

ber's accounts is very sharply modelled by Gerbillon. Amongst all travellers in eastern Asia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Jesuits are the most reliable, scientific and successful. And amongst the Jesuits those of Latin race, especially Frenchmen and Italians, are the best.

So far Great Tartary had been a very vague geographical region, something like the Scythia of the ancients or Si-fan of the Chinese. Father Gerbillon does not hesitate to demarcate its boundaries: on the west it has Moscovy, the Caspian Sea, and a part of Persia; on the south the same part of Persia, the Mogol, Arracan and Ava, China and Corea, on the east the Oriental Sea and on the north the Glacial Ocean.<sup>1</sup> Most of this vast country is, he says, either under the Emperor of China or the Czar of Moscau. Only the country of Yusbek, a part of that of the Calmucs or Calmaks, Tibet, and some small states in the mountains of Ava and Se tchuen, are independent.

Gerbillon's memoir is of rather historical content. But in describing different expeditions and events he shows how well he knows such places as Touroufan or Tourfan, Yarkian or Yarkan, Hami or Cami, Thibet, Toubet or Tangout, Poutala, Lassa or Barantola. The Dalai Lama resides in his palace, built on the mountain Poutala. »At the foot of this mountain one sees a rather great river flowing, which is called Kaltjou mouren.» It is said to be a very nice place, and in the middle of the mountain is the pagoda with its seven stories. This is probably the first time that the Ki-chu of Lhasa has been mentioned by a European.

A Chinese official in Peking told Gerbillon that it was 400 leagues from Sining to Poutala, and that he had made the journey, during winter, in 46 days. He had found habitations nearly everywhere. »It took him 20 days to reach a place called by the Chinese Tsing sou hai. It is a Lake, or rather it is three Lakes, so near each other that they form only one. It is there that is situated the source of the Yellow River, called in Chinese Hoang ho, which at this place is only a little river with very clear water. To begin with it takes its course towards the south, between the mountains from which it gets the water, and, having grown in volume by the water from the rivulets and the little rivers that flow from the whole country of Coconor, it enters China near Ho tcheou. The same mandarin told me that in the country of Coconor he had passed a river called Altang kol, which means in the Mongol tongue Gold River; it has hardly more than 3 feet in depth, and it empties itself into the Lakes of Tsing sou hai.» He describes how the gold is exploited and says that it forms the principal revenue of the Coconor princes. In many other rivers of the Grand Lama's states gold is found and sent to China.

Martini, in 1655, had brought the first news of the source of the Yellow river to Europe, and he had entered the two lakes on his map.<sup>2</sup> Forty years later

<sup>1</sup> Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise, Par le P. J. B. du Halde. Tome quatrième. Paris 1770, p. 33 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 193.