

HIMALAYAN RANGE NAMES

THE Editor has pleasure in publishing a group of contributions to the discussion begun in the *Journal* for September last, and will be glad to receive the opinions of other geographers who know the Karakoram, preparatory to a conference on the subject which will, it is hoped, take place early in the coming summer.

The letters from Sir Sidney Burrard discuss two passages of the Editorial Note, and in particular the sentence "These ideas of Godwin Austen dominated the Survey of India for the next forty years" (*G. J.*, 74, 1929, 276).

Major Mason's note is in reply to Sir Sidney Burrard's "Defence of the existing Nomenclature," in the same number of the *Journal*; and Dr. Longstaff's comments were written on receipt of an advance copy of this note.

The Editor has received several letters on the subject which he may be allowed to summarize thus :

Lt.-Colonel Philip Neame, v.c., d.s.o., is strongly in favour of the names used hitherto by the Survey of India, and against the proposed changes, on the ground that the name of the Karakoram Pass is one of the few geographical names known almost universally to the inhabitants of all this mountain region. He would therefore retain the old, historical, and well-known name of Karakoram alone, to be applied to both the mountain region and the Main Range.

Mr. H. S. Montgomerie writes that he is in agreement with Sir Sidney Burrard's article, and maintains that the earlier surveyors described K₂ as essentially a rock peak with bare black surfaces too steep for the snow to lie, as against Major Mason's description, from a different aspect, as "spotlessly white" and the range as the whitest and iciest outside the polar regions. On the early use of the name he quotes from a private letter written by his father, Colonel T. S. Montgomerie, on 22 September 1856: "I took a run into Thibet and have seen the mountains of the Karakorum range that separate the valley of the Indus from Yarkand and those places."

Sir Martin Conway, on the other hand, writes that the Karakoram range "has nothing to do with the pass of that name, still less with the ancient capital of the Mongols. Muztagh is a better name for the K₂ range: but what will you call the range north of the Hispar and that south of the Baltoro?"

THE HIMALAYAN RANGES AND GODWIN AUSTEN'S MAP

Extracts from letters written by Sir Sidney Burrard to the Editor G.J.

From letter of 27 September 1929

There were one or two points in your article on the Indian Border, *G. J.*, September, p. 274, which were not quite fair to the Survey of India.

You are quite mistaken in thinking that the ideas of Godwin Austen have dominated the survey for fifty years or that our maps are dependent on geology. I have never seen that map in any Indian drawing-office, I have never heard it

quoted, and have never used it myself. The reason that the successive maps of Tibet from Walker's downwards all resemble one another is that they are all based on the same topographical data, the later maps having additional data. All our maps of Tibet are purely topographical; geology does not enter; there have been no geological surveys, and if there had been, we never use geology in topographical maps.

In all branches of knowledge generalization is necessary and difficult. Geographers are obliged to generalize, and to produce diagrammatic maps of complicated mountain systems. These diagrams are required as index maps, and for bird's-eye views. If we plot all the known peaks above 16,000 feet, the points on our charts arrange themselves in curvilinear alignments. I am no advocate of "ranges"; as a geologist Hayden was opposed to long ranges, because the eastern part of the Himalayan range was of a different age from the western. But Hayden, like myself, could not but see that the high points of Tibet insisted on grouping themselves in curvilinear arrangements, and a "range" is merely an abbreviation for curvilinear arrangement.

We have to keep quite separate the question of the continuity of ranges from east to west, and the continuity of their names throughout their lengths. As to the continuity of ranges the topographical data lead to the idea that the plateau of Tibet is traversed from west to east by long continuous ranges. If a range does sink into the plateau here and there, it seems to reappear on the same alignment a little farther on. Between the ranges the plateau seems to consist of level strips. There has been no topographical survey; but there have been scattered surveys from east to west and from north to south, and they all confirm the view of parallel ranges.

