

»En allant de H'lasseï-tsiô-k'hang,<sup>1</sup> vers le nord, on sort par le défilé de la rivière de Yang-ba-djian, on passe le pont neuf, et on entre dans la plaine. A l'ouest de ce point commence le Tibet ultérieur, qui s'étend à l'est jusqu'au monastère de Ghâldan; au nord, on traverse de vastes prairies et on arrive à la rivière Mourou oussou et à Garzzang-goutcha, sur la frontière du pays du lac Koukou-noor. Au nord-est du H'lasseï-tsiô-k'hang, on passe par la montagne Keriye-la, par Nak-tsang, et autres endroits, on traverse le désert de Gobi et on arrive sur le grand chemin qui conduit à Yarkiang et à la nouvelle frontière. Toute la contrée est sablonneuse et remplie de cailloux; l'eau et l'herbe y manquent. Les gens du pays l'appellent Gobi et Ola, c'est-à-dire les Montagnes.»<sup>2</sup>

Ritter already observes that the Chinese author has N.E. instead of N.W. for this extraordinary road which nowadays is never used, nor even known by the natives. The Keriye-la is, as Klaproth observes, the Keriya-davan of the Turkish tribes of Little Bokharia or Eastern Turkestan. The usual name is Keriya-kotel. It is less surprising that the pass was known to the Chinese in 1791—92, than that a road is reported to have crossed the whole of the Tibetan plateau land diagonally from Lhasa to Keriya and Yarkand, probably passing through the province of Naktsang, and, of course, crossing the Transhimalaya. It may be that after the conquest of the country of the Dsungarians and of Eastern Turkestan, Chien Lung wished to establish communication between the different parts of the empire, and as the frontier was new, the road may have been a new one. But it is also possible that it was a very old road. At any rate the road was known to exist in 1792, and no other road on the earth could be compared with it in absolute height the whole way long. It may have been the same road on which the general of Tsevang Rabtân, Tseringdondob, marched with his army in 1717 from Eastern Turkestan, »auf höchst beschwerlichen und gefährlichen Pfaden über das Gebirge südlich von Khotan in den Norden des Schneereiches ein und soll sogar die Defilés am Geistersee (Tengri Noor) und die noch südlicheren, wenige Tagemärsche von der Hauptstadt gelegenen, die nur auf Kettenbrücken überschritten werden können, widerstandslos passirt haben . . .»<sup>3</sup>

It is curious that 200 years ago there should have existed a road through the Chang-tang, passing the Kwen-lun, the Kara-korum and Transhimalaya and all the other parallel ranges, between Khotan and Lhasa, and that it should be possible to take an army that way. Those who believe in modern climatic changes

<sup>1</sup> Lha ssai mtschhod khang, Lhasa's house of sacrifice. Compare Köppen, op. cit. p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> Rockhill has made some extracts from the same work. He gives the names of all the stations on the road from Lhasa to Sining in Chinese. On the section from Lhasa to Nakchu Nien-chen-tang-la must be crossed. On the southern side of the 5th station is the Cha-la mountain; south of the 9th station is mount Cho-tzü, and south of the 11th station is the Lang-li mountain, which may belong to our Nien-chen-tang-la. Of the road to Yarkand Rockhill has the following passage: »North-west from the Jo k'ang of Lh'asa, passing the Ko-li-yé la and mount Na-ko, one comes by the Gobi (Kou-pi) to the high road to Yarkand (Yeh-erh-chiang) and the New dominion.» Journal Royal Asiatic Society 1891, p. 102 and 202.

<sup>3</sup> C. F. Köppen: Die Lamaische Hierarchie und Kirche. Band II, p. 194.