

the British Boundary Commission party essayed to discover this or some other pass over the mountain watershed south of Lake Victoria', but had failed and expressed their opinion that no such pass exists.

It was accordingly a pleasant surprise when careful inquiries from two much-travelled Kirghiz in our party resulted in definite and independent evidence of an old track, still regularly used by Wakhī herdsmen of villages on the Āb-i-Panja, which leads from the Wakhān side across the watershed range to the glacier-filled head of the Shōr-jilga valley, clearly visible from Lake Victoria. Descending this valley, which is shown in the Survey of India map without a name next to the east of the Bēsh-kunak-jilga, one either gains the open valley of the Pāmīr river, or else, over gentle peneplains, the south-western shores of the lake. The ascent to the pass from the Great Pāmīr side lies up the south-western branch of the Shōr-jilga, which the panoramic view (Fig. 360), taken from the mouth of the Bāsh-gumbaz valley, shows at the point marked with an arrow. On the northern side of the pass glacier ice has to be crossed. After passing the watershed the track drops down to the Kōk-moinak spur, where it bifurcates. One route descends into the southern Shōr-jilga, marked in the Survey of India map by the entry 'Shaor',^{17a} and thence leads up the Āb-i-Panja to Langar. The other was said to cross in succession the heads of the grazing valleys of Boz-dektir and Tokuz-bāsh over easy slopes and thus to reach Sarhad. The description of the latter portion of the route agreed with what I had seen in 1906 from the Kansir spur of the range rising above Sarhad.¹⁸ The information received was calculated to vindicate once again reliance on the topographical details preserved by the record in the Chinese Annals of Kao Hsien-chih's great alpine feat. My only regret was that regard for time and the Afghān border would not allow me to test them on the spot, as I had done in the case of the Darkōt and the battle ground south of Sarhad.¹⁹

On the morning of August 28th I left Lake Victoria for the journey down the Pāmīr river to Langar-kisht, where it joins the main branch of the Āb-i-Panja. The three marches in which we covered the distance of about 78 miles correspond to Marco Polo's three days' ride from 'Vokhan' to the great lake. The valley of the Pāmīr river has since Captain Wood's time been often described, and only few of my observations call for brief record here. In the upper Pāmīr-like portion of the valley one passes, about 4 miles below the outflow of the Bāsh-gumbaz stream, a natural hillock shaped like a cone and about 80 feet high. It is known as Mazār-dōbe and worshipped by the Kirghiz as the burial-place of holy warriors. Its curiously regular shape must in Buddhist times have made it appear as a 'Svayambhū' Stūpa to pious eyes, and continuity of local worship probably accounts for its sanctity at the present day.²⁰

references, British and Russian, to some direct passage between the Great Pāmīr and Āb-i-Panja valley are fully quoted.

The following brief remarks, based on the more exact topographical record in the Survey of India map (Northern Transfrontier Sheet No. 2 N.W., 1896) and on local inquiry, may help to clear up some points of the conflicting evidence there detailed.

Colonel Gordon's mention (1874) of 'the Wurm pass' approached from head of Lake Victoria probably applies to the pass at the head of the Kara-jilga from which the Waram valley debouching on the Āb-i-Panja above Langar can be gained. The name 'Shor Kara Jilga or Warram', appearing in an earlier Indian Intelligence map and shown also in Lord Curzon's map, seems to have been wrongly applied to the Burgutai or Chelap pass giving access farther

east to the lower end of Lake Chakmaktin. The track of which Lord Curzon heard from his Kirghiz as running to Lake Victoria up the Nullah that he passed 'between 12 and 15 miles below Langar' (the Bahārak-dara) exists and leads to the Shōr-jilga pass discussed above.

^{17a} In 1906 I heard the name *Bahārak-dara* applied to the debouchure of this valley.

¹⁸ See *Serindia*, i. Fig. 25.

¹⁹ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 8 sqq.; *Serindia*, i. pp. 55 sqq., 67 sqq.

²⁰ Cf. *Serindia*, iii. p. 1303. The same name 'Mazār-tapa' is through some misapprehension shown by the Russian and Indian Survey maps also for a Mazār passed farther down below the debouchure of the stream coming from the Khargōsh pass.