

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LAKES AND SOURCES DESCRIBED BY MODERN COMPILATORS.

To give an idea of the European knowledge of the geography of our lakes and the sources of the great rivers in the years preceding the latest visits, I have in this chapter brought together the views of some competent geographers, who have published books on Tibet generally, or otherwise paid attention to its geography.

On his journey in the upper valleys of the Himalaya ANDREW WILSON also proceeded to Shipki, above which place he suspected »the plains of the upper Sutlej» should be situated in »Chinese Tibet». He thinks that some of the peaks of the Kailas may be higher than Gaurisankar and that it well deserves to be called the centre of the world. This cluster of mountains he regards, at any rate, as »the greatest centre of elevation, and the point from whence flow the Sutlej, the Indus, and the Brahmaputra.» Regarding the upper Indus he says it is unknown above Ladak: »As the Sutlej is supposed to proceed from the mouth of a crocodile (at another place he correctly says elephant), so the Indus comes from that of a lion.» On his map: »A map to illustrate the Abode of Snow by A. Wilson Esq^{re} 1875», the Satlej does not come from the »Tibetan Kailas» at all, but from the country east of Manasarovar and flows through both lakes.¹

A nameless author in the Calcutta Review says of the source of the Satlej: »The head waters of the Sutlej pass from their springs on the north-east of Rakas Tal through that lake, but the stream is soon turned from its lateral course by the southern extremity of the snow-clad spur which runs from Hanle to a point south of Gartok.»²

LÉON FEER in his excellent little book³ on Tibet categorically declares: »Au pied du Kailâsa, deux lacs voisins communiquant entre eux, dont l'un, le plus oriental,

¹ The Abode of Snow. Observations on a Journey from Chinese Tibet to the Indian Caucasus, through the upper valleys of the Himalaya, by Andrew Wilson. Edinburgh and London, 1876, p. 117, 173 and 407.

² Trans-Himalayan missions and their Results. The Calcutta Review, Vol. LXIV, 1877, p. 150.

³ Le Tibet, le pays, le peuple, la religion. Paris 1886, p. 11.