

with the "Ovis Poli" (Ovis Argali of the Russians).* The weather was now intensely cold; one of our party got his fingers frost-bitten from the cold contact of his rifle, and when I stopped for a few seconds on the top of a ridge to get a view of the country, and to record the reading of my aneroid, my hands and feet became entirely numbed.

From Turgat Bela (at an elevation of 11,030 feet above the sea), we rode to the Chadyr Kul Lake, and back to camp the same evening (about 32 miles). Starting early in the morning with the thermometer several degrees below zero, we rode 13 miles to the Pass up a gentle ascent through the broad and open valley, until within a mile of the crest, where the slope though still very easy, is somewhat steeper, there being a rise of about 400 feet in the last mile. On the left of our road was a range of lofty, bold, precipitous peaks, running while near the pass from north-east to south-west, but subsequently in a more westerly direction. The height of these peaks varied from 13,000 to 15,000 feet. On our right were low undulating hills extending away eastward as far as we could see. On reaching the pass (12,760 feet) we did not immediately see the lake, but had to advance for about three miles in a northerly direction, when we came suddenly into full view of the whole lake and the range of mountains beyond, a magnificent panorama. There are two nearly parallel ranges of mountains, the Turgat (sometimes called Kaktaw—in Russian maps "Káshghar Daban") on which we stood, and the Táshrobát to the north, both portions of the Thien Shán range, which westward, like the Kárákorum eastwards, seems to lose its identity and merges into several comparatively unimportant chains of which it is impossible to say which is the main one. The Chadyr Kul lies between these two ridges, and, as far as one can learn from Russian sources, there is no drainage out of it, but several small streams run into it. Their maps include the lake within their boundary, which they place on the crest of the southern or Turgat range, the peaks and passes of which are of about the same average height as of the northern range. The Káshgharees (in Káshghar) claim the lake, and maintain that the Táshrobát range forms the true boundary, but their officials on the spot appeared to take a different view, and maintained that the lake was the boundary. The Ak-sai River, which rises a few miles east of the lake and between the Táshrobát and Kok-tan ranges, flows into East Turkestan, while the Arpa, which flows from a corresponding position near the west end, finds its way into the Syr Darya. This would indicate the lake itself as a good natural boundary, although it must be remembered that the Ak-sai plains to the east, the head waters of the Ak-sai River, which afterwards becomes the Kokshál, are undoubtedly occupied by Kirghiz subject to Russia.

The lake is about fifteen hundred feet below the pass, which would give the former an elevation of 11,300 feet, a result agreeing very nearly with that arrived at by the Russians. From the undulating nature of the low hills to the east of the pass, it was impossible to judge of the direction of the range.

Of course from a single view of the lake and the mountains beyond it, it was impossible to form any accurate idea as to their size, but according to the Russian maps the lake is of oblong shape, about 14 miles in length, and 5 or 6 in breadth at its widest part; its greatest length being from west by south to east by north. From where we stood about three miles north of the pass, the east extremity of the lake bore a little to west of north, while the Táshrobát Pass as pointed out by our guides lay about 17° further to the west. The lake was covered with ice, and the sleet which lay on the surface made it difficult to distinguish the edge of the lake from the nearly level plain by which it is surrounded, and which was covered with a white saline efflorescence. A single horseman near the edge was the only living object visible, a curious contrast to the other side of the pass, where within a few miles of the crest, we had seen a herd of several hundred Cossack ponies grazing at the foot of the precipitous hills before alluded to.

* These extensive grassy slopes, somewhat resembling the English downs, are a very curious feature of the country, and not only attract the Kirghiz as grazing grounds for their cattle, but are equally sought after by the large herds of Guljar, in one of which Dr. Stoliczka counted no less than eighty-five.