

Routes from  
Khargōsh  
and Mats  
passes.

Where the route from the Khargōsh Pāmīr joins in, one reaches the well-made Russian bridle-path connecting Langar-kisht with the cart-road along the Alichur Pāmīr. The debouchure of the Khargōsh valley marks the boundary between Kirghiz and Wakhī grazing grounds on the right bank of the river, and there, at an elevation of some 12,700 feet, I learned of oats having been recently sown and reaped. On the level terrace of Paiga-tala a couple of miles lower down I noticed the remains of what looked like a ruined Obo, built of rough stones and about 15 feet long. Its E.-W. bearing precluded its being taken for a Muhammadan tomb. Old cultivation terraces were met with at Yol-mazār at an elevation of about 12,500 feet. About three miles lower we passed on the left bank the mouth of a wide grassy valley, known as Issik-bulak from a hot spring. From it a much-frequented track leads to the Sarighaz pass, the only one of the Wakhān range by which laden animals can be taken from the Pāmīr river to the Āb-i-Panja.<sup>21</sup>

Descent to  
Āb-i-Panja.

After passing on the third march the narrow Mats valley (Fig. 401), up which a convenient route leads to Shughnān, we came again and again upon old fields and canals abandoned within living memory, situated on terraces of the steadily widening valley. But from about 10 miles above Langar-kisht onwards stretches of actual cultivation become more and more frequent, on terraced slopes conveniently reached by irrigation, while small hamlets nestled among trees in sheltered nooks lower down. The road throughout commanded a grand view to the south, towards the snowy rampart of the Hindukush, guarded by needle-like ice peaks (Fig. 392). It afforded impressive assurance that the watershed towards the Indus was near, and nearer still the great fosse of the Āb-i-Panja valley below it which comprises Wakhān.

Arrival at  
Langar-  
kisht.

On the evening of August 30th I reached Langar-kisht, some three miles above the junction of the Pāmīr river with the Āb-i-Panja, and received a very kind welcome at the small Cossack post guarding the Russian portion of Wakhān. The close ethnic and political relations which at all times must have linked the uppermost Oxus valley with the Hindukush territories to the south was strikingly brought home to me by the fact that Sarbuland Khān, the Ming-bāshi of Russian Wakhān, who had ridden ahead to receive me, was a younger brother of 'Alī Mardān Shāh, the old ruler of Wakhān, now for many years past established at Ashkūman, and was well acquainted with Rāja Pakhtūn Wālī of Darēl and Tangīr. It was one of his sons living at Ashkūman who with his party of Wakhīs had two years before so valiantly helped me across the Chillinjī pass.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The application in the maps of the name *Sarighaz* to the valley itself, which does not drain from the pass, seems to be due to some misapprehension.

<sup>22</sup> See above, i. pp. 50 sq.