	398
378. Young Lama	398
379. Old Woman	398
380. Colonel T. G. Montgomerie	404
381. Abbé Huc	404
382. Altar Table with Images of Gods in Mangnang-gompa	<i>Coloured</i> 406
383. The Author in Tibetan Costume at the Mission Station in Poo	408

ILLUSTRATIONS

xvii

	PAGE
384. The last Members of the last Expedition in Poo . . .	412
385. My Puppy	416
386. Takkar in his new Home with the Missionaries in Poo . . .	416
387. Simla	418
388. The last Members of the Expedition at the Entrance of the Viceregal Lodge in Simla	420

MAPS

8. The Sources of the Brahmaputra, Sutlej, and Indus.
9. A Map of the Trans-Himalaya by Dr. Sven Hedin.
10. A Map of Tibet showing Dr. Sven Hedin's Routes 1906-1908.

(At end of Volume.)

CHAPTER XXXV

IMMURED MONKS

WE had heard of a lama who had lived for the last three years in a cave in the valley above the monastery of Linga, and though I knew that I should not be allowed to see either the monk or the interior of his ghastly dwelling, I would not miss the opportunity of at least gaining some slight notion of how he was housed.

On April 16, 1907, eighteen months to a day after I had left Stockholm, dreary windy weather prevailed, with thickly falling snow and dense clouds. We rode up to Linga, past rows of fine *chhortens*, left the last dormitories behind us, saw an old tree-trunk painted white and red, passed a small pool with crystal-clear spring water thinly frozen over, and heaps of *mani* stones with streamer poles, and then arrived at the small convent Samde-puk, built on the very point of a spur between two side valleys. It is affiliated to the Linga monastery, and has only four brethren, who all came to greet me heartily at the entrance.

It is a miniature copy, outwardly and inwardly, of those we have seen before. The *dukang* has only three pillars and one divan for the four monks, who read the mass together, nine prayer-cylinders of medium size which are set in motion by leathern straps, a drum and a gong, two masks with diadems of skulls, and a row of idols, among which may be recognized several copies of Chenresi and Sekiya Kōngma, the chief abbot of Sekiya.

A few steps to the south-west we passed over a sheet of schist with two stone huts at its foot containing brushwood and twigs for burning. In Samde-pu-pe were two

small temples with altars of mud. In one of them were idols of medium size and sea shells, and before them incense smouldered, not in the usual form of sticks, but in powder. It was strewn in a zigzag line, was lighted at one end, and allowed to smoulder away to the other. Within was a statue of Lovun with two lights before it, and a shelf with writings called Chöna. Rain water had percolated in and formed white vertical channels in the plaster, and under the ceiling *kadakhs* and draperies fluttered in the draught. Here the mice were less disturbed than in the ghostly castle Pesu.

Close at hand at the foot of the mountain is the hermitage, *dupkang*, in which a hermit spends his days and years. It is built over a spring which bubbles up in the centre of the single room, a square apartment with each side five paces long. The walls are very thick, and are in one solid mass, unbroken by windows. The doorway is very low, and the wooden door is shut and locked; but that is not enough, so a wall of large blocks and smaller stones has been built before the door, and even the smallest interstices between them have been carefully filled up with pebbles. Not an inch of the door can be seen. But beside the entrance is a tiny tunnel through which the hermit's food can be pushed in. The amount of daylight which can penetrate through the long narrow loophole must be very small; and it does not shine in direct, for the front of the hut is shut in by a wall, forming a small court, which only the monk who brings the anchorite his daily ration may enter. A small chimney rises from the flat roof, for the hermit may make himself tea every sixth day, and for this purpose some sticks of firewood are pushed through the loophole twice in the month. Through the chimney, too, a feeble light may fall, and by means of these two vents the air is renewed in the cell.

"What is the name of the lama who is now walled up in this cell?" I asked.

"He has no name, and even if we knew it we durst not utter it. We call him merely the Lama Rinpoche" (according to Köppen, lama means *quo nemo est superior*,

one who has no one over him ; and Rinpoche means gem, jewel, holiness).

“ Where has he come from ? ”

“ He was born in Ngor in Naktsang.”

“ Has he relations ? ”

“ That we do not know ; and if he has any, they do not know that he is here.”

“ How long has he lived in the darkness ? ”

“ It is now three years since he went in.”

“ And how long will he remain there ? ”

“ Until he dies.”

“ May he never come out again into the daylight before his death ? ”

“ No ; he has taken the strictest of all oaths, namely, the sacred vow only to leave the cell as a corpse.”

“ How old is he ? ”

“ We do not know his age, but he looked about forty.”

“ But what happens if he is ill ? Cannot he get help ? ”

“ No ; he may never speak to another human being. If he falls ill he must wait patiently till he is better again or dies.”

