

ground, of both *kiang* (wild horse) and wild yák,\* a good evidence of the excellence of the grass. The road has evidently been occasionally in use, as it is marked in places where it might easily be lost in the snow by small stones placed in an upright position here and there on large rocks. My guide told me that he had only once travelled by it, when accompanying a very small caravan of not more than five or six ponies, on which occasion, there being a great deal of snow on the Sugét Pass, through which they feared they would be unable to force their way, they had resort to this alternative route to the Kárákorum. I have never met another man who was acquainted with this road, and its existence appears generally unknown to the Bhots of Ladákh.

I returned the following day to Sháhidúla (33 miles) visiting *en route* the jade mines between Gulbáshem and Balákchi. These have been described at length by the late Dr. Stoliczka.

It was deemed advisable, that from Sháhidúla onwards all open survey or display of instruments on the road was to cease. Permission was given, however, for one of the most experienced and wary of the Pundits to take observations quietly with a small pocket compass, with which he carried his route survey up to Yárkand. I also made occasional observations at night for latitude, so that a rough but tolerably correct survey of the road was obtained. On our return to India these restrictions were found to be unnecessary, and one of the Pundits proceeded from Yárkand *viá* Sanjú and Sháhidúla, and without any attempt at concealment paced and re-surveyed the road carefully.

When we left Yárkand for Káshghar the Pundits were directed to remain behind, but one of them was permitted to follow a few days after, and made a very fairly accurate route survey up to Káshghar, the others had to stay in Yárkand until we left the country and returned (with the exception before mentioned of the man who went by Sanjú and Sháhidúla) with the advanced baggage party under Tára Sing, † *viá* the Kugiár and Kárákorum route. They carried a route survey from Yárkand up to Leh. The ground between Karghálik and Kúlunaldi (on the Yárkand River below Kufelong) had never before been surveyed. The Pundit who followed us to Káshghar did some good work; besides making an excursion with Tára Sing to some of the neighbouring bazaars, whose position he was enabled to fix, he accompanied a party of the Mission on an excursion to the north of Káshghar in the Altyn Artysh Districts, making a traverse survey of the road. He also went with Colonel Gordon's party to Sirikol (Táshkurghan), and returned to Yárkand by himself, diverging from the route by which he had come at Chehil Gombáz, whence he proceeded by the direct road to Yárkand, a distance of upwards of 100 miles, over ground that has never previously been surveyed. It was arranged for him to return to India *viá* Khotan, a journey he accomplished most successfully. Prior to leaving the country he paid a visit to the Sorghák Gold Fields in latitude north  $36^{\circ}39'51''$  longitude  $82^{\circ}42'$  east of Greenwich, about 160 miles (by road) to the east of Khotan. Returning thence to Kiria he found his way back to India by Polu, Noh, and the Pangong Lake, a route running from one and a half to two degrees to the east of the most easterly route we have hitherto possessed, *viz.*, that traversed in 1865 by Mr. W. H. Johnson in his journey to Khotan. Details of the route followed by the Pundit are given in the Appendix, as are also his observations for latitude and height.

#### *Description of routes between Ládakh and Turkestan.*

It is not proposed to give here a detailed description of the lines of route followed by the members of the Mission on their travels between Ladakh and Eastern Turkestan, ‡ but a brief comparison of the various lines of road between the two countries may not be uninteresting.

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\* A yak is a species of mountain ox which only lives at great altitudes, and is much used for the carriage of merchandize over snow and ice. On ice they are far more sure-footed than any other beasts of burden.

† Treasurer to the Mission.

‡ Details of the roads traversed by the members of the Mission will be found in Section G. of the Appendix to this Chapter.