

two valleys unite, namely 3888 m.; this gives a mean altitude of 4094 m. If we prefer to make a scrupulous comparison of its elevation with that of the latitudinal valley between the Tschimen-tagh and the Ara-tagh, we ought to restrict ourselves to the two altitudes 4185 and 3888 m., which give a mean of 4036 m. Thus the southern latitudinal valley of the Ara-tagh lies at all events a step higher than its northern valley.

South of the Kalta-alaghan we have a remarkably spacious latitudinal valley, which in respect of its morphology is very unlike the preceding; for it resembles rather a rounded or elliptical basin, with a slope towards the north. Nevertheless the deepest trough in this depression runs along the foot of the Kalta-alaghan, and beside it I took the altitudes 3922 m. (Camp XV, 1900), 3882 (Upper Kum-köl), 3878 (near the Kum-köl-darja), and 3867 m. (Lower Kum-köl). Putting these data together we obtain for the trough a mean altitude of 3887 m. If however we take into account other determinations of altitude, such as those from the southern ascending parts, we get a mean elevation of 4098 m. Nevertheless the important figure, which in comparison with preceding data shows a distinct descent, is the mean of 3887 m.

If now we proceed to the Arka-tagh and examine the observations of altitude which we possess of that system, we at once become aware that we have travelled a stage away from the regions in which we are quite sure of our facts. To attempt to explain the orographical structure of the Arka-tagh in a few words is indeed next to impossible. Between 86° and 90° E. long. this system has, it is true, been crossed over no less than seven times, namely, proceeding from west to east, by (1) myself in 1896, (2) Dutreuil de Rhins, (3) Littledale, (4) myself in September 1900, (5) myself again in 1901, (6) Bonvalot, and (7) myself in July 1900. And to these may be added in the far east of the range the point where I crossed over it on my way from Tibet to Tsajdam in 1896, Carey and Dalgleish's crossings in the same region, and lastly all the itineraries, briefly alluded to above *en passant*, which cross over the eastern continuation ranges of the Arka-tagh system to the south of the Tsajdam basin. In what follows I do not however take these itineraries into account, because between them and the foregoing, that is between my routes of July 1900 and September 1896 there exists a gap of the breadth of 3° , which is entirely unknown. In that stretch nobody has ever crossed over the Arka-tagh, and indeed it would seem that it is not altogether easy to get across it in that quarter. Whilst travelling between lake No. XX and the Ike-tsohan-gol I did, it is true, cross over two important passes, although in point of altitude they cannot be compared with the passes of the central Arka-tagh; still it is impossible to say in what relation those ranges stand to the parallel ranges of the real Arka-tagh. In default of exact explorations in that region we must rest content with taking it for granted that the Arka-tagh is connected with the ranges out of which the Naidshin-gol and the Schuga-gol issue, and which farther east form a water-divide between the Dscharing-nor and Oring-nor on the one hand and the Alang-gol and Bajin-gol on the other. Taking it in its widest interpretation, the Arka-tagh is thus a very extended system, possessing very different structures in its different parts, now forming a very sharply defined main crest with several smaller parallel ranges and now constituting