

An Account of Travels on the Shores of Lake Yamdo-Oroft.—By SARAT
CHANDRA DAS, C.I.E., RAI BAHADUR.

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I.—INTRODUCTION.

1. EARLY ACCOUNTS OF LAKE PALTİ.

In 1730, Orazio Della Penna, a Capuchin missionary, visited this great lake of Tibet and described it as follows :—

“The easternmost place is called Kambala, which is the name of a great mountain, on the slopes of which are many places, and in the plain at the foot to the south is a great lake called Iandro, which is eighteen days' journey round, according to those who have made the circuit, but within are some hilly islands. The same lake has no outlet that I know of, and during a day and a half's march round it, I can vouch that I saw none; while as regards the remaining portion, I have the authority of those who have made its circuit.”

This was the famous ring-like lake of Palti, which has appeared in all maps since the days of D'Anville. The peculiar lake of Palti, Piate, or Yam-dok-chu, with its great central island, like a large ring, first appeared on the map prepared by D'Anville, from the survey of the Lamas, under Jesuit instruction, which was published by Du-Halde in 1735. It has been repeated on all subsequent general maps. Giorgi, in his 'Alphabetum Tibetanum' (1762) says, that Palte lake, otherwise called Jang-so or Yam-dso, according to native report is of very great size, so that a man could not journey round it under eighteen days. It is three days' journey from Lhasa. From the middle of the lake rises a continuous chain of hills and islands. On the southern side is a monastery, the abode of a great queen, who is born a second time, called Torcepano. She is honoured as a real goddess by the Indians and Nepalese, who worship her under the name of Bovani. The Tibetans believe a certain holy spirit is reborn in its divine essence in this hideous female, just as in the Grand Lama. Whenever she issues

from her house, or from the island, or journeys into the city of Lhasa, a procession precedes her. Mr. Bogle, it will be remembered, made the acquaintance of this female divinity; and Dr. Hamilton cured her of an illness, and visited her constantly:—

“The holidays at the new year drew nigh, and the Lama’s relations came from parts of the country to pay their respects to him. His cousin the Teshu-tzay Debo (Tashi-tse Deba), with his wife and family, his nieces, the two *annés* whom I saw at Teshu-tzay, their mother Chum Kusho; their true brothers, Pyn Kushos; and a half-sister Durjay Paumo (Dorje Phamo), a female Lama, who is abbess of monastery near the Piate Lake, and is animated by the spirit of a holy lady who died many hundred years ago. * * * * *

“They stayed about two months at Teshu Lumbo, during which time Mr. Hamilton cured Durjay Paumo and Chum Kusho of complaints which they had long been subject to. * * * * *

“The mother went with me into the apartment of Durjay Paumo, who was attired in a *Gylong’s* dress, her arms bare from the shoulders and sitting cross-legged upon a low cushion. She is also the daughter of the Lama’s brother, but by a different wife. She is about seven-and-twenty, with small Chinese features, delicate, though not regular, fine eyes and teeth; her complexion fair, but wan and sickly; and an expression of langour and melancholy in her countenance, which I believe, is occasioned by the joyless life that she leads. She wears her hair, a privilege granted to no other vestal I have seen; it is combed back without any ornaments, and falls in tresses upon her shoulders. Her *chanea*, like the Lama’s, is supposed to convey a blessing, and I did not fail to receive it. After making presents and obeisances, I kneeled down, and stretching out her arm, which is equal to “the finest lady in the land,” she laid her hand upon my head.”¹

Mr. Manning is the only Englishman who ever saw Lake Palti, and it appears from his narrative that he was not aware that the hills on the opposite shore formed an island. In his diary he wrote:—

“Pursuing our course, and gradually descending, the valley at length opened into a large stony plain, at the end of which stood a considerable town on the margin of an extensive lake, or little sea, as it is called. From the opposite or further margin of the lake rose diminutive mountains in a continued chain, which bounded the whole prospect in front.”

On the 1st of January 1866, the Pandit, trained and sent on his travels by Colonel Montgomerie arrived at the banks of the Palti or Yamdok-chu lake at a small post called Piahte-jong.

¹ *Markham’s Mission of George Bogle*, pp. 244 & 245.

He describes the breadth of the lake as varying from two to three miles, and says that it is reported to be very deep. In the centre of the lake there is a hill at the foot of which, are situated a number of villages. The circumference of the lake is about 45 miles; it is crossed in wicker boats covered with leather.

The Pandit rode along the banks from Piahte-jong to the village of Demalung, from which point the lake stretches to the south-east about 20 miles, and then turns west.

This is the Pandit's account of the lake, extracted from his diary. He further reported to Colonel Montgomerie, that he was informed that the lake encircled a large island, which rises into low, rounded hills, 2,000 or 3,000 feet high, and covered with grass to the top. Between the hills and the margin of the lake, several villages and a white monastery, were visible on the island. The Pandit was told that the lake had no outlet, but he says, its waters were perfectly fresh. Mr. Manning on the contrary says, in the text, that the water of the lake is very bad. The Pandit's observations make the lake 13,500 feet above the sea; and the island rises to 16,000 feet above the sea.

