

CHAPTER XLI.

THE PUNDITS AND THE TSANGPO-BRAHMAPUTRA PROBLEM.

The names of several Pundits are also associated with the desperate attempts to identify the upper course of the Brahmaputra.

We have seen that DU HALDE believed the Tsangpo were the same river as the Brahmaputra for he says: »Il est vraisemblable qu'il coule vers le Golphe de Bengale: car du moins on sçait sûrement que des limites du Thibet il va Sud-Oüest à la mer, & que par conséquent il coule vers Aracan, où près de l'emboûchure du Gange dans le Mogol, que les Thibetains nomment Anonkek ou Anongen.»¹ DESIDERI knew that the principal river of Tibet comes to an end in Mogol where it meets the Ganges.² To DELLA PENNA, BELIGATTI, and all the Capuchin missionaries in Lhasa the same fact was well known, and GEORGI says of the Tsangpo: »se tandem in Gangem exonerat».³ TURNER tells the same story in plain and clear words. The whole hydrographical situation was well known to the Tibetans. But, as RICHTHOFEN remarks, before the real hydrography was accepted in Europe, long phases of erroneous opinions had to be gone through.⁴ On his map of 1751 d'ANVILLE had joined the Tsangpo with the Irrawaddi. To this Major RENNELL makes the following very clever remark, founded on researches on the very spot:

»The Sanpoo, or Thibet river, was supposed by M. d'Anville to be the same with that which is called, in the lower part of its course, the river of Ava: but we have now little doubt of its being the same with the Burrampooter, which enters Bengal on the north-east, and joins the Ganges near the sea. It was traced by me in 1765, to about 400 miles above the conflux; that is, as high as the latitude of 26°, longitude 91°; where the Bengal districts end, and those of Assam begin: but I was not permitted to go any higher . . .

¹ Description de l'Empire de la Chine IV, p. 471.

² See above p. 268.

³ Alphabetum Tibetanum, p. 343.

⁴ China III, p. 380.