

CHAPTER XVIII.

NAIN SING'S JOURNEY IN 1873—74, — AND OTHER EXPLORATIONS.

The next journey of a native explorer is the most important of all as it takes us through a country about which even the Chinese maps and texts kept silent. The best and most famous of Pundits, Nain Sing was selected by Captain (now Sir HENRY) TROTTER. In the following I will quote some important passages from Trotter's brilliant report on Nain Sing's journey.¹

The Pundit left Leh on July 15th, 1873, and went over Tánksé, Chágra and Marsimik-Lá (18 420 feet) to Niágzu Rawang where he crossed the frontier of Tibet. He followed the northern shore of Panggong-tso and reached Noh, and he was the first to determine the eastern extension of this lake. He says the ordinary name of the lake is Chomo Gna Laring Cho or the »Female narrow very long lake.»² From Noh starts the road to Khotan *viâ* Polu and Keriya. By the settled population farther south the nomads in these regions were called *Changpas* or North-men.

Of the Tibetan plateau it is said that it extends eastward »as far as the headwaters of the great rivers which water China, — in fact for a distance of more than 800 miles to the Bourhan Búda Mountains, where we still find a table-land (Huc, Prshevalskiy) rising from 14 000 to 15 000 feet above the sea-level, above which tower gigantic snow-covered mountains». At present we know that the country cannot be called a plateau in the ordinary sense of the word, for in reality it is a country of open, broad valleys with mountain ranges between.

The Pundit's road continues E.S.E. in a wide, open, grassy valley, 6 to 10 miles broad, bounded by low grass-covered hills. Eight days east of Noh he came to a fresh lake, Tháchap-tso; the banks of a stream entering it from north-east, were covered with dense forest of willow, tamarisk and other shrub. The open valley was called »sang». A little to the south of Nain Sing's first 10 days' march from Noh is the route of the Pundit who travelled from Rudok to Tok-jalung. East of Noh he

¹ »Account of the Pundit's Journey in Great Tibet from Leh in Ladákh to Lhása, and of his Return to India *viâ* Assam». *Journal Royal Geogr. Society*, Vol. 47, 1877, p. 86 et seq.

² I never heard this name in 1901. It should be compared with Nganglaring-tso. The name I heard was Tso-ngombo or the »Blue Lake».