

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SOURCE OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA ON THE TA-CH'ING MAP.

At the time when DUTREUIL DE RHINS published his work on Central Asia,<sup>1</sup> some reviewers were rather unkind to him and did not think much of a work which was to such a great extent founded on geometrical construction and calculation. I agree with them that the method is insufficient and that only new exploration may clear up the geography of an unknown country. De Rhins himself is aware of this fact, for he says:<sup>2</sup> »En Asie Centrale, l'inconnu conserve de telles proportions qu'une douzaine d'explorateurs à l'œuvre pendant un demi-siècle ne suffiraient pas aux travaux préliminaires d'une topographie sérieuse . . .» Still, I think, *L'Asie Centrale* is an admirable work. It is full of knowledge and erudition from beginning to end. It is scientific and critical and displays a great amount of perspicacity. It shows no end of patience and love for the work. It also shows a great bibliographic knowledge, although it is surprising that he gives only the titles of such German works as Ritter's and Richthofen's, in which he should have found so much information important for his researches. One reads the book with sympathy for it was de Rhins' preparation for the great and beautiful journey on which he lost his life, and which afterwards has been so well described by F. GRENARD.

The principal work from which de Rhins has found his materials is the great Chinese atlas of the dynasty Ch'ing or Manchu, a work which contains also Tibet and is founded on Chinese and Jesuit investigation and afterwards completed and controlled. It is called *Ta-ch'ing-i-t'ung-yü-t'u*, and published 1744—1756—1761—1862. He does not seem to value the Ta-ch'ing map so much as it is worth: »La carte des Ta-ch'ing représente la partie occidentale du Ngari de la façon la plus incomplète et la plus inexacte . . .»<sup>3</sup> On the other hand he has too great a veneration for the *Wei-tsang-t'u-chih* of 1792, from which some extracts are given in a

<sup>1</sup> *L'Asie Centrale*, Paris 1889.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 589.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 522.