

The Tibetan Narrative of the Missionary Desideri in the 18th Century

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Abstract—The Jesuit missionary Desideri, who was born in Italy, was one of the first Westerners to enter Tibet. His knowledge of Tibet was more accurate and richer than that of Westerners who had previously entered Tibet, so it is of high historical value. At the same time, his writing on Tibet also marked the prejudice of the preachers. The opening of the new waterway in the 15th and 17th centuries broke the regional division and isolated development of human civilization, and expanded the scope of human activities. After the geographical great discovery, Western Europeans went overseas and began colonial conquest. The legendary East with infinite wealth is bound to be the target of their expansion. Along with the geographical great discovery is the Reformation Movement (1520-1570). Humanists condemned the dark corruption of the Catholic Church and provided arguments for the Reformers to attack Catholicism. Catholics who lost their faith territory and a large number of believers in Europe made overseas development as a compensation for losses in Europe. Therefore, the pursuit of wealth and the expansion of religion have become an important driving force for the east expansion of the west, so colonial expansion and religious expansion almost happened simultaneously. This expansion has also brought the collision and exchange of Eastern and Western cultures. A religious shrine on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, Tibet has gradually emerged in the eyes of Westerners. Beginning with the works of ancient Greek and Roman writers, through the medieval world of Europe, the oriental world is full of oriental legendary illusory colors. Tibet is finally presented as an entity in front of Europeans. Western missionaries, with great enthusiasm and overcoming difficulties to spread the Gospel of Christ in the snowy region, also became the first historical witnesses in the Western world to introduce Tibet, especially Tibetan Buddhism, and became the pioneers to uncover Tibetan Buddhism. Missionaries from Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Britain, France, Russia and other countries entered Tibet from south of the Himalayas or from mainland China. In the course of their missionary work, a large number of records, letters, diaries, etc. were left, which opened the history of the true writing of Tibet. Among them, the Italian missionary Desideri lived in Lhasa for five years and his memoirs are of much value for understanding Tibet at that time.

Keywords—Desideri; Tibet; narration

I. INTRODUCTION

Ippolito Desideri was born in northern Italy. He departed from Rome in 1712 and after he arrived in Lisbon the capital of Portugal, he went to Goa India by boat around the Cape of

Good Hope, and finally he arrived in Lhasa in March 1716 for missionary activities. When he first arrived at Lhasa, Desideri used the strategy adopted by the Jesuits in many parts of the world; first he met the Tibetan ruler Lazang Khan and won his trust. Although Lazang Khan did not convert to Christianity as Desideri wanted, he gave Desideri a lot of convenience for missionary in Tibet. By the time of the departure of Lhasa by the Order of the Vatican in April 1721, Desideri had lived in Lhasa for five years.

Desideri's understanding of Tibet and its neighboring areas has a certain breadth and depth. First of all, his knowledge of Tibet is extensive and rich in content, including landforms, mountains, lakes, climate, transportation, property, political system, Tibetan Buddhism, folk customs, culture and art. Secondly, since he personally experienced the invasion of the Mongolian Junggar, he had a certain understanding of the cause and process of the invasion, the support situation of Qing Dynasty to Tibet, and the Sixth Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso. At the same time, as a missionary, he diligently studied Tibetan language, seriously studied Tibetan Buddhism, and learned comprehensively about Tibetan Buddhism. His writing is more accurate and richer than previous missionaries, so his work has become an important document for Westerners to understand Tibet.

II. WESTERNERS' FIRST DEEP SCAN OF LHASA

Since Desideri was welcomed and supported by Lazang Khan after his first arrival in Lhasa, he was able to use Tibetan to communicate and read in a proficient manner. He has extensive contacts with people from all ranks in Lhasa, his five years living experience has given him a deeper understanding of Lhasa and even Tibet.

"Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" has a very comprehensive description of Tibet. He focused on the overall situation of Tibet, his language is accurate and concise, apart from carrying personal comments in the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism, the rest is objective and concise, and he uses line drawing technique to outline the overall picture of Tibet, which deeply impressed people.

Regarding the region of Tibet, Desideri divided Bruzha¹, Ladakh, Weizang to Kangqu and other vast plateau areas are

¹ Bruzha, an ancient country in the upper reaches of the Indus Valley in the Ladakh region of eastern Kashmir, the main thoroughfare

divided into three Tibets: the first is small Tibet, that is, Bruzha; the second is Ladakh; the third is big Tibet, including Ali, Wei Zang and Kangqu².

