

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ROCKHILL'S JOURNEY ACROSS TIBET.

I will now proceed to quote certain passages from Rockhill's interesting journey which are illustrative of the general characteristics of high Tibet. The itinerary which falls within the scope of our observations is that from Tsajdam to Nag-ch'u (Naktschu). This is directly concerned to no slight extent with the self-contained drainage-regions of Central Tibet, and for a certain distance is in contact with the route which I followed towards Lhasa. I quote from Rockhill's diary for May, June, and July 1892. I make no change in his spelling of geographical names.

On the 17th May he started from the lower Naichi-gol and rode south towards the Talen-tak Mountains and the pass of Kano, which Prschevskij calls Gono.

»The sand blown from the Ts'aidam by the prevailing winds is piled up on the foothills to a depth of several hundred feet.» The mountains west of the transverse glen by which the river breaks through is called Toré-ula, though Prschevskij calls it Torai-ula.

May 18th. Crossing the Kano pass (12,190 feet), he again came down to the Naichi-gol, »the country [being] everywhere absolutely devoid of vegetation, only a mass of débris and sand. The river (some sixty to seventy-five feet wide and about three feet deep in the middle) flowed between high vertical banks.» Higher up they forded the river Schugu-gol, that flows down from the Schugan Mountains; it was almost as big as the main river. Beside the latter, in the district of Tsahan-tohé, good grass was found.

On the 19th May he continued on up the valley, crossing over the little secondary pass of Koko-tom-k'utul. The next day too he travelled up the valley of the Naichi-gol. »The Naichi-gol from Tsahan-tohé to Buhutu is very swift, with a drop of about 30 feet to the mile. Along the bank on either side are many large springs. It may be, however, that the river water (which is of a grayish colour) percolates through the loose gravelly soil to reappear beautifully clear in these spring-like pools, thence flowing back into the river.»

The following day he rode to Tator, still in the same river-valley, which is bordered on the south by the range of Amtun-ula; on the 22nd he reached Kuré-bori, and on the 27th Tabu-obo.