

CHAPTER LVII.

THE FORMATION OF PANGGONG-TSO.

Before proceeding to the description of the Selling-tso—Panggong-tso latitudinal valley, I will say a few words of the latest phase of the history of the first-mentioned lake.

There are two pairs of lakes which offer an extremely clear idea of the course of development through which the Panggong-lakes have passed, *viz.*, the two lakes near the source of the Yellow River in the extreme N. E. of Tibet, and the Manasarovar-Rakas-tal in the extreme S. W. of the same highlands. As to the first-mentioned, I borrow the following description from P. K. KOSLOFF who visited them on his journey in Eastern Tibet from May 1900 to June 1901:

The Mongols call the western lake Jarin-nor, and the eastern Orin-nor; the Tsaidam Mongols also use the names Tseke-nor (the Lake whose bottom shines through) and Tsege nor, (The Transparent lake); the Tibetans and Tanguts call them Mtso Khchara and Mtso Khnora, and Prshevalskiy, who first gave a description of them, baptized them with the superfluous names The Expedition Lake and the Russian Lake. »These two freshwater basins are separated from one another only by a mountainous neck of land with a breadth of up to 10 versts¹, and are situated at an absolute altitude of 13,900 feet (4238 m).» The Orin-nor has a circumference of about 120 versts, and its long axis stretches from north to south, whereas the Jarin-nor, which stretches from west to east, has a circumference of less than 100 versts. Both lakes are surrounded by high, rocky, steep shores with many narrow capes and promontories. Along the shores there are several small lakes or pools, which formerly were parts of the large lakes but now have been cut off by sand banks. They contain brackish or salt water. The upper lake, Jarin-nor, seems to be shallow, as the bottom, especially in its western part, is visible and there are several islands. The lower lake, Orin-nor, is comparatively deep. Along the long axis of this lake

¹ On his map the isthmus is 12 versts broad at its narrowest place, and at its broadest more than 20.