

Marco Polo. What he tells us of corals,¹ woollens,² enchanter and astrologers,³ mastiff dogs,⁴ and musk,⁵ agrees perfectly with what is well known of Tibet proper in our time, all the way to the frontier of Ladak and eastwards to the boundary of Szechuan and Yunnan. Only his opinion of the Tibetans is unjust, for so far as my experience goes a more good-tempered and kind-hearted people can hardly be found in the interior of Asia.⁶

Marco Polo has observed that the Tibetans use salt instead of money. All the people of the province of Carajan are said to make a living by salt made from brine-wells.⁷ In the southern parts of Tibet Proper, salt is indeed used as money. In the village of Pasaguk I saw a trading-house with a large store of salt in bags. Here a market is held from time to time, salt being the medium of exchange.⁸

The few glimpses Marco Polo gives us of what *he* calls Tibet are, therefore, so characteristic and true for what *we* call Tibet nowadays, that he very likely has known the far westward extent of this country and may even have believed that it bordered upon Kashmir.⁹ According to him Tibet was subject to the Great Kaan,

¹ See *Trans-Himalaya*, London 1909, I, 55, 380, 381, 385, 386, and III, London 1913, p. 101, and several other places.

² »The valley of Jhansu (Gyangtse) I understood to be particularly famous for the manufacture of woollen cloth, for which there is a very great demand. These cloths, which are confined to two colours, garnet and white, seldom exceed half a yard in breadth: They are woven very thick and close, like our frieze; they are very soft to the touch, for the fleece of their sheep appears to be remarkably fine, and supplies an excellent material. SAMUEL TURNER: *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*, London 1800, p. 225. — Speaking of the market of Gyangtse, the third largest in Tibet, next after Lhasa and Shigatse, WADDELL says that it is »especially celebrated for its woollen cloth and carpet manufactures». — *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, London 1905, p. 196.

³ »Der Geisterglaube und die Geisterbannerei, die Magie überhaupt, spielt in ihm (dem Lamaismus) eine grössere Rolle und hat eine ausgedehntere Praxis, als in jeder andern bekannten Gestaltung der Buddhareligion . . .» KÖPPEN, *op. cit.* II, p. 82.

⁴ From Chumbi WADDELL writes: »The watch-dogs chained up at the doors of the houses gave us a fierce reception. They are huge Tibetan mastiffs — 'the mastiff dogs' of which Marco Polo writes, 'as big as donkeys, which are capital at seizing wild beasts.'» — *Op. cit.* p. 89. In »*Trans-Himalaya*» I have often mentioned the Tibetan dogs, for instance, from Shigatse: »In the court . . . a large black watch-dog, with red eyes and a red swollen ring round his neck, is chained up, and is so savage that he has to be held while we pass», I, p. 385.

⁵ The Tibetan musk is famous, and has been mentioned by all early travellers, from SULEIMAN the merchant, to the Swedish prisoners whom Tsar PETER held in Siberian captivity after 1709. And even now the chief thing that the Chinese get good from Lhasa is musk. Waddell, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

⁶ Waddell says of the Tibetans at Lhasa: »Their friendly demeanor did not bear out MARCO POLO's wholesale denunciation, that 'The people of Tebet are an ill conditioned race.'» *Op. cit.* p. 345.

⁷ Yule's *Marco Polo*. Book II, p. 66.

⁸ *Trans-Himalaya*, II, p. 65. In the German translation more correctly from the Swedish original: *Scheidemünze*, which is exactly the same as in Marco Polo. See also *op. cit.* English edition II, p. 75, and III, p. 5, 23 and 183: »Five sheep's loads of salt were equivalent to four sheep's loads of barley, and the value of every sixth load of salt was the duty demanded by the Government».

⁹ In connection with the passage where he talks of 8 kingdoms Yule has a note: »Here Marco at least shows that he knew Tibet to be much more extensive than the small part he had seen. But beyond this his information amounts to little.» *Op. cit.* Book II, p. 52.