

Some Remarks on the Pundit Project of the British Indian Government

中文摘要

英國東印度公司對中國之商務經營在沿海地區受挫，於是轉向中國背面進入；這個背面指的就是西藏。因此自西元一七七六年，英國東印度公司總督 Warren Hastings 派遣 George Bogle 進入後藏，會見第六輩班禪喇嘛以來，英印政府就時刻企圖打破西藏封鎖進入西藏，但幾經派員申請入藏或暗地潛入，皆因行藏曝光而失敗。然而，這項企圖並未中止，尤其是十九世紀中，沙俄由中亞地區向南擴張，造成英國之注意，為防止西藏先落入沙俄之影響、或其利益為沙所捷足先登，英印政府開始改變對西藏之初衷，由商務利益轉向政治野心；為對西藏更進一步瞭解，英印政府不再派遣外型易於曝光的白種人進入西藏，而在印度測繪局(Survey of India)之下進行「班智達計劃」，培訓喜瑪拉雅山脈南坡之藏族文化圈所影響之當地人士（如拉達克人）潛入西藏，對西藏之山川、地形進行測繪任務。本文即在探討「班智達計劃」的緣起及執行中的幾個問題。

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by

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The initiation of the British Indian Government's Pundit project sufficed the knowledge of the British toward Tibet as well as strengthened their confidence on making any further action to her.

Here we need to review that the British had made surveys west of Nepal, and reached the borders of Tibet by 1864;(K. Mason, 1956, p.173) however, it seemed that they did not have a very clear picture about Tibet at that time. Mason writes "...our trans-frontier maps were still almost blank. Gilgit, Chilas and Chitral on the north-west were still unexplored, Yarkand, though visited, was hundred miles out of position, Central Tibet was quite unknown, as was the course of the Tsangpo." (Ibid) The poor geographical knowledge about Tibet was because the maps that the British were using were still based on the old d'Anville Atlas of China, in which the Himalayan and Tibetan geography was the work of Tibetan lamas sent out by the Emperor Kang-hsi between 1705 and 1717.

Mason writes on another earlier file that except the journeys of George Bogle, Samuel Turner, Thomas Manning, and the Abbe Huc, Central Tibet was unknown and entirely unmapped. (K.Mason, 1923, p.430) As it was mentioned above that the position of Lhasa was almost based on conjecture, so were the sources of the Indus, Ganges, and Buramaputra.

The British felt anxious to make surveys over Tibet. The time when George Bogle made his first exploration to Tibet in 1774, Warren Hastings believed that it had marked a milage stone on the road to Tibet, but the further explorations during the next one hundred years were confronted with all kinds of barricades, not to mention fruitful results. But in 1816, a treaty was signed between the Gurkha and British India, Khmoan, the western

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most territory of Nepal, was annexed by the British Indian Government. This annex made British India's frontier directly bordered with the Tibetan territory - Ngari. The staffs of the British Indian Government believed that the Tibetans were of Chinese race, and their language was allied to Burmese; but their Buddhist religion, literature, written character, and prevailing modes of thought, were all derived from India and proved that for centuries there must have been an uninterrupted ebb and flow of commerce through the then closed passes of the outer Himalayan range. They simply tried to prove that from all point that other than the race, every detail in Tibet was derived from India, and certainly she should have a closer tie with India. (C. R. Markham, 1875, p.302) Derived from this concept, they also believed that the people of Tibet and their priestly rulers had a strong claim upon the attention of European inquirers. "..... it is to Chinese exclusive policy, and to the Tibetans, that our ignorance of their country is due. In former days the intercourse between Bengal and Tibet was frequent and unchecked." (Ibid) Markham also complained that the Tibetans had always shown themselves desirous to promote trading with India, so "there is certainly no reason why the policy of permitting the passes to be closed through the jealous and selfish exclusiveness of the Chinese Government should be continued." (op.cit., p.312) Since the common border was shared, this opportunity surely would irritate the British to explore Tibet again. But an even more important factor to speed up the British surveying Tibet was due to the international strategic situation changed around the Hindu Kush area.

