

back to Chinese maps. Nowadays we know them fairly well. Richthofen had, however, at his disposition the itinerary of FORSYTH'S PUNDIT. The Chinese maps made it probable to him that far away to the east the Kwen-lun formed the front wall of the Tibetan Plateau. These maps seemed to indicate that mountains existed on the plateaux, *e. g.* on the diagonal road from Lhasa to Khotan. The lakes and rivers of the maps have names which seem to prove that Chinese travellers had been there.

The following passage is of special interest:¹

In welcher Weise der Gebirgsbau durch diese unbekannte Strecke fortsetzt, lässt sich gegenwärtig nicht ergründen. Alle Versuche, die in dieser Beziehung auf europäischen Kartendarstellungen gemacht worden sind, beruhen auf Vermuthungen. Nur am Südrand der abflusslosen Gebiete, gegen die Quellgebiete des Indus, Setledj und Bramaputra hin, sind einzelne orographische Thatsachen bekannt geworden; aber ehe die Ketten des Kailas oder Gang-disri, des Aling-Gangri und ihre östlichen Fortsetzungen nach dem Gebiet im Norden des Bramaputra nicht in das Netz der indischen Aufnahmen gezogen sind, und ihr geologischer Bau bekannt geworden ist, lässt es sich nur vermuthen, dass sie die Fortsetzung der im Nordosten von Skardo und Leh gelegenen Parallelketten sind, und östlich vom See Manasarovara die Richtung des östlichen Himälaya annehmen.

As there was a blank in his store of information regarding these parts, there is also a blank in his book. Nothing except the quoted passage is said about the then unknown country north of the Tsangpo, the country of the Transhimalayan System. This should be well observed and remembered by those who quoted the authority of HODGSON and SAUNDERS a few years ago: »All attempts that in this respect have been made upon European maps, depend upon conjecture.» And as conjecture and hypotheses in the field of scientific exploration are absolutely without any value, RICHTHOFEN, who otherwise tries to make the best use possible of Chinese maps and native information, does not even mention the names of Hodgson and Saunders and their theoretical Gangri Mountains, although he knew them very well and obviously means them when speaking of »European attempts«. And still it is true that he has built up theoretical mountain ranges himself, which in the light of later exploration have proved to be wrong.

One of Richthofen's mountain systems very much reminds us of the system which SAUNDERS on his map drew from the Nien-chen-tang-la to the N. E. Richthofen thus speaks of a »remarkable line« stretching from the sources of the right tributaries of the Ki-chu of Lhasa in N. E. direction to the point where Bri-chu touches the western end of Bayan-khara-ula. This line indicates the zone where the gigantic rivers of south-eastern Asia have their beginnings. The feeders of Ki-chu, Lu-kiang and Lan-tsang-kiang have their sources on the south-eastern side, the feeders of the Murui-ussu on the north-western side. Some rivers pierce this line of mountains, for instance the Khara-ussu, or Nak-chu, which, as Richthofen puts it (p. 129), has in

¹ Op. cit., p. 252.