

town (Leh), so much the more as those missionaries followed the river up for a long distance.

Rennell acknowledged that it was believed, on the faith of the Hindus, that the source of the Ganges was situated at the foot of the Himalaya, until Kang Hi sent his expedition, the report of which changed the opinion in Europe. Therefore Colebrooke concludes, that the conjectural basis of a geographical fable may, to a certain extent, be used as a guide to inquiry and research. And he continues:¹ »Upon this principle, it might not be unreasonable to institute researches, with the view of ascertaining whether any lake exists within the snowy mountains, an imperfect knowledge of which may have been the foundation of the fables concerning the Mánasa and Vindusaróvara lakes of the Hindu poets, and the Mapama and Luncadeh of the Lamas: and, if any such lake exist, whether a river issues from it, as generally affirmed; and whether that river be the Alacanandá, as hinted not only in Puránas but in the astronomical work of Bha'scara, or the Sarayu, as intimated in other Puránas, and as affirmed both by Pra'npu'ri² and by Tieffenthaler's emissary.»

As a result of the whole discussion it was found that Hindu pilgrims had followed the Ganges from India up to the snowy mountains, and from the north the Lama surveyors had reached Mount Kentaisse. We have, however, seen before that the Lamas would never have been able to lay down on their map the lakes and rivers in such an excellent way as they did, unless they really had been there. But in Colebrooke's time nothing was known about the country beyond the mountains and it is easy to understand why he could not find out the single and simple cause of the mistake: the Ganges instead of the Satlej. Therefore he regarded the intervening region between the Kentaisse and the southern foot of the Himalayas as unknown, although at least a part of it was comparatively well known from the survey of the Lamas. Colebrooke, however, still finds room for the supposition of a lake interposed, out of which a branch of the Ganges, perhaps the Alaknanda, might really issue, conformably with the whole current of popular belief. And therefore, he thinks, a journey to the remotest accessible source of the Ganges was an undertaking worthy of British enterprise. »Perhaps the national credit was concerned, not to leave in uncertainty and doubt a question which the *English* only have the best opportunity of solving: and one at the same time so interesting, as that of exploring the springs of one of the greatest rivers of the old continent, and whose waters fertilize and enrich the *British* territories, which it traverses in its whole navigable extent.»

The journey to the source of the Ganges was to be undertaken by Lieutenant WEBB with Captain RAPER and Captain HEARSAY, and was carried out in 1808.³

¹ Loc. cit. p. 439.

² Probably Purana Poori as above, p. 10.

³ Ritter relates Colebrooke's discussion and the most important results of Webb's and Raper's expedition thus: »Der Ganges entquellte nicht dem Nordgehänge der hohen Schneeketten des Himalaya,