As we check the situation of this area of the beginning of the nineteenth century, the north western frontier of British India was on the south bank of the Sutlej River, it still had a great distance from the southern border of Russia, which extended easterly from the Caspian Sea to Ural River and central Asia; however, there were Persia, Afghan, and some other small khanates buffered in between, so there was no immediate competition between these two great empires. The balance was changed, because by 1874 the Czar's forces had advanced to the mouth of the Jaxartes (Darya) River on the Aral Sea. By 1853 they had control of close to three hundred miles of the river, encroaching into the Oxus-Jaxartes

basin, and thus bringing Russia into contact with the territory of the Khan of Kokand. A lull ensued while Russia was occupied with the Crimean War, but in 1860 the Khan attacked a Russian position, and the Russians, who needed new supplies of cotton to make up for the deficiency caused by the American Civil War, and perceiving British weakness after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, responded by capturing the city of Tashkent in 1865, and forming the province of Turkestan from territory lying between the Aral Sea and Lake Issyk Kul. The Russians were now within range of the three khanates. Crossing the Jaxartes, Russian forces reached the border of Bokhara, and Samarkand was annexed in 1868. Khiva and Kokand were annexed in 1873 and 1876 separately. Russian conquests in the area were completed by 1884 after the Tekke Turkomans were defeated, and the Russians occupied the great oasis of Merv, only one hundred miles north of the Persian-Afghan border. (D. Waller, 1990, p.55)

The British were also on the move, advancing in the northwest of India in pursuit of defensible frontiers for the Empire. Following the death of the Sikh leader Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Sikh kingdom fell into disorder. Two wars against the British ensued in the 1840s, after which Britain annexed outright the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab in 1849. Sind had been annexed in 1843. Britain had now crossed the Indus, and the boundary of the Indian empire in the northwest had reached its natural limits on the Hindu Kush. (op.cit., p.56) Thusly, in less than half a century, due to the annexes of the neighboring small buffer states, the distance between these two great empires shortened. In this case, British India worried more than Russia, owing to India mostly was invaded from the north eastern direction historically. So, diplomatic negotiations initiated between Britain and Russia in 1869, and Gorchakof-Granville Agreement was signed in 1873, it agreed principally that the Russo-Afghan boundary was the Oxus. (op. cit., p.57) The Russian pressure did not extinguished after the agreement was signed, the British India thusly had to prepare for the final confrontation. This explains the reason why she kept on sending explorers to the Hindu Kush, Yarkand, and Tibetan Ngari areas. Exactly like Mason's description, ".....beyond the Hindu Kush Russia was in motion, and the Great Game in Asia

was 'on.'....."(K. Mason, 1956, p.173) If we look only from the view point of strategy, the British India's explorations to Tibet was part of her Asian strategy, but at the end point, it became the purpose instead.

The idea of employing selected Indians crossed the frontier into Tibet for explorations submitted by Captain T. G. Montgomerie in 1861. As review from the history of the British attempting penetrating into Tibet, there were only two successful cases -- George Bogle and Sammuell Turner, the rest of them, such as Thomas Manning, though under disguise, were still been found and deported. Besides, the murder of Adolphe de Schlagintweit at Kashgar in 1857; the turmoil condition in the Chinese north west, such as the outbreak of the Tun-kan Muslim rebellion in 1863; even the fanaticism of the Indus valley tribes and their active hostility to the Europeans....., these all proved that the local peoples were not very hospitable to the Europeans, the potential risks dissuaded the British Indian Government dispatching more of their own people to explore beyond the frontier. Captain T. G. Montgomerie, the initiator of the Pundit Project decried, "A European, even if disguised, attracts attention when traveling among asiatics, and his presence, if detected, is now-a-days often apt to lead to outrage. The difficulty of redressing such outrages, and various other causes, has for the present, all but put a stop to exploration by Europeans. On the other hand, Asiatics, the subjects of the British Government, are known to travel freely without molestation in countries far beyond the British frontier; they constantly pass to and fro between India and Central Asia, and also between India and Tibet, for trading and other purposes, without exciting any suspicion." (T. G. Montgomerie, 1868, p.129)

Under the approval of Colonel Walker, then the superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of the British Indian Government, two local men of the upper valleys of the Himalayas were recruited by Major Smyth of the Educational Department. The locals were recommended as likely that they had great opportunity to travel through various parts of Tibet, their countryman having always been granted by the Chinese authorities the privilege of traveling and trading in Nga-ri and the upper basin of the Sutlej.

