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The Asian Review

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making difficulties, probably quite naturally, because the area was unsettled. It was reasonable to suppose that more oil would be found other than in the two areas which were producing at the moment. It appeared that neither the Burmah Oil Company or any other company was prepared to go ahead and enlarge until fresh supplies were found.

Sir STANLEY REED, in proposing the vote of thanks, said that he had first gone to Burma 54 years ago. He could imagine no more beautiful a sight than a sunset in Mandalay, which was then in a perfect state of preservation. On one occasion he had been to see some oilfields and had afterwards driven in a bullock-cart to pick up the steamer. On arriving at the river bank there was no steamer, and after an hour or two there was still no steamer. There was no other way of getting back, but eventually the Governor's yacht came down the river and he decided to hail it, although a companion did not credit him with the "unmitigated cheek" to do so.

What a welcome Sir Hubert had been given when he went back to Rangoon. A man who had represented the Crown had gone back as a friend.

They thanked Sir Hubert most cordially for a refreshing address, and Lord Pethick-Lawrence for presiding.

Himalayan Exploration

By Professor KENNETH MASON, MC

FORMERLY OF THE SURVEY OF INDIA

PROFESSOR KENNETH MASON, MC, who recently retired from the Chair of Modern Geography at Oxford and who spent his earlier years in the Survey of India, spoke on "Himalayan Exploration" to a joint meeting of the East India Association and the Over-Seas League at Over-Seas House, Park Lane, S.W.1, on Wednesday, May 2nd, 1956. Sir JOHN WOODHEAD, GCIE, KCSI, Chairman of Council, presided. The address was illustrated with lantern slides.

Sir JOHN WOODHEAD: We are fortunate in having as our speaker this afternoon Professor Kenneth Mason, who is to talk to us and also show

us slides on Himalayan Exploration. It is a great pleasure for me to preside to-day for it affords me an opportunity to meet him once again after the lapse of many years. We first met in Delhi as long ago as 1928, when the Himalayan Club was being formed. Professor Mason took a very active part in the establishment of that Club and he was Editor of the Club's journal for nearly 20 years. Colonel Mason is a great authority on the Himalayas, having as an officer of the Survey of India spent much time working in that superb mountain region. He has the honour of having been awarded the Founder's Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society for work in the Karakoram. Again in 1913 he was in charge of the expedition connecting the Indo-Russian Surveys of the Pamirs, and in 1926 was the leader of the Shaksgam Expedition. After retiring from the Army and the Survey of India, he was for over twenty years Professor of Geography at Oxford. I am sure he found the work of that post most congenial and the fact that he held it for such a long period is a tribute to the success with which he carried out its duties. We shall look forward to Professor Mason's talk on exploration in the Himalayas with the greatest interest.

Professor MASON: I am going to talk this afternoon about the middle period of British Himalayan exploration. We do not always realize that British rule in India lasted only a matter of less than 200 years between the battle of Plassey and the handing over of power to India and Pakistan in 1947. The first fifty years of this period added little to our knowledge of the Himalaya; the East India Company were engaged in wars and surveyors were mostly busy in the peninsula of India. The last fifty years have been a period of specialized climbing rather than one of pioneer exploration.

It is therefore the 19th century that I shall speak about this afternoon. My excuse for doing so is that few of the younger generation realize the immense amount of knowledge gained by the small body of British officials in India during that century; and when I say officials I mean not only the Survey of India, but also Indian Civil Servants, forest officers, road and public works engineers, settlement, revenue, and political officers. When young men go to the Himalaya to-day they sometimes think they are going into unexplored country. To some extent this is true of the higher mountains of Nepal, but it is certainly not so of the greater part of the Himalaya west of it.

At the end of the 18th century we knew very little about the Himalaya. Our best map was that compiled by James Rennell, first published as part of his *Map of Hindoostan* in 1782. It was based on d'Anville's

Carte de l'Inde published thirty years earlier, in which Tibetan topography had been drawn from the work of Chinese lamas. By the end of the century, only six small British expeditions had gone into the Himalaya. Two had been invited to Katmandu in Nepal to advise the ruler on his difficulties with Tibet; four had been sent by Warren Hastings through western Bhutan, and two of these under Bogle and Turner had reached Shigatse on the Tsangpo in Tibet. Rennell's map showed the Himalayan river courses entirely wrong. No one knew the heights of any of the mountains.

