

The general character of the great highlands north of India was a puzzle to geographers fifty years ago. JOHNSON reported the existence of an open road from Ilchi around the eastern extremity of the Kwen-lun Mountains, by which wheeled carriages could pass from the Himalayas direct into the plains of Central Asia. MOORCROFT had already told us: »The trade between Hindoostan and Khotan was formerly very extensive; and it is even said, though I presume rather figuratively, that a loaded cart could go all the way from Nugeebad to Sureekeea (Sarik-kia), in the mountains of Khotan. The road from Sureekeea towards Hindoostan is reported to have passed by Rudokh and Gurkh-dokh, (Gartok).»¹ To this Sir Henry Yule, who was more clear-sighted than other geographers of his time, remarked:² »The details of Moorcroft's information on this matter were probably incorrect, for it does not seem consistent with ascertained facts, as exhibited in Col. Walker's map, that there should be a road passable for carts from Rudokh, on the plains of Chang-thang, to the Karakash River.»

In 1868 Sir HENRY RAWLINSON did not believe in any Russian danger »from beyond the chains of the Kuen-lun and Kara-korum», to which he adds the Hindu-kush. »Although the routes over these chains may be perfectly practicable for commerce, they are quite impracticable to the march of an army, not on account of physical difficulties, but from the want of supplies.»³

A few years later Sir Henry recognizes the unity of the entire mass, and writes that the whole country between India and Tartary may be considered as a broad mountain range, the Himalaya forming the southern crest, and the Kwen-lun the northern.⁴ When speaking of the PUNDIT'S journey to Tengri-nor, Sir Henry, the same year, presumed that the lofty mountains north of Tengri-nor were the eastern prolongation of the Kwen-lun.⁵

In his article: *A Prince of Kâshgar on the Geography of Eastern Turkestan*,⁶ SHAW expresses some very clever views regarding the orography.

He says of MIRZA HAIDAR:

Our author evidently considers all that lies between Yârkand and Khotan on the one side, and India on the other, as one great mountain-mass; in the same way as that which divides Yârkand from Badakhshân, or Kâshghar from Khokand, only, the mass widens as it runs round by south and east. He is not troubled by any theories about the mountains of Sanju (the Kuen-Lun) not forming a part of the same mass. This mass is composed of many subordinate ridges, but they combine to form one grand system. No one of these subordinate ridges or ranges (such as the so-called Kuen-Lun) deserves to be

¹ *Journal Royal Geographical Society*. Vol. I. 1830—31, p. 243.

² *Proceedings Royal Geographical Society*. Vol. XIII. 1868—69, p. 304.

³ *Proceedings Royal Geographical Society*. Vol. XIII. 1868—69, p. 19.

⁴ *England and Russia in the East*. London 1875, p. 236.

⁵ *Journal Royal Geographical Society*. Vol. XLV. 1875, p. CXCII.

⁶ *Journal Royal Geographical Society*. Vol. XLVI. 1876, p. 277 *et seq.*