2. A SHORT ACCOUNT OF TIBET.

Tibet, to speak in the language of Captain Samuel Turner, strikes a traveller, at first sight, as one of the least favoured countries under heaven, and appears to be in a great measure incapable of culture. It exhibits only low rocky mountains, without any visible vegetation, or extensive arid plains, both of the most stern and stubborn aspect. Its climate is cold and bleak in the extreme, from the severe effects of which, the inhabitants are obliged to seek refuge in the sheltered valleys, and hollows, or amidst the warmest aspects of the rocks. Yet perhaps providence, in its impartial distribution of blessings, has bestowed on each country a tolerably equal share. The advantages that one possesses in fertility, and in richness of its forests and its fruits, are amply counterbalanced in the other by its multitudinous flocks and invaluable mines. As one seems to possess the pabulum of vegetable, in the other we find a superabundance of animal life. The variety and quantity of wild-fowl, game, and beasts of prey, flocks, droves and herds, in Tibet are astonishing.

The climate of the country north of the Himalayas within the distance of 60 miles, in a direct line from the Kangchanjunga, is extremely cold. The summits of the mountains within this zone remain covered with snow

all through the year.¹ Owing to the high altitude and the rudeness of the winds which prevail there, the ground composed as it is of sand, gravel and loose stones, remains hard as if baked in winter. The climate and soil being alike inhospitable, in this part of the country, there is little habitation of men. The country is occupied by herdsmen and shepherds and also by *Kyang* (wild ass), wild sheep, antelopes, rabbits, wolves and other smaller wild animals. There are snow leopards but no tigers or snakes in Tibet. In the southern parts of Tibet are built cities and castles, and groves of poplar, willows, and stunted trees have been planted. The mountains are destitute of everything except grass and dwarf shrubs.

Sowing takes place in the beginning of May; the Tibetans gather

Products. little wheat, much barley which is their staple food, and some peas which they bruise and give to their horses and cattle. The latter crop is gathered in September. These harvests as well as that of rape from the seeds of which oil is extracted, yield sixty fold, and in good season eighty fold. The people grow carrot, turnips, radishes, garlic and onions. In the south and south-eastern parts are found, walnut, peach, apricots, wild apples and wild vines which yield a few grapes. There are some few flowers. The poplar, elm, willow and ash abound in most of the parks and groves of Tibet.

There are many gold mines in the provinces of U-Tsang, Chang, Takpo, Koñ-bo and Kham. Silver abounds in the last province which borders on China. **Mines and minerals.** There are also mines of copper and nickel. Sulphur, vitriol, cinnabar, cobalt, turquoise, stones, amber and alabaster are abundant. The hills of Tibet have, from their general appearance strong mark of containing those fossils, that are inimical to vegetation. Tibet is very poor in iron. It is not that there are no mines of that useful metal in Tibet. It is probable that the Tibetans either do not know to work those mines or that they have no fuel, enough to fuse the metal. In the neighbourhood

¹ During my residence at Tashi-lhunpo, I took observations from the thermometer. I had a Fahrenheit thermometer and a pair of maximum and minimum thermometers. The thermometer during the month of October, was on an average 37° in the morning; at noon 45° and in the evening 40°. During the month of November there was frost in the morning and evening, and the thermometer stood below 30° in the morning and 36° at noon in the shade. A serene, clear sky prevailed, during day and night not a cloud was to be seen in it. The genial warmth of the sun in the transparent atmosphere made the days very delightful. The weather in the months of October and November was clear throughout, cool, and pleasant and the prevailing wind blew from the south and south-west.

of Tashi-lhunpo there is a lead mine. In the province of Chang-thang, about twenty days' march north and north-west of Tashi-lhunpo, there are immense mines of rock-salt which is universally used for all domestic purposes in Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.

People in Tibet generally suffer from sore eyes, and blindness.

Diseases. The high winds which prevail nine months in the year, sandy soil, and glare from the reflection of the sun, both from the snow and sand, are evidently causes of the same. Coughs, colds, and rheumatism are frequent in Tibet. Simple fevers occasionally arise from temporary causes. They are easily removed, sometimes without treatment.

Liver diseases with the exception of *Pekan*, which is produced by sedentary habit and continual drinking of tea-soup made with rancid butter, are occasionally met with. Tibet is not exempt from venereal diseases. People suffer from it apart from other causes, more on account of the grossness of their food and for want of cleanliness in their habits of living. Smallpox, when it appears in Tibet strikes the people with too much terror and consternation. They pay less attention to those who are infected, thinking their case hopeless. All communication with the infected is strictly forbidden, even at the risk of their being starved, and the house or village is afterwards erased.

During the time I was laid up at the monastery of Samding I observed that the physicians there used roots and bark of roots for making powders and decoction for administering to their patients. The bark, leaves, berries, and stalks of many shrubs and trees are used in a pulverised state or in decoction. Some are astringent, some are of bitter taste, but the generality is employed to strengthen digestion and to work as tonics.

The Tibetans drink tea prepared in the manner of soup with butter and salt and leave a little in the cup, with which they make a dough with barley meal, and afterwards eat it. For dinner and supper they make the barley meal paste with tea and eat it with boiled mutton, kid or beef of yak when available. They are fond of a gruel made of dried meat, barley meal, radish, or dried curd. The Lamas seldom eat fish or fowl. All classes of people eat raw meat, though occasionally. Only the rich eat rice, bread and meat with sauce, as dainty dishes, called *Gya-zê* prepared after Chinese fashion. They drink malt beer: ardent spirit is seldom taken. The people generally use dried dung of cows, donkeys, horse and sheep, for fuel. Firewood is used when it is available in some districts. They cook in earthen-ware vessels. The Tibetans are skilful potters.

For clothing purposes they have only cloth of wool, serge, or yarn, blankets, which are seldom more than a foot in breadth, and skins with the hair on. In winter they use robes lined with lambskin. Silk robes lined with fur are used by the rich nobles and official Lamas.

Clothing.

They live in walled houses made of stone and sun-dried bricks, built with flat or terrace roof. Their houses are spacious and several storeys high. The grand Lama's residence at Lhasa is thirteen storeys and covers the entire summit of a hill. The temples are generally furnished with gilt turrets and domes made after the Chinese style. The houses are generally whitewashed with a kind of lime, their inside is often neatly plastered and contains paintings. The roof rests on wooden beams and is generally made of slate or clay beaten on branches of trees placed on the beams. The floor of their houses are generally kept clean.

House.

Character and Social Customs.

Mr. George Bogle and Captain Samuel Turner whom Warren Hastings sent to the court of the Tashi Lama, brought back with them a very good opinion regarding the character of the Tibetans. Visiting Tibet full one century after Turner's time, I returned with the same kind of impression of the character of the people. Humanity, and an unartificial gentleness of disposition, are the constant inheritance of a Tibetan. Without being officious, they are obliging; the higher ranks are unassuming, the inferior, respectful in their behaviour; nor are they at all deficient in attention to the female sex; in this respect their conduct is equally remote from rudeness and adulation. The women of Tibet in higher life enjoy an elevated station in society. To the privilege of liberty, the wife adds the character of mistress of the family, and companion of her husbands. Among the humbler classes the company of all, indeed, she is not at all times entitled to expect, different pursuits, either agricultural employments, or mercantile speculations, may occasionally cause the temporary absence of each; yet whatever be the result, the profit of the labourer is expected to flow into the common store; and when one of the husbands returns, whatever may have been his fortune, he is secure of a grateful welcome to a social home. The custom of polyandry which prevails here links whole families together in the matrimonial yoke, checking the increase of population in this singularly unfertile country. It also tends to prevent domestic discords, arising from a division of family interests, and to concentrate all the spirit, and all the virtues, inherent in illustrious blood. Jealousy causes unhappiness and dissensions where several men, not brothers, live in the company of one wife. The several husbands are then called *ñamdo-pyün*, i. e., brothers on account of a joint wife.

In higher life courtship is carried on with little art, and quickly brought to a conclusion. The elder brother of a family, to whom the choice belongs, when enamoured of a damsel, makes his proposal to the parents. If his suit is approved, and the offer accepted, the parents, with their daughter, repair to the suitor's house, when the male and female acquaintances of both parties meet and carouse for the space of three days, with music, dancing, and every kind of festivity. At the expiration of this time, marriage is complete. Mutual consent is generally the bond of union, and the parties present are witnesses to the contract which is formed for life. In case when one man marries one wife mutual consent is supplemented by a pecuniary contract which makes it dissoluble.

The country round the lake does not exhibit a varied prospect; it is all a leafless, dreary scene; one uniform russet brown covers alike the valleys and the hills. On the summits of the hills, here and there, springs are seen arrested in their fall, and converted into solid monuments of ice. These contribute greatly, together with the universal nakedness of both hills and valleys, to impress the traveller with an idea of the extreme bleakness of the region, and the rigour of its climate. The atmosphere, indeed, is in an extreme degree keen and pure. The dryness of the soil and scantiness of vegetation, contribute little towards charging the air with humidity. It remains clear even to brilliancy throughout the year. In winter the water of the lake becomes frozen. Its expanse becomes uniformly smooth, presenting a most noble sheet of ice.

In the narrowest parts of the lake there are ferries. During summer and autumn small boats made of an entire skin of a yak ply across them, carrying one or two sheep, goats or persons. In winter on the frozen surface, dust and powdered cow-dung are thrown to make the passage of sheep and goat over them less slippery.

The smaller lakes freeze to a great depth which afford ground for skating, but the people of Tibet are ignorant of that kind of amusement; they, however, are very good sliders.

II.—ACCOUNT OF TRAVELS.

I. A VISIT TO SAMDING, THE GREAT MONASTERY OF THE LAKE COUNTRY OF YAMDO.

On the 15th of May, 1882, while I was proceeding to Lhasa, in the company of Lhacham Kusho, the wife of *Shápé* Phala, one of the four Ministers of the Grand Lama, of Lhasa, I suddenly fell ill at Nangar-tse.

The kind-hearted lady gave me an introduction to her cousin Dorje Pha-mo, the incarnate female hierach of Samding. In handing over the letter to me she said :—"Fear not Pandubla, Dorje Pha-mo will be as kind to you as myself. We have no hand in the inevitable consequence of *Karma*. You must submit to it, but I am glad that you have fallen ill here instead of at another place, for here we can send you to Dorje Pha-mo. Come directly to our house when you recover." She warned my two attendants Pador and Lama Tomola surnamed Tshingta not to desert me. Her two sons exhorted Pador to be a faithful and devoted servant to Pandubla (myself), and serve him to the last. It was about 9 A.M., when I slowly rode towards Samding. At a distance of about two miles from Nangar-tse, we crossed a sluggish stream which flowed towards the Yamdo lake. The rivulet was teeming with a small fish and overgrown with a kind of sedge, over which green moss was scattered. The plain over which we travelled was extensive towards the north and south.

