

He had also the intention of visiting the Nubra-tso, »the lake under the Kurukurum mountains», whence the Shayok was supposed to take its rise. He knows the range of mountains, »more than 16,000 feet in height, behind Leh, which divide the valley of the Shy-Yok, or Nubra River, from that of Ladakh, the nearest distance between them, from Ladakh, being about 20 miles, in a direct line».

Vigne characterises Leh as the well known *rendez-vous* for merchants to and from Yarkand. But he has also heard of another road by the plains of »Chang Thung», to the north of Ladakh, although closed by the jealous Chinese. He believes that these plains commence but a few days march from Leh. »The only inhabitants are wandering shepherds, who range with their flocks and their families over an almost boundless extent. The elevation of these plains must be very great, probably between 13 and 14,000 feet.» The peaks rising from these plains are generally covered with snow, and the cold is intense.

Gulab Sing was annoyed at Vigne's visit to Little Tibet, and now as Vigne was at Leh, Gulab Sing feared that the traveller intended to explore the road to Yarkand. Not without difficulty he obtained permission to visit Nubra under condition that he should not proceed any farther. There were two alternative roads over the mountains behind Leh. The road he took went first east and then north over a pass 16,000 feet high and situated in »dark-coloured trap». Then he came in view of mountain masses and tops in every direction and chiefly on the other side of Shayok or the river from Nubra-tso. »Amongst those on the north, the snowy sierra of the Muztak, extending from Hunzeh to Nubra, arose with conspicuous and most majestic grandeur.» The village Shayok is mentioned as the last inhabited place on the way to Yarkand and he knows that it takes a little more than one month to reach Yarkand. »The road to Yarkand ascends the bed of the river, which is constantly crossed and recrossed by wading; and the mountains or pass of Kurukurum are in this manner reached about the 9th or 10th day from Ladakh.» He correctly says the road to Yarkand crosses two passes, Broknanpah (?) and Siser (Saser), before it reaches Kara-korum, which he calls a pass or a mountain. »The Kurukurum mountains I believed to be a branch or spur from the Muztak, and the principal crest to be passed in the way from the Shy-Yok to Yarkund.» The word »Kurukurum» he correctly translates The black rocks.

The following passage dealing with the Kumdan glacier is interesting:¹

Both the roads I have mentioned, meet before the last ascent commences, and from the place of junction, the glacier of the Nubra Tsuh is visible on the left, and the incipient Shy-Yok flows from it. The Nubra Tsuh is, as well as I could collect, a head water, formed by a vast barrier of ice, that has dammed up a valley formed between two spurs

¹ *Ibidem* p. 362.