

After my previous visit in 1895 I had erroneously assumed, that the Schor-köl was a marginal lagoon of the Kodaj-darja.\* And even now I confess I do not possess a sufficiently accurate knowledge of it to determine with certainty whence it derives its water. The only source which I can conceive it to draw upon is the Kona-darja, the old channel of the Jarkent-darja, from which the canals of Maral-baschi are fed. There can scarcely be a doubt, but that the surplus water, which at the season of high flood enters that old channel, does eventually find its way into the Schor-köl, and the other small lakes in the vicinity; for at the season of high flood those lakes are said to merge into one large connected sheet of water and even in the autumn they contribute, as we have seen, a considerable increment to the Jarkent-darja. Any way the overflow of the high-flood season cannot advance farther east than Kuruk-asti, owing to the fact that its further progress is barred by the barrier of the Masar-tagh, which forces it back into the river. The cascades owe their origin to the fact that the level of the lake is about 1.5 m. higher than the level of the river. But in this district, as indeed everywhere else along the course of the Jarkent-darja and the Tarim, the hydrographical relations are subject to great and frequent changes.

Intermediate between the two canals which drain the Schor-köl, the Jarkent-darja is also joined by yet another old channel, a branch of itself, which has only ceased to carry water since it was stopped up in the year 1895. It was, however, so faint that its course did not admit of being fully traced. The dam by which it was closed still remained unimpaired. It was said to have been built for the purpose

\* General Pjevtsoff visited this region in 1889, and what he says about it goes a long way towards throwing light upon its complicated hydrographical relations. South of Tschadir-köl and Tumschuk he discovered an extensive marsh, known as Lalmoj, and mapped its south-east border. He says, 'This marsh is oval in shape, and extends from the north-east to the south-west, being 60 versts long by 12 versts wide. It is thickly covered with reeds, reaching in some places a height of 3 saschen [1 saschen = 2.1335 m.]. An arm of the Jarkent-darja, called Ugusilde, slowly makes its way through the marsh, and then, breaking up into a multitude of little arteries, forms a perfect labyrinth of small salt lakes, with two others of considerable size beside them. The thick, tall reeds round the marsh of Lalmoj harbour tigers and a great number of wild-boar, while multitudes of birds, both waders and swimmers, nest all round the lakes.'

Pjevtsoff then goes on to say, that the marsh was encircled by a large number of fresh-water lakes, these being especially numerous at its south-west corner, and that the 'arm of the Jarkent-darja', which evidently was none other than the Kodaj-darja, lost itself amongst them. All these sheets of water expand and become full at the season of high flood, which according to Pjevtsoff, occurs between 15th June and 15th July (O. S.). He continues, 'After travelling 6 versts next day along the south-eastern shore of the marsh, we turned towards the west, and on narrow bridges crossed the seven broad and deep canals, which the natives have led off from the dammed-up arm of the Jarkent-darja, that is to say, the arm which feeds the marsh of Lalmoj.'

According to Pjevtsoff, the Kaschgar-darja also loses itself in an extensive marsh, lying 30 versts east of Maral-baschi and near the village of Tschahr-bagh. This marsh gradually narrowed south-eastwards to a thin strip, without however reaching all the way to the swamp of Lalmoj. From the extremity of the former marsh there likewise issued a stream, which emptied itself into the lake beside which we encamped. It is in this way at all events, that the water of the Kaschgar-darja, though only a relatively small proportion of it, does eventually reach the Jarkent-darja. Hence in 1889 the confluence of the two rivers was in point of fact at Lalmoj. Since then, as we have found, the Kodaj-darja has broken away from them, and is now endeavouring to pass to the north of the marshy region. Thus there can be no doubt that, since the date of Pjevtsoff's visit, the marsh of Lalmoj has essentially shrunk in area; although it still remains one of the marginal lagoons which, like vampires, suck the blood out of the main stream. When a marsh of this character disappears it obviously means a relative augmentation in the Jarkent-darja. See M. V. Pjevtsoff, in *Trudij Tibetskoj Ekspeditsij, 1889—1890*, vol. i. pp. 66 ff.