

to suggest a former lake-bottom; so that it is not surprising to find that the belt of tamarisks nearest the lake and the Tarim were dead, while those which grew twice and three times the distance away were still alive and vigorous. The first belt owed its existence to the presence of the lake; those farther away have nothing whatever to do with either it or its basin: they would have established themselves where they now stand even though no lake had ever existed near them. It is the recession of the lake which has caused the first belt to wither and die; whereas the latter are maintained in vigour by the chance rains of spring and summer, or in general by the moisture from the adjacent mountains.

In this steppe too, which is known as Sariklik, there occur, widely scattered, small rudimentary dunes, forming a belt about one kilometer broad; but there is no drift-sand whatever to be found anywhere along this route. The reason of the sand having accumulated just where it is, is that the vegetation has built up a hindrance in its path. In the barren tracts situated farther east there is, on the other hand, no sand.

The first little group of small, gnarled poplars we came to is called Turdu Nias-kemi-tschapghan-toghrak. Another group farther to the south-west is called Pakalama-toghrak. Between the two there are a great number of tamarisks growing on high mounds. And this character is preserved all the way to Töllak Kullu, where there is a little clay hut marking an *örtäng*, or »station», on the road to Tscharklik. In a deep ravine, buried under thick reeds, there is a salt spring, and when we passed, there was still actually a little ice remaining in it. At the side of the ravine poplars were growing amongst the tamarisk-mounds.

Modschuk-toghrak marks the northern border of the zone of vegetation, which thus constitutes but a narrow strip along the foot of the Astin-tagh, though it extends a long way both east and west. Westwards we encountered its continuation on the way to Andere and eastwards at Dungalik (see below). North of this belt of vegetation is schor, south of it, and stretching all the way to the foot of the mountains, hard barren *saj* (here called *kakir*), intermingled with coarse grey sand and some gravel. By far the greater part of the vegetation consists of kamisch, tamarisks, and toghraks, the last however often in the form of *kötäk*. Their mounds reached 4 to 6 m. in altitude, and one of the biggest was called Karaul-dung. To the south-east we observed the glen of Toghrak-tschap emerging from the mountains, and east of it saw, though but faintly because of the hazy atmosphere, the glen known as Mijan-baschi, whence issues the brook above mentioned that waters the oasis of Mijan, a link in the belt of vegetation. Other names in this locality are Ahmed-kuduk, a well, and Jan-daschkak, the second station of the route. On the third day's march, which clung all the way to the southern margin of the vegetation, we passed the eroded torrent that issues from Toghrak-tschap, the real Jan-daschkak. At Tes-jatghan we struck a track coming from Mijan and Tschimen. About one kilometer north of that point is the spring called Tschongbulak. Other names in this quarter are Kade-tiklaghan-dung, Kara-schipang, Tattran, and Dung-aghil. Immediately west of the last-named we crossed the first canals that are drawn from the Tscharklik-su, and soon after that came to the little *chef-lieu* of the Kara-koschun region, namely Tscharklik, where a Chinese amban resides.

With respect to the most easterly of my three routes through the districts on the southern shore of the Kara-koschun, there is not much to say, for there can hardly