

and whose foot merging into a snow bed, is not more than 1,000 feet higher than the Oxus valley.

At the head of the ravine containing this glacier are some snowy peaks, about six miles to the south,* which I estimated to be between 17,000 and 18,000 feet in height; they appeared to be on spurs of the Hindoo Koosh Range. It was most annoying being shut up at the bottom of a deep valley, and unable to get a nearer view of these peaks, but there was no help for it, the ravines entering the main valley from north and south were generally inaccessible, the one on the south being, as I before mentioned, blocked up by an enormous glacier, which was quite impassable, while those on the north are almost vertical chasms which looked as if the mountain had been split up by an earthquake. During our stay at Panjah, I ascended the mountains to the north to a height of about 3,000 feet above the valley only to find that I was on the lower portion of a much higher range behind, which obscured all view further north, while the hills to the south of the Oxus were so high that they intercepted the view of any peaks on the main range of the Hindoo Koosh that might otherwise have been seen beyond; in fact I could see very little more than from the ground below. On the only other fine day that we had during our stay at Panjah I went down the valley for about 12 miles, but saw little more than one or two peaks of the range to north.

Panjah itself is, or rather was, built on five small hillocks, hence perhaps its name,† and I have no doubt in my own mind that the river takes its name from the place, and not the place from the river. These five hillocks are situated near each other on the left bank of the stream, the largest is covered by a fort, the residence of the Mír Fateh Ali Sháh, and most of his followers, the other is of nearly equal size, covered by houses, and surrounded by a strong wall; on two others are small fortified buildings, while on the fifth there are nothing but ruins and graves. These fortified buildings (in one of which resides Alif Beg, ex-ruler of Sarikól) from their near proximity to each other, and commanding situation, form a position of considerable strength, and might hold out against an attacking force for some time if artillery were not brought against them. The Mírs of Wakhán have more than once held out in this stronghold against the forces of the Ruler of Bádákshán to which country they are subject. The whole population of Panjah perhaps does not exceed a hundred and fifty souls.

The district of Wakhan has been described by former travellers. It comprises the valleys containing the two heads of the Panjah branch of the Oxus, and the valley of the Panjah itself, from the junction at Zung down to Ishkashím. The northern branch of the Panjah has its principal source in the Lake Victoria in the Great Pamir, which, as well as the Little Pámir belongs to Wakhán, the Ak-tash River forming the well recognized boundary between Kashgharia and Wakhán. Both of the Pámirs were thickly inhabited by Kirghiz in former years, subject to Wákhán, but they are now unoccupied, the constant feuds

* Their exact distance I was unable to determine, as they could only be seen up the ravine, which has too narrow to permit of a base being measured across it of sufficient length to enable an accurate estimate to be made of the distance of the peaks.

† "Panj" is the Persian for "five." One possible derivation of the word Panjah is given above. Some authorities would derive the word from the five rivers which are supposed to form the head waters of the river on which Kila Panjah stands. There are two objections to this theory:—

1st.—It is contrary to the custom of Turkestan to name a place after a river, and to a hundred cases that I know of where the converse holds good, *i.e.*, a river is named after a place on its banks, I do not know a single instance of a place being named after a river.

2nd.—The word is usually pronounced *Panjah*, which is nearer in sound to the Persian word "Pinjah" or fifty. The true origin of the word I believe to be from the Panjah or *palm* (of the hand) of Hazrat Ali (the son-in-law of Muhammad). In a building on a small hill about 2 miles to the south of Kila Panjah is a stone bearing the impress of a hand. Local tradition says that when this country was in the hands of the Zar-dushtis, or atash-parast (fire worshippers) the people were converted to the religion of Muhammad by a visit (in the spirit) from Hazrat Ali, who left his mark on the stone as thus described, which is an object of religious veneration in the neighbourhood. At Bar Panjah in Shighnan is a similar mark *over* which the Fort "Bar Panjah," "over the Panjah," has been built. Possibly this tradition has something in common with that which attributes the derivation of the word Pámir to "Pa-e-Mír," *i.e.*, the foot of the Mír Hazrat Ali. I would myself be inclined to derive the word from "Pam," the Kirghiz word for roof, and "yer," which is both Turki and Kirghiz, for "earth" corresponding to the Persian word "Zamín." Bam-i-dunya or "roof of the world" is a name by which the Pamir is well known.