

No. I. Geographical Notice of Tibet.

[*J.A.S.B.*, Vol. I, p. 122 (1832).]

The vast mountainous tract of country between about 73° and 98° east longitude from London, and 27° and 38° north latitude, may be called by the general name of "Tibet," since the Tibetan language is understood everywhere from Belitistan (or Little Tibet) down to the frontier of China, although there be several corrupt dialects of it, and the inhabitants of these countries, in general, have the same manners and customs, are addicted to the same faith (to Buddhism), and have the same religious books written or printed in characters common to all the different provinces.

The native name of Tibet is "*Pot*," as it is pronounced commonly; "*Bod*," more properly. It denotes both the nation, and the country: for distinction's sake the country is expressed by "*Bod-yul*" (Bod-land), a male native "*Bod-pa*," and a female one "*Bod-mo*." The Indian name for Tibet is *Bhot*.

The natives of Tibet apply the name *Pot*, or *Bod*, especially to the middle Tibet, or to the two provinces "*U*" [*Ü*] and "*Tsang*" (*Dvus-Qtsang* [*Dbus-gtsang*] pronounced *U-tsáng*), the capitals of which are *Lhasa* and *Zhikátsé* [*Shigatse*]. Hence a native of those two provinces is called by them especially *Pot-pa*. The eastern part of Tibet is called "*Kham*" or "*K'ham-yul*," also "Great Tibet." The north-western part towards Ladak is called "*Nári*." Bhutan is called by several names by the Tibetans; as, "*Lhopato*," "*Lho-mon-k'ha-zhi*," "*Lho-bruk-pé-yul*," or simply "*Lho*" (the south). According to these divisions, the inhabitants of Tibet are distinguished thus: "*Pot-pa*" (or *U-tsáng-pa*) means a native of middle Tibet; "*K'hampa*" (or *K'ham-ba*), one of eastern Tibet; "*Naripa*," one of western Tibet; and "*Lho-pa*," a native of Bhutan.

The whole of Tibet occupies high ground, and lies among snowy mountains. Hence it is called in Tibetan books by several poetical names, expressive of snow, ice, or frozen snow, cold, and high elevation. The highest ground in Tibet is in *Nári*, especially the peak called *Tísé* or *Tésé*, in Tibetan, and *Kailasa* in Sanskrit, about 80° E. longitude, and 34° North latitude. The sources of the Indus, Sutlej, Gogra, and the Brahmaputra rivers are in *Nári* (*Mñahris*). There are several large lakes also. Tibetan writers, in describing the situation of

Tibet, have likened *Nári* to a lake or watering pond ; *U-tsang* to four channels ; and *K'ham-yul* to a field.

Tibet is bounded on the north by the countries of the Turks and Mongols, whom the Tibetan call *Hor*, and *Sok-po* (*Hor-sok*). On the east by China (*Gyanak* in Tib.). On the south by India (*Gyagar* in Tib.). On the west by India, Cashmir, Afganistan, *Tazik-yul*, and Turkistan.

The hill people of India, who dwell next to the Tibetans, are called by them by the general name “ *Mon*,” their country *Mon-yul*, a man *Mon-pa* or simply *Mon*, a female *Mon-mo*.

From the first range of the Himalaya mountains on the Indian side to the plains of Tartary, the Tibetans count six chains of mountains running in a north-western and south-eastern direction, when viewed from Kangri in *Nári* (a lofty mountain running from south-west to north-west), whence the ground commences to take on one side a north-western and on the other side a south-eastern inclination. In the spacious valley, which is between the third and fourth range of the before mentioned mountains, is the great road of communication between *Ladak* and *U-tsang*. The principal countries or districts in this direction, from north-west, are as follows : *Beltistan* or Little Tibet, *Ladak*, *Teshigang*, *Gár* or *Gáro* (the lower and upper), *Troshot*, *Tsáng*, *U*, *Bhrigang*. It is here likewise that the two principal rivers, the *Sengé k'há-bab* and the *Tsánpo*, take their course ; that by *Ladak* to the north-west, and may be taken for the principal branch of the Indus ; this to the south-east, and forms afterwards the Brahmaputra.

