

direction.¹ Under the heading: »Delle Barche di pelle» Desideri gives a very clever general description of the river. He is a practical man, so that the way in which the river is crossed interests him more than the river itself. And still he has much sounder views than even Klaproth more than a hundred years later. Desideri says: »It is necessary to know that, as the whole kingdom of Thibet is mountainous, the water that comes down from the mountains is forming various rivers, but particularly forms a principal river, which, from the western regions, is running towards the east and is flowing through the whole of the third Tibet, in the middle of it; and after having crossed the province of Kong-bò, which is further east, it penetrates through the countries of the Lhobàs, and from there descends to Rangmati, a province of Mogol; from there it goes to Ganges, in which this principal river of Thibet finally comes to an end. Although the Thibetans have, in some places, big ferryboats of wood for crossing this river, still they use as a rule hide-boats. Such boats are not of an acute form, but of the same breadth all over, and in the bottom they are flat, in which way they do not sink into the water, but keep fleeting on the water, and thus are very easy to turn round. Ordinarily they are composed of 3 or 4 yak hides, sewed together, and which remain stretched and convex in the bottom, by help of some bowed laths.»² In the same detailed and correct way he describes the chain bridges over the river.

On his journey from Nepal to Lhasa Father BELIGATTI came to Tingri.³ There he mentions »a river flowing from west to east», which is of course the Tingrichu, a tributary to the Arun. He followed the river several days and observed how it grew bigger. Finally he crossed it on a bridge. He calls it Bontsutsambo, which MAGNAGHI identifies as the Phungtu of Stieler and the Poùmtsouk-Zzango-tsiou of Klaproth. The same river is called Ponciu on van de Putte's sketch-map. Later on, beyond Gyangtse, he mentions »the river which goes to Kiansè», which is Nyang-chu. Then Beligatti says: »The morning of the 3d (January 1741) we descended still a little, and entered the valley through which passes the river Tzanciù which we had seen from the height of the mountain of Kambalà; we travelled on the bank of this river for a distance of 3 kos, sometimes rising, sometimes descending between great blocks, and finally arrived at the place of the boat, on which one has to cross the river to the other bank.»⁴ Then follow some curious statements: »The river Tzanciù descends precipitously from the height of a broad ravine in the mountains N.E. of Lhasa; the head of the river is about a kos further north from the city, and, following the foot of the mountains, the river suddenly becomes great and rapid and it runs a long way south, at the foot of the mountains.» He describes the canals from the

¹ Il Tibet etc. ed. C. Puini, p. 54.

² Ibidem p. 100. Compare with this description of the boats the following: »A skeleton, or rather framework, of thin tough boughs and laths is tied fast together, and is covered with four yak hides sewed together, which are attached to a rim . . .» Trans-Himalaya, I, p. 288.

³ Relazione inedita di un viaggio al Tibet . . . A. Magnaghi. Firenze 1902.

⁴ Op. cit. p. 66.