Crossing three or four limpid, but sluggish streams, all on their way to join the great lake, we arrived at the eastern side of Samding monastery, which, perched on the top of a barren hill, looked very picturesque. The flight of stone steps from the foot of the hill to the top of it, along which a zig-zag pathway wound up, lined by a stone wall about six feet high and three feet broad, filled me with the greatest dismay : how could I ascend to that height when my heart throbbed even while I was seated on the pony! Arrived at the large *Ohhorten* (stūpa) where pilgrims generally halt and encamp, Tomola asked two men, who were coming down from the monastery, if Dorje Pha-mo was accessible to pilgrims, and if the two physicians were at the monastery. Being answered in the affirmative, I dismounted from the pony, and sat down gasping on a stone step. After a few minutes' rest we commenced our wearisome ascent. Taking rest at every bend of the stair, I reached its top about 300 feet in height. The top of the steps, however, was not the end, for a narrow pathway thence lead us further up to the foot of the monastery. From the eastern edge of the hill we now came to the north-western face of it, whence we enjoyed a grand view of the inner lake of Yamdo. Ascending a few steps, we arrived at the northern gate of the monastery, which faces the inner and higher lake called Dumo-tsho, the demon's lake. I saw with surprise several men walking round the monastery and continually twirling *Manikhorlo* (prayer wheels), for I thought men, excepting women pilgrims, had no access to the monastery of which the presiding head was an incarnate nun; but the number of monks seemed to be large among the circumambulators. I was led along a narrow lane towards the north-east corner of the monastery. A few minutes after I was waiting

seated on the plinth of the building. Amchi Chhenpo the senior physician arrived, and with an appearance of kindness and sympathy, while feeling my pulse said "*mi-tog, mi-tog* do not apprehend (danger), do not apprehend; you have come from a great distance, I will give you good medicine." He appeared to be about 70 years in age, quite grey, but with a frame still strong and sturdy, of middle stature, with agreeable features, broad forehead and dignified looks. Helped by Tomola, I followed him, and after ascending two ladders we arrived at the portico of his residence. The old man, while twirling his prayer wheel with the right hand, and frequently taking snuff with his left, observed the working of my lungs with attention as I walked and climbed up. He gave me two powders to be taken with warm water and ordered his cook to serve me with a cup of plain tea. Shortly after being refreshed we went to the place of the venerable lady Dorje Pha-mo, carrying Lhacham's letter. Tomola represented my case to her through the Amchi Chhenpo, and paid five *tankas* with a scarf for her blessings and protection. Dorje Pha-mo was at this time performing some religious service. She received the letter and immediately consulted certain books on divination to examine my fortune. She then informed Tomola that she had found my illness to be serious though not fatal, in consequence of which, the speedy observance of some efficacious religious service would be urgently needed. As I had come from Tashi-lhunpo, and with a letter from Lhacham, she would be glad to see me later on. She also conveyed to me her leave to freely ask for anything we might require for subsistence during our stay at Samding. This assurance was most cheering, and enlivened my drooping spirits. Tomola went to the evening congregation of the monks leaving me in the old physician's charge. He presented the assembly with enough of tea and butter, and also a few pieces of silver, together with a scarf, requesting them to pray for my recovery. The monks with one voice prayed that the gods might extend their mercy to me, a pilgrim from a distant land. Next day Tomola arranged to entertain the monks of the monastery who were about eighty, with food.

The monastery of Samding was built on the narrow neck of land which connects the peninsula of Donang with the main land of Tibet. It has the holy lake of Yamdo on its west and the accursed Dumo, the demon's lake, on its east. Dorje Pha-mo is venerated for her power to suppress the demons which, it is believed, infest the latter.

The peninsula of Donang and the smaller islands of the great lake are frequented by great abundance of water-fowl, wild geese, ducks, and storks called *Tung-tung*, which, on the approach of winter take their flight to the milder regions in the Himalayas.

Large numbers of swans, the largest species of the crane kind, come here in summer and autumn and lay eggs, some of which are as large as a turkey's egg, in the sands and in the crevices of rocks near the banks. During the rainy season sounds resembling those of a falling avalanche, or what are called "Barisal guns," are heard from Samding and the neighbouring places to come out of the smaller lake in consequence of which it is called Dumo-tsho—the lake of the demon.

