

highest. There is a good deal of snow in the crevasses and higher up the mountains. The road leads southward to one of the large gorges between these ridges. The mountain connecting these two walls seems to be lower than in the neighbouring gorges. Just before the mouth of the gorge after some steep climbing up and down, we crossed the Dagin usun, a swift and low lying river flowing from the pass. On the opposite bank I caught sight of my caravan climbing the gorge as slowly and laboriously as we were. No doubt, they were as surprised as I was at our unexpected meeting. It appeared that my guide, who had undertaken to pilot me to Narat dawan, considered his task accomplished after crossing Naratnung ashevy dawan. He said he did not know of any other Narat.

After arguing and threatening in vain for half-an-hour I was obliged, in the absence of a guide, to take the same road as the caravan. You waste no end of time whenever you try to obtain the slightest information. Owing to the inefficiency of the interpreters you seldom get an answer to your questions and are forced to stand and listen to a great deal of unnecessary chatter, from which you have to draw your own conclusions.

The ground in the gorge is very rough, nothing but large or small stones, most of the latter having sharp edges. The further we went, the more stones there were. In many places there was not room enough for a horse's hoof between them. The ascent is not very abrupt. We went along the slope of the left bank of the river which is fairly steep in some places. Here and there the road is intersected by hollows with snow, but there is a bare patch in most of them that you can ride across. If not, you have to climb higher up the slope. We passed a small tent, in which a Sart from Qulja had been waiting for 40 days for an opportunity of getting his stock of goods over the pass. The only food he had was tea and flour. He warned me and assured me that it was impossible to cross the snowed-up pass.

After riding for about 3 1/2 miles we crossed the river and then the steep part of the pass began. So far the pass had not been too steep to prevent a road for wheeled traffic being made by removing the stones — which would necessitate blasting. It should be possible, too, to make a more or less zigzag road up the steepest part of the pass, along which vehicles would have to be helped by men on foot. It would not be easy, however. The snow increased the difficulty of our climb considerably. We had to dismount and lead our horses which often broke through the crust. The worst bit was a stretch of about 1/4 of a mile. The ascent then became easier and we crossed a couple of small hollows. There was a great deal of snow and it was difficult to get the horses across. At times they sank to their backs. We could never tell how deep the snow was in these patches. It might cover a bottomless cleft. It was 7 o'clock by the time we reached the top of the pass after riding for 12 hours. Realising that the caravan, which I had last seen approaching the steepest place about 6 o'clock, could not possibly get across the pass that day, I decided to spend the night where we were. There was not a blade of grass for the exhausted animals nor a bare patch on which we could lie down. Nothing but stones and rock. There is a lovely view northward from the pass across the valley of the Zanma, the mountains dividing it from the Kunges and the valley of the latter.

By 9 o'clock it was obvious that the caravan would not reach the top that day. Heavy