

In the more detailed part of the narrative we read, amongst other things:¹

»This place is called Ngari Giongar and is approached by this people with great respect and veneration on account of a certain Urghien (= Padma Sambava), who is the founder of the religion which is professed in Tibet. — In the same Ngari Giongar there is a mountain, tremendously high, very large in circumference, with the summit covered by clouds and with eternal snow and ice and also very horrible, rocky and difficult on account of the most bitter cold that is reigning there.»

In a grotto in this mountain, Urghien was said to have lived in total retirement and continual contemplation. But now it was used as a temple, and in an annexed monastery there were a Lama and some religious men. The Tibetans visit the grotto where they leave some offerings, and then with much zeal, they make the wandering round the whole mountain which takes some days, and by which they believe that they will receive the greatest indulgence for themselves.

This description of the Kailas and of the Tibetans' veneration for the sacred mountain is also admirable.

»Three weeks after Ngari, going towards the east, you reach another valley called Toscioa; and after some more days of journey another 'rigida campagna' where the lake of Retoa is to be found.»

Or more detailed: »The 1st of December we arrived at a plain place more free from snow, which is called Toscioa». To let the men and animals get some rest the princess stayed here for two days. Here some shepherds' tents were found. The shepherds were grazing great flocks of ponies, mules and yaks, belonging to the Gran Lama and to the king.

If he did not say that he had some more days from Toscioa to the lake, I should have identified Toscioa with Tokchen. Although, of course, and as he has had particular opportunity to study the pilgrims' wanderings round Kailas and the Manasarovar, one may be allowed to conjecture that he went down from Kailas viâ Darchen to Tokchen, and thence round the lake. This becomes the more plausible when we read the next passage, the most important and interesting in the whole narrative of this able and intelligent Father:²

»Further on we passed a plain called Retoâ, where there is a great lake which has a circumference of some days walking, and from which the Ganges is supposed to originate. However, as a consequence of what I could observe on my way and which I heard experts of the places as well as of the Mogol to agree in, it seems to me that the above mentioned mount of Ngari Giongar should be recognized as the true origin and source of the Ganges, as well as of the river Indus. That mount being the highest, from which the land slopes on both sides, the one as well as the other, the waters, either from rain or from melting snow, which descends from there on the western side, flow into the second Tibet, as practically shown by facts; and after having gone through it, cross the Little Tibet. Then rushing down through all the mountains of Kashmir, they finally approach Little Guzaratte to form the Indus, very

¹ Op. cit. p. 44 et seq.

² Op. cit, p. 45.