

or Piccolo Thibet, which in the native language was called Baltistan. From there he entered the Secondo or Gran Thibet, which is called Lhatà-yul by the natives. The capital is Lhè or Lhatà, where they arrived on June 26th. Here they were received with great honours and hospitality by King Nima Nangial, the ministers, Lamas and others.

From Leh their way goes eastwards over an uninhabited plain, called Ciangh-thangh, »the north plain», and finally they arrive in Trescij-khang, or Tashi-gang, as we call it. They left Leh on 17th of August and reached Tashi-gang on 7th of September. A part of this journey took them through mountainous and inhabited country, but later on they arrived at »a wide plain, Ciangh-thang, a great part of which was occupied by dead and rotten water, veins of sulphur and pools of sulphurous water». This »rotten» water and the pestilential air was very dangerous both to men and animals. For some days they had to abstain, as far as possible, from drinking the bad water.

From this description it is not easy to say which road Desideri has really taken between Leh and Tashi-gang. For on the ordinary road there is no bad water nor are there sulphurous pools. The whole way long one is close upon the Indus, and has no need whatever to drink bad water, so much the more as the river is at its highest level at the end of August and beginning of September, and therefore large enough even for very thirsty Jesuits.

So far as I can see, Desideri has not taken the high-road along the Indus, but has gone viâ Rudok. On this northern route he may easily have come across salt water pools. Thus he would have had to cross the western part of Transhimalaya in order to descend from the Chang-tang to Tashi-gang. It must, however, be remembered that the name Chang-tang does not only belong to the plateau-land north of Transhimalaya. For at the present day, when Ladaki merchants go from Leh to Gartok, they always say that they are crossing or going to Chang-tang. Still, Desideri would never have complained of the water if he had followed the Indus.

Trescij-khang »is the last inhabited place in this direction» with a fortress and a surrounding wall and a moat with bridges. Here the dominion of the Second Tibet comes to an end and the Third Tibet begins. As the place was a frontier fortress there was a governor and a garrison in Tashi-gang. The fortress had at some periods belonged to Ladak, and the Dsungarians, and the Tartars of high independent Tartary, who were known to be very ambitious, unreliable and treacherous, were not far off. The King of Second Tibet had given the missionaries letters of

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the pass of Paien-i-Kotal or Bal-Tal (above—below), otherwise Shur-ji-La (pronounce Zoj-i-La), the hill of Siva, is, by thermometer, about 10,500 feet. The pass I have just descended, is that which is marked as mount Kantal in the old maps. Kantal means a lofty hill or pass, and as it happens to be that by which the low land of Kashmir is quitted on the highway to Duras, it was, of course, noticed by the Jesuit missionary Desideri in his way to Great Tibet and Butan.» G. T. Vigne: Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo etc. London 1844, Vol. II, p. 395.