

After a minimum temperature of -8.6° in the night, we left *Bulung-kul* April 27th, and began to descend from 3,405 m. gradually the whole way down to *Kashgar*. Due north we had the beautiful peak of *Karagul*, 6,545 m. high, according to the map of SCHULTZ. We had to pass swampy ground and many pools full of water-plants; to our left were sand-dunes, climbing up the slopes of the hills. At 3 o'clock p. m. we passed *Tar-bashi*, or the »Beginning of the Narrow Passage«, where the *Gez-darya* begins to break through the *Kashgar Range*. Here is a little fort with a garrison of a few Chinese soldiers and some native *karaulchis*. To the west and N. W. is the open plain stretching to *Chaker-agil* Lake. Turning to the right we entered the narrow passage, where the *Gez-darya* had a breadth of about 12 m. and a depth of 0.3 m., the half-clear water forming rapids. The valley is bounded by steep naked rocks, and its floor is full of gravel. The erosion terraces seemed to consist chiefly of gneiss. To the E. S. E. a magnificent peak was seen, obviously belonging to the *Charkum Range* which is an eastern ramification of the *Kashgar Range*. We camped at *Üch-kapa*, a *rabat* (or *robat*) or halting-place consisting of three clay huts of the shape of bee-hives. Dense fog filled the valley in the evening.

Here the minimum temperature was only at -0.1° . April 28th we continued. The valley is narrow and wild, the plateau-land has been succeeded by very accentuated relief. After a ride of 2 km. the road goes down to the right bank of the river which has to be crossed here. I estimated its breadth at 25 m., the average depth at 0.3 and the velocity at about 2 m. per second, which would give a volume of about 15 cub. m. per second. The bed was full of blocks and boulders. At highwater seasons one prefers to use a very narrow and dangerous path along the side of a nearly perpendicular mountain on the right bank. It is like a cornice and has a parapet of poles and osier, but is so steep that it seems enigmatic how a pony may climb it.

A second ford was easy, as the river was broad and shallow; this place is only a few hundred meters from the first passage. A little lower down the third passage is effected by the help of a very picturesque wooden bridge, which has been built across an enormous block in the middle of the river.¹ There are heaps of blocks and boulders everywhere. From the east, thick fog again came up the valley. A second bridge was well built at a narrow place, and a third one was called *Gög-agen-köprü*. A little tributary from the S. E. had comparatively clear water and was crossed on a little wooden bridge. The erosion terraces of pebble and shingle are everywhere developed. Only the nearest part of the valley was visible, on account of the fog.

At *Chong-tash-bulak* there is some bush-vegetation. The road here runs along the base of a vertical terrace which partly had fallen down and looked very dangerous at places. At 4 o'clock p. m. we passed *Gez-bashi-köprü*, a bridge near the little

¹ Vide photograph Vol. I, p. 233 of my personal narrative *Through Asia*.