2. JOURNEY ON THE SHORES OF LAKE YAMDO-CROFT (PALTU).

On the 23rd of October (1882) on my way to the ancient monastery of Sam-yea, I revisited the place called Dsara tsan-*chhur* (the nook of the genii), so called on account of its being a hiding place of robbers who waylay travellers. Passing it with feelings of dread and danger, we entered into the tortuous winding of a rugged and gloomy valley, which passed, we began to see light as the glen widened. We then got a peep into the table-land of Nangar-tse and descried the famous monastery of Samding, the late scene of my sufferings. Its white walls and sombre roofs could be distinctly seen. At about 10 A.M., we arrived at the solitary village of Rhingla. Formerly when Rhingla was prosperous, a branch monastery of Samding existed here. It is now in ruins with the exception of a *chhorten*. There are two or three families here who make pottery. We cooked our breakfast in the house of an old potter of 70 whose two sons were engaged in turning pots. They employed a concave wooden pan, on which pots were turned by being twirled with the hand. During the rotation of the pan with the pot the potter shaped the latter with a wooden knife, and sometimes with his fingers. After breakfast we resumed our journey. Crossing the Dsara *chhur* which rising from Kharula empties itself in the Yamdo lake we ascended along the gentle slopes of a hill to take the road to Talung.

The contrast between the elevated and the lower platform of this lake country is most striking. The latter, which extended up to the margin of the lake, being covered with an extensive carpet of deep verdure, afforded refreshment to the eye, while the former, the abodes only of vultures and kites, was of a most repulsive and inhospitable aspect. The inlets of the Yamdo lake from this side were also numerous. We passed by a walled enclosure, adjoining which there were some ruins. We were told that this enclosure was solely used as a pony market, and that the annual pony fair of Talung formerly used to be held here. There were many *dōk* sheds, now deserted, probably owing to the shepherds and herdsmen having retired to more fertile parts of the country. We now found ourselves in a gravelly plain

filled with scattered blocks of rock and boulders. The way, which threaded sometimes along the edge of the mountains and sometimes through the middle of the plain, was very rough. I therefore rode very carefully. The village of Talung (country of ponies), which has a hillock in its middle, from a distance presented a very imposing appearance. We arrived at this at 5 P.M. A castle-like monastery with painted windows and corner towers adorns its top. The village is large, containing upwards of two hundred houses, scattered over the flat. At the foot of the central hill there is another monastery belonging to Sakya. The barley-fields were all stony and evidently sterile. Far behind were the *dök-pa* sheds. The yaks of the place appeared to be of good breed and large size. The people, from the way they had cultivated the lands, seemed very industrious. This year's crop had been much damaged by the frost and hailstorm of September. The villagers refused us shelter in their houses, suspecting Phurchung to be a *Duk-pa* (Bhutanese). The Bhutanese are called Lhopa (the Southern) at this place, and are very much dreaded, as they often make raids on this place for plundering the villagers of their cattle and grain. The skies were filled with rain clouds, and a slight shower fell. After making fruitless negotiations for securing our night's shelter under a roofed house, at last we came to the gate of the Sakyapa monastery, where many monks, the elders of the villages, and the villagers, including children and women, were standing in anxious expectation of the arrival of Je-tsun kusho of Sakya, who was just returning from a pilgrimage to Mon-chho-nag and other places of the South. The band was playing hautboys, drums, and the gigantic trumpets (called *Dung-chhen*). Gopon (our guide) winked at us not to speak, so we kept quiet, while he conversed with the villagers and succeeded in convincing them that we were not *Dukpas*. A kind-hearted *Gelong* (monk) conducted us to the interior of the monastery compound through a lofty doorway. The hall through which we passed was about 18 feet wide and about 15 feet high. Here the spectators were drawn up in two rows, and the Lamas of the monastery, dressed in their church costumes, were present to receive their revered lady, Je-tsun kusho. The *Gelong* agreed to accommodate us in the house of one of his friends. The *namo* (hostess), though very good-natured, still suspected us of being bad men from Bhutan, but being repeatedly assured by Gopon that we were not Bhutanese, she accommodated us in an out-house where ponies are halted, and furnished us with good *chhang* (malt beer). The stall was far from being comfortable; but since leaving Gyaf-tse I had been a stranger to comfort. Phurchung gave me a wretched meal. I slept well amidst the clamour of the religious service occasioned by the arrival of Je-tsun kusho.

24th October 1882.—We resumed our journey a little before sunrise. The streamlets were frozen and the ponies slid several times on the slippery ice; the wind was howling and extremely chill. My face, tightly bandaged with a piece of Assam silk cloth, was well protected; but my feet within the boots began to freeze, and I could hardly draw out my hands from inside the long sleeves of my lambskin vestments. There were no villages near the way. Far behind were the *dokpa* tents, whence the howling of mastiffs was alone heard. From this distance the village and the monastery of Taling were visible. After two hours' journey we came to the edge of the Yamdo lake, a nook of which we had now almost doubled. We crossed the Shandung-chhu inlet of Yamdo with much difficulty owing to its being frozen. The Shandung monastery and the valley for some time formed the only object of importance within view. The morning sun had lengthened the shadows of the cliffs that overhang the Yamdo; so that we had to journey a long way under their shade, and could not enjoy the genial rays of the sun. To add to the discomforts a very chill, unwelcome breeze blew, freezing our extremities. We had a glimpse of the Chhoi-khor monastery, which is noted for its supplying the whole of Tibet with a class of fantastic dancers called Achi-Lhamo actors. Some of these professional players and dancers annually visit Darjeeling. As we came nearer we obtained fuller views of the Chhoi-khor monastery, which commanded a singular view, as it was situated like an eagle's eyrie amidst the bleak and sombre cliffs of Yamdo. Passing along the circuitous margin of another nook of the lake, we entered another broad valley with a stream in its middle flowing towards the lake. The large village of Ri-o-tag, I was told, was on this side of Yamdo. After an hour's ride we came within two miles of it. The plateau through which we now passed was several miles long and broad. To our right we saw at a distance of eight or nine miles the ruins of Ri-o-tag Jong. About a mile towards our right hand side we were shown a place near a village where we could breakfast, shortly passing the village we crossed the Ri-o-tag stream after which we crossed a saddle-like eminence. Beyond the latter is a stream flowing to the Yamdo, on the banks of which we halted for breakfast. This was a grassy patch of ground filled with cavities and mole hills. Phurchung prepared me a dish of boiled *phing* (vermicelli made of peas) and mutton with rice. At 10 A.M. we resumed our journey. We were now ascending an undulating plateau. This rose, as we proceeded, in successive retiring terraces, the undulations being in an ascending slope. These were covered with grass, now yellowish brown at the approach of winter. Presently the tortuous winding of the Yamdo came in view as

