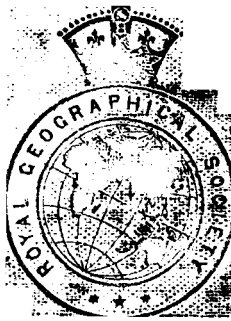
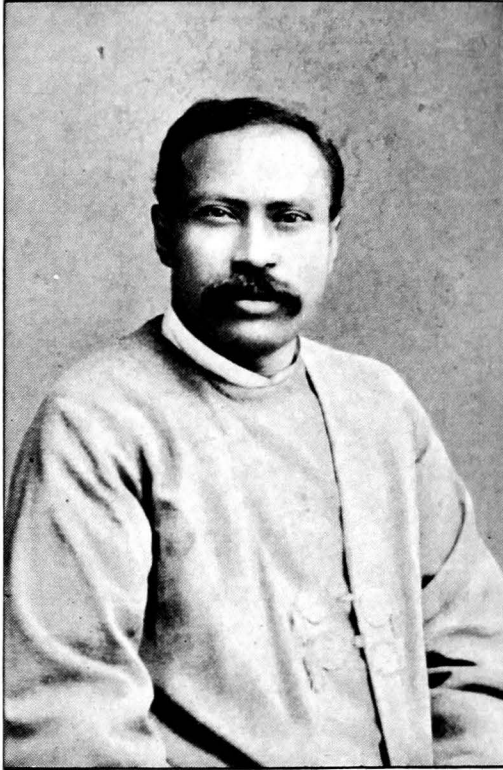


JOURNEY TO LHASA
AND
CENTRAL TIBET



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SARAT CHANDRA DAS, C.I.E.



JOURNEY
TO
LHASA AND CENTRAL TIBET.

BY
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INTRODUCTION.

SARAT CHANDRA DAS was born in the town of Chittagong, in Eastern Bengal, in 1849, in a Hindu family of the *vaidya* , or medical caste. He received his education in the Presidency College at Calcutta, where he became favourably known to Sir Alfred Croft, the present Director of Public Instruction of Bengal, who ever since has been his friend and guide in his geographical and literary work, and by whose representations to the Indian Government it became possible for him to perform his important journeys into Tibet.

While still in the engineering department of the college he was appointed in 1874 head master of the Bhutia Boarding School, just opened at Darjiling by order of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir George Campbell. Sarat Chandra at once applied himself with characteristic energy to the study of the Tibetan language, and established friendly relations with the Raja of Sikkim and many of the leading lamas in that country, to which he made several short trips in the succeeding years.

In 1878, lama Ugyen-gyatso, who was attached to his school as Tibetan teacher, was sent to Tashilhunpo and Lhasa with tribute from his monastery, and advantage was taken of this opportunity to ascertain whether permission could not be obtained from the Tibetan authorities for Sarat Chandra to visit Tibet. The lama was so fortunate as to obtain from the Prime Minister of the Panchen rinpoche of Tashilhunpo an invitation for Sarat Chandra to visit that great centre of lamaist learning, of which George Bogle and Samuel Turner have left us such interesting descriptions; and, so as further to insure his safety and justify his presence in the country in the eyes of the suspicious lamas and Chinese, the Minister had the Babu's name entered as a student of theology in the Grand Monastery of that

place. A passport was also brought Sarat Chandra by the lama, issued to him by the Prime Minister, by which a choice of roads to enter Tibet was given him, and his safe conduct insured to Shigatse.

Armed with these credentials, Sarat Chandra set out for Tashilhunpo in June, 1879, accompanied by lama Ugyen-gyatso, and there he remained for nearly six months, the guest of the Prime Minister, with whose assistance he was able to make a careful examination of the rich collections of books in the great libraries of the convent, bringing back with him to India a large and valuable collection of works in Sanskrit and Tibetan. He also explored during this journey the country north and north-east of Kanchanjinga, of which nothing was previously known, noting with great care observations of bearing and distances. Not the least valuable result of this journey was, however, the friendly relations which the traveller was able to establish with the liberal and powerful Prime Minister, who, deeply interested in western civilization and its wonderful discoveries, of which he had learned much from the mouth of Sarat Chandra, requested him to come back again to Tashilhunpo, to instruct him further in the wonders of the west.

