

CHAPTER XVII.

KAWAGUCHI.

I now come to a very wonderful and interesting — and amusing narrative of a journey in Tibet, accomplished by the SHRAMANA EKAI KAWAGUCHI.¹ He left Japan for Tibet in June 1897 and returned to Japan in May 1903. His object was to study the sacred texts of the Holy Religion and to compare Chinese versions of Buddhist texts with Tibetan. After having met SARAT CHANDRA DAS in Darjeeling, he visited Buddhagaya in January 1899, went back to Calcutta and thence to Nepal and Katmandu, where he made up his mind to visit the Manasarovar and Kailas. »Fortunately a good pretext was at hand for me. For I happened to think of the identity of the lake Manasarovara with the Anavatapta Lake that often occurs in the Buddhist texts. However divided the scholastic views are about this identity, it is popularly accepted, and that was enough for my purpose. The identity granted, it could be argued that Mount Kailasa, by the side of the lake, was nature's Mandala, sacred to the memory of the Buddha, which formed an important station for Buddhist pilgrims. So one day I said to my host: 'Having come thus far, I should always regret a rare opportunity lost, were I to make a stork's journey from here to Lhasa, and thence to China. The Chinese text speaks of Mount Kailasa (Tib. Kang Rinpo Che) rising high on the shore of lake Manasarovara (Tib. Maphamyumtsho). I want to visit that sacred mountain on my way home . . . '»²

We may read all the European visitors' accounts without once finding the real and correct name for one of the most famous mountains on the earth. But as soon as an Asiatic goes there he finds it out at once and calls it correctly Kang Rinpo Che.³ If that had been done in due time, the unfortunate name Gangri would never have been introduced on European maps, for every ice-mountain is a Gangri or Kang-ri just as in countries with the Turkish language every ice-mountain is a Mus-tagh. As to the Tibetan name of the lake I heard it pronounced as Mavang or Mavam,

¹ »Three Years in Tibet». Published by the Theosophist Office, Adyar, Madras, 1909.

² Op. cit., p. 38.

³ Compare my »Trans-Himalaya» II and on the map, where it is called Kang-rinpoche.