The countries on the Indian side that lie next to Tibet, commencing from Cashmir, are as follows : “ *K'ha-ch'hé-yul* ” (or *K'ha-ch'hul*), Cashmir ; *Varan*, *Mandé*, *Palder* or *Chatirgerh*, *Pángé*, *Gár-zha* or *Lahul*, *Nyungti* or *Kullu* ; *K'huna* or *Knaor*, and *Bésahr* ; *Kyonam* and *Shák'hok*, or *Garhwal* and *Kamaon* ; *Dsumlang* ; *Gorkha-yul* ; *Pal-yul* (*Bal-yul*) or *Népal* ; *Lhopato* or *Bhutan* ; *Ashong* or *Asam*.

The names of the countries or districts in Tibet that lie next to India, commencing from Cashmir, are as follows : *Himbab* (near to Cashmir), *Purik*, *Zanskar*, *Spiti*, *Gugé*, *Purang*, *Kyirong*, *Lhoprák*, *Myánam*, *Lach'hi*, *Mon-ts'ho-sna*.

Beyond the fourth range of the Himalaya mountains, or in the next valley to the north of *Ladak*, there are the following districts, counting them eastward : *Nubra*, *Rudok*, *Tso-tso*, *Bombá*, *Chang-ts'há k'há*, *Chang-ra greng*.

The three great divisions of Tibet are :

1. Tibet Proper, or *U-tsáng*. 2. *K'ham-yul*, or the eastern part of Tibet, and 3. *Nári*, or the north-western part of Tibet.

1. Tibet Proper or *U-tsáng*. It is that part of Tibet which lies next to the north of *Asam*, *Bhutan*, and *Népal*, that is called by this name. This is the most considerable part of Tibet. The inhabitants of this division are the most industrious, skilful,

and polite of all the Tibetan races. The number of the inhabitants in these two provinces is said to be about one hundred and thirty thousand families. *Lhasa* is the capital of the province *U*, as also of the whole of Tibet. From the seventh till the tenth century it has been the residence of the kings of Tibet. Now it is the first place for commerce in Tibet, the seat of government, and the residence of the Chinese *Ambans* (or ministers). There are several religious establishments. Near *Lhasa* is *Potala*, the residence of the great *Lámá* (styled *Gyel-vá-rin-po-ch'hé*), the head of the sect called *Géluk-pa* or *Geldan-pa*. Other remarkable places, in the province *U*, are: *Yam-bu-Lhá-gáng*, a fort or castle built in the fourth century, by *Thothori*, a king. It has been the residence of the ancient kings. It contains some antiquities, and plastic images of the ancient kings. It is a few days' journey to the south from *Lhasa*. *Sam-yé* (*Bsam-yas*) a royal residence and a large monastery, one day's journey from *Lhasa*, built in the eighth century by *K'hri srong-déhu-tsan*, a celebrated king. There are deposited several ancient books taken from India. In the province of *U*, among other forts or castles, *Dé-ch'hén-song* and *Haspori* are the most considerable. In the province of *Tsang*, the following ones are of some repute: *Chang-nam-ring*, *Chang-Lha-tsé*, *Phun-ts'hok-ling*, and *Gyang-tse*.

2. *K'ham-yul* (*K'hams-yul*), called also *Pot-ch'hen*, or Great Tibet, consists of the eastern part of Tibet, and is bounded by China on the east. There are several small principalities; as, *K'ham-bo*, *Gábá*, *Li-thang*, *Dégé* (or *Der-ghé*), *Brag-yak*, *Depma*, *Go-jo*, *Gya-mo-rong*, *Jang-sa tam*, *Amdo*, *K'hyamdo*, etc. The people of these parts differ very much from the rest of the Tibetans in their stature, features, dress, customs, and in the manner of speaking the Tibetan language. They are very robust, passionate, void of artifice or cunning, not fond of ornaments on their dress. In *K'ham-yul*, those called *Pon* or *Bon*, holding still the ancient religion of Tibet, are very numerous. They have also their literature, religious order, several monasteries, and kill several animals, great and small cattle, for sacrifice: they have many superstitious rites.

3. The north-western part of Tibet, from *Tsang* to *Ladak*, is called *Nári*. This part is of very great extent, but the number of inhabitants is inconsiderable, not exceeding fifty thousand families together with *Ladak* and *Beltistan*. There have been several small principalities formerly in *Nári*, as, *Gugé*, *Puráng*, *Kangri*; but all these belong now to the great *Lámá* at *Lhasa*, and are governed by *K'harpons* (commanders of forts) sent from *Lhasa*. There are also in *Nári* very extensive deserts. The inhabitants dwell in tents, made of hair cloth; exercise a pastoral life, without any agriculture. Their number is said to amount to ten thousand families, and they all are under the *sGar-pon* or chief officer residing at *sGár* or *sGáro*,

who is sent from *U-tsang* or *Lhassa*, and generally remains there for three years.

