

authority in connection with a range, of which he had only read in books and perhaps heard some vague accounts from unreliable natives. He was sufficiently wise to understand that the country north of the Tsangpo could be made »accessible to science» only by exploration, and not by speculation.

Hodgson continues:<sup>1</sup> »In the meanwhile, without seeking to deny that many facts seem to indicate that the axial line of the Himalaya lies beyond the ghát line, it is obvious to remark that this assumed line is still parallel to the ghát line, though beyond it, and consequently *cannot be reconciled* with an essentially meridional axis, such as the Gángri range presents. And, upon the whole, and with reference to organic phænomena especially, the ghát line still presents itself to me as the best divisor of the Indian and trans-Indian regions and climates, though I am not unaware that bráhmanic geography has, from remote times, carried the Indian frontier up to Mansaróvar and Rávanhrád, to the Brahmápútra and Indus line in Tibet. And, again, though I do not, nor ever did doubt that Tibet is a very mountainous country, yet I conceive that there are good reasons for admitting the propriety of Humboldt's general designation for it. He calls it a plateau or elevated plain, and all those I have conversed with who have passed from various parts of the Himalayan countries into those of Tibet, have expressed themselves in terms implying a strong distinction at least between the physiognomy of the former and the latter region. I would add, that nothing can be juster or finer than Turner's original contrast of the two. — No one acquainted, as I have long been, with the native descriptions of Tibet, or with the general and special delineations of the country by Danville, based entirely upon native materials, or with such enumerations of mountain ranges occurring between the Nepalese and Chinese frontiers, as the accompanying documents contain, could for a moment question that mountains abound in Tibet. On the other hand, there are several reasons of a general nature, besides the specific allegations of the fact by the people, to prove that wide spread plains also abound there.»

The most striking statement here is that the Gangri range is said to present a meridional axis. This extraordinary hypothesis could be explained only if Hodgson were speaking of two wholly different ranges: the Nien-chen-tang-la and the Gangri range, as is indeed the case on his map, although even thus it is difficult to understand what he means.

In the above passage we find three new European sources quoted by Hodgson: Humboldt, Turner and d'Anville. He does not say a word beyond what they said long before. Turner describes Bhutan as a very accentuated country, where »there is scarcely a mountain, whose base is not washed by some rapid torrent», whereas Tibet »exhibits only low rocky hills, without any visible vegetation, or extensive arid plains». <sup>2</sup> When Hodgson got Nien-chen-tang-la from Ritter and the

<sup>1</sup> L. c. p. 481.

<sup>2</sup> An Account of an Embassy etc. p. 216