

ains which I have called the Tsajdam Chain. It too is sterile and ill-supplied with water, but it contains a great abundance of loess deposits. South of this again rises the stupendous mountain-range which I have called after the discoverer of the New World. The eastern half of the Columbus (= Kalta-alaghan) range is covered with perpetual snow. To a third range, which forms the westward continuation of the two last-named, and borders on the south the Valley of the Winds, was given the name of the Moscow Chain (= Atschik-kol). This is connected on the west with the Tokus-daban. It is almost entirely covered with glaciers and these are biggest in the middle where the Kreml peak is situated. After two short stages southwards from Sajsan-sajtu we reached the plateau of Tibet. Before us stretched the vast, limitless plain in every direction, vanishing at length on the eastern horizon. In the south and south-east rose a chaos of less important mountains; but beyond them gleamed the snowy peaks of the range which subsequently received my name. In the middle of the plain lay, finally, a large, elongated lake, which to our astonishment was not yet frozen over; I called it the »Non-freezing lake. It lies at an absolute altitude of 3570 m.* The water was of a beautiful dark blue colour, but so salt that probably it never freezes; at all events in the beginning of December, with the thermometer registering 34.4° of frost, we found only a narrow fringe of ice along the shores. Underneath this ice-fringe the water had a temperature of -11° (at 2 p.m. on the 8th Dec.). The night was still and the cold intense, and a thick mist spread across the entire lake, looking under the beams of the rising sun like a beautiful transparent white veil. Towards the west the lake is very shallow, and there it receives no affluent; but its eastern half is probably entered by rivers which flow off the Columbus Chain and of that which bears my name. At first I called the last-named the Mysterious (Sagadotschnij), because we only saw it at a distance, and its highest summit I christened, because of its shape, the Schapka Monomacha. As, from what we could apparently see, this immense range stretches towards the west, it is not improbable that it is connected with the Russian range or the Tokus-daban, and thus forms the principal crest of the middle part of the Kwen-lun. The icy west wind blew straight in our faces. Sometimes a little snow fell and storms were not infrequent. On the 15th December we encountered an especially memorable tempest. It began in the morning and continued until the afternoon. The excessively violent gusts of wind whirled clouds of sand and dust into the air, and notwithstanding that it was the middle of the day we were enveloped in a thick yellowish grey mist; at a distance of 30 or 40 paces we could see nothing.»**

In this passage we have the results of the first reconnaissance of the extreme north of Tibet, the region between the Arka-tagh and the Astin-tagh, of which I have given a more detailed description in the third volume of this work. In this journey, as in the three which preceded it, Prschevalskij succeeded in penetrating an unusually long way into Tibet. In fact his journeys are astonishing, especially when we remember that he was the first explorer of the heart of Asia. In this respect his first journey of 1870—73 was also without doubt his most remarkable; neither in length nor in the results obtained was it exceeded by any of the other three which followed it.

* According to my observations 3867 m.

** Prschevalskij, *At Kiachtij na istoki Scholtoj Reki, isledovanije Severnoj Okranij Tibeta i put tscheres Lob-nor po Bassejnu Tarima* (St. Petersburg 1888).