“ You never know, then, how he is ? ”

“ Not before his death. A bowl of *tsamba* is pushed every day into the opening, and a piece of tea and a piece of butter every sixth day ; this he takes at night, and puts back the empty bowl to be filled for the next meal. When we find the bowl untouched in the opening we know that the immured man is unwell. If he has not touched the *tsamba* the next day our fears increase ; and if six days pass and the food is not taken, we conclude he is dead and break open the entrance.”

“ Has that ever happened ? ”

“ Yes ; three years ago a lama died, who had spent twelve years in there, and fifteen years ago one died who had lived forty years in solitude and entered the darkness at the age of twenty. No doubt the Bombo has heard in Tong of the lama who lived in the hermitage of the monastery Lung-ganden-gompa for sixty-nine years, completely shut off from the world and the light of day.”

“ But is it not possible that the prisoner may speak to

the monk who pushes the *tsamba* dish into the loophole? There is no witness present to see that all is correct."

"That could never happen and is not allowed," answered my informant with a smile; "for the monk outside would be eternally damned were he to set his mouth to the loophole and try to talk to the recluse, and the latter would break the charm if he spoke from within. If the man in there were to speak now, the three years he has passed there already would not be put down to his credit, and he would not like that. If, however, a lama in Linga or Samde-puk falls ill, he may write his complaint and a request for the anchorite's intercession on a piece of paper, which is placed in the *tsamba* bowl and pushed into the opening. Then the recluse prays for the sick man, and if the latter has faith in the power of prayer, and holds no unseemly conversation in the meantime, the intercession of the Lama Rinpoche takes effect after two days and the patient gets well again. On the other hand, the recluse never makes any communication in writing."

"We are now only a couple of paces from him. Does he not hear what we are saying, or, at least, that some one is talking outside his den?"

"No, the sound of our voices cannot reach him, the walls are too thick; and even if it were the case, he would not notice it, for he is buried in contemplation. He no longer belongs to this world; he probably crouches day and night in a corner, repeating prayers he knows by heart, or reading in the holy books he has with him."

"Then he must have enough light to read by?"

"Yes, a small butter lamp stands on a shelf before two images, and its light suffices him. When the lamp goes out it is pitch-dark inside."

Filled with strange thoughts, I took leave of the monk and went slowly down the path which the recluse had only passed along once in his life. Before us was the splendid view which might never delight his eyes. When I had descended to the camp I could not look up the monastery valley without thinking of the unfortunate man sitting up there in his dark hole.

Poor, nameless, unknown to any one, he came to Linga,

where, he had heard, a cave-dwelling stood vacant, and informed the monks that he had taken the vow to enter for ever into darkness. When his last day in this world of vanity dawned, all the monks of Linga followed him in deep silence, with the solemnity of a funeral, to his grave in the cave, and the door was closed on him for the rest of his life. I could picture to myself the remarkable procession, the monks in their red frocks, silent and grave, bending their bodies forward and turning their eyes to the ground, and walking slowly step by step as though they would let the victim enjoy the sun and light as long as possible. Were they inspired with admiration of his tremendous fortitude, compared with which everything I can conceive, even dangers infallibly leading to death, seems to me insignificant? For, as far as I can judge, less fortitude is required when a hero, like Hirose, blockades the entrance of Port Arthur, knowing that the batteries above will annihilate him, than to allow oneself to be buried alive in the darkness for forty or sixty years. In the former case the suffering is short, the glory eternal; in the latter the victim is as unknown after death as in his lifetime, and the torture is endless, and can only be borne by a patience of which we can have no conception.

No doubt the monks escorted him with the same tenderness and the same sympathy as the priest feels when he attends a criminal to execution. But what can have been his own feelings during this last progress in the world. We all have to pass along this road, but we do not know when. But he knew, and he knew that the sun would never again shine warmly on his shoulders and would never produce lights and shadows on the heaven-kissing mountains around the grave that awaited him.

Now they have reached their destination and the door of the tomb stands open. They enter in, spread a mat of interlaced strips of cloth in a corner, set up the images of the gods, and lay the holy books in their place; in one corner they place a wooden frame like those go-carts in which infants learn to walk, and which he will not use till death comes upon him. They take their seats and recite prayers, not the usual prayers for the dead, but others which deal

with the glorified light and life of Nirvana. They rise, bid him farewell, go out and close the door. Now he is alone and will never hear the sound of a human voice except his own, and when he says his prayers no one will be there to hear him.

What were his thoughts when the others had gone, and the short hollow echo had died away of the noise he heard when the door was shut for the last time, only to be opened again when he was a corpse? Perhaps something like what Fröding has expressed in his verse :

Here breaks the soul from every bond
That fetters to this life its pinion ;
Here starts the way to the dark beyond,
The land of eternal oblivion.