(Ibid) However, the first two pundits, Nain Singh and Mani Singh, were selected due to Nain's father, Bir Singh, and Mani's father, Deb Singh, had previous affiliation with the great British pioneer, William Moorcroft, who disguised as fakir, and explored Kumaon from south to north and finally reached Manasarovar and Sutlej source in Nga-ri. This journey of Moorcroft's was of particular interest because he was detained by Tibetans at "Daba Dzong", (K. Mason, 1956, p.170) a few marches west of Manasarovar, and was helped there by two Bhotia Rawat brothers, Bir Singh and Deb Singh. Therefore, due to the British's trust, Nain and Mani became the first two Pundits; another reason for Major Smyth's recommendation was their home village, Milldam, situated only less than twenty miles from the Tibetan frontier. (D. Walker, 1990, p.39) It proved later, that this Sing family did mark a mile stone about the British Indian Government's exploration in Tibet. Actually four of the most distinguished Pundits were from this special Sing family. As for the reason why the Singes' were so arduous to execute such dangerous assignment for the British was due to their "anxious to obtain some permanent government employ a little better paid than what he gets as a Patwaree." -- a chief native officer (Op. cit., p.41) When the payment of a Pundit, Rs. sixteen to Rs. twenty per month, was compared with a Patwaree, the former was much better, because the gold price was Rs. thirty per ounce. (T. G. Montgomerie, 1869, p.155) This explained why the local men inhabited along the southern slope of the Himalayan range were willing to be recruited despite the hardship of the job.

In the public documents of the Survey of India, these men came to be called "pundits" or "native explorers," but in the closed files of the government of British India, they were given their true designation as spies or secret agents. (Op. cit., p.1) Because their assignments were to explore the geographical and civilian environments of Tibet, and every single ones of their missions were so confidential, they must be trained strictly before departure, so that the results would be reliable. For the sake of keep information confidential, they were firstly given a pseudonym. "Generally initials alone were used, and these initials were often combined by inverting the order of the first and last letters or of the

initials of the man's name...;" (K. Mason, 1923, p.432) Thus we could see from the later cases, Mani Singh was coded as G-M, Kalian Singh was known as G-K, Kishen Singh or Krishna, the name under which he was entertained, became A-K, Abdul Subhan became N-A, Sarat Chandra Das became D-C-S, etc. "The Pundit" was always assigned to Nain Singh (may be as a respect) at the beginning, but it turned to be a general address to all the native explorers.

These Pundits had to learn the full use of a sextant or perhaps only to partial use of the instrument, so as to take observations for latitude. Possibly just the take of compass bearings and walking with a measured pace might be all that they could be trained for. Here we could see an original description of this application, "In the route survey made by explorer No. 9, from Darjiling to Shigatze, and from Shigatze by Shakia, Dingri Maidan, Nilam, &c., to Katmandu, the value of his pace has in the first instance been derived from the differences of latitude between the various places at which star observations for latitude were taken. A mean value of pace, viz.: 2.45 feet, derived from a mean of the values of each section, was adopted, and this mean value was applied to the number of paces, showing the differences of longitude for each section, and the value of the same in degrees and minutes was deduced there from in the usual way." (T. G. Montgomerie, 1875,p.337) For the sake of accuracy, the Pundit was practiced to walk two thousand paces in a mile, or say a pace of thirty one and one half inches, (T. G. Montgomerie, 1868, p.145) However, this measurement, according to pace, is not always so accurate, Montgomerie gives an example in page 338, the same resource.

The best way to keep the Pundits from being disturbed was to disguise as a fakir. So all the exploring techniques were designed to make the Pundit match up with the role of a fakir; for instance, the symbol of a fakir was the praying -wheel. The praying-wheel that the Pundits used consisted of a hollow cylindrical copper box, which revolves round a spindle, one end of which forms the handle -- its appearance looked exactly the same like any other genuine fakir's, but instead of carrying a paper scroll with the usual Buddhist prayer "Om mani padmi hom" ,or some sacred doctrine, the Pundits put rolls of blank

