

are two mountain ranges, running north and south, and connecting the two chains of Nishadha and Nīla. Gandhamādana and Kāilāsa extend, east and west, eighty Yojanas in breadth, from sea to sea. Nishadha and Pāriyātra are the limitative mountains on the west, stretching, like those on the east, between the Nīla and Nishadha ranges: and the mountains Triṅginga and Jārudhi are the northern limits of Meru, extending, east and west, between the two seas. Thus I have repeated to you the mountains described by great sages as the boundary mountains, situated in pairs, on each of the four sides of Meru.»

In the *Bhāgavata* and *Vāyu Purāṇa* Wilson finds the eight mountains enumerated in a similar way. The *Bhāgavata* places the mountains Kāilāsa and Karavīra south of Meru. Wilson does not believe in the possibility of verifying the position of these different creations of ancient legendary geography of the Hindus, but he thinks the scheme was suggested by imperfect acquaintance with the actual character of the country. Therefore, quoting Humboldt and Ritter he indicates an identity with the Altai, Mustag or Tian-shan, Kwen-lun and Himalaya. And here again we have good reason to doubt whether the ancient sages of India could possess even the faintest idea of the existence of such systems as Altai and Tian-shan, and even Kwen-lun. The very natives of these mountains can even nowadays not be said to have a clear conception of the great orographical systems. The authors of the Purāṇas have constructed a very regular and symmetrical orography bordering the Meru. Humboldt has constructed a geometrical system of ranges in Central Asia. How could ever these constructions agree with each other! The existence of ranges was known, but how they were situated in relation to each other was unknown. Even so late as in Humboldt's days very little was known of the orography between Kwen-lun and Himalaya. To satisfy the demands of the Purāṇa texts the western Himalaya and the Kailas are sufficient; the rest accomplishing the symmetry round Meru is fiction.

The *Vāyu Purāṇa* says there are six mountains in Jambudvīpa, »which lengthen to the eastern side, have excellent summits, are all related to each other, and have the sea both to the east and west». They are named as follows, namely, Hemahaya(?), Himavant, Hemakūṭa, Hemavant, Hairaṇya (which last is) possessed of a splendour equal to the rays of the midday sun and Nishadha.<sup>1</sup>

Of all these the mount Sumeru, which is made of gold . . . is the best.

The *Vāyu Purāṇa* tells us of four Sarovaras or lakes, »which resound with the noise of large birds; their water is clear, propitious, healthy . . . The lakes are adorned

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 32, p. 328 of the manuscript translation of the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, which belongs to the Library of the India Office, and which is the same copy that was prepared for Professor Wilson. It has been placed at my disposal by the courtesy of the India Office. Of its existence in London I received information through the kindness of Dr. F. W. Thomas. I am giving here a few extracts from this translation though they, in some respects, are nearly the same as in the *Vishnu Purāṇa*. The manuscript copy of the translation of the *Matsya Purāṇa* which was also sent to me proved to be superfluous, as it did not contain any geographical details of interest to us.