

it, Klaproth provided only the stones, with which HUMBOLDT tried to construct the architecture of Asia. Klaproth's map (Paris 1836) was, however, a masterpiece and the first to bring light into the geography of Central Asia. Humboldt's geometrical construction proved to be false in many places, and right in others, but it worked in a high degree as an impetus to new researches.

Of the hypothetical prolongations of Humboldt's four ranges, only the Kwen-lun Range and its continuation into China was, as Richthofen remarks, a happy idea. All the others have proved to be »artificial constructions». Bolor-tagh has only a conditional existence.

Nur allmählig ist eine verbesserte Gebirgskunde an die Stelle des geistvollen Schemas getreten, und noch sind wir erst bei den Anfängen derselben. Vorsichtig können wir Einzelnes construiren. Die Gesamtkennntnis ist noch in grosser Ferne. In vielen Fällen aber verleitet das Streben nach einer klaren Anschauung auch jetzt zur hypothetischen Ergänzung desjenigen was festgelegt ist.

This was said 40 years ago and has so far proved to be right. It is true that since Richthofen wrote we have approached the final understanding considerably, but in some regions, as in the mountains around the Indo-Chinese rivers and in the interior of Tibet, we are only at the beginning. So far as my own Transhimalayan region is concerned, only the first step of the pioneer has been taken. Therefore, Richthofen showed how erroneous many hypothetical ranges must have been in 1877, especially in regions which were not yet open to exploration. Our maps of China used to represent mountain ranges wherever water-partings were situated.

In the seventh chapter¹ of his work, Richthofen has collected all known facts about the orography and geology of, and exploration in, the Kwen-lun »and the mountainous country south of it».² We miss only the names of HODGSON and SAUNDERS, for in their theories Richthofen seems to have had no confidence at all.

He regards the Kwen-lun as the back-bone of eastern Asia. It stretches eastwards and its prolongation divides China Proper into two halves very unlike each other. In the heart of Asia it also plays the part of a great dividing wall. He gives it a length of 42 degrees. Already at the end of the silurian age it rose as a considerable system. Richthofen found in its eastern portions that it never since the silurian age had been covered by water, even if it had undergone several other changes. STOLICZKA proved that the conditions were the same in the west, pointing to the great homogeneity of the whole system. For a considerable length in China, it is the water-parting between the Hwang-ho and Yang-tse. As to the Tibetan portion of the Kwen-lun, Richthofen's knowledge was, of course, insufficient; he did not and could

¹ Op. cit., p. 222.

² Richthofen's description of the Kwen-lun as well as the results of expeditions undertaken since *China*, Vol. I was published, have been thoroughly discussed by GEORG WEGENER in his: *Versuch einer Orographie des Kwen-lun*. Inaugural-Dissertation, Marburg 1891.