

Moreover I was able to sketch the contours of some of the surrounding mountains, namely those shown on one of the accompanying plates. The following are the soundings I successively took — 2.10, 11.90, 12.70, 11.73, 11.30, 11.36, 12.25, 12.22, and 5.70, the last quite close to the north-western extremity of the island. From the shape of the basin and the contours of the neighbouring mountains I gathered the impression, that it was a relatively shallow part of the Naktsong-tso which we had crossed. To the south of our route was a shallow quarter, while north-west of it the lake-bottom probably sinks down to the greatest depths.

At the point where we landed we found a slab of stone set up on end, crowning a rocky headland that plunges steeply down into the lake. South of that is a little bay, with a flat strip of shore, bearing thick and luxuriant grass, plainly enough at that season inaccessible to the flocks of the nomads. We climbed to the top of the highest point (c. 50 to 60 m.) of the little rocky island where it rises sheer from the water's edge, and found on it three heaps of stones piled up. As the Tibetans possess nothing that in any way resembles a boat, these heaps of stones prove, as do also the large quantities of droppings of yaks, horses, and sheep, that the island is visited in winter, the means of access being the very thick, strong sheet of ice with which the lake is I dare say for five months covered. The island is crescentic in shape, convex towards the south-west, and on almost every side its rocky walls plunge sheer down into the lake. The only living creatures we found on it were pigeons and midges.

From the top of this little rocky island we obtained an especially excellent view all round us; the whole country to the south lay spread out like a map. On that side the boundary of the lake stood out sharply and distinctly. The Naktsong-tso now turned out to be a good deal smaller than I had supposed it to be when I first saw it from the northern shore. From that side the view south had appeared to stretch to infinity; this was due to the refraction of the atmosphere close to the surface of the earth, the whole of the plain on the southern side of the lake being swallowed up in its »liquid» vibrations, the effect being an apparent prolongation of the lake all the way to the foot of the southern mountains. Even whilst we were still paddling on the water this southern range had appeared to rise directly out of the lake. Owing to these optical illusions you can never trust your first impression of these sheets of water. The only way to get a reliable map of their outline is either by riding all round them or by examining them by boat. The little rocky island on the summit of which we stood lies only a couple of kilometers from the southern shore, and the space that intervenes between the lake-shore and the foot of the southern range is occupied by an extensive plain, exceedingly flat, and dotted all over with an enormous number of small lakes, pools, and marshes. This low, marshy ground also makes the shore next the lake very boggy and irregular. The greenness of the surface and the numerous herds of yaks and horses, and flocks of sheep, served to show that the grazing was good. We also counted eight nomad tents and two white cubical houses of stone, possibly small local temples. To the south was a well-marked glen-opening, with a small stream flowing out of it. Under ordinary circumstances one would not have doubted a moment as to the destination of this river; it would of course have been a mountain-stream destined to terminate