

*yā 'Alī madat*, scribbled across the cruciform portion of the Stūpa, with another *Yā Muḥammad yā Muḥammad yā 'Alī* below it. To the left of the Stūpa, written vertically, we read the names *Khāwar Shāh Shāh Khushwaqt* and in the left top corner *Yā 'Alī madat pādshāh Mardān*. Finally across the lowest base of the Stūpa is scrawled the record, *ba kalam Murād Bēg*. None of the persons here named seems capable of definite identification at present; for the name of Khushwaqt appears to have been borne not solely by the founder of the family ruling Yāsīn and Mastūj since the beginning of the eighteenth century, but also by at least two of his descendants.<sup>10</sup>

Close above this spot the track took us to the moraine on the east side of the much-crevassed glacier that descends from the pass. After scrambling up this to an elevation of nearly 14,000 feet, we crossed the glacier in a zigzag line to avoid crevasses. Further progress lay along its snow-covered western moraine, past precipitous cliffs and avalanche slopes, until easier ground was gained at about 14,600 feet on snow-beds flanking the head of the glacier. At last, after four hours' steady climbing, we reached the broad and flat expanse of snow that forms the crest of the pass (Fig. 43). The reading there taken with the mercurial mountain barometer indicated a height of 15,250 feet, closely approximating to that recorded in the Trans-frontier map sheet (15,380 feet).

Ascent of glacier to Darkōt pass.

This great *firn* bed was the same to which my ascent of May 17, 1906, had brought me, and the full description then recorded in my Personal Narrative<sup>11</sup> makes it unnecessary to note further topographical details about this remarkable pass. It will suffice to mention that though the gathering snow clouds soon deprived me of a full view to the south, I was once more greatly struck by the contrast which the steep glacier bed on that side, confined between precipitous spurs, presented to the wide snowy expanse of the summit and to the gentle slope of the mighty ice stream flowing down from it towards the Yārkhun gorges (Fig. 48). It was easy for me to realize again on the spot the feelings of dismay which filled Kao Hsien-chih's Chinese 'braves' when they had been brought to this height and found what a descent lay before them, and to appreciate the great qualities of their leader, who by combined boldness and stratagem assured final success in his adventurous enterprise.

Kao Hsien-chih's crossing of Darkōt.

### SECTION III.—FROM THE YĀRKHUN HEAD-WATERS TO THE TĀGH-DUMBĀSH PĀMĪR

On the top of the Darkōt pass I was met by the late Captain H. F. D. Stirling, of the 57th (Wilde's) Rifles, then commanding the Chitrāl Scouts and officiating as Assistant Political Agent in Chitrāl. The hardy Mastūjī porters whom that young officer, himself an expert mountaineer, had brought up in person were most welcome. But less so the information he gave me that the north-eastern of the two glacier routes from the Darkōt to the Yārkhun valley had been blocked for the past three years by impracticable *bergschrunds* which had formed above the foot of the glacier. When discussing Kao Hsien-chih's crossing of the Darkōt in *Serindia*, I have had occasion to call special attention to the interesting orographic fact that from the great *firn* beds on the very top of the pass there descend northward two separate glaciers filling valleys which diverge at right angles.<sup>1</sup> I have also shown there reasons for the belief that Kao Hsien-chih's route lay over the north-eastern glacier, which descends the Kachil valley and ends a short distance above the grazing ground of Showar-shur on the uppermost Yārkhun river.

Glacier routes from Darkōt pass.

This route, which conveniently connects with the low Shawitakh pass leading across the Oxus watershed close to the east of the Barōghil saddle, was described by reliable reports as the easier of the two routes previous to the glacier change above mentioned. It was then regularly used

Route to Showar-shur and Shawitakh pass.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Biddulph, *Hindu Koosh*, p. 153, genealogical table.

<sup>11</sup> See *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 57 sqq.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Serindia*, i. p. 56.