

The fact that Bolor was known to Europe more than 600 years ago is due to MARCO POLO — to the Chinese it was known, as we will see, at a much earlier date. The translations of Chinese geographical works made the Kwen-lun known, and as to the Himalaya, it had been famous ever since antiquity. But the Kara-korum was and remained very well hidden behind and amongst the other mountains, and the road between Leh and Yarkand was not sufficient for making it known. In 1845 European scholars, as a rule, believed that the Himalaya came into direct contact with the Kwen-lun, forgetting or ignoring the system of Kara-korum coming in between them and separating them from each other. REINAUD, speaking of the black-haired people that in olden times lived in the valley of the Yellow River, says of them:

Le berceau de cette nation semble devoir être placé sur les degrés inférieurs d'une des grandes chaînes de l'Asie centrale, le Kouen-lun, qui, se liant à l'Himalaya, à son extrémité occidentale, s'étend directement de l'ouest à l'est, jusqu'aux frontières de la Chine. Ces traditions remontent à plus de deux mille ans avant notre ère.¹

The mountain ranges of Ak-tau and Kara-tau, stretching along the eastern portion of the Khanat of Bokhara are regarded, by KHANIKOFF, as the continuation of the mountains of Kashgar and Badakshan, *i. e.* the Pamir and Bolor Mountains, and there is, as usual, no mention of the Kara-korum.²

ELIE DE BEAUMONT does not seem to be quite sure of the correctness of HUMBOLDT'S N.-S., and E.-W. stretching systems, for he asks: Peut-être pourra-t-on en séparer un groupe dirigé de l'E. à l'O., Système du Thian-Chan? From the Atlantic to the Gulf of Bengal he joins the mountain ranges into one gigantic system:

Outre les chaînes déjà mentionnées, ce Système comprend l'Atlas, le Taurus, la chaîne centrale du Caucase couronnée par le pic d'Elbrouz, ainsi que la longue série de montagnes qui, sous les noms de Paropamissus, d'Indoukosh, d'Himâlaya, borde au nord les plaines de la Perse et du Bengale, et renferme les cimes les plus élevées de la terre. Toutes ces chaînes courent parallèlement à un grand cercle qu'on représenterait, sur une globe terrestre, par un fil tendu du milieu de l'empire de Maroc au nord de l'empire des Birmans (ou mieux encore, du cap Saint-Vincent au Dhawalagiri).³

If the highest peaks of the earth are to be considered, the Kara-korum has to be included in this gigantic system. Only glimpses had so far pierced the fogs of mystery that veiled these mountains and even learned men, like ERSKINE, when speaking of political boundaries, used such uncertain names as Parapamisan mountains and Tibet mountains, both expressions difficult to define.⁴

¹ *Relation des Voyages faits par les Arabes, etc.* . . . Tome I. Paris 1845, p. CXLIX.

² *Bokhara: Its Amir and its People.* Transl. by Cl. de Bode. London MDCCCXLV, p. 15.

³ *Notice sur les systèmes de montagnes.* Tome II. Paris 1852, p. 606 and 607.

⁴ William Erskine: *History of India* . . . Vol. I. London 1854, p. 24 and 261.