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receives the adoration of the people: he is raised on a magnificent altar, and sits cross-legged upon a splendid cushion. His worshippers prostrate themselves before him in the humblest and most abject manner; but he returns not the least sign of respect, nor ever speaks, even to the greatest princes. He only lays his hand upon their heads, and they are fully persuaded that they receive from thence a full forgiveness of all their sins. They are likewise so extravagant as to imagine that he knows all things, even the secrets of the heart; and his particular disciples, being a select number of about two hundred of the most eminent Lamas, have the address to make the people believe he is immortal; and that when he appears to die he only changes his abode, and animates a new body.

The learned in China have long been of opinion that in the archives of this grand temple some very ancient books have for many ages been concealed; and the present emperor, who is very curious in searching after the writing of antiquity, became at length so fully convinced of the probability of this opinion, that he determined to try whether any discovery of this sort could be made. To this end his first care was, to find out a person eminently skilful in the ancient languages and characters. He at length pitched upon one of the Hanlins, or doctors of the first order, whose name was Boa-tson, a man of about fifty years of age, of a grave and noble aspect, of great eloquence, and who, by an accidental friendship with a certain learned lama, who had resided many years at Pekin, was become entire master of the language which the Lamas of Thibet use.

With these qualifications he set forward on his journey: and, to give his commission the greater weight, the emperor honored him with the title of Calao, or prime minister. To which he added a magnificent equipage and attendants, with presents for the Grand Lama and other principal Lamas, of immense value, also a letter written with his own hand, as follows:—