

in the east, south of Odon-tala, Soloma. The system did not reach the snow limit, and it was lower than the two previous ranges. Between the Shuga and the Bayan-khara-ula an undulating desert was found at 14,500 feet. In the N. W. part of this desert rose the gigantic snow mountain, Gurbu-naidshi, which he regarded as the eastern-most part of the Kwen-lun. In January 1873, he reached the Murui-ussu (Murusu), coming from the Tang-la. We have already dealt with his experiences on the Tang-la.<sup>1</sup> From here he returned to the north.

Prshevalskiy's second journey took place in 1876 and 1877, started from Kulja, and proceeded across the Tian-shan to Lop-nor and Altyn-tagh.<sup>2</sup> Marco Polo was the first to tell Europe about the Desert of Lop, and since his time the Desert of Lop had figured on most maps of Central Asia. RICHTHOFEN says that Prshevalskiy's discovery of the Altyn-tagh (Astin-tagh) was the most surprising of all during this journey.<sup>3</sup> The discovery of this range was of the same importance for geography as for the understanding of Central Asian communication. It at once became obvious why the old silk-roads between China and the west passed immediately south of Lop-nor. The Altyn-tagh was found to stretch south-west-wards and to stand like a wall between the highlands and the lower desert uninterruptedly to Keriya and Khotan. SHAW had heard the name Tokos-dewán (Tokus-davan), which Richthofen thought was rather a road with nine passes connecting Tsaidam, Koko-nor and Sining-fu with Khotan. Richthofen could hardly believe in this unexpected stretching of the ranges south of the eastern half of Eastern Turkestan.

Wenn hiernach die für die supponirte Gebirgsmauer angenommene Bezeichnung fallen muss und eine andere Bedeutung erlangt, so sprechen neben der eminenten Unwahrscheinlichkeit noch manche positive Gründe gegen die Existenz der von S. W. nach N. O. gerichteten Gebirgsmauer selbst. Einmal wissen wir aus übereinstimmenden Erkundigungen von Johnson und Shaw, dass der Weg von Kiria aus erst seine frühere Richtung (also wohl ungefähr OzS) weiter innehält, dann aber einen Bogen macht und beinahe direct nördlich geht. Unter den Gründen, welche dies veranlassen können, ist der wahrscheinlichste der, dass ein nördlicherer Gebirgszug nach Westen vorspringt und umgangen werden muss. Ferner erfuhr Shaw, dass man auf dem Weg von Kiria nach Tschertschen zur Rechten in der Ferne bei klarem Wetter schwarze, d. i. schneefreie, Berge sehen könne.

In accordance with this theory, RICHTHOFEN has drawn his maps of *China I*, though independent of Prshevalskiy's discoveries. The Russian explorer on later journeys got opportunities to prove that the information he had got from the natives was correct, and that there indeed existed a great mountain range stretching N.E.—S.W.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide supra*, Vol. III, p. 159 *et seq.*, and Vol. VII, p. 212 *et seq.*, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> The narrative has been translated into English by DELMAR MORGAN, *From Kulja across the Tian-shan to Lop-nor*, London 1879, and in *Petermann's Mitteilungen*, Erg.-Heft, No. 53, Gotha 1878. Cf. also my *Scientific Results*, Vol. II, p. 267 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Bemerkungen zu den Ergebnissen von Oberstlieutnant Prjewalski's Reise nach dem Lop-noor und Altyn-tagh.* — *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft f. Erdk. zu Berlin.* Band V, 1878, p. 121 *et seq.*