

it for pasture as far as the Káshghar boundary, said by the Sirikol Governor to be twenty "tash" (about eighty miles) beyond the Fort. The Tághdúngbásh Pámír lies to the north of, and parallel to, the Little Pámír, from which it is separated by a broad chain of hills joining with the Neza Tásh mountains, and forming one unbroken range. The Sirikol valley, after extending south for some distance, bends towards the west, and merges into the Tághdúngbásh Pámír, which appears to be merely a continuation of the valley at a higher elevation. Smith

The climate of Sirikol is severe. Hassan Shah, the present Governor, who has had five years' experience of it, says, that there are only two seasons, summer and winter, the former lasting but three months, the latter nine.

The Sirikol river was of considerable size when we first crossed it, March 29th. The perfect clearness of its water, the steadiness of its flow (equality of volume day and night) and the severity of the cold then, showed it to be at the usual low winter ebb. It is said to be joined, about fifty miles further down, by the "Tong," a stream as large as itself, if not larger. Should this be found to be correct, it is probable that the Yárkand river may yet be regarded as rising in the Kunjút range instead of the Kárákoram, as hitherto believed.

The Tágharma plain lies about three miles to the north-east of the Sirikol valley, and is of the same elevation. It is a fine open crescent-shaped flat, about twelve miles long by seven broad, extending from the south-west to the north-east, and is well watered by a stream which flows through it from the north-eastern end and falls into the Sirikol river. This stream is plentifully fed by numerous springs in the middle of the plain. A few Sirikolis reside and cultivate in it, but the main portion of the inhabitants consists of one hundred Kirghiz families under their Chief Krúmchi Bí, who permanently occupy the plain as a pasture land, for which it is admirably suited from the richness and abundance of its grass.

This plain is separated from the Kizil-Art by a low rounded ridge, formed by projecting spurs from the opposite mountain ranges, the Neza-Tásh to the west and the Tágharma to the east. The ridge forms the watershed between the two plains, the drainage on the Kizil-Art side flowing into the Little Kárákúl lake, said to be about twenty miles distant. The Bardish pass leads from the watershed over the Neza Tásh range into the Áktásh valley. The road over this pass is reported to be good. It emerges nearly opposite the Great Pámír.

According to the accounts given by the Kirghiz, the Kizil-Art plain extends north from the Tágharma to the Alái, from which it is separated by a mountain range. The height of the two former is about the same, and that of the latter (the Alái) somewhat greater, but still considerably less than the elevation of the Pamir, judging from Fedchenko's description. That traveller mentions the preference given by the Khirghiz to the Alái over the Pámír, by reason of lower height. The Kizil-Art is similar in character to the Tágharma plain—being well watered and abounding with grass and fuel. Its length is about one hundred and thirty miles. It is enclosed on the east by the mountain range extending, and sweeping round from the direction of the Kokand "Terek" pass and the Alái, and on the west, by the Neza Tásh. The Little Kárákúl lake lies in the lower, and the Great Kárákúl in the upper part of this plain. The former gives exit to the "Gez" stream, which flows eastward through the Gez pass, under the lofty and massive Múztágh (the Tágharma peak of the maps), into the Káshghar plain, and there joins some of the numerous branches or canals of the Káshghar river. The size of the lake is given as about fifteen miles in circumference. The Great Kárákúl is stated to be about forty miles in circumference. It receives feeders from the Alái dividing range, and gives exit to the Múrgháb, which finds its way westward through the Neza Tásh range, and flows towards Shighnán and Roshán. Four lakes on the Kizil-Art, and in its vicinity, were mentioned as giving rise to streams: the Great and Little Kárákúls already spoken of, the Rang Kúl in the Siríz Pámír, and the Yeshil Kúl in the Alichor. The two latter furnish tributaries to the Múrgháb. Further mention will be made of these Pámirs and their lakes later on in this narrative.

We left Táshkurgán for Wakhán on the 2nd April. Hussun Shah, the Governor, accompanied us part of the way out. He rode a very fine Túrroman horse (the first and only one seen by us) with gold mounted trappings. We remarked him to be almost the best dressed and equipped officer we had met in the Atálik's service. Our first day's journey was

Bolor

The Neza Tash or Tash
is part of the Bolor
range

Tagharna Peak