

Moorcroft knew perfectly well the controversy or rather problem of the lakes, for already in his days it was a geographical question of great interest. He went to the western shore of the Manasarovar with the intention and desire to solve the problem definitely. Here he was not a wool-merchant, but a scientific geographer, who gave extremely important and very valuable additions to the geographical knowledge of his time. He has not always got the credit he ought to have. But I will prove presently, that his journey was not only the first in these regions undertaken by a scientifically trained and critical traveller, but also that the observations he made give us a valuable help in our attempts to reach clearness in this most interesting hydrographical question.

Moorcroft must really have felt somewhat bewildered when he compared what he saw with his own eyes with what he heard from natives. Thus HARBALLABH, the old Pundit, reported that near the south-western corner, a river issued from the lake which, flowing in a westerly direction, went along the Ráwanhrad, and, escaping from its western extremity near the foot of the great mountain, formed the first branch of the Satlej. But when Moorcroft himself, on August 5th, went up on a hill near the shore, from where he could see most of the western shore of the lake, he could not see any outlet, unless a projecting rock at the S.W. angle concealed one from his view. Determined not to leave this point in doubt, he went on foot along the shore, on August 6th, although he was weak after frequent attacks of fever. He gives an excellent description of the N.W. shore which he followed along the foot of the cliffs, from the face of which great heaps of »red and green granite, marble, and lime-stone had fallen.» He saw the grottoes and caves which still exist. In the N.W. corner of the lake he went to the bay at the foot of the hills, from the bottom of which rose a pyramidal red rock, connected with a line or ridge of high land to the higher flats to the north, and steep towards the south. Upon this was the house of a Lama and many *Gelums*, pitched in situations which produced a romantic effect. This description of Chiu-gompa is also very well given.

The following passage is of special importance:¹ »Leaving this (the hill of Chiu-gompa) and diverting my steps to the south, I went along the base of granite rocks amongst such troublesome, rugged and slippery stones, as had interrupted my progress in the outset, till I reached a high, level, and firm bank, which separated

and the Setlej, and of the two remarkable lakes of Rávan and Mánasa.» In the notes to the second edition of his translation of the *Megha-dūta*, 1843, Wilson says (p. 66): »Mánasa, Mánasarovara, or commonly Man-sarour, is a celebrated lake situated in the centre of the Himálaya mountains, and was long said to be the source of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers: with respect to the first of these, the statement has been found to be erroneous; and we have no positive proofs of its accuracy with regard to the latter. When the passage in text was translated, — (the first edition of *Megha-dūta* appeared in 1813) — the chief information regarding the latter was derived from the vague reports of Hindu Pilgrims. Since then, Mánasarovara was visited by that enterprising traveller, Moorcroft. He has not yet had a successor.»

¹ As. Res. loc. cit. p. 470.