

Disregarding the problematic value of the *Mānasa-khaṇḍa* we must, at any rate, confess that, in the quoted passages, it contains a good deal of real geography, which, even if it has, as usual, been mixed with mythological legends and tales, still seems to refer to authentic observation in the sacred region round the Manasarovar.

The famous piece of poetry of Kālidāsa, called *Megha-dūta* or Cloud-messenger, is too well known to be entered upon in this connection. I will only quote two or three verses as examples of its geography. In OUVRY's translation verse 11 runs as follows: »The Rajhansas, hearing thy ear-pleasing thunder, that has the power to make the earth (in a state) cropping up with mushroom parasols, and longing to go to the lake Mānasa, will become thy companions in the sky as far as Kāilāsa, as soon as they have made provision for the journey of the fresh cuttings of the Lotus plant.»²

Verse LXIV in Wilson's translation runs thus:

Where bright the mountain's crystal glories break,
Explore the golden lotus-covered lake;
Imbibe the dews of Mānasa, and spread
A friendly veil round Āiravata's head . . .

And verse LXXV runs as follows:

There is the fountain, emerald steps denote,
Where golden buds on stalks of coral float;
And for whose limpid waves the swans forsake,
Pleased at thy sight, the mount-encircled lake.³

The latter verse Ouvry translates literally thus: »And from this, a flight of staires formed of emerald slabs leads to a large oblong pond, covered with golden lotus, with stalks glossy like lapis lazuli. The Hansas, which make their residence in its waters, throw aside regret, for when they see thee, they think no more of the adjacent Mānasa». This means, in Ouvry's opinion, that the Hansas, seeing the cloud which will fill their pond with rain, no longer think of taking their accustomed flight to Mānasa.

There is a good deal of other geography as well as descriptions of very picturesque scenery in the *Megha-dūta*, as for instance the source of the Ganges, and

He, or rather his native informants, have been lead by religious prejudice. Atkinson explains the mistake of the original text, saying that the *Çatadru* in reality goes out of Rakas-tal, but as this lake is in connection with the Manasarovar, the river can be said to start from there. His positive statement of the connection between the Manasarovar and Rakas-tal, given in 1884, must be founded upon Strachey's observations. Whether the channel be dry or not the old text is correct in making the Satej flow out of the Manasarovar, but the statement about the Sarju is wrong.

² The *Megha Dūta* or Cloud Messenger by Kālidāsa, translated into English prose by Colonel H. A. Ouvry. London 1868.

³ The *Megha-dūta* (Cloud-messenger) by Kālidāsa. Translated from the Sanscrit into English verse, . . . by the late H. H. Wilson. Third Edition. London 1867.