Regarding the climate and properties of Tibet, Desideri noticed that the climate in Tibet is cold, snowy, and frosty. The coldest season is from mid-October to the next mid-April. Although the climate is cold, the air is pure and good for health. Crops include wheat and rare rice, fruits include walnuts, peaches, apricots, grapes and apples, and vegetables include turnips, radishes, garlic and onions.

Desideri also showed strong interest in the gold production in Tibet: "Kangqu has high quality gold and silver. In Tibet, gold can be found everywhere, but there are no mines here, people only use one way to extract gold from soil and sand. Gold normally like sand, not piece by piece, people usually find a flat land at the foot of the mountain or at the edge of a stream flowing between the two mountains. The rain washes away and leaves a lot of gold on the land. This shows that if Tibetans know how to mine in these barren hills, they will find a lot of gold."³

In addition, he also introduced minerals and medicinal herbs such as salt, borax, sulphur, rhubarb root and turmeric in Tibet, as well as Tibet's abundant wildlife resources and a large number of livestock: including horse, donkey, mink, eagle, parrot, cow, goat, sheep, Tibetan mastiff, yak; for Tibet's well-known musk, Desideri introduced musk deer, musk and the method of collecting musk.

For Lhasa, the city where he has lived for five years, he also has more descriptions, such as: "Lhasa is in Weizang, the capital of the Weizang, where the Tibetan king and the Dalai Lama live. Lhasa is densely populated, not only local residents, but also there is a large number of people from other places, such as Tartar, Central Plains, Russia, Armenia and Kashmir, Hindustani and Nepal. They are all famous for their business, and they have also made a lot of money here."⁴ This shows that Lhasa was a regional trade center at that time, there is a large number of businessmen from all over the world, and active business activities in other surrounding areas. For example: "People are trading goods at the big square in the city center from morning till night. From 3 pm until sunset, all kinds of goods are selling here, people are crowded, and it's very difficult to walk through there."⁵ The main monasteries around Lhasa are all in his

narratives, such as Ladrang, Jokhang Temple, Drepung Monastery, Sera Monastery, Ganden Monastery, and Samye Monastery.

The beautiful and spectacular Potala Palace is the landmark of Lhasa, so Desideri wrote more about it. "There is a large part of the Potala Palace that is rocky and it is very tall. On the southern side of the rock, there is a beautiful square, surrounded by high walls, with gates and fortresses, inside is a beautiful colonnade. There is a wide and gentle step, which leads to the top of the rock, at the top there is a luxurious palace, which is 5 stories high. The palace looks perfect and balanced on the outside, and its center is in harmony with the main rooms. Only the sides of the palace are not harmonious, but it is still a beautiful building. The wealth stored in the palace is immeasurable, especially in the rooms of the Great Lama, Lacan, and the Temple, there are more treasures."⁶

Desideri also has an understanding of the origins of Tibetans by reading Tibetan books and communicating with Tibetans. And he retailed Tibetan folk origins: At the junction of the Hindustan and Tibet, there is a woman who lost her way while walking in the mountains. She is desperately painful and shouts loudly! Hey! (Pain! Pain!), then she got the help from a big monkey. This monkey brought her some wild fruits. They had been very friendly together for a while, and the woman gave birth to several sons for him. On the mountain, she met a man named cen-ree-zij (Guyin Bodhisattva) who gave her some wheat, rice, barley and other vegetable seeds. Many years have passed and Tibet has been settled by her descendants. But they are vulgar, have no words, no culture or religion, and this state had not changed until a Tibetan king named Trisong Detsen arrived⁷. This story about the origin of Tibetans can be found in the Tibetan history book "Xi Zang Wang Tong Ji", indicating that he has a deeper understanding of Tibetan culture. He even compared the "Xi Zang Zhen Mo Tu" on the topography of Tibet with Prometheus in Greek mythology. He believed that the image of Tibet witch tied on the ground, similar to the Prometheus who locked on the cliffs of the Caucasus in punishment in ancient Greek mythology.⁸ Both the witch and Prometheus are bound by the body, there are many monasteries built on the body of the witch, and the body of Prometheus is locked on the Caucasus and torn up by the hungry eagle. Both of them are bound and helpless. Desideri's comparison of Eastern and Western cultures is very interesting, it also shows his familiarity with

between the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, and the western and northwestern parts of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. In the current Kashmir region.

² Wu Kunming, "The Activity History of Early Missionaries Entering Tibet", Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 1992, p. 564.

³ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 89.

⁴ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 107.

⁵ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi,

translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 108.

⁶ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 111.

⁷ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 83.

