

**Catalogue of Memoirs of the Survey of India (1773-1866)**  
**National Archives of India**  
**New Delhi**  
**1989**

**p. 67, item 88, "Travels of Moorcroft in Ladak 1820-22."**

**National Archives of India; Cartography Room reference:**  
**Memoir--SGO M-414; 1820-30; M-88 Serial No. 230**  
**Item number XII; Manuscript pages 309-339**

**Typed on 12-18/10/2012; 9-12/Nov./12;**

*The source of the following document regarding William Moorcroft is unclear. It comes without the normal heading, and ends on page 339 without any indication of a possible author. There is a squiggly line at the end that might be a very unreadable signature, or perhaps it is just a line to indicate the end of the article.*

*The 1830 Vol 1 of RGS Journal includes an article "Notice on Khoten" p.233 that describes some of the papers of the Late Mr. William Moorcroft. On p. 234 it states, "Those (papers) at present possessed by the Society naturally arrange themselves under three heads: --1. The Journey to Leh, and account of Ladakh given with it: 2. Such hearsay notices of Chinese Tartary as were there procured: and 3. Papers regarding Cashmere, its soil, productions, manufactures, trade, etc. several of which are very curious and interesting. Selections from each will be published in future volumes of these transactions, as may be found expedient; and in the meantime, one extract is subjoined." Then on p. 268 of Vol 2 of RGS journal we have a note appended to an article summarizing information from Moorcroft on Kashmir--"Another paper, similar to the above, may be gleaned from Mr. Moorcroft's materials, regarding the arts and manufacture of Cashmere; and also a third, of a miscellaneous nature, regarding Ladakh, in which country he resided two years. It seems desirable" ..... etc.*

*Is it possible that the document below is the document (1) mentioned above, as prepared for publication at some point by the Royal Geographical Society. To my knowledge, the document below was never published by the RGS. (DEJ)*

\*\*\*\*\*

Manuscript text

The travels of Mr. Moorcroft in the countries north of the Himalayas have for several years attracted the notice and excited the curiosity of the public. Little however has yet transpired to convey an accurate notice of the course which the traveller has pursued and we are yet wholly uninformed of the result of his researches beyond a few detached observations, chiefly of an agricultural or veterinary tenor, which have found their way from time to time into the Public Journal. It is probable that some considerable interval may elapse before we are put

in possession of minute details of this journal by Mr. Moorcroft himself, and in the interval it may be acceptable to the society to be enabled to form some view of his proceedings hitherto and of the information we may expect from his undaunted enterprise and intelligent zeal. The means of doing this have been furnished by the liberality of Government and the sketch of Mr. Moorcroft's travels which it is proposed to offer to the Society are derived with permission from his official correspondence. On the present occasion it will be confined to his journey to Ladakh and his residence in that country.

Mr. Moorcroft commenced his journey in 1820 and prosecuted the route by Kangra, a tract in which no European had ever preceded him.

Side note: The latest information respecting the western states of the Himalaya is published by Buchan~~n~~ in his account of its Nepal. It was derived by him from information gathered from the natives as he had no opportunity of visiting the country.

In the early part of July Mr. Moorcroft arrived at Shahjehanpur the residence of Raja Sanoor<sup>i</sup> Chand and present capital of Kangra. The town is of inconsiderable extent, distant about 18 cos from the fortress of North Kangra, the former capital of the Raja but now in possession of Ranjeet Singh having been ceded to that chief in 1810 as the price of his assistance against the Goorkhas. The district of Kangra although of small extent is fertile and exports considerable quantities of rice and wheat annually to Lahore and the Punjab.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July Mr. Moorcroft proceeded from Shahjahanpur and moved?? into the Kullu territory, at the capital of which, Sultanpur, he arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August. The particulars of his route are not amongst the papers referred to, but it cannot fail to be interesting, as this district is entirely unknown to us except by native report, although in communication with the British Provinces on the left bank of the Sutlej.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of August Mr. Moorcroft resumed his route and proceeded to Tandee??,<sup>ii</sup> the capital of Lahoul in outer Tartary, which he reached on the 21<sup>st</sup>. These names occur for the first time in the geography of the eastern<sup>iii</sup> Himalaya. Mr. Moorcroft left Tandee on the 27<sup>th</sup> and entering Ladakh by the Bara Lacha pass, the table of which is calculated to be a greater elevation than Mount Blanc, he arrived at Leh the capital of Ladakh on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1820.