He hears the brethren rolling the heavy stones to the door with levers, piling them up one on another in several layers, and filling up all chinks with smaller stones and fragments. It is not yet quite dark, for there are crevices in the door, and daylight is still visible at the upper edge. But the wall rises. At length there is only a tiny opening through which the last beam falls into the interior of his tomb. Does he become desperate; does he jump up, thrust his hands against the door and try to catch one more glimpse of the sun, which in another moment will vanish from his sight for ever? No one knows and no one will ever know; not even the monks who were present and helped to block up the entrance can answer this question. But he is but a man and he saw how a flagstone was fitted over the hole through which a last ray of daylight fell; and now he has darkness before him, and wherever he turns there is impenetrable darkness.

He assumes that the other monks have gone down again to Samde-puk and Linga. How shall he pass the evening. He need not begin at once to read his holy books; there is plenty of time for that, perhaps forty years. He sits on the mat and leans his head against the wall. Now all his reminiscences come with great distinctness into his mind. He remembers the gigantic characters in the quartzite, "Om mani padme hum," and

he murmurs half dreaming the holy syllables, "Oh! thou jewel in the lotus. Amen!" But only a feeble echo answers him. He waits and listens, and then hearkens to the voices of his memory. He wonders whether the first night is falling, but it cannot be darker than it is already in his prison, his grave. Overcome by the travail of his soul, he sleeps, tired and weary, in his corner.

When he awakes, he feels hungry, crawls to the opening and finds the bowl of *tsamba* in the tunnel. With water from the spring he prepares his meal, eats it, and, when he has finished, puts the bowl in the loophole again. Then he sits cross-legged, his rosary in his hands, and prays. One day he finds tea and butter in the bowl and some sticks beside it. He feels about with his hands and finds the flint, and steel, and the tinder, and kindles a small fire under the tea-can. By the light of the flame he sees the interior of his den again, lights the lamp before the images, and begins to read his books; but the fire goes out and six days must pass before he gets tea again.

The days pass and now comes autumn with its heavy rains; he hears them not, but the walls of his den seem to be moister than usual. It seems to him a long time since he saw the sun and the daylight for the last time. And years slip by and his memory grows weak and hazy. He has read the books he brought with him again and again, and he cares no more for them; he crouches in his corner and murmurs their contents, which he has long known by heart. He lets the beads of his rosary slip through his fingers mechanically, and stretches out his hand for the *tsamba* bowl unconsciously. He crawls along the walls feeling the cold stones with his hands, if haply he may find a chink through which a ray of light can pass. No, he hardly knows now what it is like outside on sunny paths. How slowly time passes! Only in sleep does he forget his existence and escape from the hopelessness of the present. And he thinks: "What is a short earthly life in darkness compared to the glorious light of eternity?" The sojourn in darkness is only a preparation. Through days and nights and long years of solitude the pondering monk seeks the answer to the riddle of life and the riddle

of death, and clings to the belief that he will live again in a glorified form of existence when his period of trial is over. It is faith alone which can explain his inconceivable fortitude of mind.

It is difficult to picture to oneself the changes through which the lama passes during successive decades in the darkness of his cell. His sight must become weak, perhaps be extinguished altogether. His muscles shrink, his senses become more and more clouded. Longing for the light cannot pursue him as a fixed idea, for it is in his power to write down his decision to curtail his time of trial, and return to the light, on one of the leaves of his books with a splinter dipped in soot. He has only to place such a paper in the empty *tsamba* bowl. But the monks had never known a case of the kind. They only knew that the lama who had been walled in for sixty-nine years had wished to see the sun again before he died. I had heard from monks who were in Tong at the time that he had written down his wish to be let out. He was all bent up together and as small as a child, and his body was nothing but a light-grey parchment-like skin and bones. His eyes had lost their colour, were quite bright and blind. His hair hung round his head in uncombed matted locks and was pure white. His body was covered only by a rag, for time had eaten away his clothing and he had received no new garments. He had a thin unkempt beard, and had never washed himself all the time or cut his nails. Of the monks who sixty-nine years before had conducted him to his cell, not one survived. He was then quite young himself, but all his contemporaries had been removed by death, and new generations of monks had passed through the cloisters; he was a complete stranger to them all. And he had scarcely been carried out into the sunlight when he too gave up the ghost.

