

when it shows this range stretching east, north-east, and north from a point immediately east of Usun-schor, and fraternally embracing the Astin-tagh at a mountain-knot in the region south of Kum-bulak. The map in question is indeed suspiciously generous in similar mountain-knots, and in letting distinct mountain-ranges diverge from them in a way to which there exists in reality no counterpart whatever. The beautiful and consistent way in which the law of orographic formation that rules throughout the whole of Tibet, and not least in the northern parts of the Tibetan plateau, namely that the foldings of the earth's crust, the great mountain-ranges, form parallel elevations, is for the most part disregarded on the Russian map. The very mountain-knot, south of Kum-bulak, in which the Astin-tagh is made to culminate, is really a perfectly unwarranted invention, for, as I have sufficiently emphasised already, the Astin-tagh is in no sense a single range, but consists of two chains running parallel to one another; while of the diagonal range that stretches from Usun-schor to the mountain-knot there exists in reality not a single trace. Indeed one has every reason to be amazed at the carelessness of topographers who, in order to fill up a blank on their map, simply draw upon their own imaginations as they sit at their own study tables. Nor have they been content with merely depicting this imaginary range on the map: they have actually encircled it with four or five blue rings in sign of perpetual snow, so that it really stands out more conspicuously than even the stupendous Tschimen-tagh or the sharply outlined Kalta-alaghan; in fact it is delineated almost as emphatically as the Arka-tagh, the very backbone of Asia. On sheet 62 of *Stieler's Handatlas* this imaginary range has been a good deal toned down, but on the map of »Tibet and the Surrounding Regions», issued by the Royal Geographical Society, it figures in all its pseudo-splendour. Thus as one result of the first few days of this present excursion I was able to eliminate from our maps a misleading and vexatious blunder.

From the principal pass, which reached an absolute altitude of 3698 m., we proceeded towards the north-north-east, keeping on a flat, rounded, rather steep ridge, which branches off from the crest of the range in which the pass is situated, and winds about in the same capricious manner as the glens in the same locality. One of these we had on our right hand, and into it we descended by a steep, stony ravine. This glen is fairly broad and has a gentle slope towards the east and north-east, and finally to the east-north-east, the mountains on both sides decreasing steadily in altitude until they eventually melt into low hills. The left terraced bank is a couple of meters high, and rounded, and after climbing up it we crossed over the little latitudinal valley between the Akato-tagh and the minor parallel range, dipping up and down into a number of small shallow watercourses, separated from one another by flattened elevations.

Our course then became northerly, and to the N. 50° E. we had the mouth of the transverse glen which I have already mentioned as gaping in the minor parallel range, and now resembling a deep-cut and constricted portal. Upon this opening all the eroded watercourses of the region converge, not only those off the flanks of the Akato-tagh, but also those from the country west of our route. Hence there must be, farther east in the latitudinal valley, a dividing ridge or threshold,