Sidenote: Of those travellers who have gone from India to China or Tibet not more than one has taken the road through Ladakh and Dessideri is the only European who seems to have visited the country before W.M. He went from Cashmere, approximately by a similar route with that followed by Mir Izzat Ullah, who was sent by W.M. in 1812 to explore these countries. Dessideri offers a most appalling and no doubt exaggerated picture of the perils and toils of the journey. Marco Polo,

the ambassador of Shah Rokh and the missionary Goez passed to the north of Ladakh and reaching Yarkund through Badakshan thence proceeded by way of Trafan (ed. Turfan?) and Khamil to China along the road still traversed annually by caravans from China to Yarkund. The route Andrade followed is uncertain and his narrative so brief and unsatisfactory that it is doubted if he visited the countries he pretends to describe. Grueber and D'Orville returned from China through Lassa and entered Hindustan by Nepal and Morung and the subsequent journies of the missionaries Moracede La Penna and others between Europe and Tibet continued to observe the same direction during the maintenance of the communication between the Pontiff of Lassa and Rome. Subsequent to the invasion of Shah Jehan the direct road from Cashmir to Ladakh is as interdicted by the Raja, according to Bernier, so that the caravans from Cashmir to Yarkand which formerly passed through Leh were compelled to follow another road leading through Baltistan by Skardu or Shanderun, the capital. This journey occupied 50 days. Mir Izzat Ullah states that the road from Cashmir to Yarkand by Balti is a journey of but 26 days but three of these are over perpetual snow, and it is therefore barely travelled. From the city of Cashmir to Leh he was 21 days on the road and about 28 from Leh to Yarkand.<sup>iv</sup>

The difficulties of Mr. Moorcroft's march were very considerable and the variety of temperature which he encountered was equally trying to the constitution. The party passed through the Punjab at the hottest season of the year. On ascending the mountains heavy and incessant rain detained their progress and in the beginning of September the thermometer was 8 degrees below the freezing point. Notwithstanding the exposure, however, and the occurrence of intermittent fevers which it induced, the party arrived at Leh in good health and without losing one of their number.

The mountainous character of the country through which the route lay is of itself sufficient assurance that travelling in it must have been attended with no ordinary trials and danger. The circuitous course rendered it still more arduous as after a march of days it was not uncommon to find that the actual advance was not

above twelve cos in horizontal distance. The crossing of the mountain torrents was also attended with great difficulty and sometimes with peril, and the Tartars attached to the party when they reached the great barrier of the Chandrabhaga or Chenab declared its passage to be impracticable. Notwithstanding this the stream was forded with loss only of a pony--drowned by mismanagement.

The mode of crossing the rivers throughout the mountainous portions of the Punjab is by inflated skins called *Dishis*. They are managed by a caste of fishermen who ply as ferrymen and are to be met with at every village along the Setlej and other streams. They also accompany travellers and carry with them the empty Dishis doubled up and tied on the back crossed by a light fir paddle. Each man carries also a cruise<sup>v</sup> of fluid tar. When they come to a river the skins are inflated, and the ferryman placing himself upon it on his breast, carries a bale or a passenger on his back. When in this manner he carries across, guiding and propelling himself forward with his little paddle, and his feet which skim the surface of the water. The horses he leads in one hand whilst he guides himself with the other. In this manner a party consisting of three hundred persons with sixteen horses and a large quantity of baggage, was ferried across the Sutlej by thirty Dishis in an hour and a half, without accident or confusion. The stream was fifty yards broad and was running at the rate of about five miles in an hour.

On this route Mr. Moorcroft had an opportunity of investigating the sources of three of the rivers of the Punjab, the Beas, Chenab<sup>vi</sup> and Ravi, the actual origin of which is wholly misplaced in all the Maps hitherto published.

The Beyah, Byas or Byasa river rises in the southern face of the mountains called Ratankha ki Josh<sup>vii</sup> towards the southern frontier of Kullu. The river rises near the summit of the mountains and after bathing the feet of the statue of Byasa or Byas Rishi, the presiding deity of the stream, it descends through Kullu to the plains.

The Chenab rises by two heads as stated by Foster, but follows a very different course from that which is assigned to it upon his authority. The two streams denominated the *Chandrabhaga* and *Suryabhaga* both rise in Outer Tartary. The former comes from the southern confines of Pictro?? in Ladakh near the northern frontier of Bishaher. It runs along the foot of the Rotankha range to Tandi the capital of Lahoul in Lat. 32° 27' 40" where it is joined by the western branch or *Suryabhaga*.

