

CHAPTER VII.

ROBOROVSKIJ, PRSCHEVALSKIJ AND FUTTERER ON THE KURUK-TAGH.

On Roborovskij's map of the south shore of the Baghrasch-köl both names Kisil-sangir and Sangir-urten are entered, the former to the east of the latter. Between the two runs a route-line, labelled, »route through Sangir-urten to Sa-tschou.» To the north of both we read »Kisil-sangir-tagh», which again must in reality be the main range of the Kuruk-tagh.

Roborovskij however both in his text and on his map distinguishes between two parallel chains. In November 1900 this traveller made an excursion from Korla to Uschak-tal, round the southern and eastern shores of the Baghrasch-köl, and between the first-named town and the western extremity of the lake, where the Kontscharja issues from it, crossed the extreme western part of the Kuruk-tagh. I will here cite his conception of the orographical relations.

»At its north-eastern edge the oasis of Korla touches the desert-like slopes, strewn with pebbles, which descend steeply from the adjacent Kuruk-tagh. At the farthest extremity of the oasis a road branches off to the south-east to the district of Kisil-sangir, five days from Korla. At that place, which lies in a broad valley between the mountain chains of the Kuruk-tagh, 150 Kalmuck families are settled, engaged in agriculture.* In the mountain Altin-tagh, two days to the south-west of the same place, there are gold and lead mines, Altin-kan, though they are now virtually abandoned.»**

»Shortly after leaving the oasis, we crossed a little south-easterly spur of the Kuruk-tagh and on the other side of it a valley, and then entered a gloomy defile

* This statement was subsequently corrected by Kosloff, who found nobody there except Ahmed Pavan and his family. There are Kalmucks however not very far away.

** During my 1896 journey I was given the following information about this place: »Die Teile des Kurruk-tag, ein Paar Tagereisen unterhalb Tjinalga, werden Tjong-altin-tag und Kitjik-Altin-tag (der Grosse und Kleine Goldberg) genannt; hier haben früher Dunganen gearbeitet, nach dem letzten Dunganenaufstand aber übernahmen die Chinesen selbst die Bearbeitung, verwenden aber nur sartistische Arbeiter. Die Arbeit wird nur während des Sommers getrieben. Sogenannte *kans* oder Gruben werden einfach in den Betten von vertrockneten Bächen gegraben; aus dem ausgegrabenen lockeren Schutt und Sand werden die Goldkörner durch ein Sieb ausgewaschen.» (*Pet. Mitt.*, Erght. 131, p. 71.)