

not very distinct ridge, known as Tschartschak, or the Mountain of the Wearied Ones, a name derived from the fact that a detachment of Chinese troops went astray here and nearly perished of thirst. It was in this locality that we first perceived the track of the wild camel.

The portion of the saj on which we were marching forms an independent terrace, being separated from the edge of the detritus slope by a depression, fenced in on the south-east by a very distinctly marked, almost vertical, escarpment. The terrace on which we were proceeding, although sharply defined on each side, slopes away gradually towards the north-east and south-west, while its own direction is south-east. It also forms an evident boundary-line for the vegetation. To the north-east of it the country is absolutely barren, whereas to the south-west there is an abundance of kötäk, proving that the plant-life here was formerly luxuriant. One feature of the landscape catches the eye at once, namely the depression I have just mentioned between the two clay terraces. Its bottom is sterile, and for as long as we followed it, it ran pretty straight towards the south-east. It is very difficult to arrive at any other conclusion than that this must be a former bed of the Kuruk-darja, for in appearance it bears a striking resemblance to an eroded channel, except for the fact of its running in such a straight line. The suggestion that its origin can in any way be due to wind-erosion is entirely out of the question, for the prevailing wind cuts it at right angles.

Going down from the clay terrace, we encamped on the left side of the bed of the Kuruk-darja. From that point the nearest spring was that of Jigde-bulak, lying behind the Tschartschak to the north. On the way thither kamisch occurs in one place, not far from the saj; but there is no water. Hence at our Camp No. VII there was an absence of everything except kötäk.

As during the course of the day's march we frequently found the bed of the Kuruk-darja indistinct, or rather interrupted at intervals, my Lop-men, who are shrewd and skilful in the interpretation of both new and old hydrographical relations, were of opinion that the river had here flowed through a series of small lakes, in the same way as certain parts of the Tarim do below Jangi-köl. This is not unlikely; but it is also likely that certain portions of the channel have become more obliterated than others through the filing and planing action of the wind. By way of throwing light upon the country to the south, I may state, that on one occasion Abdu Rehim rode his camel from the vicinity of our Camp No. VI to the Bos-ilek (Kontsche-darja), which he struck at a point about half-a-day's journey below Tik-enlik. He estimated the distance between the Kuruk-darja and the Bos-ilek to be about the same as the distance between our camps No. VI and No. VII, or (say) 30 km. That is to say, it is only a moderate day's journey, considerably shorter than the distance between Jing-pen and Turfan-karaul, i. e. assuming Kosloff is right, of which, as I have said above, I am doubtful. The angle between the two rivers in this part of their courses is not at all great; in fact, they appear to flow almost parallel. The real divergence between them begins at the Avullu-köl. The country my guide rode over, when he travelled from the one river to the other, consisted at first of clay desert with jardangs, then of sand, the dunes of which, without ever attaining any very appreciable height, gradually rose as he approached