

It was undoubtedly from this region that the Chinese authorities in Sa-tscheo were informed of the route which the fugitives had taken, so that they were able to intercept them in the mountains. The Tungans ran down also into the basin of Machaj, but were met with opposition, in the course of which several Mongols lost their lives. They did not however visit the basin of Tsädum. With the Tungans were a number of Kökö-nor Mongols, and they were the more formidable, being better armed and more skilful shots. Perhaps it was because of these experiences that I found the Särtäng Mongols far more reserved and uncommunicative than the Tadschinur Mongols whom I had formerly become acquainted with on the southern edge of Tsajdam. The latter were franker, and natural, and anything but suspicious. But possibly the Särtäng Mongols have been spoilt by their frequent intercourse with the Chinese of Sa-tscheo. The Mongols with whom I here came into contact, even the women and children, all spoke Chinese, though this was quite exceptionally the case with the Tadschinur Mongols. Marriages between the Chinese of Sa-tscheo and the Mongols of Särtäng are said to be by no means infrequent. In the summer the latter are visited by Chinese, who come to buy sheep. In fact, a large proportion of the sheep in Särtäng are reported to belong to the Chinese of Sa-tscheo and are looked after for them by the Mongols. In a word the latter are more exposed to the influence of Chinese predominance than the southern Mongols are, who enjoy a greater amount of freedom and independence. The Särtäng Mongols appear to have little intercourse with the Tadschinur Mongols, and indeed there is nothing to take them into the country of the latter. When journeying to Donchur and Kum-bum they travel by a more northerly route, by way of Kurlik-nor and Kökö-nor.