we ascended a gentle acclivity. An hour's ride brought us to the top of this ridge, which ran in a lateral direction from right to left till obstructed by the lake. From this eminence we saw the villages of Yuröp, Kegutag and Khyunpo-dō situated on the side of the lake. The country, though very thinly populated, yields extensive pastures, as could be judged from the healthy appearance of the numerous cattle—yak, sheep, goat, and donkeys grazing here and there. At 3 P.M. we saw a man coming towards us at a swift pace. Gopon accosted him, and after a short conversation found him to be his friend's son. As the man was going on urgent business to his home at Ri-o-tag, he said he could not come back to Shari in the evening, but begged us to pass the night at the house of his father-in-law, who was the richest man of Shari. Riding slowly down a gentle slope, we came to a flat dip, where we met a shepherd tending about three to four hundred sheep. He saluted me and pointed out to us the village of Shari, situated on the lee side of a ridge standing between Yamdo and a small lake about six or seven miles in circumference. The margin of this fresh water lake and the slopes on all sides were covered with excellent pasture, on which a number of cattle were grazing, while the lake itself abounded with wild ducks and swans, besides other water-fowl, all of which would have been very tempting objects for sportsmen. The village of Shari, which commands an excellent view of the smaller lake, being situated on an eminence on its bank, contained two rich families, the huts of whose *misser* (serfs) were scattered round their spacious houses. A long and well repaired *mandang* (votive pile of inscribed stones) with a pretty *chhorten* (*stüpa*) near it formed the frontage. Alighted near the *chhorten*, I sat on its plinth, and sent Gopon to negotiate for our night's accommodation. His acquaintance, who was unwell, was afraid of receiving us in his house, evidently from apprehension of smallpox. Gopon, however, after much entreaty, obtained his leave for our occupying the *Manilhakhang* (temple of the *mani* prayer wheel), and a maid-servant with a kettleful of tea came to conduct us to it. The *Manilhakhang* was a pretty turret-like stone house, measuring 8 feet by 10 feet inside with a small spire rising from the middle of its flat roof. Its outside was decorated with a dusky red cornice, and the stones of its bonded walls were painted with Buddhist figures, so it presented an inviting appearance. On entering I was received by a grey-headed man, and a small table was placed before me and tea poured in a China cup for my refreshment. The centre of the room was occupied by a *mani* cylinder (prayer-wheel) about three feet in diameter and six feet high. Its outside was covered with *mantras* (charms) in the *Lantsa* (Rājā character of Magadha) and the ever present mystic expres-

sion—*Om mani padmē hūm*. I spread my rug to the east of the cylinder, and accommodated myself in a space about four feet wide. The old man, whose sole occupation was to turn the prayer-wheel, had his bed at the opposite side. He continually muttered *Om nani padmē hūm*. The floor was good and remarkably clean; the walls were painted, containing basso-relievo figures from the Buddhist pantheon. There was no forage nor gram for our ponies. Phurchung cooked for me, and Gopon, after regaling himself with several bottles of *chhang* (malt-beer), went to sleep on the lawn-like margin of the lake, tethering the ponies to graze in the pasture. His friend had assured him that our ponies would not be removed by anybody during the night. The wind blew rather strongly during the first part of the night. I gave some rice and tea to the old man, who, considering me a sacred personage, prostrated himself several times to salute me, though I vainly tried to explain to him that being a layman I did not deserve such homage from anybody. When he came to receive my *chhag-wang* (benediction from the touch of the hand), I told him that I was no incarnate being, and could not place my palms on his grey head, but being equally subject to misery like himself, I could touch his forehead with mine as a token of sympathy with him as a brother man. I also pointed out to him the hands of Pema Juñ-nē (Padma Sambhava) the saint, where he could apply his forehead for benediction.

But this only impressed him with still more pious feelings, and he called some of his acquaintances, a few shepherds, to prostrate themselves before me, which they did. The old man told us of the condition of the monastery of Shari Gonsar, situated on the top of a hill behind the village, and also of the village where we ought to halt next day. I passed the night very comfortably.

