

Thus within a very short space the contour drops 594 m. We may safely assume that this transverse glen is narrow, steep, and wild. Here, and extending a long way down the watercourse, there was a gigantic blue-green ice-sheet, swept clean of snow, and entirely filling the space between the scarped terraces. It sloped towards the N. 7° W. About a hundred meters from its left bank is a low threshold, on the other side of which a relatively well-grassed glen proceeds towards the north-west. In the same direction we now saw distinctly the nearest of the little desert ranges. Ascending a minor side-glen, we reached a small pass (3095 m.), lying entirely amongst soft material and forming a flat water-parting. From it we went down to Kan-ambal through the same broad valley, bordered with low, rounded heights, the end of which we had passed on our left on the journey out. There can be no doubt it was by this valley that Littledale travelled. The grass here was good. The watercourse keeps close to the northern foot of the mountains, the path leaving it for the most part on the right. The stretch of mountains which here separated us from the Desert of Gobi, and which is pierced farther west by the Anambaruin-gol, was called by my Mongols Hun-to-jor. The upper stone walls, which are reported to be called Schan-jempen, were hidden from us by a small buttress of the mountains known as Chara-udsur. My Mongols also told me, that two small side-glens, which come from the south and enter the Anambaruin-gol at Kan-ambal, are called Schi-tschuen and Che-go respectively. They run parallel to one another, and in the former is a spring, with an ice-sheet. A third glen is called Bandscha; it descends from the little pass of Schi-lang-to which we crossed over on the 1st January. From the minor pass that we crossed over this day we obtained an excellent view of the lower expansion of the Anambaruin-gol. Upon reaching our former camp we found nothing altered, except that the snow lay fairly thickly in the valley. We learned subsequently that this district is occasionally visited by Mongols. The summer before none had visited it, although the previous winter and spring ten yurts were pitched there for the space of 6 months, and after that the people had returned to Särtäng by the route that we followed on our journey out. Some ten or a dozen years earlier a Chinaman had occupied the stone huts which we saw lower down in the transverse glen, and with the help of two labourers he sowed barley and wheat. The locality is said to be notorious for its violent and sudden winds, though they will not bear comparison with those farther east.

The only travellers whom we met throughout the whole of this great circular tour round the Anambaruin-ula were two Chinese, whom we met on this our last day; they were in charge of a caravan of 10 camels, conveying dried fish, packed in large bundles and bales, from Abdal to the merchants of Sa-tscheo. I had never heard speak of this little local traffic in fish, a commodity the Chinese are very fond of, and it is to this chance meeting that I owe my knowledge of it. The reason why the Chinamen choose this lower mountain road rather than the incomparably shorter and more convenient desert route, which can very easily be traversed by camels in winter, is of course simply and solely the grazing and the springs. This traffic can naturally only take place in winter, when the fish are frozen. The two Chinese said that they had been to Lovonur; which proves that at any rate some of them, less well versed in the ancient geography of that region, do apply the classic name to the Kara-koschun as well.