

*Ubashi* and *Ubashanza*. Their vows extend to the strict keeping of the five great commandments of the Buddhist Law, and they diligently ply the rosary and the prayer-wheel, but they are not pledged to celibacy, nor do they adopt the tonsure. As a sign of their amphibious position, they commonly wear a red or yellow girdle. These are what some travellers speak of as the lowest order of Lamas, permitted to marry; and Polo may have regarded them in the same light.

(*Koeppen*, II. 82, 113, 276, 291; *Tink.* II. 354; *Erman*, II. 304; *Alph. Tibet.* 449.)

NOTE 15.—[Mr. Rockhill writes to me that “bran” is certainly Tibetan *tsamba* (parched barley).—H. C.]

NOTE 16.—Marco’s contempt for *Patarins* slips out in a later passage (Bk. III. ch. xx.). The name originated in the eleventh century in Lombardy, where it came to be applied to the “heretics,” otherwise called “Cathari.” Muratori has much on the origin of the name Patarini, and mentions a monument, which still exists, in the Piazza de’ Mercanti at Milan, in honour of Oldrado Podestà of that city in 1233, and which thus, with more pith than grammar, celebrates his meritorious acts:—

“Qui solium struxit Catharos *ut debuit* UXIT.”

Other cities were as piously Catholic. A Mantuan chronicler records under 1276: “Captum fuit Sermionum seu redditum fuit Ecclesiæ, et capti fuerunt cercha CL Patarini contra fidem, inter masculos et feminas; qui omnes ducti fuerunt Veronam, et ibi incarcerati, *et pro magna parte* COMBUSTI.” (*Murat. Dissert.* III. 238; *Archiv. Stor. Ital.* N.S. I. 49.)

NOTE 17.—Marsden, followed by Pauthier, supposes these unorthodox ascetics to be Hindu Sanyasis, and the latter editor supposes even the name *Sensi* or *Sensin* to represent that denomination. Such wanderers do occasionally find their way to Tartary; Gerbillon mentions having encountered five of them at Kuku Khotan (*supra*, p. 286), and I think John Bell speaks of meeting one still further north. But what is said of the great and numerous idols of the *Sensin* is inconsistent with such a notice, as is indeed, it seems to me, the whole scope of the passage. Evidently no occasional vagabonds from a far country, but some indigenous sectaries, are in question. Nor would bran and hot water be a Hindu regimen. The staple diet of the Tibetans is *Chamba*, the meal of toasted barley, mixed sometimes with warm water, but more frequently with hot tea, and I think it is probable that these were the elements of the ascetic diet rather than the mere *bran* which Polo speaks of. Samedo indeed says that some of the Buddhist devotees professed never to take any food but tea; knowing people said they mixed with it pellets of sun-dried beef. The determination of the sect intended in the text is, I conceive, to be sought in the history of Chinese or Tibetan Buddhism and their rivals.

Both Baldelli and Neumann have indicated a general opinion that the *Taossé* or some branch of that sect is meant, but they have entered into no particulars except in a reference by the former to *Shien-sien*, a title of perfection affected by that sect, as the origin of Polo’s term *Sensin*. In the substance of this I think they are right. But I believe that in the text this Chinese sect are, rightly or wrongly, identified with the ancient Tibetan sect of *Bon-po*, and that part of the characters assigned belong to each.

First with regard to the *Taossé*. These were evidently the *Patarini* of the Buddhists in China at this time, and Polo was probably aware of the persecution which the latter had stirred up Kúblái to direct against them in 1281—persecution at least it is called, though it was but a mild proceeding in comparison with the thing contemporaneously practised in Christian Lombardy, for in heathen Cathay, books, and not human creatures, were the subjects doomed to burn, and even that doom was not carried out.