The Andes were then believed by geographers to be the highest mountains in the world. When W. S. Webb, early in the 19th century, made the first observations for the heights of the Great Himalayan peaks, and calculated that of Dhaulagiri at 26,862 feet, he was derided in Europe. We now know that Webb's height was within 70 feet of the truth, that it is the seventh highest in the world, and that there are more than a hundred Himalayan summits higher than the Andes.

POLITICAL EXPANSION

The interest in the first fifty years of the last century lies in the fact that exploration was largely the result of political expansion. The first event was Napoleon's threat to India; it led to the East India Company's despatch of envoys to neighbouring countries, including Charles Metcalfe to Ranjit Singh, the ambitious ruler of the Punjab. The result was the treaty of 1809, which led the British to take a greater interest in the country east of the Sultej and their northern flank in the Himalaya. Robert Colebrooke, Surveyor General of Bengal, who died in 1808, had already persuaded the Maharajah of Nepal to allow him to explore the Ganges sources, and had sent his able young lieutenant, W. S. Webb, to survey the river's course. Webb, with another officer, Captain F. V. Raper, of his regiment the 10th Bengal N.I., and that strange adventurous character of the early 19th century, Hyder Young Hearsay, explored the Ganges to within about forty miles of its source in the Gangotri glacier.

Another interesting adventurer of this time is William Moorcroft, veterinary surgeon to the East India Company, who had charge of the Company's stud farm at Pusa, near Patna. In 1812, he and Hearsay, both disguised as fakirs, travelled right through the Kumaun Himalaya into Tibet. Here they were detained by the Tibetans, but with the help of two Bhotias near the border returned safely to India. Such journeys were by no means easy. Apart from the lack of roads and maps, the Gurkhas of Nepal had expanded westwards into Kumaun and were generally hostile to intrusion. They were also encroaching southwards on to territory in the occupation of the Company.

It was this encroachment that brought about the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16. The treaty which followed fixed the western boundary of Nepal at the river Kali, but closed Nepal itself to British exploration and penetration throughout the whole period of British rule in India. It was out of respect for this treaty, loyally kept by both parties to it for 140 years, that compelled British attempts to climb Mount Everest to be made from the Tibetan side, and to avoid Nepalese territory until after the second World War. After this treaty, Kumaun came under the protection of the East India Company, and explorers were quick to go in. John Anthony Hodgson was appointed "Surveyor of the north-west mountain provinces," which now included Kumaun, with James Herbert as his assistant; they at once began measuring bases and observing the high mountains.

The next twenty years are interesting because of the number of explorers who made their names. The Gerard brothers (Captain Alexander and his brother, Dr. J. G.) in 1817 passed through the "middling-sized village of Simla" and explored into Bashahr, Spiti and Kanawar; they crossed most of the passes into the Baspa valley. G. W. Traill, the first deputy-commissioner of Kumaun, a benevolent despot in his domain, travelled extensively between 1817 and 1835; a pass across the main range between Nanda Devi and Nanda Kot is still known by his name. Farther north-west, Moorcroft and the geologist, Trebeck, in the twenties were active in Ladakh, before their deaths at Andkhui in Afghanistan in 1825. The traveller G. T. Vigne also made extensive explorations in the thirties in Kashmir, Ladakh and Baltistan, and wrote an important book on these countries.

I must not go into details and can only sketch an outline of how the pattern of knowledge changed. By the end of the thirties we already knew the main routes and valleys. The political set-up was then altered by the death of Ranjit Singh and by the Sikh wars which followed. With the annexation of the Punjab, the Company again had an exposed mountain flank and once more officials and surveyors had to go in to increase our knowledge. The boundaries of Kashmir now under the Maharajah Gulab Singh, both with the neighbouring Company's provinces and with Tibet, were unknown, and had now to be determined. The Commissioner appointed for this purpose was Alexander Cunningham, who had with him as doctor and naturalist Thomas Thomson, and as his assistant Henry Strachey, one of the two famous brothers who did so much in Kumaun. Together they covered much of Rupshu, Eastern Ladakh and Baltistan. Cunningham was the first to trace the alignment of the Zaskar range; Strachey discovered the great Siacken glacier in the Karakoram, though he did not realize its length; Thomson

was the first European to cross the Saser pass, 17,480 feet, between the Nubra and upper Shyok valleys and the first to reach the Karakoram pass. These are two important passes on the main trade-route between Leh and the Central Asian towns of Yarkand and Kashgar.

