

either die halfway or become incapable of proceeding any farther. When leaving Ladak, Desideri and Freyre and their servants had seven horses, of which only two reached Lhasa, both in the most miserable condition. »Add to all this the impracticability of the road itself, which always is horrible and rocky and where one has continually to rise and descend between terrible mountains and to travel through eternal snowfall and ice-cold, and always to be exposed to the inclemency of the air and the highest rigour of the most bitter and penetrating winds.»

The two Fathers, their three Christian servants and their »infidel» interpreter used to pack their frozen tents in the morning, load their ponies, put the saddles on their riding horses, breakfast and go on. When camping they used to clean the ground from snow, pitch the tents, make them strong with the aid of stones and ropes. Then the animals were let loose, yak dung was collected, fire was made and dinner prepared. In the meantime the fathers read their prayers. And then came the night, cold and uncomfortable, and giving only a minimum of rest.

This description of the manner of travelling in Tibet is classical. Space forbids me to quote it in detail. Hardly any modern traveller has done it better. It is a real and great pleasure to read Desideri's book.

In the next chapter we find his description of Lhasa and its surroundings. Speaking of the vast province of Kham he says that in olden times it was a separate kingdom and that it stretches to the very frontier of China. Several times he mentions the great river, but does not know its name, Tsangpo. When going from Sam-yeè to Zè-thang »one has to cross a great river». Once he speaks of the part of Tibet which is situated »a settentrione del gran fiume». In this northern part of Tibet there is another great desert of three months which begins one day's journey from Lhasa where one goes to the north towards Dam. It continues to Siling. And he talks of the provinces »south of the above mentioned river».

Desideri tells us of the province of Cong-bo that it is divided in the middle by a great river, the same, concerning which he has before said that it passes near Jegaçè, Lhasà and Çe-thang,¹ and which grows bigger by and by on account of all the tributaries it receives on such a long distance. Farther on in some places the river has more space to extend itself.

»In these countries of Cong-bò it has often a more narrow bed and the banks on both sides are higher. In such places the banks make the river very charming, as they are full of cypresses, in which Cong-bò is very rich. All those parts of Cong-bò, which are situated south of the said river, are to the south bounded by the above mentioned peoples called Lhobà' i. e. meridional peoples.»

When Desideri talks of »un gran fiume . . . che passa vicino a Jegaçè, vicino a Lhasà e vicino a Çe-thang . . .» one feels tempted to think that he has made the same extraordinary mistake as BELIGATTI, who practically believed that the Tsangpo

¹ The same names are often spelt in different ways. I have not changed the spelling.