⁸ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 83.

the two cultural traditions and his cross-cultural comparative perspective.

Desideri is also a Westerner who introduced the polyandry system in Tibet. As early as in the medieval Marco Polo's travels, we can see that he introduced the exotic customs that he might heard from in a singular style that the Tibetans would dedicate their beautiful girls to passing merchants. What Desideri introduced is the "disgusting" polyandry marriage form in the history of Tibet: "In this custom, the eldest brother put butter on the girl's head, which made him the legal husband of the girl, he exercises this ritual not only for himself, but also for all his brothers, because whether his brothers are big or small, adults or children, they can regard this woman as their own legal wife. Of course, the later children are all considered the children of the eldest brother; they are the nephews and nieces of his brothers, although some of these children are certainly not his descendants."⁹

Because Desideri is able to use Tibetan to communicate and read, he was welcomed and supported by Lazang Khan after his first arrival in Lhasa, so he has extensive contacts with people from all ranks in Lhasa for five years in Lhasa. His living experience gave him the opportunity to get a lot of information about Tibet.

III. THE SIXTH DALAI LAMA AND THE JUNGGAR TRIBE'S INVASION OF TIBET BY DESIDERI

During the period when Desideri arrived in Tibet, it was the period of political instability and political contradictions in Tibet's history. In 1682, the fifth Dalai Lama died, Sde-pa¹⁰ Sangye Gyatso concealed the truth in order to control the political power, he did not send out obituary for 15 years. After the Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty discovered it, he asked for the new Dalai Lama. In 1697, Tsangyang Gyatso (14 years old), born in the peasant family of the South Gate area of Tibet, was recognized as the "Reincarnation" of the Fifth Dalai Lama and held the bed ceremony in the Potala Palace in Lhasa in October of the same year, then he became the sixth Dalai Lama. Since his growing environment is different from the educational environment of Buddha, so Tsangyang Gyatso became the most controversial Dalai Lama in Tibetan history.

The Sixth Dalai Lama is famous for his non-compliance with the rules and regulations. Most of his behaviors are irreconcilable with the conduct code as a religious leader. This is unacceptable for Desideri, who has a religious faith and take missionary as a lifelong career. So this has greatly affected his evaluation of Dalai Lama. In his discourse, the Sixth Dalai Lama is completely a "dissolute young man".

⁹ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 176.

¹⁰ Sde-pa: Official name. The Tibetan transliteration of the name of the highest official of the Tibetan local government in the early Qing Dynasty. Also known as the "Disi", commonly known as the Tibetan King. Originally means the chief. At the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, it was the official of the local government affairs in Tibet.

"Because Tibetans blindly worshiped him and their infinite loyalty, he was infected with all sorts of vices, completely degraded and hopeless. He ignored the sacred habits of Tibetan lamas and monks, paying attention to hair accessories, drinking and gambling. In his slutty life, married or unmarried woman, handsome man or a beautiful woman, all hardly escapes his palm."¹¹

Another political force that ruled Tibet at the time was Lazang Khan, which provided protection for Desideri. The contradiction between Lazang Khan and Sangye Gyatso was very sharp. When the conspiracy of Sangye Gyatso bribe the eunuch in Lazang Khan's House and try to poison him was exposed, war was broke out, at last Sangye Gyatso was defeat and been executed. The sixth Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso, who was acclaimed by Regent Sangye Gyatso, is naturally in danger. After the incident, Lazang Khan reported to Kangxi Emperor about Sangye Gyatso's "rebellion" incident, and claimed that the Sixth Dalai Lai Tsangyang Gyatso did not abide by the rules, calling him "fake Dalai", and he asked to "discrown the fake Dalai". Emperor Kangxi agreed his report and decided to escort Tsangyang Gyatso to Beijing for demobilization. Tsangyang Gyatso died on the way near the Qinghai Lake. There are various versions of the directions of Tsangyang Gyatso. Some said that he got sick when he arrived at Qinghai Lake and died; some said that he was secretly killed by the political enemy Lazang Khan; there is also a saying that he abandoned his position and decided to escape, so he went missing after arrived Qinghai Lake. In the latter half of his life, he traveled to India, Nepal, Kangzang and other places to continue to promote the Dharma, and later died in Alashan.

Desideri's statement is that Lazang Khan cannot tolerate the Tibetans' worship of "such an evil lama". He tried to free the Dalai Lama from this "desolation and debauchery life", but persuasion, blame and threat have no effect, so he decided to take tough measures to eliminate this "evil that is ruining religion".¹² After obtaining the consent of the Qing emperor, he ordered the Dalai Lama to leave Lhasa with various excuses and reasons. Tartars and several of his cronies sent him to the mainland of the Central Plains. They showed up the order of Lazang Khan and executed him on the way.