As to continuity of names across the plateau, every one would like to find Tibetan names. No one wants to extend the name Karakoram east of the Karakoram region: it would be a mistake. The *Map of Tibet*, 1914, which you quote, had a very unfortunate error, which was not noticed by the scrutineer; the drawing-office was short-handed, and this mistake crept in. The draughtsman entered the name Karakoram too far east. This was a mere slip; there was nothing intentional about it. I have never heard any surveyor advocate the extension of the name Karakoram east of the Shyok basin. The name has not been limited in area with the same definite precision as a state boundary. But just as the name of this range is automatically changed to Hindu Kush, as it proceeds westwards into Afghanistan, so we may hope that it will one day take on a Tibetan name as it proceeds eastwards.

With regard to your remark about the Ladakh and Kailas ranges extending eastwards to 92° , there is no doubt that these two ranges are very long alignments of elevated points. The apparent breaks in their continuity are mentioned on pp. 93 and 95, Part II (Burrard and Hayden's sketch). These breaks are probably only dips of the alignment below the high level of the plateau. The difficulties of naming these long ranges, when there are no Tibetan names, were painfully present to Hayden and myself in 1907. Our critics may say, "How absurd to extend the names Ladakh and Kailas through so many degrees of longitude!" The names affixed to these two ranges were given in 1852-53 by Cunningham, a careful, scientific and erudite explorer; we followed Cunningham, and in the absence of Tibetan names we continued

Cunningham's names throughout the eastern prolongations of his range-alignments. In taking this step and in avoiding inventions of new names, we were only actuated by the wish to leave the whole question open for final consideration when the time had become ripe. We thus saved our successors from the complications of having new names started which might prove unsuitable. I may say that in 1907 we consulted every known authority about these ranges, and we received the universal advice: "the time is not ripe; leave the question alone."

The ranges of Tibet seem to open like a fan, and to be squeezed together at the north-western end. But the same elevated alignments seem to persist even when squeezed and pushed north-west.

From letter of 5 October 1929

Thank you very much for sending me Godwin Austen's papers and map. They are forty-six years old, and though they may have marked a step of progress in 1883, they are now out of date, owing to the explorations in recent times of Ryder, Wood, Kishen Singh, and others. When Godwin Austen wrote these papers he had been absent for twenty years from North-Western Tibet, and had become engrossed in the geology of the Eastern Himalayas in Assam. As you kindly invite me to make further remarks upon your paper, I gladly accept.

You say on p. 276 that the geological structure is indicated by long lines in red overprinted on the map. But these lines of red are not geology: they are merely lines of high elevation. Some of these lines are borrowed from Markham and Saunders, who were not geologists. Godwin Austen himself calls these lines "elevation lines." Although he tries in his letterpress to find a relationship between these lines and the known geology, a modern geologist would, I am sure, say he was premature, as so little geology was known. In the sentence you mention on his page 611, he is only referring to the main Himalayan mass, south of Tibet. The geologists had learnt something in 1883 of the Himalayas, but after years of association with Hayden and Holland and Oldham and Middlemiss, I feel sure that they would have repudiated any assumption of a knowledge of geology in Tibet.

On p. 277 you say that the Karakoram range has been carried away east of Mount Everest because geologists identify rocks. The geologists have never explored the Karakoram and its extensions in Tibet; and geographers would never continue a name on geological grounds only. Except for one map, upon which the name Karakoram was misplaced by a draughtsman's slip, this name has never been extended into Tibet.

In Hayden's and my 'Sketch of Himalayan Geography' we drew the ranges by plotting all the high peaks (please see Chart V of Part I, on which all peaks higher than 24,000 feet were plotted). We continued this process down to 19,000 and 18,000 feet. In Tibet, where heights had not been observed, we had to rely upon the reports of explorers concerning the perpetual snow upon peaks.

It is true that the Ladakh range is a long one. The evidence of its length is discussed in Part II, pp. 92, 93, of 'Himalayan Geography.' We stuck to the name Ladakh because it was the only name that had been used by our predecessors, and we disliked inventing new names.