

Lower Astin-tagh. From Tasch-köl, which we find on Littledale's map, it is reckoned a day's journey to Kum-bulak, and from Kum-bulak it is barely half a day to Chodscha-schukur, and from there a good stiff day to Dole-bulak, the road crossing on the way the lower parts of the sajs of Kara-davan, Jangi-su, Kara-saj, and Arkarlik-saj. All along this stretch there appears to be nothing but desert towards the north, with possibly a small mountain-ridge or so in the far distance. From Dole-bulak it is counted a day's journey to Toghrak-bulak, and from there a long day to Lap-schi-tschen. This is evidently the same route that Littledale followed. Lastly we have the system of Ku-schui-cha, which a long way to the west is joined by Lap-schi-tschen and the five transverse glens. Of these five the one farthest west is reported to enter the Lap-schi-tschen, while the other four combine two and two before issuing upon the main glen. By proceeding eastwards from a broad open glen that joins the glen of Ku-schui-cha from the right, one may cross over a secondary spur, though by a very awkward pass, into the next north-going transverse glen in the northern flank of the Astin-tagh. This transverse glen was called by my men Kan-ischlaitighan-saj, because gold occurs there, and was formerly extracted by Tungans. The *baschi* or »head» of this glen lies directly over against the *baschi* or upper part of Ja-ma-tschan on the other flank, that is to say these two glens start on opposite sides of the main crest of the Astin-tagh.

Unsatisfactory though this description of the natives is, it nevertheless enables us to infer, that the northern flank of the Astin-tagh exhibits a far greater energy and variety of development than, for instance, the Kuruk-tagh, the southern face of which likewise looks out over the same desert. Of the two routes — the lower, to the north, which Littledale selected, and the higher, to the south, which I mapped — the latter is beyond doubt the more convenient, because the ground is level, whereas the former pretty certainly crosses over a whole series of ravines and watercourses that issue out of the transverse glens.