

Before leaving this field, from which we have nothing to gain regarding our mountain system, I will only insert a quotation giving an idea of the poetical garb in which the mountain giants north of India were dressed in Sanskrit literature. It is the beginning of the first Canto of KALIDASA'S poem *The Birth of the War-God*:¹

Far in the north Himálaya, lifting high
His towery summits till they cleave the sky,
Spans the wide land from east to western sea,
Lord of the hills, instinct with deity.
For him, when Prithu ruled in days of old,
The rich earth, teeming with her gems and gold,
The vassal hills and Meru drained her breast,
To deck Himálaya, for they loved him best;
And earth, the mother, gave her store to fill
With herbs and sparkling ores the royal hill.
Proud mountain-king! His diadem of snow
Dims not the beauty of his gems below.

And, indeed, there is very little reality in the following picture of the Meru, Second Canto, where it is said of Indra:

He roots up Meru's sacred peaks, where stray
The fiery coursers of the God of Day,
To form bright slopes, and glittering mounds of ease
In the broad gardens of his palaces.

In Canto Seven, finally, it is said of Nandi's bull:

Whose broad back covered with a tiger's hide
Was steep to climb as Mount Kailása's side.

It is, however, very probable that the Kara-korum Proper was known to a certain extent in some quarters of Ancient India. The missionaries who spread Buddhism to Eastern Turkestan and China, penetrated into the heart of the continent by roads that cross the Tibetan highlands where these are at their narrowest, *viz.*, to the north-west of India, and which, therefore, at least the eastern ones of them, have to cross the Kara-korum System. But of these Buddhist crusades we have no knowledge.²

¹ RALPH T. H. GRIFFITH in *The Birth of the War-God, a Poem by Kalidasa*, Second Edition, London 1879, p. 1.

² ABEL-RÉMUSAT says: »Le Tibet et le Japon ont aussi reçu de l'Inde cette même religion de Bouddha, ce culte voyageur, qui a parcouru le continent et les îles, policé les pasteurs des vallées de l'Himalaya et les cavaliers du Turkestan, et fondé des monastères et des bibliothèques sur les pics inaccessibles du Tibet et dans les déserts sablonneux de la Tartarie.» *Mélanges posthumes d'histoire et de littérature orientales*, Paris MDCCCXLIII, p. 237. — RENAUD gives the following statement: »Des avant notre ère, le bouddhisme franchit l'Himalaya et l'Hindoukouch, et se répandit en Tartarie, d'où il pénétra en Chine.» — *Extrait d'un Mémoire... sur l'Inde. Nouv. Annales des voyages*, Paris 1846, Tome III, p. 145. — To this may only be added the following words of T. W. RHYS DAVIDS: »Buddhism had long before this (2nd century of our era) penetrated to China, along the fixed route from India to that country, around the northwest corner of the Himalayas and across Eastern Turkestan.» In the