

CHAPTER X.

J. D. HERBERT.

We now come to the article by Captain J. D. HERBERT: *An account of a Tour made to lay down the Course and Levels of the River Setlej or Satúdrá, as far as traceable within the limits of the British authority, performed in 1819.*¹ In this able account of one of the great Himalayan pioneers, we find some passages and views about the origin of the great river. Herbert, who travelled in company with Patrick Gerard, could not, however, contribute any new knowledge founded on autoptic observation, for already at Shipki, the first village of »Chinese Tartary», he was compelled to retrace his steps.

As to the source of the Satlej he says:

»The Setlej has been lately known to derive its source, if not from the lake Ráwan Hrad, or the neighbouring one of Mansarovar, from the high ground on which they are situated. From the source however, which by Capt. Hearsay's map, is in 31° 46' Lat., 80° 43' Long. to Ropur in 30° 58' and 76° 31' a distance of upwards of 400 miles, little was known concerning it, or the country it flows through, till the expulsion of the Gorkhas gave facilities to research which had before been wanting: the existence of a Western Branch of this great river beyond the snowy chain was not even suspected, and to our ignorance of this fact may be attributed some errors which could be pointed out in maps very recently published. Of the actual direction of its course an equal ignorance prevailed, or it could never have been made a question, whether the Bhagirathí had its source within or beyond the snowy chain.»

The headman of Dabling, a Lama, gave him some information. He reckoned 5 days on horseback to Cháprang. Even there the Satlej was said not to be fordable. The Kanáwarí's called the river Zangtí, the Tartars Lang Jing Kunpa or Kumpa. The Manasarovar was said to be 18 days' journey from Shipki. The Lama told him the Mapang was either seven or four days' journey in circumference according to the season, which indeed must have given Herbert a rather absurd idea of the lake, unless the Lama really meant walking or riding, for as we know, the influence of the seasons upon the circumference of the lake is negligible.

¹ Asiatic Researches, Vol. XV. Calcutta 1825, p. 339 et seq.