

have plotted it with anything like accuracy; but one thing their itineraries do settle for us, namely the limits to which the lake extends in the directions indicated. The knowledge which we previously possessed of the Selling-tso and the Naktsong-tso was not great; but I conceive that I ought to do the above-mentioned travellers, both of whom visited the region before me, the justice to quote their observations. To Grenard, whose observations are the most important, I shall have to return later on. Captain Bower describes the two marches he made to his camps 50 and 51 (6th and 7th September 1891) in the following terms:

»A few miles after leaving camp 49 we crossed a narrow neck of land between two lakes, the northern one of immense size, while the southern one was of extremely irregular shape, having branches running up valleys in every direction, and islands, some of them fairly large, scattered about its surface. It was of singular beauty, to the south a high cone-shaped peak, capped with snow, threw its shadow across; but what made the great difference between it and other Tibetan lakes was the freshness of the water. Grass grows right down to the edge, and the invariable adjuncts of fresh water, gulls, and terns, wheeling about and uttering cries, gave a feeling of life and animation contrasting strongly with the death-like solitude hanging over the salt lakes» — — — — »After leaving our last camp we crossed a narrow neck of land, about the size of and somewhat resembling a railway embankment, with a lake on each side. A Tibetan, in the course of conversation with one of the caravan drivers, stated that the large lake on the north, of which we were continually getting glimpses and occasionally extended views, was called Tengri Nor by Mongols and Tengri Cho by Tibetans, but I fear he lied. However, whatever the right name might be, there was no doubt of its being a noble sheet of water, stretching out east and west to an enormous distance, it seemed more worthy to be called an inland sea than a lake. But, like all the Tibetan lakes, it showed signs of once having been larger than it is now; indeed some of the lakes appear to have dwindled to about half their original size. Between it and our camp were some large lagoons of fresh water fed by streams coming down from the hills.»*

As will be seen, this account agrees excellently with the description of the two lakes which I have given above. To call the Selling-tso »an inland sea» is however an exaggeration; what no doubt led Bower to use these words was the fact, that this lake was larger than any that he had hitherto seen in Tibet. When on his return he travelled along the southern shore of the Naktsong-tso, he had no idea that the lake which then lay »to the north» of him was identically the same as that which he had formerly observed farther south, and which was of »extremely irregular shape». But his erroneous conception admits of ready explanation and is quite excusable, because when you stand on the northern shore the southern basin of the lake is entirely hidden behind the large island, and unless you row through the watery labyrinth, as I did, you are never likely to obtain a clear idea of the mutual relations of the several lake-basins. Bower complains, and with justice, of the difficulty of ascertaining the real names of the geographical features in Tibet;

* Capt. Hamilton Bower, *Diary of a Journey across Tibet*, pp. 82 and 83.