

As I had travelled the *Pas-rabat-Tengi-tar-Keng-kol* road the previous summer, I decided now to take the road of the *Kandahar Pass*. I was told that the latter in older times had been very much frequented, but that nearly all traffic nowadays preferred the *Pas-rabat* road. However, it proved to be difficult to get a guide in *Tash-kurgan*. Everybody pretended to be busy with the fields and the harvest, but the real reason was that they were afraid of the Chinese. Finally we got a man who, before we reached the highest pass, dropped behind and was lost to sight.

To the highest threshold of the *Särghak Pass* we had, September 16th, a distance of 18 km. The rise is 880 m., as the altitude of the pass is 4,032 m. The rate is 1:20.5. On the eastern side we had 6.2 km. to the village of *Bäldir*, the altitude of which was found to be 3,117 m., or a descent of 915 m. at a rate of 1:6.8 which may be said to be very steep.

We passed between fields, small gardens and a few groves of willows, and crossed the *Taghdumbash-darya*, which now was only one-third of its volume of six weeks ago and had perfectly clear water. At its eastern side we soon entered a narrow gorge with, at its right side, rocks of mica-schist in 77° N. 10° E. There was no water. The ascent is steep, and after a while the broad *Taghdumbash* valley was seen below us with its green vegetation patches and its river. Here we climbed steeply on the left hills of the gorge, a difficult passage that had to be improved with axes and stones. It leads to a first pass which is 3,427 m. high and situated in mica-schist in 62° N. 15° E.

East of this pass the ground becomes more rounded and open, and we ascend to the second pass having an altitude of 3,823 m. The landscape then becomes curious. It is a series of flat, cupola-shaped undulations, consisting of hard detritus dust. Living rock is rare, plants are seen occasionally; it is like a highland steppe. Sometimes the ground is nearly level and one does not see any steep slopes in the vicinity. Dry erosion furrows cross this highland in zigzags. The road goes up and down these furrows, crossing flat ridges or following their crests or sides.

The third pass had an altitude of 3,938 m. In its neighbourhood the mica-schist cropped up in sharp ridges and peaks laying 69° S. 10° W. After a while we reach the fourth and highest pass, 4,032 m. in altitude. The view from here is magnificent. To the south we see the snow-covered highest part of the range we are just crossing, and east of it the valley of *Ütshe* or *Üche*, to the left side of which our range stretches long, irregular ramifications. On these our road proceeds in innumerable zigzags down through small erosion valleys, up through other valleys. Finally an extremely steep slope leads down to a very narrow gorge, the floor of which has a gradual fall. It contained no running water, only a few pools. At the mouth of this valley the same rock as before stood in 41° S. 20° W.