

contained water. But they soon unite, and then proceed to the lake of Jughan-balik-köl, situated at the northern foot of the Tusluk-tagh, where I made a halt in 1895. Thence the water makes its way into the Sorun-köl, and finally terminates in the Tschöl-köl, situated at the west side of the detached mountain which I discovered in 1895 and which, as my guide was unable to give it a name, I called the Southern Masar-tagh; though I now know that its real name is the Tschoka-tagh. North-west of the Tusluk-tagh there stands another little detached mountain known as Jul-annam. On the south the Tschöl-köl is bordered by the great »ocean of sand«, which the shepherds of that neighbourhood call Ak-kum (White Sand), Schahr-i-katak-kum (from a legendary town which is reputed to lie buried under the sand), or Takkan, plainly an abbreviation of Takla-makan. My renewed investigations of the locality enabled me to add materially to my former map, and showed me, that the Jarkent-darja flows almost immediately along the northern foot of these mountains. As the river swells to its full flood, these canals and lakes gradually fill, and when it drops, they return a portion of their water to its bed. The residue that remains in them through the winter soon gets cut off from the river, and freezes. As the name indicates, Jughan-balik (the Big Fish) is well stocked with fish, which are taken by the inhabitants of Tschahr-bagh and Masar-aldi, from canoes hollowed out of the stems of poplars. The fishing seasons are in spring and summer. In the Tusluk-tagh there is a deposit of salt, which is mined in winter when the river is frozen, that being the only time at which the people can get their carts (*arbas*) across the stream. Beside our camp at Jughan-balik dwelt three shepherds and their families, in charge of about 1000 sheep, belonging to *bajs* or »rich men« in Tschahr-bagh and Masar-aldi. Here, as everywhere else along the river, the sheep are shorn twice in the year, first in the spring, and again in the autumn, and at those seasons the owners of the flocks come and fetch the wool. In this locality tigers had recently paid several visits, and during the year had already carried off five horses and a number of sheep.

I was told by these shepherds, and their information was corroborated by a hunter whose pursuit takes him into all parts of that region, that a long day's journey east of the Tschoka-tagh, and a short day's march south of the river, there exists an old river-bed stretching from west to east, and known as the Kara-saj. The surface of the country through which it runs consists, they said, of gravel and coarse sand, resting upon yellow earth and salt, with small fragments of flint embedded in it. Some of these last were given to me in proof of the statement. On the east, south, and west the Kara-saj is shut in by dunes of drift-sand. Defective though this information is, I nevertheless record it here; even these cursory indications might possibly prove important in future exploratory work. But the place as described to me seems to suggest not so much an old river-bed as a portion of the desert off which the drift-sand has been swept, exposing the surface underneath. At all events, I came across similar tracts whilst crossing the Takla-makan in 1895. The country which extends between the Kara-saj and the river is reported to be full of dead forest (*kötäk*), with a few living poplars at wide intervals apart.

October 5th. From 9 o'clock in the afternoon to 7 o'clock on the following morning the river dropped 1.3 cm. Thus the subsidence proceeds pretty uniformly