When Desideri arrived in Lhasa in March 1716, the political situation in Tibet remained unstable. In 1717, the Mongolian Junggar tribe¹³ invading Tibet, Lazang Khan was

¹¹ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 131.

¹² [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 131.

¹³ Junggar is a tribe of Olat Mongolia. From the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, the Junggar controlled the north and south of the Tianshan Mountain, and established the last nomadic empire in the history west to the Balkhash Lake, north to the Altai Mountain, east to Turpan, and southwest to the vast areas of the Blowing River and the Talas River. Religiously they believe in Tibetan Buddhism and have a certain influence

killed. They occupied Lhasa and burned the Temples of Nyingma Sect. The following year, Tibet reported the urgent to the Qing court, Emperor Kangxi sent army from Xining to Tibet. The army was blocked and besieged by Junggar army in the Naqu area at north of Tibet, and the whole army was wiped out. In 1720, Emperor Kangxi commanded his 14th son Yunti as the Fuyuan General to lead three troops into Tibet, they defeated the Junggar army and expelled them from Tibet. And then he ordered Yanxin to lead West troops to escort Seventh Dalai Gesang Gyatso from Xining to Tibet. At this point, the history about Mongolia's Gushi Khan descendants controlling Tibet has come to an end. Since then, the Central Government of the Qing Dynasty has gradually strengthened the management of Tibet.

Desideri hated the Junggar army who invaded Tibet and expressed deep sympathy for the disaster that Lhasa suffered. In his book, the invaders' crimes were too numerous to record:

"Once General Zeren Dunzhu¹⁴ settled in the palace, he ordered to ransack the city. The monks in the army are very greedy and cruel mobs, they rushed into houses with weapons, and even the property of their allies was not spared. They invaded and ransacked the temples that kept the treasures. They were insatiable and returned to the houses again and again. They tortured men, women and children, and whip them cruelly. Their hands were tied behind them, hanging on the girders, asking them to tell the place to keep wealth. This situation lasted for two days and two nights until all the valuable things were looted. It was a wealthy city, people were living comfortably, but now it is a sad place, what a pity!"¹⁵

Desideri gave a detailed introduction to the process of the Qing Emperor's recovery of Tibet. He was deeply impressed by the "intelligence" of the Qing Emperor and the "highly disciplined" Qing army. "After 20 years of riots and disasters, the Weizang area was recovered by the Qing court in October 1720".¹⁶

After the Junggar invasion of Tibet, the Qing Dynasty strengthened its management of Tibet and stationed a minister in Tibet to form a joint administration local government in Tibet controlled by Si Ga Lun. These measures are also under Desideri's concerns: "In October 1720, after the Qing Dynasty recovered Tibet, the specific manager is now a Tibetan king (that is Deqin Batur) and several imperial ministers¹⁷. Some of them are Tartars from the Central Plains, some are Han, and several are Tibetans.

All the laws and adjudication documents here are written in Chinese, Tibetan and Tartar three languages".¹⁸

It can be said that Desideri happened to have experienced all the incidents of Junggar's invasion in Tibet. It was described by a witness, so it has a certain degree of credibility. He is very aware of the Qing emperor's dominance in Tibet, and the Qing emperor was also given a very positive evaluation, such as "smart", "powerful", and "incredibly rich" and so on. As a bystander, his narrative has a very important reference for understanding that period of history.

IV. FOCUSING ON THE GREAT LAMAS AND OTHER MONKS IN TIBET

As a missionary, Desideri's attention to Tibetan Buddhism is far better than Tibet's politics, property, and customs and so on. Desideri has lived in Lhasa for five years and he has a deeper understanding of Tibetan Buddhism. The book "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" is divided into four volumes, the third of which is the content of Tibetan religion. Although as a missionary, Desideri has many prejudices and misunderstandings when he describes Tibetan religion, his works can also give readers a general understanding of the many core elements of Tibetan religion. For example, the great Lama of Tibetan Buddhism, the religious order of Tibet, the reincarnation of the soul, the theory of hell, the morality of the Tibetan religion, the principles of good and evil, and the origin of Tibetan Buddhism. The title of this volume is "The Fallacy and Characteristics of Tibetan Religion". It is obvious that he is standing on the religious stand of the Jesuits to understand the religion of Tibet.

