

5. SEVERTSOFF.

In his important article »A Journey to the Western portion of the Celestial Range (Thian Shan), or 'Tsun-Lin of the Ancient Chinese, from the Western Limits of the Trans-Ili region to Tash-kend«, N. SEVERTSOFF makes a more serious attempt to fix the boundaries of the system in question.¹

He finds a complete accordance between HSÜAN-CHUANG'S narrative and his own investigations.

Speaking of the location which Hsüan-chuang has given to the *Tsung-ling* mountains Severtsoff concludes:

According to these boundaries of the *Tsun-lin* Mountains, it would appear that I visited the northern portion of this rugged region, between the *Sir-Darya* and a line extending from *Lake Issik-kul* to *Mynbulak*, or, more correctly, the northern boundary of the *Tsun-lin*.

The region between *Chu* and *Talas* belongs according to Severtsoff, to the *northern Tsung-ling*, and, travelling from *Vernoie* towards the SW. he crosses this system. Of the valleys of the *Talas*, *Ferghāna*, *Zerāfshān* and *Badakhshān*, he says: »These are the hollows that indent the *Tsun-lin* mountain-rise.« When he speaks of the mountainous country between the *Chu* and the *Western Himalayas* as being the *Tsung-ling*, he does it »in the recognized wide Chinese sense of that appellation«. Therefore he is in opposition to the view of HUMBOLDT, who has used the name for a too small region.² But Severtsoff himself seems to go too far when he includes nearly the whole *Central Asiatic world* of mountains within the Chinese name:

Arguing from the data we at present possess respecting the Central Asiatic mountain region (*i. e.*, the *Tsun-lin* of the ancient Chinese), the *Bolor*, in the sense of a distinct range, does not exist, and the mountains so called ought to be classed with the Himalayan system.

It is not quite easy to understand the meaning of this passage. First he gives the widest possible geographical extent to the old Chinese name. Then he says that a range *Bolor* does not exist, but so much as exists should be classed with the *Himalaya*. A few pages above he has reckoned the *Tsung-ling* in its wide Chinese sense as including the whole region between the *Chu* and *Western Himalaya*. Whether *Bolor* is a range or not it falls within the boundaries of this region, it is even in the midst of it. So it cannot possibly be classed with the Himalayan system.

Oro-morphologically he expresses his views thus:

Properly, those places on the map should be marked where there are actual ranges, that is, where there are upheaved strata preserving a uniform extension for a great distance; and also those places where the lines of the extension of these uplifted, contorted, and broken strata frequently cross each other, and where, consequently, many conterminous elevations of inconsiderable magnitudes, as regards their horizontal extension, unite in one vast contiguous mass of highlands, reft, however, by the narrow chasms of river valleys. Such an elevation the *Tsun-lin* appears to me to be, as it is formed by the intersection of the *Thian-Shan* system with elevations from the *Himalayas*. It would be more correct to represent it without any ridges, and to shade it more or less darkly, according to its height, with the river valleys, and with lines marking the direction and extent of the various strata.

¹ Translated from the Journal of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, 1867, by ROBT. MICHELL. — Journal Roy. Geogr. Society, Vol. XL, 1870, p. 343 et seq.

² Loc. cit., p. 385, note.