The *Suryabhaga* is formed by the confluence of three streams, the Yethu Cho from the northern face of Kokohu Isth?, the Lanshau branch from the southern face of the mountains bordering that province, and the Darcha river from the pass of Bara Lacha. These meet at Labrang. The united streams there fall into the eastern branch and the whole river becomes the *Chandrabhaga*, which at the confluence is seventy-five yards across. The river runs first in a north-westerly direction in which it proceeds to Kishtwar about 150 cos, then to Ankur 50 cos, to Guzrat 60, and it then proceeds by ~~Mazirabad~~ Wazirabad through the Punjab.

The Ravi rises from two small lakes in a mountain called Manmathesa about a day and a half's journey to the East of the city of Chamba. As it flows past that city it is joined by the Sava, a river coming from the north-east at a distance of about 5 cos. Chamba stands in the angle formed by the meeting of these streams. The united river runs in a westerly direction to Ulans, seven days journey from Chamba,

where it received the Siang rivulet. At Terinu-ki-pattan it is joined by the Lakweev, from Seoj in Basidarwa, 18 cos from Iasnu. The Ravi is crossed by a bridge called Shah Dowlet ka pul, between fifteen and twenty cos from Lahore. The source of the Beyah and Ravi are both considerably to the South of those of the Chenab, and are enclosed within the sweep which that river makes from S.E. to N.W.

After journeying eight days without meeting a human habitation, Mr. Moorcroft arrived at a small town subject to Ladakh, called Giah [Gya], where he was met by the brother in law of the Wazir, sent to sound his intentions and ascertain his character. Being satisfied with the information he obtained, permission was granted to advance to Leh. The first days march brought them to Marsilla, the residence of the chief Lama, who to his religious functions added those of principal magistrate and jamindar. He is described as a good-looking man, about forty years of age, of lively manners and frank conversation.

A remarkable part of his costume was his hat, which by its broad reversed brim and shallow crown, and being covered with red cloth, resembled that of a Cardinal of the Roman church. He treated the travellers with buttered and salted tea, a dish always offered to strangers in the country at a visit soon after they are seated.

On the following day Mr. Moorcroft proceeded towards Leh and was met by Khoaja Shah Nias a friend of Meer Izzat Ullah. He entertained the party with a repast of salted and sugared tea, with fresh grapes, apricots and apples, the produce of the valley and with the biscuits of Yarkand as hard as stones. The repast was partaken in a tent on an island in the river which is the eastern branch of the Indus or Sinh-kanh-bab, and rises in the Kailas or Hanlee, and the Halnee snowy mountains south east of Ghirtope as described in Mr. M's former journey<sup>viii</sup>. On the right bank of the river stood the small town of Sheh, containing the mosque over which the entertainer who was a Pirzada presided. Khojeh Shah Nias is a lineal descendant from the Emperor Baber<sup>ix</sup>. This family held Tashkent and its dependencies in sovereignty till his father was disposed of by Aliser Khan the brother of the present ruler of Ferghana. He then adopted a religious life and settled in Cashmir, where a grant of land was bestowed upon him by Durani monarch. On his death the jaghir devolved upon his son, but he was deprived of it upon the conquest of Cashmir by Ranjeet Singh. Since that event the Khojeh has found safe port in Ladakh, Kashgar and Yarkand as well as in Cashmir from the voluntary contributions of his disciples who are numerous and respectable in all these countries. He is now about sixty years of age, of prepossessing appearance, animated in conversation, and liberal in his sentiments. His influence contributed essentially to the friendly reception of our traveller by the ruling authorities in Ladakh.

The establishment of a commercial intercourse of Europeans with Ladakh, the object of Mr. M's journey, was a subject entirely in accordance with the views of the Kalon, the Hags [?Wazir] and actual ruler of Ladakh. As a matter of compliment however, reference was made to the neighbouring authorities of Gardokh or Garthope, for their sentiments, and these proved hostile to the admission of Europeans on any footing whatever in to the country. Their reply made no alteration in the conduct of the minister, although he considered it, in consequence,

necessary to report the occurrence to the Court of Lhasa. In the meantime Mr. Moorcroft was allowed to reside at Leh and maintained an intercourse of the most amicable and confidential description with all the leading members of the state.

The residence of Mr. Moorcroft at Leh extended through the whole of 1821, and greater part of 1822, and afforded him ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the circumstances of the Court. The notices however contained in his correspondence are brief and imperfect, and have much to be supplied for which he has no doubt prepared other and more ample materials. In the meantime the following remarks will give us some idea of a country hitherto so little the object of European enquiry.

The territory of Ladakh is situated upon the tabular ledge which intervenes between the precipitated heights of the Himalaya, and the lower elevations that abut upon the plains of Tartary. The district is bounded on the east by the Chinese province of Khoten and the Lhasan Province of Changtang. On the South west and west by Cashmir and part of Balti or Little Tibet, on the NW and N by part of the same country and by Khofalun and by the Karakorum range of mountains, which form the southern barrier of Chinese Turkistan, and it is bounded on the south by the British Province of Bishaher and the independent states of Kullu and Chamba.