An account of this first journey was printed by the Bengal Government some time after the author's return, with a prefatory note by the traveller's friend, Sir Alfred Croft. As the route therein described is the same as that followed by the traveller in his second and more extended journey of 1881-82, and as the results of his studies in Tibet in 1879, as shown in this report, bear nearly exclusively on historical and religious subjects, it has been deemed advisable to omit it from the present publication, embodying in footnotes all such details as have been found in it bearing on the geography and ethnology of Tibet, and which are not in the later and fuller report.

The year 1880 was passed by Sarat Chandra at his home in Darjiling, working on papers on the history, religion, ethnology, and folk-lore of Tibet, drawn from the data collected during his journey. These papers, most of them of great value to Oriental students, have since appeared in the *Journal* of the Bengal Asiatic Society and in that of the Buddhist Text Society of India, which Sarat Chandra founded in 1892, and of which he has since remained the secretary.

In November, 1881, in fulfilment of the promise previously made to the Prime Minister of the Panchen rinpoche, Sarat Chandra started on his second journey to Tibet, again accompanied by Ugyenyatso, who acted as secretary, collector, and surveyor, though much of the later work, including the extremely important survey of Lake Palti (Yamdo tso), was done by the traveller himself. Sarat Chandra again established his headquarters at Tashilhunpo, whence he made various excursions along both banks of the great Tsangpo, from Sakya in the west to Samye and Tse-tang in the east. He was also so fortunate as to be able to make a short visit to Lhasa, which had only been done twice by native explorers prior to his time, once in 1866 by Nain Singh, and again in 1880 by Kishen Singh, the latter making a detailed map of the whole city and its environs. He was present at an audience of the Tale lama, and visited a number of the important monuments of the city; but for various reasons, especially of a prudential nature, he was prevented from seeing many places of great interest in and around the city; but his valuable notes are a most important addition to the descriptions left us by previous travellers.

After this brief visit to the capital of Tibet, Sarat Chandra explored the valley of the Yalung, where Tibetan civilization is said to have first made its appearance, gathering everywhere, with the usual thoroughness which distinguishes his work, valuable information concerning each locality traversed. In January, 1883, he re-entered India after an absence of about fourteen months.

The report of this journey was printed in two separate publications by order of the Government of Bengal. They are entitled, "Narrative of a Journey to Lhasa," and "Narrative of a Journey Round Lake Palti (Yamdok), and in Lhokha, Yarlung, and Sakya." For various reasons these reports were kept as strictly confidential documents by the Indian Government until about 1890, when selections from them, bearing exclusively upon the ethnology of Tibet, however, appeared in an article in the July number of the *Contemporary Review*, and five years later further extracts from them were published in the August number of the *Nineteenth Century*. It is these reports which, with only such slight modifications as have

seemed absolutely necessary to make the narrative connected, are published in the present volume.

In 1885, when the Government of India contemplated sending a mission to Tibet, and the late Honourable Colman Macauley was sent by it to Peking to obtain the necessary authorization of the Chinese Government to the projected embassy, Sarat Chandra accompanied him to the Chinese capital, where he remained several months in the early part of the year. It was during this visit to Peking that I became acquainted with the Babu, to whom I felt strongly drawn by my lifelong interest in Tibetan studies. Sarat Chandra lived, while at Peking, in the lamasery outside the An-ting gate, known as the Hsi Huang ssu, and in which all Tibetan traders stop when at Peking. He wore the dress common to lamas in China, and was always called the "Ka-che lama," or "the lama from Kashmir." His knowledge of Tibetan, his extensive travels, and his courteous manners gained for him the friendship of many of the lamas, among others of the Chang-chia Hutuketu, the Metropolitan of the lama church in China. Had the mission ever been sent to Tibet, it was understood that Sarat Chandra was to accompany it, and he would have rendered it valuable service; but the project was abandoned, and since then the Babu has bent all his energies to the publication of Tibetan texts and to the preparation of other works on Buddhism while living in Darjiling, where he holds the position of Tibetan translator to the Government of Bengal.

The services he rendered Mr. Macauley while in Peking were deemed, however, of such value by the Indian Government, that on his return to Bengal he was given the title of Rai Bahadur, and created a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire, and in 1887 the Royal Geographical Society awarded him the "Back Premium" for his geographical researches.