paper in the cylinder for the purpose of recording the bearings and number of paces. (T. G. Montgomerie, 1869, p.140) As the rosary, which ought to have one hundred and eight beads, was made of hundred beads, every tenth bead being much larger than the others. The small beads were made of a red composition to imitate coral, the large ones of the dark corrugated seed of the udras. The rosary was carried in the left sleeve; at every hundredth pace a head was dropped, and each large bead dropped, consequently, represented one thousand paces. With his praying-wheel and rosary, the Pundit always managed in one way or another to take his bearings and to count his paces.(Ibid) Even the training was completed, to carry some instruments,i.e., the sextant, into Tibet without alerting the Tibetan border officers, was not an easy job. So the large sextant was always stowed away in a secret compartment. (T. G. Montgomerie, 1869, p.153) The Pundits always acted extremely careful while traveling in Tibet, even though this, almost every one of them had, more of less, some experience being detained by Tibetan officers. Nain Singh's alert was a typical one. He arrived at Lhasa from Western Tibet on November 18, 1873, and departed to Tawang on November 20 immediately. Prior to starting, he collected the most bulky and least valuable articles of his property, tied them up in an old blanket, carefully sealed the parcel, and handed it over to the owner of his lodging house, whom he informed that he was going on a pilgrimage to a monastery ten days' journey to the north of Lhasa, whence he expected to be back in about a month to reclaim his goods. He started accordingly in the afternoon in a northerly direction, but as soon as evening came on, he wheeled round and commenced his return journey to Hindustan in the direction of south. (H. Trotter, 1877, p.113) His behavior explains that he understood clearly that the nature of their job was "spy", so did all the other Pundits. The Pundit project started with only one thousand Rupees in 1862, (K. Mason, 1923, p.431) and from 1863 to 1886, twenty four explorations were done in twenty three years, the results were so fruitful that no one could have expected at the beginning.

The results of the Pundit project was significant, because the knowledge that the British Indian Government on Tibet was not any more based on travels notes or legend, but

completely based on actual, pace by pace, surveys. Montgomerie reports to the Royal Geographical Society in 1869, "Altogheher the Pundit and his brethren have, as I predicted, improved very much in the art of fixing distant peaks; satisfactory proof of this has been forthcoming from their back bearings to well-known peaks, such as Leo-Porgyal, Kamet, &c., which gave very accurate positions to those peaks, forming at the same time a valuable check on the route-surveys, and proving that there has been no large accumulation of error." (T. G. Montgomerie, 1869, p.159) Mason also reports that "Near Bartang in the province of Kham, over a distance of 120 miles, Colonel Ryder, the present Surveyor-General of India, found that A-K's work agreed within a mile of his own.....Colonel Ryder's traverse was run with a measuring wheel. The coincidence of the two results is remarkable. (K. Mason, 1923, p.439) The British also admitted that by the date of Nain Singh's retirement, the veil had lifted from Tibet and the surrounding countries. (Op. cit., p.438) We believe the most important information behind the veil were the geographical, cultural and political situation.

Therefore, the above mentioned location, event, related personnels.....were all described in detail. Let's take Nain Singh's exploration from 1865 to 1866 as an example. The results consist of: (T. G. Montgomerie, 1868, p.141)

1. A great number of meridian altitudes of the sun and stars, taken for latitude at thirty-one different points, including a number of observations at Lhasa, Tashilumbo, and other important places.
2. An elaborate route-survey, extending over one thousand and two hundred miles, defining the road from Kathmandu to Tadum, and the whole of the "Great Tibetan" road from Lhasa to Gartokh, fixing generally the whole course of the great Brahmaputra River from its source near Manasarovar to the point where it is joined by the stream on which Lhasa stands.
3. Observations of the temperature of the air and boiling water, by which the height of thirty-three points have been determined, also a still greater number of observations of temperature, taken at Shigatze, Lhasa, etc. giving some idea of the climate of

those places.

4. Notes as to what was seen, and as to the information gathered during the expedition.

The Pundits were requested to take temperature of air twice a day and recorded. (Op. cit. p.204) Some thing make us surprise is the accuracy and detail of the Pundits' observation. Nain recorded "Between Lhasa and Gartokh there are 22 staging places, called Tarjums, where the baggage animals are changed. These Targums are from 20 to 70 miles apart; at each, shelter is to be had, and efficient arrangements are organized for forwarding officials and messengers.Each Tarjum is in charge of an official, called tarjumba, who is obliged to have horses, yaks, and coolies in attendance whenever notice is received of the approach of a Lhasa official." (Op. cit., p.148) This was the first time the British Indian government realized how the Tibetan government manipulate her communicating system. Nain decries further about this staging system. On the march, they were often passed and met by special messengers, riding along as hard as they could go. (Op.cit. p.149) The Pundit said these men always looked haggard and worn. They have to ride the whole distance continuously, without stopping either by night or day, except to eat food and change horses. In order to make sure that they never take off their clothes, the breast fastening of their over-coat was sealed, and no one was allowed to break the seal, except the official to whom the messenger is sent. Nain said he saw several of the messengers arrive at the end of their eight hundred miles ride, their faces were cracked, their eyes blood-shot and sunken, and their bodies eaten by lice into large raws, the latter they attributed to not being allowed to take off their clothes. (T. G. Montgomerie, p.150)

