

»The Whor (or Hor) country is said to be due north of the district, and from information gathered elsewhere there is little doubt but that Whor (or Hor) is the Tibetan name for eastern Turkistan.» The district he speaks of is Jung Phaiyu. Pooyu was said to »take its name from some high snowy peaks which are probably those at the eastern end of the Kiun-Lun range». He was told the Aksai-Chin was sandy and gravelly and covered with brush-wood. The »term implies the great Chinese white desert or plain».

»No high peaks were seen to the east of the Chang-chenmo, Mr. JOHNSON having noticed from the peaks he ascended large plains to the east and south-east, which are believed to merge into the Chang-thang plains of Rudok. Whilst he also gathered that the Kiun-Lun range only ran about 100 miles east of the Karakash river and then terminated on an extensive plain also communicating with the Chang-thang plains.»

»The Pundit whilst marching from Rudok to Thok-Jalung saw no high peaks to the north or east, evidence which all tends to prove the existence of a large plain in that direction, the term Chang-thang meaning moreover the great plain.»

»According to modern maps this plain extends a great way east, nearly up to the end of the great wall of China near the city of Sewchoo . . . .»<sup>1</sup>

Less than a year later on, MONTGOMERIE reports:

One of the Pundits has carried a route-survey from Dunkhar, in British Spiti, across the upper part of Chumurti, to the south-east corner of Ladak, and thence by a new route to Rudok — the capital of the north-west part of Tibet — which had never before been seen by a surveyor . . . . From Rudok the Pundit advanced nearly due east, over an elevated plateau averaging more than 15,000 feet above the sea. From commanding points this plateau appeared to be of a dazzling white, extending as far as the Pundit could see, and confirming what he heard as to its great extent. The whiteness appeared to be due to some salt mixed with the soil. The plateau lies to the north of the great Aling-Kangri group of snowy peaks which was discovered during 1867; from all accounts it must extend very far to the east, either joining or running parallel with the great desert of Gobi; its general position is indicated under the name of the »Aksai-Chin or white desert», in my map of Turkestan . . . . The sources of the eastern or main branch of the Indus have been satisfactorily traced to the back of the Kailas Parbut, and a very high range to the north-east of that peak.<sup>2</sup>

Montgomerie had long had his eye on the triangular space, lying between the Indus and its great Kabul tributary, which is bounded on the north by the Hindu-kush and Mus-tagh Ranges. All information gathered so far had been uncertain and he, therefore, decided to send a surveying explorer quite across from Peshawar

<sup>1</sup> *Report on the Trans-Himalayan Explorations in connection with the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India during 1868.* By Major T. G. Montgomerie, R. E. *In charge Trans-Himalaya Exploring parties.* P. II.

<sup>2</sup> *The Operations of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India.* In 1868—69, p. 19.