Among other travellers with scientific interests were Richard Strachey, who studied the geology of the Kumaun Himalaya and made a collection of some two thousand plants in this region; the great naturalist of the mid-century, Sir Joseph Hooker, who travelled and collected in Sikkim and the eastern borders of Nepal; and the three Schlagintweit brothers, who travelled over many parts of the Himalaya, not as is often thought as independent scientists, but under direction of the Company. Men were in fact already pressing into the Himalaya in all directions and laying the foundations of much scientific work.

SCIENTIFIC SURVEY

I now come to a period which is of great interest to me personally, because I was myself trained as a mountain surveyor, and spent much of my early active life surveying the Himalaya. It is the period of scientific Himalayan survey and dates back to the great work of Sir George Everest, who went to India as a young artillery cadet in 1806. He became assistant to William Lambton, the founder of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India in 1818, succeeded Lambton in 1823, and ruled as Surveyor General from 1830 until his retirement in 1843. He conceived and measured the arc of the meridian from Cape Comorin in the south to Banog near Mussoorie in the outer Himalaya, and planned and laid out the geodetic framework of triangulation that covered the whole of India, on which all subsequent accurate survey was to be based. Before his day, the latitudes and longitudes of places were of varying accuracy, and maps were often loosely controlled by rough astronomical observations, made by light portable instruments. Everest's arc and the series of great triangles and quadrilaterals tied all the future work together. His successor, Sir Andrew Waugh, extended the work along the Himalayan foothills, and from these further triangulation nets were observed deep into the mountains.

It was from the stations of these geodetic series of triangulation that the first accurate observations were made to the great peaks. Among those made in 1848 from the north-eastern series were those to the great peaks of Nepal, including one listed as xv, which was computed in 1852 to have a height of 29,002 feet, proving it to be the highest known mountain in the world, a position it still holds. Thirteen years later, when all efforts to find a native name for it had failed, Sir Andrew Waugh, with

the approval of the Government of India, named it Mount Everest, after his great predecessor. It displaced Kangchenjunga (ix) which had already taken the place of Dhaulagiri. West of Nepal, the north-western series was extended into the Punjab, and in the early fifties branch chains of triangulation were observed from stations in the Kumaun Himalaya and in Kashmir, until the whole of the mountains were covered with accurately fixed points and peaks on which detailed survey could be based.

The topographical survey began in Kashmir in 1853 under Captain T. G. Montgomerie. He planned the survey and first saw the giants of the Karakoram from the 16,000 foot survey station of Haramukh in Kashmir. In 1857, the year of the Indian Mutiny, these peaks were observed by George Shelverton, and a year later one of them, the great pyramid κ2, was computed at 28,250 feet, so relegating Kangchenjunga to third place. Thus, by the end of 1858, the three highest mountains were known accurately for position and height; xv, not yet named Everest, 29,002 feet; κ2, (its designation in the old records) 28,250 feet; and Kangchenjunga, the sacred Sikkim mountain, "the Five Treasuries of the Great Snows," 28,146 feet. There are nineteen mountains in the Karakoram over 25,000 feet in height, six being above 26,000 feet. In 1861, Captain H. H. Godwin-Austen, an officer of the old 24th Foot (now the South Wales Borderers), who was attached to the Survey of India, explored the glaciers which descend from these grand mountains. He was probably the most daring mountaineer of his day and a beautiful draughtsman, and I had the personal privilege of knowing him and hearing of his travels from his own lips. In 1888 it was suggested that his name should be given to κ2, but this suggestion was not accepted by the Royal Geographical Society nor approved by the Survey or Government of India, first on the grounds that he did not discover the mountain, and secondly that, with the single exception of Everest, personal names are inappropriate for these great natural features.

The survey of Kashmir, Ladakh, and the Kumaun Himalaya was completed by 1863. Precision instruments had been carried up the mountains, huts and cairns often being built on or near the summits. No fewer than thirty-seven mountains over 20,000 feet had been climbed and observed from with the theodolite, five above 21,000 feet. But now India had come under the Crown and officers were forbidden to go beyond the frontiers. Yet our trans-frontier maps were still very poor, and something had to be done about it. This situation ushered in a new phase of exploration. J. T. Walker and Montgomerie of the great Trigonometrical Survey began to train Indians to explore the regions forbidden to British officers. The first two to be selected, Nain Singh and his cousin, Mani Singh, were Bhotias from the little village of Milam

in the Kumaun Himalaya beyond Nanda Devi. They were sons of the two brothers who had befriended Moorcroft in Tibet as long ago as 1812. Both had travelled in Kumaun with the Schlagintweits. They were brought to Dehra Dun, taught to use the sextant and compass, how to count and record their paces, how to write up their observations, and generally how to make route-surveys.