Since the Pundits were exploring the unknown land, they constantly faced all kinds of challenges, such as their disguise and/or measuring instruments were penetrated, etc. Passing the border itself was considered to be a job full of risks, since the Pundits were disguised to be pilgrims or Indian traders, they must act like them. However, many of a time, the shrewd Tibetan custom officers on the border penetrated their disguising immediately. Almost every single one of the Pundits confronted with armed robbers: Mani Singh and his old servant were robbed in the upper Indus, around the end of August in 1867,

while on the way back to India; (T. G. Montgomerie, 1869, p.156) Kalien Singh also met a band of sixty robbers on 18th of February, 1872, they left him nothing but the instruments, a piece of clothes, two sheep and two bags of food. (C. R. Markham, 1875, p.311); Kishen Singh's fate was not any better. He left Darjeeling on 24 April, 1878, and planned to travel to Lhasa and proceed northwards towards Mongolia. He was robbed by bandits and then deserted by one of his companions who absconded with the transport and everything the robbers had left; in spite of adversity he pushed on and reached Shachow (Tunhwang). In India all trace of him was lost and hope of his return was abandoned. After nearly four years' absence he made his way back by China and reached India, to find his only son dead and his home broken up. His own robust health, subjected to so many hardships, had at last broken under the strain. (K. Mason, 1923, p.439) The fate of Kintup probably was the worst among all the Pundits. The survey of India had trained a Mongolian Lama and ordered Kindup to accompany him as servant. They were to endeavour to trace the river Tsangpo from Tibet right through to the plain of India and to settle definitely the question whether there were any great falls during its descent from the plateau of Tibet. They left Darjeeling and crossed the northern frontier of Sikkim, entered Tibet in August 1880. But that lama was not very responsible, he enjoyed too much with his old acquaintance in Tibet, and gradually he started to dislike Kindup. Eventually, Kindup was sold to a local chief as slave, not long later, the chief again sold him to a monastery. The monastery finally decided to free him due to his honesty, but he did not return India until he had fulfilled his mission. When he finally went back to India on November 17, 1884, four years had passed already. (F. M. Bailey, 1943, p.430) However, according to Nain Singh's observation, the Pundits also had to pay some kind of tribute to the local Garpon, ".....and a punctual payment doubtless secures a certain immunity from their peccadilloes being inquired into." (H. Trotter, 1877, p.96) During the whole explorations of the Pundits, they had to face constant stress, such as running out of drinking water or food, lost in direction....., and many of a time, death seemed to be so close to them. But the results were worthy. It seems that the most deserved results of the

Pundits project is to understand how and how much the Ch'ing Dynasty influence on Tibet. For instance, a report of Captain T. G. Montgomerie in 1869 about the Trans-Himalayan Explorations during 1867 made by Nain, Kalian and Mani mentions, (T. G. Montgomerie, 1869, p. 148) when the three Pundits reached Mana Pass on the 3rd of June, 1867, they had to halt there for a period because the Pundits found that ,before the party could cross into Tibet, it was necessary that the opening of the pass should be formally notified by the Tibetan officials; and, before this is done, the Zongpon of Tsaparang made inquiry every year as to the political and sanatory condition of Hindustan. The Pundits emphasized , "The inquiry seems to be carried out with all that assumption of lofty superiority for which Chinese officials are famous." (Ibid) The road situations were clearly studied, "Between the Manasarovar lake and Lhasa the Pundit travelled by the great road called the Jong-lam (or Whor-lam), by means of which the Chinese officials keep up their communications for 800 miles along the top of the Himalayan range from Lhasa, north of Assam, to Gartokh, north-east of Simla." (G. T. Montgomerie, 1868, P. 146) When the Pundits first saw the "Jong-lam", they were very surprised to see how quick the message was delivered through it, and how effective the Tibetan officials kept the "Jong-lam" in the all year around usable condition, they later found out that the "Jong-lam" was just a part of the whole Chinese Ch'ing dynasty's post system. The Pundits explored along the "Jong-lam", and they calculated twenty two Tarjums (staging places) were established along the eight hundred miles road, each one was from twenty to seventy miles apart. (Op. cit., p.147) Actually this famous "Jong-lam" system had described before by a Catholic priest, Dessideri, in 1716, when he and his companion were trapped at Garthok in the winter, and finally, they were assisted by a Mongolian Princess, and reached Lhasa next spring. (F. de Filippi, 1937, p. 82.) Because the Pundits' check up the road situation in person, the Tibetan geographical blank in the files of British Indian Government was filled up.

