

»From the district of Kok-su we turned almost north, crossing several successive flat elevations, which increased in altitude as we approached the Kuruk-tagh. Having surmounted the highest of these, we descended into the dry bed of the Gansichin-toghvak, where we made our last camp in the desert. This torrent, like so many others in these mountains, does not travel very far, but terminates in the cauldron-shaped saline depression of Nan-schan-schor. This depression, which is 50 versts in circuit, is inclosed on all sides, and projects westwards like a bay between detached flattened heights.»

With regard to the spring of Ban or Bavan-bulak, Kosloff says, »It lies at the southern foot of the Kuruk-tagh and about 15 versts from Kisil-sinir«. This spring must not be confounded with the well of Palvan-bulak already mentioned; that lies a long way to the east, although Palvan is the same word as Bavan, both meaning »hunter«.

Finally, I may add what Kosloff says about the route from Kisil-sinir over the mountains to Jing-pen. In this connection, as indeed in every case where I quote him, I select only those passages which serve to elucidate the orographical structure of the Kuruk-tagh.

»In point of fact the extensive desert which stretches between the basin of Turfan and the basin of Lop-nor, that is to say the two broad swellings, together with an incalculable number of ridges, protuberances, and hills, which taken together form the system of the Kuruk-tagh, make up an entity to itself, sharply differentiated from the surrounding regions, save that it is divided into two by a broad valley with saline depressions. Alongside of the northern depression there is a plateau, not very broad, with a pretty steep descent towards the north, while the southern slope goes down by a series of step-like terraces, which characteristically enough are formed along the side of the Tarim basin. Both swellings grow lower towards the east, but westwards rise into lofty mountain masses. The whole of this exposed region has been subjected to the excessive destructive agency of the atmospheric forces, which have incessantly filed them, rent them to pieces, and blown them down, and then swept away the minutest particles in the form of sand and dust, and deposited them in the adjacent basin on the south. Hence this has been the scene of the changes which have taken place in the network of rivers that supplied Lop-nor with water.»

On 16th December (O. S.) Kosloff started again from Kisil-sinir, and journeyed south-south-west. »On the right was a high range, on the left a whole series of smaller ones. We proceeded up a valley between the mountains, brightened by the manifold variety of the ordinary desert vegetation. At no great distance away two mountains and their peaks were distinctly visible, the eastern one called Dindiosen, the western Muchursein. Both overtop the flat Kuruk-tagh, rising to about 5,000 feet above sea-level, though to the unaided eye their relative altitude is approximately 3,000 feet. At the meridian of Mount Dindiosen we turned off to the south and climbed over the flat crest of the Kuruk-tagh. Farther on the road descended steeply towards the desert, which however still continued to preserve its mountainous character. Leaving on one side some mountain ridges which we had