

try for the corner, but eventually a snowstorm compelled retreat and we made all speed back to camp, leaving the problem still unsolved. This was a blessing in disguise, for in the successful crossing next year from the north, with better porters, we were obliged to descend the cliff, and are of opinion that, with the porters available in 1925, an accident might have occurred had we persisted. Actually, the cliff affords the only way, and it will always be dangerous, owing to the angle and extreme looseness of the face.

From the top, at a height of over 18,000 feet, the pass is visible and is easily attainable between two systems of crevasses which have not yet united but may do so before very long.

The north side is steep everywhere, but it is possible that an easier route than ours of 1926 exists to the west, and parties might investigate this.

THE WORD HIMALAYA.

SIR GEOFFREY CORBETT.

THE WORD Himalaya is derived from two Sanskrit words,—“Hi-ma,” snow, and “ā-la-ya,” abode ; and it means *The Abode of Snow*. Words similarly formed and similarly pronounced are “Devālaya,” *Abode of God* and “Shivālaya,” *Abode of Shiva*. In northern India, Himalaya denotes the whole range,—or rather ranges,—stretching from Chitral to Assam, “like a measuring rod of the earth.” But in Nepal and east of Nepal, each group of snow-covered peaks is called Himāla or Himāl, which is a contraction of Himalaya, and a separate name is given to the group rather than to the individual peak. Thus Brigadier E. A. Tandy, late Surveyor General of India, says that the Everest group is called Mahā Langūir Himāl in Nepal, and that Mount Everest itself has no Nepalese name. Similarly Colonel Ganesh Bahadur Chattari, who directed the recent survey operations in Nepal, considers that the Tibetan name Chomolangma is applied generally to the whole Everest group or Himāl, and not particularly to the highest peak.

The common Anglicised pronunciation is Himālayā. But in recent years there has been a tendency among superior folk to say Hīmāliyā or Hīmāliyā. I happened last year to be a member of a committee of the Indian legislature which included representatives from all parts of India, and we suspended work one morning to discuss the right pronunciation of the word from which the Club takes

its name. There was considerable argument and divergence of opinion, which I should summarize thus :—

<i>Northern India</i>	..	}	(1) Hindi—Himālay.
			(2) Urdu—Himāleeya.
<i>Bengal</i>	..		Himāla or Himāl.
<i>Southern India</i>	..		Himāliya.

Colonel C. L. Peart, Adviser in Languages and Secretary to the Board of Examiners at Army Headquarters, was good enough to go into the question, and he has sent the following note :—

“ There is no doubt that Tibetans and Hindi and Urdu-speaking Indians all pronounce the first ‘ a ’ long, though the last named stress it more than the first two.

“ The real difficulty lies in the transliteration of the last two syllables. Several Tibetans questioned by the Indian Member of the Board pronounced the word as ‘ Himāliye,’ passing quickly over the ‘ i.’ Hindus pronounce it ‘ Himālai ’ and ‘ Himālay.’ It will be noticed that these renderings have the effect of making all the syllables of the word almost of the same length. The Muhammadan rendering is ‘ Himāliya ’ and less frequently ‘ Himāla.’ These renderings have the support of the standard Urdu dictionary, the *Farhang-i-Asafia*.

“ The rendering given by Platts and other authorities, ‘ Himālaya,’ can only be supported if it is read in the Hindi or Sanskrit way, that is, Himālay-ā, the final soft ‘ a ’ being the sound that follows many final consonants in Sanskrit. Read in any other way, say under the Hunterian system or the Army system, the word would read Himālayā, which of course is wrong.

“ Platts’ rendering, if read in the Hindi way, is probably the correct way of writing and pronouncing the word and is the same as the commoner Tibetan and Hindu pronunciations given above. The difficulty of writing the word so as to ensure that the last two syllables are pronounced in the Hindi way is overcome for us by the fact that English people already pronounce these two syllables almost in that way.

“ That we should follow Tibetans and Hindus in their renderings and not the Muhammadans is only reasonable, as the former are the inhabitants, and therefore have presumably the proper pronunciation of the name. If that is so, it only remains for the Survey of India to bring the English pronunciation into line with the Hindi pronunciation as given by Platts and others, by placing an accent over the first ‘ a ’ of the word as already written in English, i.e., ‘ Himālaya.’

“Under our present Army system the word would be written ‘Himálea,’ which is an excellent rendering but would, no doubt, be violently assailed.”

I showed Colonel Peart’s note to Professor A. B. Dhruva, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Sanskrit at Benares Hindu University. He writes :—

“‘Himáliya,’ with the accent on the second syllable, is said to be the authorized Urdu or Muhammadan pronunciation, and the pronunciation is correct so far as the accent is concerned, which in Sanskrit and Hindi also is on the second syllable. But the Urdu pronunciation is defective in so far as it slurs over the vowel *a* between *l* and *y*.

“The Tibetan ‘Himāliye’ is a corruption of the Sanskrit ‘Himālaya,’ the *a* on each side of *y* being changed into *i* and *e* according to well-known laws of sound and change. The Muhammadan ‘himāliya’ nearly corresponds to the Tibetan ‘Himāliye, and ‘Himāla’ is the contraction of ‘aya’ into one syllable. The omission of *a* after *l* in some mouths is due to the absence of accent on the third and fourth syllables.

“In the Sanskrit pronunciation the accent falls on the second syllable, with a slight accent on the final soft *a*, just so much as is required to pronounce it distinctly. Since Hindi and other modern Indian languages do not require the final *a* to be pronounced distinctly or even indistinctly, there is only one accent, and it is on the second syllable.”

The sum of it all is that Himalaya is a Sanskrit word, and there is no doubt about the correct Sanskrit pronunciation. The English equivalents of the vowel sounds are these—

Hi-	as in “him”
-mā-	as in “father.”
-la- -ya	} as in “fur” or French “le.”

In modern Hindi the final -a is ordinarily not sounded, and the word is pronounced Hi-mā-lay.

I have reached this conclusion with the help of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pandit Brijlal Nehru, who assure me that it is correct.