

had traversed, about 1260 A.D., on an adventurous incursion from Badakhshān towards Kashmīr and the Punjāb. In Chapter XVIII., where the Venetian relates that exploit (see Yule, *Marco Polo*, I., p. 98, with note, p. 104), the name of Pashai is linked with *Dīr*, the territory on the Upper Panjkōra river, which an invader, wishing to make his way from Badakhshān into Kashmīr by the most direct route, would necessarily have to pass through.

“The name *Pashai* is still borne to this day by a Muhamadanized tribe closely akin to the Siāh-pōsh, settled in the Panjshīr Valley and in the hills on the west and south of Kāfiristān. It has been very fully discussed by Sir Henry Yule (*Ibid.*, I., p. 165), who shows ample grounds for the belief that this tribal name must have once been more widely spread over the southern slopes of the Hindu kush as far as they are comprised in the limits of Kāfiristān. If the great commentator nevertheless records his inability to account for Marco Polo’s application of ‘the name Pashai to the country south-east of Badakhshan,’ the reason of the difficulty seems to me to lie solely in Sir Henry Yule’s assumption that the route heard of by the traveller, led ‘by the Doráh or the Nuksán Pass, over the watershed of Hindu kush into Chitrāl and so to Dir.’

“Though such a route *via* Chitrāl would, no doubt, have been available in Marco Polo’s time as much as now, there is no indication whatever forcing us to believe that it was the one really meant by his informants. When Nigūdar ‘with a great body of horsemen, cruel unscrupulous fellows’ went off from Badakhshān towards Kashmīr, he may very well have made his way over the Hindu kush by the more direct line that passes to Dīr through the eastern part of Kāfiristān. In fact, the description of the Pashai people and their country, as given by Marco Polo, distinctly points to such a route; for we have in it an unmistakable reflex of characteristic features with which the idolatrous Siāh-pōsh Kāfirs have always been credited by their Muhammadan neighbours.

“It is much to be regretted that the Oriental records of the period, as far as they were accessible to Sir Henry Yule, seemed to have retained only faint traces of the Mongol adventurer’s remarkable inroad. From the point of view of Indian history it was, no doubt, a mere passing episode. But some details regarding it would possess special interest as illustrating an instance of successful invasion by a route that so far has not received its due share of attention.” [See *supra*, pp. 4, 22-24.]