Gugé, part of *Nári*, lying to the north of Garhwal and *Kamáon*, consists of two valleys, inhabited by somewhat more than two thousand families. The principal places are *Tsaprang* and *Tholing*, not far from each other. The first is the residence of the commanding officer called the *Kh'arpon* of *Tsaprang*, and the second is a large monastery and the seat of a *Lámá* styled the *K'hanpo* of *Tholing*. He resides during the summer at *Teshigang*, another large monastery, a few days' journey to the north from *Tholing*. These two places (*Tsaprang* and *Tholing*) have been the residence of the princes that have reigned there from the 10th till the end of the 17th century.

Ladak, formerly called *Mar-yul*, still has its own prince, but he must accommodate himself to the political views of the Chinese. *Zanskar*, *Purik*, *Nubra*, form part of the Ladak principality. In the whole of Ladak the number of the inhabitants does not exceed twenty thousand families. Nearly the half of them are Mohammedans, mostly of the Shia persuasion. *Lé* (*slé*) is the capital of Ladak, the residence of the prince, and the emporium of a considerable trade with Turkistan, Lhassa, and the Panjab countries. It is about 15 to 20 days' journey from Cashmir to the east, and nearly under the same latitude, (*i.e.* 34° north lat.).

Little Tibet or Beltistan (*Belti-yul*, in Tibetan) is the most north-western part of Tibet. There are several chiefs. The chief residing at *Kárdo* is the most powerful among them; those of *Kyeré* and *Kuru*, with some others, depend on the former. The chief of *Shigár* holds sometimes with the prince of Ladak and sometimes with the chief of *Kárdo*. The chiefs of *Minaro*, *Hasora* etc. are the heads of some predatory tribes. In the several defiles to the south, in the neighbourhood of Beltistan, there live some predatory tribes, among whom the most notorious are the *Dárdu* people. These barbarous tribes are either of Afghán or Hindu origin. The inhabitants of Beltistan are Mahomedans of the Shia persuasion. They speak a dialect of the Tibetan language, but have nothing of the Tibetan literature. They keep some books or fragments in Persian. The correspondence from Ladak with the chiefs of those parts, is carried on in Persian, as also with Cashmir. The people of Beltistan are very unhappy on account of their chiefs having continual quarrels with each other, or with the prince of Ladak. The climate is warm. In the lower part of Beltistan, snow never falls. The soil is good. There are several kinds of grain; they have two crops. There are likewise several sorts of excellent fruits; as, of apples, pears, peaches, plums, figs, grapes, mulberries, etc., etc. There is a great want of salt and wool in those parts; formerly there existed a commercial route from Cashmir to Yarkand through Beltistan (of 30 days' journey); but that

country being in an unsettled state, the Cashmírian merchants afterwards preferred that through Lé, in Ladak, although it is very circuitous.

The people of *Lhopáto* or Bhutan, on account of their language, religion, and political connexion, belong to Tibet. But in their customs and manners they have adopted much from the Indians. They are more clean in their dresses and houses than the other Tibetan races. The men are of a martial spirit, like those of *K'ham-yul*, with whom they are said to have much resemblance in their character. The people of Bhutan speak a corrupt dialect of the Tibetan language; but there are several religious establishments, a great many books, and some religious persons are well acquainted with the Tibetan language and literature. They are Buddhists of the sect called in Tibet *Brukpa* (vulg. *Dukpa*). They adopted this kind of Buddhism in the 17th century of our era, when *Nák-Váng Nam-gyel*, a Lámá of great respectability, leaving *Tsáng* in middle Tibet, established himself in Bhutan. There are counted now about forty thousand families. The whole province of Bhutan consists of four districts or valleys, which if counted from east to west, are as follows: *Thet-yul*, *Thim-yul*, *Patro* or *Pato*, and the middle district. The principal place is *Teshi-ch'hos-dsong*.

LAKES.—There are four principal lakes in Tibet. The *Ma-pham yu-ts'ho* (Mansarovara), in *Nári*, is the most considerable, of a circumference of about one and a half day's journey. In *U-tsáng*, the *Yárbrokyu-ts'ho*, *Mu-le-sgrum ts'ho*, and *Nám-ts'ho ch'hukmo* are likewise of great extent. There are many others of inferior rank or less compass; as, that of *Lá-nág* to the west of *Ma-p'ham*. From *Rúdok* (near Ladak) to the east or south-east, there are many salt lakes.