25th October.—I awoke early in the morning, about 4 o'clock, refreshed and in good spirits. The ponies saddled, we started for Khame-dō, our next stage. The wind began to blow afresh with much fury, and the chill was simply tormenting. My body, though well protected by lambskins, could not escape the penetrating effects of the cold, and began to freeze. After crossing two large inlets of the Yamdo, we came to a nook of the great lake. While traversing the little promontary overhanging this nook, we met a woman of about 40 cutting wild plants resembling brushwood. The cold was so severe that I could hardly bring out my hands from within the fur sleeves, yet the woman was doing her work as if it was a summer morning with her. The nook passed, we came to a solitary village with three or four huts belonging to two *dök-pa* families. Some yaks were grazing on the margin of the lake, which here presented a very desolate and

solitary appearance. Some pointed rocks interposed here and there. This passed, we crossed a small *La* (hill) and descended towards another lake which, with its grassy flat shores and the undulating slopes above them, looked very lovely and cheering. The dark blue expanse of water, now ruffled by the wind, rose in gentle waves. This was the lake Rombu-dsa, which is fed by a few inlets. Our way partly lay along the dried margin of the lake, which was sandy, and partly in grassy paths above the highest water mark. We passed a caravan of yaks and donkeys carrying heaps of fuel, consisting of fragrant weeds and some wood. After a slow ride of two hours along the margin of this lake and a flat valley beyond it we entered into a gorge, from which we had a glimpse of the Yamdo lake. Here there are two roads to Khame-dō one by the side of the great lake, and the other *viâ* Melung village across the Lonagla Pass. I was told that the latter was rather difficult on account of the steepness of the *La*. I, however, preferred the more difficult route, having been informed that I would have to use the saltish water of the Yamdo at breakfast if I went by the easier one. Half an hour's ride from this gorge brought us to the village of Melung. It was past 11 A.M. when I dismounted at the door of the *Gambu's* (village headman) house. He received me with much politeness, and begged to know how he could serve us. We bought *chhang* for our use and hay for our ponies. I preferred to sit in the yard, which was filled with cowdung, the *Gambu's* house being very low and the ceiling covered with soot. The *Nabo's* (host) brother sat near us and had a chat with Gopon about the Chinese Ampa's movements, as *Ülag* (road service) was demanded from them. After breakfast we resumed our journey, intent upon reaching the next stage, which according to Gopon would be the village of Khame-dō. Our guide always sought places for halting where he had acquaintances; so that sometimes we halted after marching long distances, and sometimes after very short marches. Passing a dried-up water-course filled with boulders and broken stones, we ascended the steep slopes of Lonagla, also filled with splinters, rocks, and gravel. There were evidently no pastures, but still a few yaks and sheep were grazing at this barren place. Gopon picked up some flints, and told us that the village derived its name from the flints, as *m̄* in Tibetan means 'fire' and *lung* a "valley." Hence Melung is fire or flint valley. The *La* was high, and our ponies were knocked up. From the village to the top of the Pass it was about a mile's distance. The *La* crossed, we entered another spacious and flat valley intersected by sparkling brooks. On the slopes of the hills here juniper and other fragrant plants grow in abundance. The pastures for yaks and sheep were of luxuriant growth. The grass of this pleasant valley, now

growing yellow, refreshed our eyes. There was a remarkable contrast in the appearance of the opposite sides of Lonagla. Crossing the bends of several tiny streams, and passing across the valley, we arrived at the village of Kha, where the men and women were engaged in threshing corn. Heaps of sheaves lay in their yards. We now found ourselves in an extensive open country, more resembling a plain. As we proceeded onward, we caught a glimpse of some *jong* (castle) standing on a distant isolated peak. The valley was filled with numerous villages. The villagers, intent on their work, did not care to inquire about us, but only now and then stared at us with some curiosity. The dogs of this place were very fierce and powerful, and kept barking as long as we remained in their sight. Passing many houses on our left, and walking a distance of about a quarter of a mile, we entered the large village of Khame-dō, which stands on the flat slope of the ridge extending to the back of the village of Kha. At the entrance of the village there were several *Mandangs*. After inquiring from several villagers where we could get accommodation for the night, we were pointed out the house of one of the richest residents of the place who usually received guests. Several seats made of slabs resembling marble were placed in the courts of their residences as well as in the open ground. The houses of the villagers were very good looking, large and white-washed. The barley stalks were stout and long. Gopon told me that some of these altar-like seats were made by potters and painted with lime. The villagers use them for basking in the sun. At 5 P.M. we came to the gate of the rich resident whose guest we were to be. After much knocking we succeeded in getting the door opened by an old woman, who, after inquiring what we wanted, disappeared. After a while the *nabo*, an old man of nearly seventy, made his appearance and showed us his stable, where we could pass the night. It was on account of our guide's foolishness that we failed to get better accommodation here, for he offered only to pay one *tanka* (six *annas*) as house-rent, whereas this miserly landlord asked for more. I paid the *nela* (rent) immediately, which pleased the old man, who at my request supplied us with two stuffed cushions and a screen. The latter was very useful, as at the time a strong wind blew and we had no other protection against it, for the stables in Tibet are not like those in India. They are stalls open on three sides. When my rugs were spread and I took my seat as a respectable man, the *nabo* drew near and began to converse with me about the harvest which the people had just reaped. The crop of this year, he said, was damaged by the September frost. We bought from him a *Phagri* (sheep burnt like a pig after slaughter). This yielded us very fat mutton. Our host was one of the rich-

est men of the village, which contained upwards of a hundred families. His house is very large and surrounded by a wall with three gates. There were plenty of willow, juniper and other fragrant plants in this village. The juniper plant formed a part of their fuel, which chiefly consisted of dried cattle dung.