The amount of literary work accomplished by Sarat Chandra since his return from Tibet in 1883 is enormous in bulk, and its value to students cannot be over-estimated. He brought back with him from his travels over two hundred volumes, manuscripts or block-prints, obtained from the great libraries in Tibet, a number of them in Sanskrit, and for many centuries past lost in India. From these

sources he has drawn for the preparation of the valuable papers which he has since published, a list of which would occupy several pages. Besides a large number of translations into English of Tibetan texts, he has edited in Sanskrit for the 'Bibliotheca Indica' Kshemendra's poem, entitled "Avadana Kalpalata," which he was so fortunate as to discover in Lhasa, and in Tibetan an historical work of great value, another giving the history of the pre-Buddhist or Bon religion of Tibet, a very valuable native grammatical work, and others too numerous to mention. He is now engaged, and has well on through the press, a Tibetan-English dictionary, which, he tells me, will be of about two thousand pages, exclusive of a Sanskrit-English appendix of Buddhist terms.

This brief notice of Sarat Chandra's literary work will suffice, however, to show that his labours in this field are as important as those which he has rendered to geography. Personally, I am under a lasting debt of gratitude to him for the valuable information which he gave me while in Peking, and which was later on of great use to me during my explorations in Tibet, and I hold myself particularly fortunate in having been chosen by the Royal Geographical Society to edit his reports, as it is a means of publicly expressing my indebtedness to him, and also, I trust, of helping him to take the place he so justly deserves beside Csoma de Koros, as one of the greatest pioneers of exploration and discovery in Tibet.

This introductory note would not be complete if further reference were not made to the Babu's faithful companion and assistant in his two journeys to Tibet, lama Ugyen-gyatso. The lama, who is a Tibetan from Sikkim and connected with the reigning family of that State, was born in 1851 at Yangang, and at the age of ten entered the lamasery of Pema-yangtse, where he took the usual course of monastic studies for twelve years. In 1873 he visited, for the first time, Darjiling in the suite of the Raja of Sikkim, and a little later on in the same year he was designated by that Prince, and at the request of the Deputy-Commissioner, Mr. Edgar, to fill the post of Tibetan teacher at the Bhutia school at Darjiling, which it was proposed to open. For a time the lama was employed in the office of the Deputy-Commissioner, and accompanied that officer on a visit to

Sikkim. In 1874 he entered upon his duties as teacher in the school, and continued there until 1878, when he went to Tibet, as previously noted, to bear tribute from his lamasery to the heads of the church. During the lama's residence at Darjiling he had been instructed in the use of such surveying instruments as it is customary for the trans-frontier surveyors to use, and the accurate work which he did during his various journeys bears witness to the thoroughness with which he was instructed and to his own ability. From this journey of 1878, the lama brought back with him the passport which enabled Chandra Das to make his two journeys to Tibet, in both of which he accompanied him, rendering him everywhere true and valuable service.

The discovery by Sarat Chandra in 1882 of the true dimensions and shape of Lake Palti,* seemed to Sir Alfred Croft so important that in June, 1883, he despatched the lama to cover the same ground in order to check off, verify, and complete the survey of the Babu. This he successfully did, adding only to the latter's work a small portion to the south-east of the lake, but establishing the great accuracy of the previous survey. He also explored the Lhobrak (Manas) valley, and again visited Lhasa, returning to India by way of the Tang la and Chumbi valley, and reaching Darjiling in December of the same year. A report of this work was prepared by Colonel, now Sir Thomas, Holdich, and appeared in the "Report of the Explorations in Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet from 1856 to 1886," which was published in 1889 by the Trigonometrical Survey of India, and is frequently quoted in the notes to the present narrative.

Since then the lama, whose services have been rewarded by the Indian Government with the title of Rai Bahadur, a silver medal and a grant of money, has been employed as chief Tibetan translator to Government, serving in that capacity during the late Sikkim expedition, and has also given valuable assistance to Sarat Chandra in editing Tibetan texts.

W. W. ROCKHILL.

BLOCK ISLAND, U.S.A.,
July 27, 1899.†

* Sarat Chandra has, in honour of Sir Alfred Croft, named the lake Yamdo Croft. See *Journ. Buddh. Text Soc.*, iv. pt. iii. p. iv.

† The publication of this volume has been unavoidably delayed.

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