

Raphtan, the Kahlon of Bazgo." I have recently encountered the word used independently, and precisely in Marco's application of it. An old friend, in speaking of a journey that he had made in our Tibetan provinces, said incidentally that he had accompanied the commissioner *to the installation of a new NONO* (I think in Spiti). The term here corresponds so precisely with the explanation which Marco gives of *None* as a Count subject to a superior sovereign, that it is difficult to regard the coincidence as accidental. The *Yuechi* or Indo-Scyths who long ruled the Oxus countries are said to have been of Tibetan origin, and Al-Biruni repeats a report that this was so. (*Elliot*. II. 9.)* Can this title have been a trace of their rule? Or is it Indian?

NOTE 2.—This chapter is one of the most interesting in the book, and contains one of its most splendid anticipations of modern exploration, whilst conversely Lieutenant John Wood's narrative presents the most brilliant confirmation in detail of Marco's narrative.

We have very old testimony to the recognition of the great altitude of the Plateau of PAMIR (the name which Marco gives it and which it still retains), and to the existence of the lake (or lakes) upon its surface. The Chinese pilgrims Hwui Seng and Sung Yun, who passed this way A.D. 518, inform us that these high lands of the Tsung Ling were commonly said to be midway between heaven and earth. The more celebrated Hiuen Tsang, who came this way nearly 120 years later (about 644) on his return to China, "after crossing the mountains for 700 *li*, arrived at the valley of *Pomilo* (Pamir). This valley is 1000-*li* (about 200 miles) from east to west, and 100 *li* (20 miles) from north to south, and lies between two snowy ranges in the centre of the Tsung Ling mountains. The traveller is annoyed by sudden gusts of wind, and the snow-drifts never cease, spring or summer. As the soil is almost constantly frozen, you see but a few miserable plants, and no crops can live. The whole tract is but a dreary waste, without a trace of human kind. In the middle of the valley is a great lake 300 *li* (60 miles) from east to west, and 500 *li* from north to south. This stands in the centre of Jambudwipa (the Buddhist *οικουμένη*) on a plateau of prodigious elevation. An endless variety of creatures peoples its waters. When you hear the murmur and clash of its waves you think you are listening to the noisy hum of a great market in which vast crowds of people are mingling in excitement. . . . The lake discharges to the west, and a river runs out of it in that direction and joins the *Potsu* (Oxus) The lake likewise discharges to the east, and a great river runs out, which flows eastward to the western frontier of *Kiesha* (Káshgar), where it joins the River Sita, and runs eastward with it into the sea." The story of an eastern outflow from the lake is, no doubt, legend, connected with an ancient Hindu belief (see *Cathay*, p. 347), but Burnes in modern times heard much the same story. And the Mirza, in 1868, took up the same impression regarding the smaller lake called Pamir Kul, in which the southern branch of the Panja originates.

"After quitting the (frozen) surface of the river," says Wood, "we ascended a low hill, which apparently bounded the valley to the eastward. On surmounting this, at 3 P.M. of the 19th February, 1838, we stood, to use a native expression, upon the *Bám-i-Duniah*, or 'Roof of the World,' while before us lay stretched a noble but frozen sheet of water, from whose western end issued the infant river of the Oxus. This fine lake (Sirikol) lies in the form of a crescent, about 14 miles long from east to west, by an average breadth of 1 mile. On three sides it is bordered by swelling hills about 500 feet high, while along its southern bank they rise into mountains 3500 feet above the lake, or 19,000 feet above the sea, and covered with perpetual snow, from which never-failing source the lake is supplied. . . . Its elevation, measured by the temperature of boiling water, is 15,600 feet."

The absence of birds on Pamir, reported by Marco, probably shows that he passed very late or early in the season. Hiuen Tsang, we see, gives a different account;

* Ibn Haukal reckons Wakhán as an Indian country. It is a curious coincidence (it can scarcely be more) that *Nono* in the Garo tongue of Eastern Bengal signifies "a younger brother." (*J. A. S. B.* XXII. 153, XVIII. 208.)