The extent of Ladakh is estimated at about half that of England proper; its shape is that of an irregular triangle, the longest side or base of which forms the Southern limit, running obliquely about 200 miles from SE to NW or from Bishaher by Kullu and Chamba to Cashmir. It comprises, according to a sketch of a map prepared by Mr. G. Trebeck, four provinces or Kobian? [?Nubra] to the North, Parich [Purig] on the West, Zanshir [Zanskar] on the South, and Putie [Piti, i.e. Spiti] on the Southeast. The Chief city is Leh.

Although not comprising within its limits any mountains of remarkable elevation yet Ladakh is lying between the Himalayas, Karakoram, Muztagh, and the mountains of Khoten, derives its character from such a vicinity, and is not only of considerable elevation throughout its surface, but is more or less broken up into the abrupt and constant interchange of mountains and valleys, in which many of the elevations are of considerable altitude and many of the hollows of difficult and dangerous travel.

Margin note:

At Baralacha, the Southern Pass as at the Lapcha pass by which Capt. Herbert entered the district in the South East corner the elevation was feet 13, 126 above the level of the sea. The village of Sari within the passes was from the same authority an elevation of 11,515 feet.

Similar causes contribute to the abundance of streams by which the country is intersected, and which generated by the meltings of the snow on the loftier or lowlier height, cross Ladakh in various directions. They combine for the greatest

part into two main rivers, and contribute essentially to the formation of the Sutlej and the Indus.

The main branch of the Sutlej is formed by different streams that rise in Changtang or from the Ravan Krad and the neighbouring mountains of Kangteese and the Himavat. After a considerable course westward, the river turns to the south, and is known by different names in different parts of its course; of Tanass Lang Chen Khabab or the great river proceeding from the mouth of the elephant, the Satruda, the Sudra, and finally Setlej.

It is the Sudra that receives supplies from Ladakh, by two principal feeders. One of these rises from the Eastern side of a range supposed to separate the part of Piti [Piti, i.e. Spiti] belonging to Ladakh from part of the Lahoul belonging to Kullu.

The other rising in the northern face of another pass in Piti, on the Eastern frontier, follows a south easterly course into Changtang, and joining the former between Changtang and Shalthar or the frontier of Hangarang, the united stream falls into the Indus below Leh, a considerable village in that province.

Margin Note:

Captain Herbert's account agrees with this on all essential points but he has rather different names. Piti he calls Spiti. The southern branch of the Piti rivers he states rises by two heads which are called the Sabang and Spino rivers. The northern river he calls the Yang chan. Capt. Herbert entered Ladakh as far as Lari.

The rivers that contribute to the formation of the Indus are more numerous, and of larger volume. The main stream constituting the great eastern branch of the river and called Sinh kha Bab, or the Ladakh or Leh river enters Ladakh upon its eastern frontier at Kagjong; it then pursues a westerly direction inclining to North and runs by the city of Leh; it receives a number of petty torrents on its passage through Ladakh, but is not joined by any considerable stream till it has arrived at Niemano about 12 miles west of Leh, where it is joined by the Zanskar river.

The Zanskar river or Ling to cho which at this place is much larger than the main branch of the Indus rises by two sources on the southern frontier of Ladakh. One of these rises from the northern and eastern side of the Baralacha pass by a number of precipitous torrents trickling from amongst the snow. As they collect at the foot of the pass they form a considerable body of water, which follows a northerly direction for about 4 miles, when it expands into a beautiful lake about 3 miles in circumference. The channel then again contracts, and the river rushing along with great impetuosity flows to the NWest as far as Beding, where it turns to the north, and after receiving several considerable rivers in a course of protracted extent, it falls into the main stream of the Indus at Brino [Nimo.]

The Shayuk river rises from the southern face of the Karakorum Pass and flows to the south east, entering Ladakh in its eastern frontier. It then races in a

direction nearly south for some distance, where it turns abruptly to the West and flows parallel with the river of Ladakh. A little beyond Sirlet it is enlarged by a considerable associate the Chirasa.

The Chirasa<sup>xi</sup> comes from the eastern face of the Muz Tagh mountains, and flows southward in a direction nearly parallel with the Shayuk to the west of it. As it preserves a nearly straight line its direction is crossed by the horizontal arm of the Shayuk, and it empties itself into that river.

