

Barros has misunderstood his informant and supposed that the Indo-Chinese rivers were meant. But the informant has meant the four rivers which were supposed to take their rise from the sacred lake of Brahma, and one of which was the Caor river. It is easy to understand that in a time when even Tibet was unknown, nobody would be able to locate this lake, even approximately at its right place. We have also to remember the form and situation given to India, the Indus and the Ganges. It would have seemed absurd to think that the Indus and Ganges came from the same lake as the Caor river. For then the Caor would have been forced to make an enormous bend through the Diserto de Camvl and Monte Naugracot and to enter into very intimate contact with the Chinese rivers. The more natural it appeared that the Indo-Chinese rivers came from the lake that Barros or his informants had heard of.

Barros may have got news of a journey from India to China, or *vice versa*, by some now unknown native or European traveller, or perhaps about several journeys undertaken on that line. He has been told that the road crosses four great and almost parallel rivers. At the same time Barros may have heard that a lake, the source of four great rivers, existed somewhere to the north. He could not know that this lake was the Manasarovar, nor that the rivers were the Indus, Satlej, Map-chu and Brahmaputra. So, very naturally, he identified the rivers with those crossed on the road between India and China. This is most probably the real and fundamental cause of the transformation of the real Manasarovar into the imaginary Chiamay.

It is surprising that the elementary laws of physical geography, of erosion and bifurcation, could be so completely unknown that every geographer born since 1550 accepted without the slightest attempt of opposition such a monstrosity as four rivers, in five branches, flowing out in almost the same direction from one and the same lake. This is exactly what innumerable natives of India and Tibet believed to take place, and still believe, — in the case of the Manasarovar! But that Europeans could be taken in so far is indeed surprising.

Manasarovar became known to the Jesuits in Peking in the beginning of the eighteenth century. In 1733 d'Anville made it known to Europe. Before that time the lake had been unknown, — and still it had existed for 183 years on nearly all maps, but at a wrong place, feeding wrong rivers, and possessing a false name.

We must leave it to philologists to settle the question of the derivation of the name Chiamay. In Hindu mythology the Himalaya mountains have many different names, as Himāchala, Himādri, Himavat, and others. Alberuni calls them Himavant. Moorcroft in 1812 writes Himachal, Francis Hamilton, 1819, Himadra and Himaliya, James Fraser, 1820, Himālā, and so forth, innumerable variations only 100 years ago. How easily could not the word have been misunderstood 360 years ago! And Chiamay is not so very far from Himalay. The informant may not have known the name of the lake and simply called it the Himalaya lake, and indeed the Manasarovar is still regarded as one of the most sacred »tirthas» amongst the Himalaya Mountains.

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