During the 1873 exploration, Nain Singh departed from Leh and traveled with twenty six sheep, with which his whole party's possessions could be carried. He arrived at a small village lay on the north bank of the Seng-ge Chu, a branch of the Indus. They found

out that the Chiefman of the village, by the title of "Lhamba", was under the immediate orders of the "Jongpon" of Rudokh. However, the "Jongpon" of Rudokh was in his turn subordinate to the "Garpon of Gartokh, who had also under his orders the "Jongpons" of the large districts of Guge and Purang, as well as other independent "Pons" (or Rajas) of Western Tibet. But one thing important in the Pundit report is that "The Garpon is under the immediate order of the Gyalpo or Raja of Lhasa. The office of Garpon is only tenable for three years, and is always held by a native of Lhasa, who is appointed by the Gyalpo. The Jongpons are also generally changed every three or four years." (H. Trotter, 1877, p.90) This special situation was something that the British Indian Government could have never imagined. Because it explained that such a remote small village at the distance over one thousand miles away from Lhasa, was actually under the bureaucratic system of Tibetan Government, and the personnel managing system was still executed effectively daily.

Almost every town was passed, and population, geographical characters, food, accommodations, and certainly the administrative condition were recorded carefully. Let's take Shigatse for example. The Pundits writes, "The population of the city is estimated at 9000 souls, exclusive of the 3300 priests. The earth here is rich and yields fine crops of grain. The city is ruled by two Depons, one residing at Kharak village, and the other at Rimu village; but two Jongpons are obliged to take up quarters in the city.....A force, consisting of 100 Chinese and 400 Bhotiya soldiers, is quartered here. To the south of the city, and distant about 15 miles, is situated a hill called Mao-mi, where gold is said to be found....." (T. G. Montgomerie, 1868, p.165) Their description about Gyangze city is, "We arrived at Gyangze city, which is about the size of Digarcha, and has a fort on a low hill in the heart of the city, and also a large gilded temple. The city is ruled by a Depon, assisted by two Jongpons..... A force, consisting of 50 Chinese and 200 Bhotiya soldiers, is quartered here.....Very fine crops are raised here ." (Ibid) As for the most important city --Lhasa, they recorded that the city was circular, with a circumference of two and a half miles. In the centre of the city stood a very large temple, which we know now is the Jo

Khang. They said that the idols in Jo Khang were richly inlaid with gold and precious stones; besides these, most important monasteries, land markers....were all clearly described in their reports. (*Op.cit.* p.167) From which, quite a lot informations were included, and some of them surely amazed the GTS officers, such as gold was widely used, which gave the GTS officers an impression that Tibet must be rich in gold storage.

The Pundits' explorations were multi-purpose, for instance, there were four objects included in the 1867 exploration: the first object being to settle various doubtful points as to the position of the Upper Basin of the Sutlej; the second object, the question of the eastern branch of the Indus; the third, the connection of Gartok with the regular survey in Ladak, and the fourth, to explore up to the gold and salt mines east of Gartok, and as far beyond as the Pundits could get in an easterly direction. (T. G. Montgomerie, 1869, p.147) Since the time of Warren Hastings, the British had tried to pass through the Himalayan Range and Tibet for the purpose of opening a trading route from the back door of China -- this is Hastings' primary motivation to send George Bogle to Tibet. Therefore, despite the Strategic viewpoint or any other purposes, i.e., to spy the situation of Tibet, the Pundits still of and on paid attention to the trading conditions. The Pundit wrote in his report while he was traversing the nomadic area in the great Byang Thang -- at the nomads' movable camps, they cooked in smaller vessels made of stone or copper (both of which were much valued, and a small axe that the Pundit was using to break up ice, had chance at any time for exchanging for two or three sheep. (H. Trotter, 1877, p.92.) However, some of the time, the competition between British and Russian was also considered to be the object, otherwise, there was no point for the GTS to dispatch Pundits to explore the roads and general situation beyond the Kun Lun Range and enter the Yarkand area.

Twenty four explorations were done in twenty three years (1863-1886), many pundits risked their families and lives for the sake of this project; however, the results were so fruitful even better than the expect of Major (afterwards General) J. T. Walker, superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey, when he first approved the project, which means the British had collected quite ample of information about Tibet in all respect,

that was why Colonel Younghusband dare lead troops to invade Tibet in 1904. We could conclude that the Pundit project was quite a successful one.

NOTES

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