The united stream continues to preserve a westerly direction, till it unites with the River of Ladakh, near Khafalum, situated about nine days journey west of Keesma and 3 east of Balti. The common term trunk passes by Skardun or Skanderun the capital of the Shia state of Balti in its progress towards the plains.

The rugged surface and rigorous climate of Ladakh are little favorable to extensive cultivation, and it is estimated that not above one fifth of it is productive. The grains chiefly raised are wheat, red and white buckwheat, and barleys rough and smooth skinned of various colours. The produce of the country is insufficient for the consumption of the population and much grain is imported from the Southern states. Great practical skill however is displayed in the local agriculture, and crops are raised upon rocky soils where the possibility of their growth could scarcely have been anticipated. Fruit is plentiful, particularly apples, pears and apricots; two varieties of the latter are cultivated and considerable quantities dried in the sun are annually exported to the Eastern Provinces.

The domestic animals are horses, asses, yaks, cows, Zhus or hybrids, goats, dogs, etc. The horses are small, active and hardy, but not numerous. Yaks are only found on the high lands and are inferior in form and strength to those of Chang Than. The neat cattle are kept for milk and butter of which there is a large consumption. The Zho is the progeny of the male yak and the cow and is used for carrying burdens. The ordinary sheep of Ladakh are larger than those of Hindoostan, of handsome shape and light bone; their fleece is fine, curly and thickly set but from its shortness is only fit for carding. It is shorn twice a year and is worked up into a narrow cloth for domestic use. Beside these there is another breed of sheep, of singular diminutive size. The full grown individuals not being larger than a six months lamb of the South down race. The rearing of this breed is very economical as they are singularly hardy, feed on cheap substances, are of a large carcass in proportion to their size, furnish a delicate meat and yield an abundance of fine wool.

The Shawl wool goats of Ladakh are of the breed common to the neighbouring countries, but the wool is of an inferior description. The fleece is cut once a year and the wool picked out and sent to Cashmir. The hair is retained for home use, and is worked into ropes, bags and blankets. *New handwriting*

The government of Ladakh is of a despotic character but tempered in administration by the mild character of the people and the peculiarities of the country into a patriarchal kind of relation. The will of the Raja appears to be the only established body, but he is very essentially constrained by the chief individuals of his court. These are the Kalon or Prime Minister, the Nuna Kalon or Deputy, the Lupa or Chief Municipal Officer, the Treasurer who is a Lama, the general, the



master of the horse and superintendent of the stud; Tauzens or Kalons of inferior rank who govern the districts -- a custom master, and other subordinate officers. These are all paid by assignment of land, and are all held to perform military service with their retainers. The peasantry in general hold their land by a like tenure, and no money nor tax is levied. The districts about Leh pay a tax in kind, or furnish fuel, milk, butter, tea, domestic servants and labourers to the Raja, while those under separate governors give them the same contributions. The people in general are of a frank and kindly disposition, and although poor are neither distressed nor discontented.

Although neither opulent in new material or manufactured produce, Ladakh is the seat of an active commerce which contributes to the prosperity of its capital at least, and to the revenue of the Rajah. Leh is the great emporium for shawl wool which is brought from the dependencies of Lhasa and Chinese Turkistan and is conveyed by Kashmere dealers to that province, for the purpose of being manufactured. It is calculated that in 1820 the value of the Shawl wool manufactures in Cashmere was between 40 and 50 Lacks of Rupees, and in 1821 the duty on the importation of shawl wool was farmed by Ranjeet Singh for 13 lakhs and a half.<sup>xii</sup>

The trade in shawl wool as conducted in Ladakh is a monopoly held by the Raja ie??, who however remunerates his chief officers, the Kalon and Supa by admitting them to a share in the trade.

About a century ago the provinces which give the best wool, and which at that time almost alone supplied the market, or Changtang and Radokh, both on the East of Ladakh and immediately contiguous, were subject to the Raja of Ladakh and he might be regarded in fact as proprietor of the wool reared in countries of which he was absolute master. Upon some provocation however, the Pontifical Government of Lhasa invaded and took possession of these provinces, and has ever since retained them, but in order to compensate the Rajah in some degree for the loss, it was stipulated that no other person should be allowed to purchase shawl wool, and the stipulation is still in force. The Chief of Ghartop, however, sold a quantity to Wm. M on his former travels in 1812, and these is no doubt that smuggling through the hills take place to a considerable extent. The chief protection of the Rajah of Ladakh is in the central situation of his territory between the Hundes or wool country and Cashmere, and the limitation of the manufacturers to the latter province so there is little demand for the wool in any other quarter.

