

south. Even from afar European eyes saw it then for the first time. I wondered when the time would arrive for exploring those Indus gorges, where the old Chinese pilgrims made their way south 'by hazardous paths through gloomy gorges, crossing bridges of ropes or iron chains, across bridges spanning precipices, or climbing by means of pegs for steps'.⁵

The descent from the pass to the Tangīr river was a trying experience; for after leading for a mile or so over slopes covered with magnificent Deodar forest the path dropped down along bare precipitous cliffs and over vast shoots of rock debris. Not until we had done nine hours of continuous climbing was the first water met with above the village of Shēkho. Below, on the opposite side of the valley, the large villages of Diamir and Lurg could be seen spreading their terraced fields over wide alluvial fans watered by snow-fed streams. Beyond a rocky defile, through which the Tangīr river has cut its way down to Shēkho village, the valley bottom opened out into a wide fertile basin occupied by the scattered hamlets of Rim and Jaglōt. Amidst the fields of the latter place Rāja Pakhtūn Wālī's stronghold rose close to the right bank of the river (Fig. 25), and there a very pleasant reception awaited me. The fort had been much enlarged since the time when the original modest structure, which he occupied as a refugee from Chitrāl, witnessed a memorable siege. The powerful Gabar-khēl tribesmen who hold the upper portion of Tangīr had then vainly tried to rid themselves of their ambitious exile-guest. Their defeat at this spot marked the first stage in Pakhtūn Wālī's rise to power.

My passage through the permanently occupied portion of Tangīr had for practical reasons to be restricted to two days. Yet it sufficed to show me on the one hand the close similarity in fertility and natural resources that exists between Tangīr and Darēl, and on the other a marked difference as regards the character of the population and its ways of living. The practically continuous area of cultivable ground that extends from Jaglōt to the last hamlets above Dobats is scarcely less in extent than the area available in the main Darēl valley. The climatic conditions prevailing between these two points, situated at an elevation of about 6,000 and 7,500 feet respectively, are approximately the same as between Gumāre-kōt and Nyachūt. The water-supply available for irrigation is manifestly greater in Tangīr; for the streams feeding the Tangīr river from the west and north drain mountains which are not only higher than those surrounding Darēl but also carry considerable beds of permanent snow and glaciers. This abundance of water is proved by the volume, over 2,100 cubic feet per second, which I measured in the Tangīr river where it passes below the bridge of Jaglōt.

The large size of the river represents an important factor in the exploitation of the magnificent forests that cover all the slopes of the valley from an elevation of about 7,500 to 11,000 feet; for it permits the timber to be floated in huge logs to the Indus, and thus adds to the value of this great economic resource of Tangīr. At the time of my visit, it is true, I found great masses of timber wedged in the gorge through which the river passes below Jaglōt. But the flood from the melting snows of the next spring and early summer was expected to clear off all this accumulation and carry it safely to the distant plains about Attock. There can be little doubt that in ancient times, as now, Gandhāra and the territories lower down the Indus must have drawn their supplies of timber largely from Tangīr and Darēl. The exploitation of these forests formed an important source of revenue to Rāja Pakhtūn Wālī and was exclusively in the hands of Kāka-khēl traders and their agents from the famous Ziārat near Nowshera in the Peshawar District. They alone, owing to the sanctity enjoyed by their clan, are able to carry on this business, here as also on the Swāt river head-waters, in tracts too dangerous for others.⁶

⁵ See Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, i. p. 239.

⁶ The true origin and history of this remarkable Kāka-

khēl community well deserves investigation by a critical student familiar with the North-West Frontier. The com-