

Phison entered at the side of Ganges.¹ The Vishnu Punana tells us how the Ganges, after encircling the capital of Brahma, divides into four mighty rivers, flowing in opposite directions, Sita, Alaknanda, Chakshu and Bhadra.

The names and the distances of Edrisi do not, of course, play any part whatever in an account where so much is in confusion. The same is the case with the direction of these rivers. Edrisi makes them enter the lake instead of issuing from it. In the following pages we shall often have to deal with the four rivers issuing from the Manasarovar. DELISLE and TIEFFENTHALER believe, at least partly, in their existence and have them on their maps; Delisle, however, has only two. Even in our own days one hears, from time to time Tibetans asserting that four rivers flow underground to the mouths of the Lion, the Elephant, the Peacock and the Horse, these rivers being the Indus, Satlej, Map-chu, and Tsangpo-Brahmaputra.

The first of Edrisi's four rivers may be the sacred Ganges, »heard of, bathed in, sanctifying all beings», for he says the inhabitants of Adhkach take their children to bathe them and purify them in its water. The natives regard the ablutions in the Téhama as incontestable. Drinking the water heals every sickness, and washing the head with it ensures against headache for a year. The eternal wonders of the Ganges-water believed in by the Hindus have been digested in a more practical way by the Mohammedan writer.

North of the lake are some famous mountains, one of which, Cocaïa, is described as very abrupt and covered with eternal snow. This may be the Kaïlâsa.²

To this discussion it might be objected that Edrisi should have described the Manasarovar as if it were two different lakes, the Berwan and the Téhama, the one in Tibet, and the other in the country of the Adhkach. But this is not at all surprising, for Edrisi is, as a rule, very confused and having taken his information from two different sources about one and the same lake, he very likely believed that he had to do with two quite different lakes in different countries. And we should not forget that both these countries were practically unknown in his time. The same

¹ »Mappamondo di Fra Mauro. Da una copia fotografica dell'originala veneziano, esistente presso l'Istituto Geografico Militare.» Studi Italiani di Filologia Indo-Iranica, Dirett: da FRANCESCO L. PULLÉ. Vol. IV. Atl. della Parte I, Firenze 1901. See below Pl. XIII.

² In this mountain numbers of enormous serpents are living. Such tales were told 150 years later by Marco Polo, though in one case his serpents were crocodiles. Yule: The Book of Ser Marco Polo. Vol. II, p. 76. Of a quite different part, namely, a place belonging to the Presidency of Madras, Marco Polo says: . . . »in those mountains great serpents are rife to a marvellous degree, besides other vermin, and this owing to the great heat. The serpents are also the most venomous in existence, insomuch that any one going to that region runs fearful peril; for many have been destroyed by these evil reptiles». Op. cit. Vol. II, p. 360. There is a great resemblance between this and EDRISI'S: »Il y a dans cette montagne nombre de serpents et de reptiles énormes . . . , d'où résultent des dangers et des obstacles pour quiconque voudrait la gravir.» The following legend on GASTALDI'S map of 1561, placed in a region far to the east of the source of the Ganges, probably refers to Marco Polo's serpents as described in his Vol. II, p. 76: »qui ui sono serpe grandissime»; and the same must be the case with Mercator's legend at the very source of the Ganges, on his map of 1569: »In his montibus sunt serpentes maximi.» I do not know whether Edrisi's serpents are taken from the same source as those of Marco Polo and the old maps.