In purchasing the wool from the dependencies of Lhasa the Rajah employs permanent agents in the wool raising districts, and sends also occasionally merchants resident at Leh to the tents of the shepherds. The wool is paid for in silver, white yellow or red cottons, tobacco and grain. The merchants who are dispatched on this errand visit the Eastern districts in September, and return to Leh by the end of November. Mr. Moorcroft met several in his journey to Manasarowar. The wool is bought at the rate of 30 Neghas<sup>??xiii</sup> for a Mahmood Shahe Rupee, and is sold at from 5 3/4 to 8 Neghas for the same sum at Leh.

The Kashmir traders at Leh are the purchasers of the wool and have it cleaned and picked in that city; they pay the labour chiefly with the coarse hair which are worked into blankets. If the wool is of good quality the fine wool amounts

to about 2/3rd of the weight of the original parcel. 1/3rd is an unfavourable outcome and the general average is about a half. This is then twisted into ropes, packed in strong hair cloth, and is sent on to Kashmir.

The cost of a horse load of fine wool and the expense of transit with the duties payable at Dras and Cashmir make the value of it about 250 Rupees when it reaches Cashmir. It is sold there for 495 Rupees yielding a profit of nearly 100 pcent. The advance upon the original cost may be estimated at nearly 1400 p cent.

30 Neighas producing 15 of wool are bought for Rupees \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Neigha could \_\_\_ sold at Leh for about \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ in Cashmir \_\_\_\_\_ for about 12 - 8.

Of late years considerable quantities of wool have been brought from Yarkend, and as the supply from the East has been insufficient to meet the demand, the Rajah of Ladakh has permitted its importation from the former places upon payment of a duty of 25 per cent for every horse load. The preferable road from Yarkend passes through Leh and the trade is therefore completely under the control of the Rajah. The wool costs at Yarkend about 10 as 10 pc per seer and is sold at Leh at 1 1/2 Rupees to 2 Rupees per seer. The wool is cleaner than that from Gertokh but does not work so well being detached from the skin, not of the living animal but of the carcase, after it has been killed for the market, and being separated by steeping in lime water, a process which injures the wool and in consequence of which it is supposed small holes appear in the shawl when fresh from the loom.<sup>xiv</sup>

Besides shawl wool, tea is an article of considerable traffic in Ladakh, and is also monopolised by the Rajah. The coarse kinds come from Lhasa but the fine sort are brought by the annual caravans from China to Yarkend, and are then conveyed to Leh by agents in the Rajah's employ. Tea is an article of general consumption throughout the mountainous regions within and beyond the Himalayas.

The purchase and sale of shawl wool and tea necessarily under Leh the centre of considerable traffic arising out of these branches of merchandize. The Kashmerian traders buy their wool with the products and manufactures of Kashmir and Hindoostan and the merchants of Turan<sup>xv</sup> and China are considerable purchasers of the costly wares of the South, which they pay for chiefly as \_\_\_\_\_ in tea and wool but they also bring to market Felts, sheep skins, books, Refacia? brocade, velvets, and woolen cloths, Bulghar leather, the silks of China, Chakmaks, or steels for striking lights, dried fruit and silver. The later is in the shape of lumps being also in the form known in Calcutta as that of Sycee Silver, but of large dimensions, each ingot weighing about two seers Delhi weight. Gold is brought in small quantities from the Province of Changthen, Balti and Kafiristan. It is reported to be abundant in the former provinces.

We have no description in the papers that have come under our observation, of the principal towns of Ladakh, not even of its capital beyond the mention of its latitude and elevation. The latitude is stated by WM to be 34° 4' 21" and the importance of his travels to geography is strongly evidenced by this statement of the latitude which is exceedingly different from any yet assigned to Ladakh. Latac in the Jesuits map of Tibet is stated to be something less than 31°. D'Anville in reducing

these maps into one general map places it about 33 20'. Gardener seems to have followed his authority in the map published with his edition of Marco Polo prepared under the superintendence of Major Rennell. He has in fact acted judiciously for the latest authorities are the widest from the truth, and in map attached to Elphinstone's Cabul the latitude of Leh is something above 37°. This error we may conclude is received in \_\_\_\_\_ generally, as near the truth, as in Hamilton's Hindoostan Leh is placed 36 30', nearly two degrees and a half too far to the North. The accuracy of Wm Moorcroft's position at least within very reasonable limits, is confirmed by the observation of a traveller with whom he had many intercourses. Captain Herbert gives 32 4' 32" as the latitude of Laxi in the South East corner of Ladakh, and by the scale attached to G. Trebeck's map of the city of Leh lies about 120 miles in a straight line north from Lavi. The elevation of Leh from the data afforded by the barometer appears to be *??something missing here in the text.*

An interesting sketch of the town by the companion of the traveller, Mr. G. Trebeck, presents the capital as situated on the eastern extremity of a plain, in the recess formed between two contiguous mountains, of inconsiderable elevation, with the summits of both of which the town is connected by a wall, terminating in some buildings intended for defence. Lofty mountains which are half covered with snow during the greater part of the year skirt the plain at as great a distance from the city. The Rajah resides in the middle of the town in a lofty building of the precise character of the edifices of Tibet as depicted by the old travellers.

