

It runs as if the Latin version were partly translated from the Arabian, which is 700 years older.

Grueber and Dorville came from the north, and to them Kuti, now called Nilam-dsong and situated on the Tibetan side of the frontier, was »la première Ville du Royaume de Necbal» (Kircher).

To the Chinese, Nepal, under the name of Ne-po-lo, had been known hundreds of years before Alberuni's time. Hiuen-tsang, the famous and admirable pilgrim, whose journeys fall within 629 and 644, seems to be the first Chinese traveller who gathered information about Nepal, a country which he did not visit, and which had not been mentioned by the great Fa-hian who travelled to the western countries 200 years earlier.<sup>1</sup>

In a book which ought to be called I-tsing His Pilgrims, I-TSING, himself a pilgrim, tells us in very short and pregnant words the experiences and peregrinations of the Chinese Buddhists, who, in the second half of the 7th century, travelled to India, and of whom many, either coming from the north or from the south, crossed Nepal on that horrible road, so graphically described by Alberuni 400 years later. Several of those Chinese pilgrims who would return *viâ* Nepal died there, as they could not support the hard climate of the mountains. Unfortunately there is very little geography in their descriptions, or rather in the annotations of I-tsing. Here is an instance:<sup>2</sup> The Master of Law, Hiuen-t'ai, in 650 to 655 »prit le chemin des T'ou-fan (Tibétains), traversa le Ni-po-louo (Népal) et arriva dans l'Inde du centre», and then returned to his home the same way.<sup>3</sup>

Alberuni's account of this old road is one of the most precious pearls in the geographical literature of the Arabs.

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EDRISI was born at Ceuta about 1100 and had finished his great geography in 1154. He never visited the east himself, but he was a very learned man and made use of all the geographical knowledge of his time, though, as Reinaud supposes, he has not known the account of Suleiman and the remarks of Abu Saïd; from other works he has borrowed whole pages, and he consulted narratives which

<sup>1</sup> Le Népal, Étude historique d'un royaume hindou par SYLVAIN LÉVI. Vol. I. p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Mémoire composé à l'époque de la grande dynastie T'ang sur les Religieux Éminents qui allèrent chercher la loi dans les pays d'occident, par I-tsing, traduit en français par EDOUARD CHAVANNES. Paris 1894, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> When I was in Shigatse in the early spring of 1907, and the Chinese authorities would have me return to India, I made up my mind that the only way I would take in such a case, would be the famous road of the Jesuits and Capuchins and of the Chinese invasion into Nepal in 1792, famous already in the days of HIUEN-TSANG and ALBERUNI. I therefore questioned the Nepalese consul in Shigatse and he gave me a description which in every detail coincides with that of the great Arabian writer. Nothing has changed since then. Coming from the Tibetan side one can use yaks or sheep for transport, or goats as ALBERUNI has it. But where the gorge begins with its dangerous galleries above the precipices, one has to walk on foot.