

NOTE 1.—The identification of this province is a difficulty, because the geographical definition is vague, and the name assigned to it has not been traced in other authors. It is said to lie *between north-west and north*, whilst Kamul was said to lie *towards the north-west*. The account of both provinces forms a digression, as is clear from the last words of the present chapter, where the traveller returns to take up his regular route “in the direction between north-east and east.” The point from which he digresses, and to which he reverts, is Shachau, and 'tis presumably from Shachau that he assigns bearings to the two provinces forming the subject of the digression. Hence, as Kamul lies *vers maistre*, *i.e.* north-west, and Chingintalas *entre maistre et tramontaine*, *i.e.* nor'-nor'-west, Chingintalas can scarcely lie due west of Kamul, as M. Pauthier would place it, in identifying it with an obscure place called *Saiyintala*, in the territory of Urumtsi. Moreover, the province is said to belong to the Great Kaan. Now, *Urumtsi* or Bishbalik seems to have belonged, not to the Great Kaan, but to the empire of Chagatai, or possibly at this time to Kaidu. Rashiduddin, speaking of the frontier between the Kaan and Kaidu, says:—“From point to point are posted bodies of troops under the orders of princes of the blood or other generals, and they often come to blows with the troops of Kaidu. Five of these are cantoned on the verge of the Desert; a sixth in Tangut, near Chagan-Nor (White Lake); a seventh in the vicinity of Karakhoja, a city of the Uighurs, which lies between the two States, and maintains neutrality.”

Karakhoja, this neutral town, is near Turfan, to the south-east of Urumtsi, which thus would lie *without* the Kaan's boundary; Kamul and the country north-east of it would lie within it. This country, to the north and north-east of Kamul, has remained till quite recently unexplored by any modern traveller, unless we put faith in Mr. Atkinson's somewhat hazy narrative. But it is here that I would seek for Chingintalas.

Several possible explanations of this name have suggested themselves or been suggested to me. I will mention two.

1. Klaproth states that the Mongols applied to Tibet the name of *Baron-tala*, signifying the “Right Side,” *i.e.* the south-west or south quarter, whilst Mongolia was called *Dzöhn* (or *Dzegun*) *Tala*, *i.e.* the “Left,” or north-east side. It is possible that *Chigin-talas* might represent *Dzegun Tala* in some like application. The etymology of *Dzungaria*, a name which in modern times covers the territory of which we are speaking, is similar.

2. Professor Vámbéry thinks that it is probably *Chingin Tala*, “The Vast Plain.” But nothing can be absolutely satisfactory in such a case except historical evidence of the application of the name.

I have left the identity of this name undecided, though pointing to the general position of the region so-called by Marco, as indicated by the vicinity of the Tangnu-Ola Mountains (p. 215). A passage in the Journey of the Taouist Doctor, Changchun, as translated by Dr. Bretschneider (*Chinese Recorder and Miss. Journ.*, Shanghai, Sept.-Oct., 1874, p. 258), suggests to me the strong probability that it may be the *Kem-kém-jút* of Rashiduddin, called by the Chinese teacher *Kien-kien-chau*.

Rashiduddin couples the territory of the Kirghiz with *Kemkemjút*, but defines the country embracing both with some exactness: “On one side (south-east?), it bordered on the Mongol country; on a second (north-east?), it was bounded by the Selenga; on a third (north), by the ‘great river called Angara, which flows on the confines of Ibir-Sibir’ (*i.e.* of Siberia); on a fourth side by the territory of the Naimans. This great country contained *many towns and villages*, as well as many nomad inhabitants.” Dr. Bretschneider's Chinese Traveller speaks of it as a country where *good iron was found*, where (grey) squirrels abounded, and wheat was cultivated. Other notices quoted by him show that it lay to the south-east of the Kirghiz country, and had its name from the *Kien* or *Ken* R. (*i.e.* the Upper Yenisei).

The name (*Kienkien*), the general direction, the existence of good iron (“steel and ondanique”), the many towns and villages in a position where we should little look for such an indication, all point to the identity of this region with the Chingintalas of