The Western and lower portion of Leh is inhabited by merchants. Further particulars of the city are to be found in the journal of Mir Uzzet Ullah, part of which has been translated and published in the Quarterly Magazine.

The religion of Ladakh is that of Tibet, and the people are mostly of the sect of the red hat or the spiritual subjects of the Dalai Lama. The yellow hat has also its votaries. There are numerous monarchical institutions of both sects throughout the country. The people are superstitious and devout but not intolerant, and exhibit in their conduct and sentiment many traces of true Christianity, which the Nestorian monks diffused so extensively throughout Tibet and Turkistan. Mr. Moorcroft has not given any particular description of their tenets or practices, but Desideri has recorded some, and other may be acquired from the journal of Meer Uzzet Ullah already referred to.

Neither have we in the papers consulted any account of the literature or language of Leh; the latter we learn from Meer Uzzet Ullah is the same with the Tibetan, and of course the literature will be of similar origin. We may hope to access some positive and accurate information on these subjects from the labours of a Hungarian gentleman Mr. Csomos de Koros who has travelled from Hungary to Ladakh, and has been for sometime engaged in the study of the Tibet language in that country with the aid and encouragement of Mr. Moorcroft. In the mean time we are enabled to form some notion of the extent of the literature by the voluminous specimens presented to the society by its zealous correspondent Mr. Hodgson. It may be added too that Mr. M mentions having met with a book upon the religious and moral system of Tibet, in more than 100 folio volumes.

Of the past and present political situation of Ladakh little information has been hitherto afforded. The state enjoys actual independency, although completely

surrounded by powers whose slightest efforts could affect its annexation to their own dominions. The territory of Lhasa, although ostensibly independent is authoritatively influenced by the views of the Chinese government, and must be identified with it. The whole line from the great wa?? of Yarkand[?? great wall to Yarkand?] is occupied by China, the principal post is Rela where an army of 100,000 men is permanently stationed, but a Chinese Governor resides at Yarkand.

Ranjit Singh as master of Cashmir approaches Ladakh on the West and the British possessions border it on the South East, Along the rest of the Southern frontier the petty independent states of Kullu, and Chamba are in connection with it by occasional and difficult passes, whilst on the west the independent state of Baltistan--a state perhaps of less political weight than itself--separates it from Turkistan. It has little to fear from any of its neighbours, except perhaps the Chinese and the Sikh Chieftain. It does not appear however that the former has ever indicated any design hostile to its independence, and the latter would lose more by any interruption to the trade in shawl wool, than he would gain by the acquisition of so poor a territory.<sup>xvi</sup>

How long the independence of Ladakh has continued cannot be satisfactorily traced. An occasional tribute or rather present as sent for some time to Delhi, and was claimed as late as the reign of Mohammed Shah as a right. According to Izzet Ullah's account, this originated in assistance given by Ibrahim Khan, the Governor of Cashmir, to the Rajah of Ladakh against the Kahanhs[?Kalmaks?], who had invaded the country and taken the Capital. On being replaced in his possession he professed to hold them as tributary to the Emperor, and even to adopt the Mohammedan faith--when this event occurred is not stated but we learn from Bernier, some particulars of the intercourse between the Emperor and the Rajah of Ladakh, which gives the business a rather different complexion. The following are the circumstances he has recorded, "about seventeen or eighteen years ago Shah Jehan made an attempt to reduce the kingdom of Great Tibet under his authority (by Great Tibet Bernier means the territory east of Baltistan or Ladakh).

Margin note: Izzet Ullah's journey from the confines of Cashmir to Leh comprised 14 stages, in general very short ones. The whole number of Cos being but 64, or averaging less than 5 Cos to a stage. From Cashmir the city, he was 21 days on the road.<sup>xvii</sup>

After a march of sixteen days thru a very difficult country his forces besieged and captured a fortress, and had only to pass a famous?? and rapid river (the Indus no doubt) to occupy the Capital (Leh). The attack would assuredly have succeeded, as the whole country was panic struck, but the government of Cashmir who commanded the army was apprehensive of being shut up by the snows, as the season was advanced. He therefore marched back to Cashmir, leaving a garrison in the fort, and intending to resume his enterprise in the Spring. The detachment he left behind, either thru fear or in want of supplies, abandoned their posts and frustrated his design.

