

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES ON THE UPPER TSANGPO.

It is surprising that DESIDERI, although he passed the Tsangpo several times and describes its course between Shigatse and Lhasa, as well as the bridges and boats, does not give any information about its upper course and its source. And still he was, together with FREYRE, the first European who ever passed by Maryum-la and thus came very near to the source. At any rate he could not call the Maryum-chu the source of the river as he does not mention the name of this pass. Nor has BELIGATTI, in his admirable description, anything to say of the origin of the Tsangpo. Father GEORGI, who gets his wisdom from Orazio Della Penna, Beligatti and other missionaries, has the following interesting passage, in which we partly recognise an old well-known story: »P. Horatius Pinnabillensis (della Penna) *lacum* describit in Provincia Tibetana *Ngari* ad confinia *Caskar*, ex quo testantur Indigenæ flumina quatuor exoriri, *Indum* nimirum, *Gangem*, & *Tzhang-pò*, sive *Tzhang-ciù*, aut etiam *Tsangjà* dictum. Istud Lhassam rapidissimo cursu præterfluit: conjungitur cum *Cihasum* ad Arcem *Ciuciur*: mergitur post longa viarum intervalla in lacum *Lopà*; inde rursus emergit, sese tandem in *Gangem* exonerat.»¹

It is obvious that Georgi, from the reports he had got of the missionaries, regarded the four great rivers: Gihon, Sihon, Indus and Ganges as originating either from »Caskar» or from its neighbour, the Tibetan province Ngari, for in a heading he says: »Origines fluviorum Gihonis, Sihonis, Indi, & Gangis in Caskar, sive in confinibus Provinciæ Tibetanæ Ngari.»² And further: »Tzang-ciù fluvii scatebra eadem, quæ Gangis, & Indi,»³ where »scatebra» is the most verbal translation of the Tibetan *kabab*. Now as the Ganges is said to come from the lake in Ngari, the Tsangpo originates from the same lake, namely the Manasarovar. The information

¹ Alphabetum Tibetanum Romæ MDCCLXII, p. 343.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem.