

Our glen continued to widen out and eventually debouched upon the valley that lies between the Tschimen-tagh and the Kalta-alaghan; while its watercourse joins the main river that flows down the valley in question. This last then turns south, and after describing a wide curve to the south-east makes its way to the western shore of the Ajagh-kum-köl. At the point where we emerged upon the great valley the lake was not visible, although we could see the small range that rises on its southern shore. Thus I was able to substantiate the fact, that the Kalta-alaghan terminates not far west of the unnamed pass which we had crossed over the day before, as well as the fact that the latitudinal valley between the Tschimen-tagh (that portion of it which is called the Piaslik-tagh) and the Kalta-alaghan (or Amban-aschkan) — a latitudinal valley which has almost wholly an east-west direction — nevertheless curves round towards its western end and ends at the lake. Here it widens out very considerably and forms a spacious open plain, engirdled by mountains, though at a great distance away. Just below the point of junction between our transverse glen and the main valley there stand in the latter some small detached hills, the bases of which are touched by the winding watercourse, then dry.

We rode along the bottom of this last, up the main valley towards the north-east. The valley was at this part about 8 km. wide, but it gradually contracts towards its upper end. It is flat and open, and its stream is not very deeply eroded. The ascent, without being anywhere very steep, was nevertheless perceptible. On both slopes there was a little grazing. Seen from this side, that is from the south, the Tschimen-tagh has the appearance of a low and insignificant range. Yet its northern versant presents quite a different appearance, as we ascertained when we emerged upon the valley of Toghri-saj. The reason is quite simply, that the more southerly latitudinal valley lies at a higher level than the more northerly latitudinal valley. To this question we shall however return when we come to discuss the altitude relations of Tibet as a whole. Unfortunately I had no opportunity to visit the region between the route I am now describing and the Toghri-saj. Still I do not think it is too bold a supposition, when I state that the westward continuation of the Tschimen-tagh is formed by the range which the Russians call Atschik-kol or Moskovskij. The long range is cut through by a transverse glen of the Toghri-saj. On the other hand it is difficult to make out whether the relatively low mountains that stand on the right-hand side of the valley of Toghri-saj belong to the system of the Tschimen-tagh or to the system of the Kalta-alaghan. But the fact I have already mentioned, that the latitudinal valley in which we now are bends round to the Kum-köl, renders the former supposition the more likely, for the country just there is too open to be merely a breach through the range. It is therefore quite conceivable, that the orographical system of the Kalta-alaghan does terminate immediately north-west of the western end of the Kum-köl, and that the stretch of mountains on the right of the Toghri-saj is a branch or bifurcation of the Tschimen-tagh (Piaslik).

After advancing only a few kilometers up the latitudinal valley we came to the swelling that forms its water-divide; it is extremely flat, scarce perceptible in fact to the unaided eye. On the other side of it begins the stream which we followed, and which picks up on its way a great number of contributories from the transverse