In analysing the state of such a soul, fancy has free play, for we know nothing about it. Waddell and Landon, who took part in Younghusband's expedition to Lhasa, and visited the hermits' caves at Nyang-tö-ki-pu, say that the monks who have there retired into perpetual darkness first underwent shorter experiences of isolation, the first

lasting six months, and the second three years and ninety-three days, and that those who had passed through the second period of trial showed signs that they were intellectually inferior to other monks. The cases which the two Englishmen have described seem not to have been so severe a trial as the one I saw and heard about in Linga, for in the Nyang-tö-ki-pu caves the lama who waited on the recluse tapped on a stone slab which closed the small opening, and at this signal the immured lama put his hand out of this door for his food; he immediately drew the stone shutter to again, but in this way he would at least see the light of the sun for a moment every day. In the cases described by Waddell and Landon the immured monks had passed some twenty years in confinement. Waddell, who has a thorough knowledge of Lamaism, believes that the custom of seclusion for life is only an imitation of the practice of pure Indian Buddhism, which enjoins periodical retreats from the world for the purpose of self-examination and of acquiring greater clearness in abstruse questions. In his opinion the Tibetans have made an end of the means.

Undoubtedly this opinion is correct, but it is not exhaustive. It may be that the future hermit has in religious delusion come to the decision to allow himself to be buried alive. But does he clearly conceive what this means? If he became dull and insensible like an animal in his cell, all his energy and his power of will would be deadened, and what seemed to him, when he entered, to be worth striving for, would gradually become more and more indifferent to him. But this is not the case, for he adheres firmly to his decision, and therefore his energy must remain unimpaired. He must possess a steadfast faith, an immovable conviction, which is exposed to a harder trial because he is alone and death alone can visit him in his cave. Possibly he becomes by degrees a victim of self-delusion, so that his longing for the last hour in the long night of his den gives place to the feeling that he is always at the moment when the hour-glass of time has run down. He must have lost all idea of time, and the darkness of the grave appears to him only as a second in

eternity. For the means he formerly had of marking the flight of time and impressing it on his memory no longer exist. The changes from winter to summer, from day to night, are only made known to him by the rise or fall of the temperature in his den. He remembers that several rainy seasons have passed by, and perhaps they seem to him to follow closely on one another while his brain is clouded by monotony. It is inconceivable that he does not become insane, that he does not call out for the light, that he does not jump up and run his head against the wall in the agony of despair, or beat it against the sharp edges of the stones till he bleeds to death and frees himself by committing suicide.

But he waits patiently for death, and death may delay its coming for ten or twenty years. His remembrance of the world and life outside his cell becomes fainter and fainter; he has long forgotten the dawn in the east and the golden clouds of sunset; and when he looks up his dimmed eyes perceive no stars twinkling in the night, only the black ceiling of his cave. At last, however, after long years have passed in the darkness, suddenly a great brilliancy flashes out—that is, when Death comes, takes him by the hand, and leads him out. And Death has not to wait, entreat, and coax, for the lama has waited and longed for his welcome and only guest and deliverer. If he has had his mind still clear, he has taken the little wooden stand under his arms so that he may die in the same sacred position in which Buddha is represented in all the thousands of statues and pictures which have come under our notice in our wanderings through the cloister temples of Tibet.

When the *tsamba* bowl, which has been filled daily for so many long years, remains at last untouched and the six days have expired, the cave is opened and the abbot of the monastery sits down beside the deceased and prays for him, while all the other monks pray in the *dukang* hall for five or six days together. Then the body is wrapped in a white garment, a covering called *ringa* is placed on his head, and he is burned on a pyre. The ashes are collected, kneaded together with clay, and moulded into a small pyramid, which is deposited in a *chhorten*.

The Linga monks said that an ordinary lama, when he dies, is cut in pieces and abandoned to the birds. This process is performed here by five lamas, who, though they belong to the monastery, attend the service in the *dukang*, and drink tea with the other monks, are still considered unclean, and may not eat with the other brethren. Also when nomads die in the neighbourhood, their services are required, but then the relatives are bound to provide them with horses and to undertake that the property of the deceased shall pass into the possession of the monastery.

For days and weeks I could not drive away the picture I had formed in my mind of the Lama Rinpoche, before whose cell we had stood and talked. And still less could I could forget his predecessor, who had lived there forty years. I fancied I could hear the conch which summoned the monks to the funeral mass of the departed. I pictured to myself the scene in the cave where the lama, crouching in rags on the floor, stretches out his withered hands to Death, who, kindly smiling like the skull masks in the temples, gives him one hand while he holds a brightly burning lamp in the other. The features of the monk are transfigured in a reflexion of Nirvana, and forgetting the "Om mani padme hum" that for tens of years has reverberated from the walls of his den, he raises, as the trumpet blasts sound out from the temple roof, a song of victory, which calls to mind the following strophe from the myths of another people (*Frithiof's Saga*, Blackley's translation):

Hail, ye deities bright !
 Ye Valhalla sons !
 Earth fadeth away ; to the heavenly feast
 Glad trumpets invite
 Me, and blessedness crowns,
 As fair, as with gold helm, your hastening guest.