ROMANTIC PERIOD

To my mind this is quite the most romantic period of exploration. It is the period of Kipling's *Kim*, with Russia, and the "great game" in Asia as a background. During my service in India I took the opportunity of looking through the records of these men, and found them of great interest. Time does not permit me to detail their journeys, and I shall confine my remarks to a few points. Collectively these Indian explorers became known as "the pundits," though all were by no means Hindus; some were Buddhists, others, especially those on the north-west, Muslims. A few were engaged on political work as well as on survey. Their work was generally secret, and they were known by designations or initials, often the last sounded letter of their name and the first. Nain Singh, who helped to train others, was generally "the Pundit," or "Pundit No. 1." Mani Singh was GM; Kishen Singh, a brother of Mani Singh, enlisted as Krishna, became the famous AK. These, with others, worked mostly in Tibet. On the north-west frontier the best-known were "the Mullah" (Ata Muhammad), "The Mirza" (Mirza Shuja), and "NA" (Abdul Subhan). These gave us our first maps of northern Afghanistan, Chitral, Swat, and the Indus gorges—the old Buddhist route of "the hanging chains." Their work being secret, they travelled often in the guise of holy men or traders. AK generally travelled as a Tibetan lama, counting his paces with a rosary of a hundred beads (the Tibetan rosary has 108) and keeping his records in the drum of a Tibetan prayer-wheel. His most notable journey lasted from 1878 to 1882, when he passed through Lhasa and reached the extreme north-west confines of the Chinese province of Kansu, having been robbed and stripped by bandits in Chang-tang. Other pundits deserving mention are Hari Ram (MH) who made the first circuit of the Everest group in 1871, and Rinzin Namgyal (RN) who first mapped the circuit of Kangchenjunga.

One story bears retelling. Kinthup was not a trained explorer, but the servant of a Chinese lama of the Darjeeling district trained in survey by Captain Harman of the Survey of India and sent by him to trace the course of the Tsangpo of Tibet as far down as possible. On arrival in Tibet the Chinese lama turned false to his mission, sold Kinthup into

slavery and decamped to China. Kinthup escaped and took over the mission and traced the Tsangpo through Pemakoi-chen down to the monastery of Marpung where he took refuge. From here, on the pretence of visiting other holy places, he made several short journeys, on one of which he reached Olon, within thirty-five miles of the Brahmaputra plains of Assam. He eventually returned through Tibet to India, after being absent about four years. By this time Harman was dead and it was not until two years later that his successor H. C. B. Tanner, engaged on the survey of Sikkim, wrote down Kinthup's story. Being illiterate, Kinthup had to rely on his memory; he listed the places through which he had passed and described them. A rough map was compiled by Tanner, but though his story was credited by the Survey of India it was not generally accepted by geographers until some thirty years later when F. M. Bailey and H. T. Morshead explored the great bend of the Tsangpo in 1912, and proved it true.

It must not be thought that during the "pundit period" British explorers and surveyors were idle. G. W. Hayward was active in 1868 when he reached Yarkand, and the following year explored the Yarkand river sources. He was murdered in Yasin in 1870 in an attempt to reach the Darkot pass in order to explore the sources of the Oxus. The two Forsyth missions to Kashgar in 1870 and 1873-4 also brought back valuable information. With Sir Douglas Forsyth were three British officers, all trained in survey, four Indian surveyors, including the two "pundits" AK and NA, a doctor-naturalist and a geologist.

Much information and mapping also resulted from N.W. frontier expeditions, where for twenty years, from 1878 to 1898, Sir Thomas Holdich had an almost unbroken period of service, and an uncle of mine, Alexander Mason, was a very active intelligence officer. There were others also who crossed the frontiers in disguise, such as William Watts McNair who in 1883 penetrated Kafiristan disguised as a Muslim doctor. None of these men was encouraged to write or talk of his exploits.

