

that lake into the Selling-tso, although the latter lies so near and lies a good deal lower. That there is any outflow towards a lake that may exist to the south I consider to be extremely improbable, because there is on that side a formidable swelling in the shape of a mountain-range. Moreover Bower, who was compelled by the Tibetans to turn back when he had reached the south-east corner of the Selling-tso, and who appears to have travelled along the southern shore of the Naktsong-tso, says nothing about any river issuing from the latter and entering a lake on the south. In some respects his statements are as laconic and as difficult to interpret as Marco Polo's, and it is not at all easy to trace his itinerary along the southern shore of the Naktsong-tso; but upon turning to his Diary of the days that he travelled beside the more southerly lake, namely the 5th and 6th October, we read as follows: »An easy march of about 13 miles, crossing a fairly large stream flowing into a lake on the north, to a nomad camp beside some swamps.» Further (on the 6th): »For a couple of miles we went along the bank of a swampy lake; the surface was crowded with duck, geese, and teal; where the water was shallow the *Grus cinerea* was to be seen — — —. The Lama went to the edge of the lake and threw in some valuables, an ancient practice that has at different periods been followed in many countries.»*

Had Bower accompanied his Lama to the lake, and tasted of its water, he would have been able to give us much more valuable information, namely whether the lake was fresh or salt. But the most important thing he tells us is, that the lake which he saw to the north was entered by a fairly large stream coming from the south. On the other hand we are *not* told whether the »lake on the north» of 5th Oct. is identical with the »swampy lake» of 6th Oct. I assume however that both descriptions do refer to the Naktsong-tso, the southern part of which really is very shallow; besides, the occurrence of waterfowl points to the fact of the water being fresh. And when we bear in mind the existence of the mountainous country to the south of the Naktsong-tso, it is scarcely possible, as I have said, that there can be any salt lake between that lake and the mountains. In a word, everything points to the conclusion, that the Naktsong-tso does not discharge to the south either. This lake is therefore a freshwater lake, which receives almost the whole of its supply of water from the mountains to the south of it, but receives practically none from the north, or east, or west, with the exception of small transient streams after rain. Since however there exists no visible emissary, the lake must possess a subterranean outflow; otherwise it would not be able to maintain itself at the constant level which its shores show that it does maintain. Whether the inflow be copious or whether it be scanty, the surplus water runs away upon reaching a certain level, and nothing is more probable than that this surplus water makes its way into the adjacent Selling-tso. By this means the level of the Naktsong-tso is regulated and moderated, and kept practically constant; whereas the Selling-tso, on the other hand, is dropping, because, being situated in the very lowest part of the whole basin, it fails to possess any regulating factor. Possibly it was a consequence of the infiltra-

* *Diary of a Journey across Tibet*, p. 102.