

Littledale crossed over the Arka-tagh — like Pjevtsoff, he incorrectly calls it the Akka-tagh — by a pass which lies only a very short distance west of the pass which I chose a year later. What he says about it is this:

»The pass, though not steep, was high and long, and it cost us the lives of five or six donkeys and a couple of horses. We found ourselves at last on the Tibetan plateau, having lakes and low mountains to the south as far as could be seen, and to the north we had the high range of the Akka-tagh, with fine glaciers and snowfields . . . The Tibetan plateau proper, which probably has an average height quite 2,000 feet in excess of the Pamirs, has, in its northern part especially, a very small rainfall, and in the absence of rivers the drainage of the country finds its way into one or other of the innumerable lakes, which, having no outlet, are salt. Except in the volcanic country, the valleys are broad and open.» Mysterious volcanoes appear with too great frequency in Littledale's address, and there exist many reasons why their existence must be received with doubt, not the least being that he travelled past them too hurriedly, and he appears to have taken every conical mountain for a volcano.

»We passed through a volcanic country with little grass, and water rather scarce. Later in the summer the grass would be better, but in May there was only the previous year's growth, which had had all its nutriment weathered out of it, and our animals began to suffer severely.»

With regard to the general orographical configuration of the country Littledale justly calls attention to the slight degree in which the mountain-ranges rise above the base of the plateau: »We travelled on for some time with a dwindling stud over a succession of passes of no great height above the general run of the country, but many of them were steep.» On the other hand the following observation is only in part correct: »After we left the Akka-tagh we never saw a single continuous mountain-range till we came to the Ninchen-Tangla, south of the Tengri-Nor,» an observation which can only be based upon an illusion, for not only is it impossible to have travelled such a great distance without crossing over at least one range the eastern or western termination of which would have been out of sight, but, from the summit of a pass you often fancy you can see a breach in a range where in reality there exists only a relatively deep depression or saddle. Then we once more have the volcanoes cropping up: »We passed three very conspicuous volcanoes, which must have been considerably over 20,000 feet. They had made excellent landmarks for some time previously. Between  $36^{\circ} 50'$  and  $33^{\circ} 50'$  N. lat., our path lay through a very volcanic region, numerous undoubted volcanoes being visible. South of  $33^{\circ} 50'$  I did not notice any, till three months later we passed the conspicuous volcano Tongo.» Now I had an opportunity to visit this particular volcano, and I have no hesitation in stating that it has not the very slightest connection with any form of volcanic activity; and from this we may justly adopt a sceptical attitude with regard to the other »volcanoes» of which Littledale speaks.

We read further: »June 26, lat.  $33^{\circ} 12'$  N., and long.  $88^{\circ} 12'$  E., was remarkable for two things: we had the first rain since leaving the Black Sea in November — and I think at this point we first came under the influence of the south-west monsoon; the skies became more cloudy as we went south, and we frequently