In 1887 Francis Younghusband made his famous journey from Peking across Asia to Yarkand and over the Karakoram by the Muztagh pass to Kashmir. He crossed the pass without tents, with no specialized knowledge of mountaineering, and with no climbing equipment; nor could he light a fire for fear of attracting Hunza raiders. The pass was not crossed again for thirty years. This was the first of three important journeys by Younghusband. The establishment of the Gilgit Agency by Algernon Durand in 1888 and the pacification of the northern frontier as the result of the Hunza-Nagir war in 1891, led to the detailed exploration of these two states, and ushered in a new era of mountain adventure. With the exception of one climbing expedition by W. W. Graham in

1883, which was the subject of much controversy, no climbers had gone to India with the main object of climbing mountains. In 1892, Martin Conway, afterwards Lord Conway of Allington, led his expedition to the great Karakoram glaciers, and in particular explored and mapped the great Baltoro glacier and its head branches in the neighbourhood of K2. In 1895, A. F. Mummery, G. Hastings and Norman Collie made their daring attempt to climb Nanga Parbat, an attempt which cost Mummery and two Gurkhas their lives. Charles Bruce, then a young officer in the 5th Gurkhas, was with both Conway and Mummery. The last expedition I shall mention is that of Douglas Freshfield round Kangchenjunga in 1899, which in a sense opened the campaign against this great mountain.

Time does not permit me to say much more. From now onwards, mountaineers began to dream of reaching the summits, but the most interesting period of pioneer exploration was over. The first steps had been taken towards the conquest of K2, Nanga Parbat, and Kangchenjunga, though it was still more than fifty years before their summits were reached. The ascent of Everest was discussed before 1900, but both approaches through Tibet and through Nepal, were forbidden. Even the bottom rung of that ladder was unknown.

I cannot close without a tribute to General Charles Bruce and Tom Longstaff, the pioneers of mountain exploration during the early years of the present century, and without one to my old chief, Sir Sidney Burrard, Surveyor General of India, who in 1909 decided to re-survey the whole of the Himalaya and first gave me the chance of seeing these grandest of all mountains and working among them. I had the good fortune, as a young officer before the first world war, to complete the triangulation between India and Russia over the Pamirs.

QUESTIONS

In reply to questions, Professor Mason assured his audience that there were no mountains higher than Everest, Most *estimates* of the heights of mountains were based on aneroid or barometric heights, and these were based on some datum and a constant atmospheric pressure. He was unable to say whether there was much trade these days between India and Tibet or much crossing of the passes between the two countries. Probably more Tibetans crossed the border into Indian territory than vice versa.

Asked whether he considered the view of Kangchenjunga from Darjeeling to be the finest in the world, Professor Mason said that in his opinion it was probably beaten by that of Nanga Parbat from the mountains of Gor near Gilgit across the deep valley of the Indus. Here at

about 10,000 feet you can look down to the Indus at about 3,500 feet above sea level and to the summit of Nanga Parbat, 26,660 feet, about thirteen miles away, giving a view of 23,000 feet of rock, snow and ice.

VOTE OF THANKS

SIR FRANCIS LOW: I have taken it upon myself this afternoon to propose the vote of thanks because during the first war, when I was a very junior officer in Mesopotamia, I became a sort of assistant to Professor Mason, or Major Mason as he then was. I had started in the world of journalism just before I joined the army, and this presumably was the reason why I was seized upon to become a temporary Intelligence Officer. I was taken on first at Divisional Headquarters, and then I went to 1st Corps Headquarters, where Major Mason was in charge of intelligence. It was quite an education for me, I can assure you, to serve under him. When in the hot weather the war was not unduly disturbing us, Professor Mason became very interested in the traces in that part of the world of Alexander the Great. I remember him getting highly intrigued about the number of parasangs Alexander and his men could do in a day. I think he himself got on to the track of Alexander and tried to work out how many parasangs constituted a day's march.

We are very grateful to him for coming here to-day to tell us about the early days of the Himalayas. We have heard lately in this and other bodies a good deal about the glamorous exploits of climbers who have gone to the top of these mountains. I think it is very important to remember, as Professor Mason has reminded us, the great pioneer work which was done in the Himalayas by British and Indian surveyors. The whole world of mountaineering is under a great debt of gratitude to them, and I am sure you will agree, as I said before, that the world-famous climbers of the last few years owe much of their success to the pioneer work carried out by the Survey of India for over a century. That is worth remembering, and it has been recalled to us and preserved for all time by Professor Mason in the classic volume which he himself produced last year entitled "Abode of Snow." The record of Himalayan pioneering and exploration is one of which I think we—both British and Indian—can be very proud indeed. I have very great pleasure in asking you to accord a hearty vote of thanks to Professor Mason and also to our Chairman.