He first introduced the "Great lama" in Tibet: "The Tibetan great lama were not only recognized and respected by the Hou-Zang and Wei-Zang public, but also recognized and respected by Nepalese, Tartars and Han people. Meanwhile, Tibet People also regard him as their protector and high priest. People worship him and dedicate themselves to him, not to regard him as an ordinary person, but as a cen-ree-zi (The author's original note) is the reincarnation who blessing Tibetans for many centuries. The Great Lama not only manages religious affairs, but also manages secular affairs because he actually is the county owner of Tibet."¹⁹ At the same time, he also corrected Father Kirsch's statement in the "Illustration of China" that it is difficult for ordinary people to see the Great Lama. Because the Great Lama is constantly meeting visitors, he often discusses issues with Tibetan King, nobles, lamas, and abbots of monasteries. Sometimes he meets with businessmen, devout believers, and some foreigners who give gifts to him. Moreover, the Great Lama will publicly abide two Murang festivals each

on Tibet. In the nineteenth century, it was destroyed by several military operations in the Qing Dynasty.

¹⁴ General Zeren Dunzhu is a general of the Junggar tribe.

¹⁵ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 136.

¹⁶ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 148.

¹⁷ Compiler's Note: The Minister of Tibet.

¹⁸ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 150.

¹⁹ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 192.

year in Lhasa: the New Moon Festival and the March Festival. In these two festivals, the Great Lama will sit on the throne outside the temple and pray for thousands of people. At the same time, the Great Lama and the Tibetan King must give meals to the monks gathered in Lhasa and send them a gift. They also sent much alms to the monasteries and places where monks and nuns gathered, including gold and silver, silk, scarves, tea, butter, livestock, flour, tobacco and other things. Such large-scale charity activities will not affect the economic situation of the Great Lama, because "the Tibetan Great Lama is very rich. Local taxes, customs duties, and total income are usually given to him and the Tibetan king. The Great Lama receives a lot of tributes and gifts every day, all of which are owned by him privately... The Great Lama also hires many businessmen to trade with the mainland and other regions. He can also obtain a lot of property from it, and the benefits are incredible."²⁰

In addition, he also gave a detailed introduction to many objective things such as the religious order of Tibetan Buddhism, the code of conduct, and the development process of Tibetan Buddhism. For example, he mentioned that the monks in Tibet are divided into four levels, the first level is Lama; the second level is Laranba, the scribe, who need to study in the scholastic for 12 years, and then preside over various public debates, and finally they can be promoted as scribe; the third level is Gelong. Gelong swears when he start to practice, they swear to remain absolutely pure, fully obey the lama, they shall live poorly, not to possess anything, plead for food day after day; the fourth level is Zhaba, including those who haven't studied in any temple scholastic, those who have not completed 12 years of study in the scholastic, and some children who are educated in the temples to learn read, write, and study verses. In Tibet, there is no age limit for being a monk, but children are usually sent to monasteries when they are 4 or 5 years old.²¹

Desideri also recorded the life of monks in Tibet in great detail: each lama has a quite large homestead and courtyard, with many servants, horses, donkeys and cattle, just like a manor. They can get private income from their own territory, but their wealth is mainly from the alms provided by Tibetan King, Great Lama, government officials, peoples and believers. The food and drink of the monks are partly from the income of their monasteries. These incomes are distributed according to their respective ranks. The other part comes from the Tibetan King, the Great Lama, their lamas and the devout believers. They never do farm work, cut trees or saw trees, or other similar labor. In Desideri's description, the religious order in Tibet is orderly, and the monks in Tibet are special class which completely out of physical labor.

V. CONCLUSION

From the above cases, Desideri's description of Tibetan religion is very comprehensive and his understanding is deep. It is undeniable that his views on Tibetan Buddhism are also full of Christian exclusion and prejudice. However, the accuracy and systematicness of his religious record of Tibetan has undoubtedly surpassed any previous Europeans and greatly enhanced the level of understanding of westerners to Tibetan religion.

More importantly, he explicitly denied the illusory legends about the "John Elders" in Tibet that have been circulating in Europe for many years, helping Christians to untie the centuries-old knot: "I have not found any signs in the history, memory and legends of Tibet, that our sacred faith was known at a certain time, or an apostle or a communicator of the gospel once lived in this place."²²

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²⁰ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 194.

²¹ [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 200.

²² [German] Ippolito Desideri: "Mission in Tibet by Ippolito Desideri" Editor-in-Chief of Wang Qilong, edited by Philip Ferribi, translated by Yang Min, Lhasa: Tibet People's Publishing Company, 2004, p. 305.