MEDICINAL OR MINERAL WATERS.—Between *U* and *Ts'ang* there are some hot springs, used in curing cutaneous diseases and the gout. But such hot springs are numerous in the mountains lying east from the *Ma-p'ham* lake; especially at one place there is a hole out of which continually issues vapor, and at certain intervals, hot water is ejected with great noise to the height of 12 feet.

GLACIERS.—The summits of many of the Tibetan mountains remain through the whole year covered with snow. But there are especially four glaciers or mountains covered with ice or frozen snow; as, *Tisé*, *Havo*, *Shámpo*, and *Pulé*.

MINES.—Mines are rarely excavated in Tibet. In the northern part of *Nári*, and in *Gugé*, some gold dust is gathered, as also in *Zanskar* and *Beltistan* it is washed from the river. If they knew how to work mines, they might find in many places gold, copper, iron, and lead.

Petrifactions are found at many places in Tibet, especially in *Nári*. On the 2nd and 3rd range of the Himalaya mountains, there are several sorts of them. *Sálgráms* and shells are found

most frequently, in many places. All such petrifications are denominated in Tibetan, according to the resemblance they have to anything; as, sheep-eye, sheep-horn, sheep-brain, swine-head, bird-leg, cow-tongue, stone-trumpet, etc. They are not objects of reverence in Tibet, neither of curiosity. Some of them, after being burnt and reduced to powder, are used as medicaments in certain diseases.

In the whole of Tibet, there is, in general, a deficiency of wood, both for fuel and for building, or timber, especially in *Nári* and *U-tsang*. In *Bhutan* and *Beltistan* there are many sorts of fruit trees. In *K'ham-yul* there are some woods and forests. In the western part of *Ladak* and in *Beltistan* some vines are cultivated. In middle Tibet and *Ladak* the mountains are in general naked, destitute of herb, grass, and every vegetable. In the valleys, where the fields can be watered or irrigated, several kinds of corn are produced, especially wheat, barley, buck-wheat, millet, peas, and some others. In *Nári* and in the northern deserts of Tibet, there grow several kinds of medicinal herbs and plants, and there are likewise good pastures; but there are in the deserts no fields for producing corn, and what they want they purchase from those who inhabit the southern parts of *Nári*, and give them in exchange yaks, sheep, wool, woollen cloth, salt, borax, etc.

Rice is nowhere cultivated in Tibet. There are some kinds of pulse; as peas, bean, and lentils. There is no great variety of esculent plants. They have some turnips, cabbages, carrots, onions, garlies, and a few others; but for potherbs they use in general such greens as grow wild. In the western part of *Ladak*, in *Purik*, there is a certain plant (with bushy stalks), called *Prángos*, which is a good remedy against the rot in sheep, if given for food for a certain time, in autumn.

The daily food of the Tibetans consists, in general, of gruel, or thick pottage prepared from the meal of parched barley (*satu*), several kinds of flesh, bread, sour milk, curds, potherbs, and of tea prepared in a particular manner in a churn, with butter, salt, and with some milk, or without this last ingredient.

The origin of the Tibetans is referred in their fabulous history to the union of an ape with a she-demon. Some derive them from India; some from China; others from the Mongols, and others from the Turks. Nothing can be certainly said in this respect. They have an original language, which has little affinity to that of any of the nations mentioned. It is probable, that the royal family who reigned in middle Tibet from about 250 years before Jesus Christ till the 10th century, was derived from India, from the *Lichabyi* race, and it is certain that their religion and literature is of Indian origin. The Tibetans are ignorant of their origin. They distinguish now five sorts of people or races (or nations) among themselves; as 1. *K'hamba*, one dwelling in *K'ham-yul*. 2. *Pot-pa*, one inhabiting in *U-tsang*.

3. *Brok-pa* or *Hor-pa*, one living in the deserts to the north-west of Lhasa. 4. *Nári-pa*, one of *Nári*, *Ladak* and *Beltistan*, and 5. *Lho-pa*, one of *Bhutan*. All of whom have yet other subdivisions. They differ much from each other in their stature, character, dress, and in the accent with which they pronounce the Tibetan language. But they can all understand each other. They all agree (with the exception of the Mahomedans in *Ladak* and *Beltistan*) in having the same religion, whose records are in the same language and character.