26th October.—I rose from bed at sunrise. Our miserly *nabo* came early to take back from us the curtain and the fine articles which he had lent us. We parted with him after an exchange of polite expressions. He begged us to come to his house on our way back. We resumed our journey at 6 A.M. A villager joined us near the precipitous rock which stands at the entrance of the village on this side. He proved a pleasant companion for a few miles. We passed along the side of another small lake, and were shown the large village of Ling, the seat of the *Jongpon* of this side of the Yamdo District. This fellow talked of certain orders that were received by the *Jongpon* of Ling from Lhasa to examine strangers travelling within his jurisdiction. He also said that similar orders were sent to Sam-yea. We crossed two little streams with him by wading across them. When we came to the bank of a third stream, which was the largest, he parted with us after showing us the *rab* (ford). My pony, in wading through the half frozen stream, once sank up to his knees, Gopon extricated us with much exertion. The pony had several stumbles besides. We now entered the extensive table-land of Kamoling, the Arcadia of Tibet. Here were grazing hundreds of ponies belonging to the Government of Lhasa. The head of the Government stables has one of his establishments here. It took us several hours to cross a bend of this large pasture land. Its breadth was ten to twelve miles, but its length appeared very great. There was no water in the several water-courses which intersected the plain. In some of the streamlets bulging crusts of ice were seen. We were very thirsty. At noon we arrived at the village of Shabshe, containing nine or ten families.

We cooked our breakfast in the court of a poor woman's house, filled with goat's dung and some goats' hair-bags and hay. Our good *namo* kindly lent us some fire-wood. The object of our preferring dirty huts and stables in a village to clean flats and river banks was that we got fuel, water, water-vessels, &c., from the host, which, as a rule, were generally included in the *nela* (house-rent). The *namo* was a very well-behaved and obliging woman. Though very poor, she seemed to be in good spirits and cheerful. She has three children by two joint husbands. We bought one-fourth of a sheep at one *tanka* from one of her neighbours, and some barley meal, of inferior quality.

After breakfast we resumed our journey. As there were several

ways leading in different directions, our good *namo* kindly accompanied us a short distance to show us the way to Sam-yea. There were other villages scattered in this upland plain, which passed we came to the little village of Tan-tha, situated at the foot of the *La*, we were about to ascend. Climbing up a short distance, we came near some well-constructed recluse's cells, now empty. These from a distance appeared like some monastic establishments. Gopon showed to me the monastery, situated on a dome-shaped hill near the lake, but half a mile off from the place. The ascent from here was very tiresome. But all these fatigues vanished when the height gradually widening the horizon brought sublimer scenes to my enchanted eyes. I really thought that the view from the top of Thib-la, of the snowy country of Tibet, of her far-famed lake and river, and of an immense congregation of snowy mountains which skirts like silvery fringes, on the vanishing line of the dark blue sky in the horizon, cannot be equalled by the sceneries of the glorious Himalaya. The numerous windings of this *scorpion lake*, as Yamdo is called, the countless hills and mountains which they surrounded, and the waving line in the horizon where the snows of Noi-jon Kang-Zang mingle with the blue summits of distant mountain ranges, were all visible from Thib-la. The valley of the deep and meandering Tsañpo, the dark pine and fir forests which here and there broke the monotony of the bleak mountain scenery, and the snowy mountains of Lhobra, bore a striking contrast to the scenery on the other side. Both defy description. On the southern flanks of this lofty pass, which appeared to be more than four thousand feet above the lake, a kind of broad-leafed plants, called *yeshi kogo*, grow. The dried leaves rustled as they were blown by the wind. The wind blew so strongly that I found it difficult to stand. This increased the fatigues of this exceedingly trying journey along the steep slopes of Thib-la. The down-hill journey was worse than the up-hill one. At 5 P.M., we arrived at the village of Thib. There were about ten houses in this little village, all clustered together and only separated from one another by narrow lanes and barley fields. Heaps of hay and unthreshed barley lined these little avenues. There were some willows of stunted growth in the village. We were conducted to the house of a well-to-do villager. The *namo* received us very kindly. One of her husbands was in the field reaping barley crop. Her elder husband was gone to Lhasa. We were accommodated in the upper floor of her house which was spacious enough. A part of the house was under repair. The night was very fine and the skies bright, and the little village with its white-washed houses and fields was bleached with moonlight.

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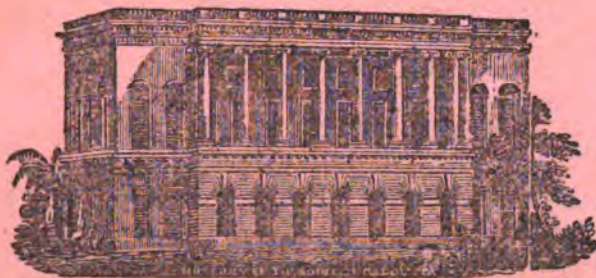


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