

Then he talks again of the flocks and shepherds and the great amount of butter that goes from this region to Lhasa and other places. On the 22nd of December he came to another plain where he also found several tents and shepherds wandering about with their flocks. In spite of the desert being arid enough and totally devoid of sedentary population, still the Grand Lama has a great profit from its gold and butter as well as from the tolls levied from the merchants of Gartok.

»January the 4th, 1716, having finally terminated to descend the whole of this great desert we arrived to the first population in the third Thibet.»

In Serchià,¹ which was a big fortified place and the capital of the province of Zang-to and where there was a great governor, they had to stop on account of the sickness of the princess. On January the 28th they left Serchià and travelled through many villages and inhabited places, but they had to travel slowly for the princess' sake.

Fifteen days from Serchià they reached another big fortified place, which is the beginning of the kingdom of Sechià.² From here they had 4 or 5 days to the great city of Giegazzè,³ »the capital of the old kingdom of Zang-to, which nowadays is divided into 2 provinces: Zang-to, the capital of which is Serchià, and Zang-me, the capital of which is Giegazzè». ⁴ Over Chiangzè (Gyangtse) the party finally arrived in Lhasa on the 18th of March 1716.

A special chapter in the valuable publication of Desideri's narrative has received the title: *Difficoltà del viaggio*, and contains a perfectly admirable description of all the hardships Desideri and his fellow travellers met with on their way, where, during 3 months, they did not see a single village and where they had to bring with them all the necessary provisions, tea, butter, roasted corn flour and mutton, which was excellently preserved by the cold. The horses had to be fed with flour and corn as no grass could be found on account of the snow. They obtained water by melting ice and snow, which, however, can only have been for a certain part of the road; as for the rest they had the Tsangpo near at hand. No firewood worth mentioning could be found and they had to collect droppings of horses and yaks. Camping was cold and uncomfortable on the snow-covered ground. They used round Tartar tents. But whether these were pitched on sand or on frozen ground, they were very much exposed to the furious wind. Desideri tells us how they were dressed and how difficult it was to save one's nose, hands, and feet from being frost-bitten.

The journey is described as specially hard, as one has to be in the saddle before sunrise and ride the whole day till sunset. Amongst innumerable mountains one has to proceed in ice and snowfall, and from scarceness of grass the horses

¹ Probably Saka-dsong.

² Sakya-gompa.

³ Shigatse.

⁴ I. e. Tsang-tod and Tsang-med, the upper and lower Tsang.