

Then follows the old story of the treatment of the dead, the head being cut off the dead father and given to the son who eats it, while the body is cut to pieces and given to eagles and vultures.

CORDIER suggests that Gota may be derived from Bod, Pot-pa, Buddha-la, Po-ta-la, and finds it, at any rate, to be identical with Lhasa, Odoric thus being the first European who has ever visited this city. In his introduction Cordier says that Odoric returned from Cathay to Europe via Shan-si, Shen-si, Szechuan and Tibet, whereas the rest of his journey remains in darkness; Badakshan, Khorasan, Tabris and Armenia may have been on his route.¹ His journey was completed in 1330.

The first European who ever enters Tibet and reaches its, later on, so desired and mysterious capital, calls the country Riboth and the capital Gota, and that is all the geography we find in his narrative! However, Odoric knew that Tibet bordered upon India, and he tells us that the natives lived in tents of black felt.² The stone houses of Lhasa were white as nowadays,³ and the streets were well paved, a comfort that was abandoned long ago.⁴ He was familiar with the first of the Eight Precepts of Buddhism: 'One should not destroy life'. And he had in Lhasa seen or heard of some high priest, »their pope«, though not yet a DALAI LAMA.

Sir JOHN MANDEVILLE was a contemporary to Odoric, and pretended to have started on a journey of 34 years in 1322, the greatest part of which was accomplished only in his own imagination. His narrative was published between 1357 and 1371, and he was the hero of the great uncritical public for centuries. More critical spirits were struck with the similarity, often word for word, between Mandeville's account and other books of travel, amongst them the narrative of Odoric.⁵ Some writers

¹ Op. cit. p. XXIX.

² He has therefore travelled through districts inhabited by nomads, before he reached districts with cities and temples.

³ Abbé Huc says of the houses of Lhasa: »elles sont entièrement blanchies à l'eau de chaux, à l'exception de quelques bordures et des encadrements des portes et des fenêtres qui sont en rouge ou en jaune... Les habitants de Lha-Ssa étant dans l'usage de peindre tous les ans leurs maisons, elles sont habituellement d'une admirable propreté, et paraissent toujours bâties de fraîche date...» — Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie, le Thibet et la Chine, 1844—1846. Paris 1853, Tome II, p. 247.

⁴ »If the original description of the place by Father Andrade had any real foundation, the capital of Tibet has changed sadly for the worse, for not even the kindest advocate could find in the slosh and filth of every street, or in the ramshackle structures which cumber every available inch of ground beside the heavier houses, the well-paved thorough-fares and dignified architecture which he describes.» PERCEVAL LANDON: Lhasa, London 1905, Vol. II, p. 206. — He obviously means Odoric, for Andrade was never in Lhasa.

⁵ In BERGERON's work we read: Ces deux voyages d'Oderic & de Mandeville sont si semblables l'un à l'autre, soit aux choses vraies, soit aux fabuleuses, dont ils sont remplis, qu'il sembla qu'ils aient été pris l'un de l'autre; mais il y a plus d'apparence que Mandeville l'ait pris d'Oderic, qui mourut dès l'an 1331...» — Voyages faits principalement en Asie dans les XII, XIII, XIV et XV Siecles... Tome I, a la Haye 1735, p. 53.