

should therefore attempt to set forth the general architectural features of the Tibetan swelling would be certain to lose himself in this very gap in guesses and theories devoid of all foundation. Rather than expose myself to such a risk, I have resolved to study that unknown region with my own eyes on the spot. It is only when this gap has been filled up and the white patches on our maps have given place to new groups of lakes and new mountain-ranges and new rivers — it is only then that the attempt to convey a faithful picture of the morphology of the Tibetan highlands, and to get to the bottom of the genetic causes of the existing surface forms, can be successfully carried out; for it is only then that the necessary material will be available and the necessary general view of the whole, without which it is impossible to write a physico-geographical monograph of any value. Under these circumstances therefore I prefer to postpone giving a general account of the country until after my return from the journey upon which I am now just about to start. The work which I shall then hope to be able to write may be regarded as the immediate continuation and completion of this which I herewith bring to a close.»

I have quoted these words to show my own standpoint so late as in 1905, when all my predecessors had finished their work. About the time when I closed my manuscript, or in the beginning of the autumn 1905, the famous Khalamba-la was, however, crossed by the French traveller Count DE LESDAIN.¹ He had accomplished a remarkable and clever journey from Peking through Mongolia and Eastern Tibet and reached India *viâ* Sikkim. It is a pity that he crossed the Transhimalaya through the same pass, which had already once been taken by the Pundit of 1872. He did not add anything beyond what was already known from the Pundit's journey. The performance is very plucky and courageous, regarding all the difficulties he had to conquer. But it was not scientific and had no special object. On the map only 9 heights are given, and in the book the altitudes are very few. Several of those 9 heights have been determined by others. The morphological and orographical description is not clear, which is a great pity. De Lesdain's description of these gigantic mountains confirms what I have said before, namely that the narratives of all the eyewitnesses who have seen and crossed the Transhimalaya talk of it as if it were forbidden to enter upon any details. From Huc's narrative we must be satisfied with guesses; in Littledale's, Bonvalot's, Grenard's and the Pundits' we read only a few words or some poetical exclamations over the beauty of the Nien-chen-tang-la. De Lesdain does not even tell us which pass he has crossed, and it is only from his little sketch-map and from his description of Namling and Shang-chu, that we understand he has taken the road of Khalamba-la.

Count de Lesdain is surprised that he was not stopped by the Tibetans. In this respect he had the same experience as I. He travelled late in 1905, I reached Shigatse February 1907. It was obviously the Younghusband mission that made it easier both for de Lesdain and me to cross the country. Now it will probably be different.

His journey includes the period from Juli 1904 to November 1905. The route is situated to the west of Huc. Both in its northern part, in Mongolia, and

¹ Voyage au Thibet par la Mongolie, de Pékin aux Indes. Paris 1908.