When the king of this Great Tibet, heard of Aurangzeb's residence at Cashmir, and that he threatened to invade his dominions, he sent an ambassador with various produce of the country as presents, such as crystal, the white tails of a sort of cow which are suspended as ornaments to the ear of Elephants, a quantity of musk, and a yeshim stone of immense value from its extraordinary size. The suite of the ambassador was formed by four or five persons mounted, and 10 or 12 attendants on foot, of spare and meagre persons, with two or three hairs in their chins in place of beards, like the Chinese. They wore red caps like those worn by our mariners and the rest of their costume was of the same character. Four or five had swords but the rest were wholly without arms. The ambassador treated with Aurengzeb on behalf of his master, and engaged that a mosque should be built in his capital for the celebration of the Mohammedan service, that the coin should be struck in the name of Aurengzeb, and that he would pay a fixed annual tribute. It is generally supposed, however, that as soon as the king shall hear of Augengzeb's departure from Cashmir he will laugh at this treaty, as he has done with that of Shah Jehan." That the mosque however still exists, and the coin is struck, though not in the name of Aurengzeb but in that of an Emperor of Delhi, Mohammedan, we learn from Izzet Ullah.

It was Mr. Moorcroft's intention to have proceeded by way of Yarkand to Ferghana and Bokhara, but the Chinese authorities in that city could not be prevailed upon to permit his entering the limits of their administration. After much unavailing negotiation therefore he was under the necessity of relinquishing his design and taking the more westerly route to Turkestan. With this purpose he quitted Leh in October 1823 and returned to Cashmir.<sup>xviii</sup>

*Close could be an unreadable signature??*

p. 339

---

<sup>i</sup> Sansar Chand?

<sup>ii</sup> Correct. In Lahul (today spelt Tandi).

<sup>iii</sup> Western?

<sup>iv</sup> This guy knows his sources, as far as travel to Ladakh and its neighbourhood is concerned.

<sup>v</sup> Correct. Probably 'cruse', small bowl or vessel. Cf. the parable of the widow's cruse in the Bible.

<sup>vi</sup> According to the published *Travels*, I, 197, the info on the sources of the Ravi and the Suryabagha was from hearsay. And I don't think necessarily accurate, in fact decidedly garbled.

<sup>vii</sup> i.e. the Rohtang Pass

<sup>viii</sup> Again, a garbled account

<sup>ix</sup> 'Descended from a branch of the same family as the Emperor Baber'. *Travels*, I, 241

<sup>x</sup> Much of all this would also be hearsay, as M never travelled in Zanskar. I'm sure he checked his sources for the accuracy of their accounts as far as possible, but when you haven't been there yourself it may be difficult to get it right.

<sup>xi</sup> I.e. the Nubra river. Don't think I've ever heard it called Chirasa.

<sup>xii</sup> This is a misunderstanding on the part of our chronicler. Rs 13.5 lakh was the duty farmed in 1820 not on the import of shawl-wool, but on the export of finished shawls (Moorcroft MSS D256/75, quoted in Rizvi *Trans-Himalayan Caravans*, 57).

<sup>xiii</sup> According to Henry Osmaston and Tashi Rabgias in Crooke and Osmaston (eds.) *Himalayan Buddhist Villages* (Delhi 1994), the original nyaga was equivalent to 0.15 kg. (150 gms.), and the new nyaga, introduced during Dogra rule, to 230 gms. (p. 130, 131). So in the present context we're talking about the 150-gm. nyaga

---

<sup>xiv</sup> This is news to me! I thought I'd transcribed everything that M wrote about pashm, whether from W Tibet or C Asia, but this is something that—I won't swear to it, but I'm pretty sure—isn't in the papers in the IOL.

<sup>xv</sup> A now-obsolete term for Central Asia.

<sup>xvi</sup> This wasn't Moorcroft's opinion!

<sup>xvii</sup> This is inaccurate, if a cos is, as I believe, about 2 miles. The distance between Srinagar and Leh is in the region of 460 km., or 250 miles, though indeed this takes into account the windings of a road designed for motor vehicles. Say 200 miles (100 cos?) in the straightish line of the old route.

<sup>xviii</sup> So the present paper was written after M's departure from Ladakh, but presumably before the news of his death (or 'death!') trickled in. But it's sloppily drafted, because M didn't 'return' to Kashmir, where he'd never been before.

Janet's corrections and comments checked against the text again by DJ on 6/6/2013, and a few minor corrections made. This is now probably about as good a transcription as can be made from this text at National Archives.