

River from Kúlúnaldi up to Ak-tágh, utterly unsafe for travellers or merchants unless in large parties and well armed.*

It was in the month of June that the Pámír party returned by the Kugiar route somewhat too late in the season to traverse it with safety, and considerable danger was incurred from the daily increasing floods of the Tiznaf River, which after noon used to come down with such force as frequently to close the road. At this season also the southern slopes of the Yangi-Diwán (Pass) are very difficult to traverse and somewhat dangerous, as the recently dead bodies of numerous baggage animals seen by us on the return journey too surely testified. The floods of the Tiznaf are probably worse in June and July than at any other time of the year, as after that period the snow on the lower mountains has nearly all been melted. The Yárkand River, on the other hand, above Kúlúnaldi, being fed more generously by glacier streams is more difficult later on in the hot weather. We found that although there was a much larger body of water in the Yárkand than in the Tiznaf River, yet in the former the bed was broad and level, and was crossed without difficulty; whereas in the Tiznaf the bottom is narrow and generally composed of large stones and boulders which render its passage very difficult.† The road crossed it nearly 20 times in one march, or about once in every linear mile of its course. A month earlier in the season (May) the river was frozen and was ascended by an advanced party of natives without difficulty.

42. Returning to Ak-tágh, the point of divergence of the two routes, the summer road passes thence over a spur of the Kuen Luen by the Sugét, a tolerably easy pass (17,610 feet), from which the road descends along a winding stream to the Kárákásh river which it strikes a few miles above Sháhidúla.‡

At Sháhidúla the Kárákásh river winds through the Kuen Luen Range.§ The road follows along it for some 20 miles, and occasionally crosses it. In summer its passage is effected by merchants with considerable difficulty. The Kárákásh flows in the direction of Khotan, and between the river and Yárkand lies a formidable spur from the Kuen Luen, which has to be crossed. The traveller, if he be here unfettered by political obligations, has the choice of three roads before him, viz., by the Kilik, the Kilian, and the Sánjú passes. Traders are seldom or never allowed to use the former which is said to be the easiest and

* *Note.*—These robbers, apparently from fear of the Káshghar Amir, have of recent years ceased to infest this road, but it is reported that since the return of the Mission from Yárkand, the Kunjudis have attacked a nomadic tribe called Phakpos, who inhabit numerous valleys on the west bank of the Tiznaf river. The road by which these robbers advance must pass over numerous glaciers, and crosses the Kárákorum range by the Shingshal Pass, a short distance to the west of the Shigar or Muztagh Pass. The road from Shingshal descends the Kum stream and joins the road from the Muztagh Pass at a distance of one and a half marches to the north of the latter. After three short marches more the Yárkand River is reached at Dahn-i-Bazar Darah, three short marches below Kulunaldi (on the same river), a frequently used halting place on the road between Kárákorum Pass and Kugiar. The Shingshal Pass is said to be easier than either the Chhorbut or the Shigar Passes, and is at times passable by laden horses. The Muztagh Pass (which was estimated by Godwin Austen at 18,400 feet, and by the

† Or natives of Baltistan, a mountainous district inhabited by Shiah Musulmans, and lying to the north-west of Ladakh.

Schlagentweits at 19,000 feet) road lies for a great distance over glaciers, and is difficult and dangerous. It is occasionally used by the Baltis,¹ who have a colony in Yárkand, and who traverse this pass when returning thence to their own country.

† On one occasion during the return journey, when I had gone on a couple of days ahead of Colonel Gordon's party so as to have more time for survey, I had, in order to insure security from water, placed my chronometers in my pockets instead of in the mule trunks where they were usually carried. It was the first time that I had done so, and as ill-luck would have it, I twice got parted from my horse in deep water while searching for a ford, and had to swim for my life with my chronometers in my pocket. On the same occasion my horses and baggage animals were cut off from all supplies by the floods, and were for more than 36 hours without tasting food.

‡ *Note.*—At Sháhidúla is a small fort which during the time of the disturbances in Eastern Turkestan (which resulted in the accession of the present King) was occupied by a detachment of the Maharaja's troops from Kashmir. These were subsequently withdrawn and the place is now generally recognized as belonging to the Kashghar ruler. The Kirghiz of Sanju have of late years constantly occupied the Karakash valley up as far as the great bend above Sora, and occasionally ascend some of the valleys to the south, leading up to the Karatagh plain; in many of these valleys there is abundance of grass and wood.

§ Dividing it according to Hayward's nomenclature into Eastern and Western Kuen Luen.

Sanju Pass is
S W of Khotan
Sanju is N of pass