



Fig. 15. Camp on the Oboin-gol, October 25th

that one would die if one drank water from Ghashun-nor! Just westwards of the lake there are two great routes to the north, one from Suchow to Uliasutai, the other from Suchow to Urga. Between Suchow and Ulan-tsonch on the Mören-gol the routes are identical, but from this point they separate and go different ways.

In winter there is generally a hand's breadth of snow in the lake-tract. Ghashun-nor freezes every year, but the old man did not know how thick the ice was. The rivers are solidly frozen over, but there is always running water under the ice. In spring-time, especially in March, there are storms; but stormy weather is not unknown in winter either. He knew that the winter at Ghashun-nor was considerably milder than in the republic of Mongolia.

There are sometimes hard north-west gales, that drive the lake-water in a south-easterly direction, flooding large portions of the lowest delta. He thought our camping-place a very risky site, as we might be surrounded with water on all sides. He himself intended to shift his yurt farther south, and was therefore in a hurry to get home.

RETURN FROM GHASHUN-NOR TO TSONDOL

On October 26th we broke up our camp at Ghashun-nor and set out on the return journey to Tsondol. At first we followed the eastern bank of the Oboin-gol. We took short-cuts at the bends, passed a large wooden obo, entered a wood and rode past a fold for ewes and she-camels made of dry branches. We picked our way between dense tamarisk thickets and passed to the west of the residence of the Torgut prince.

For the first time we saw narrow strips of ice near the banks of the river. We proceeded through woods, sometimes consisting of nothing but dead trees, among bushes and over open and grassy plains. Near some of the Torgut yurts browsed not only camels and horses but also donkeys. Open stretches of black gravel we traversed, too, though this was generally at some distance from the river.

We waded over the Oboin-gol, presently catching sight of the great dune at the main camp, and soon we had joined the members who had stayed behind.