

is the summer road to Shighnan \* from the head of the Wakhan valley. This road crosses the Joshingaz, a very high and lofty pass closed by snow throughout the winter and spring, and proceeds down the Shakh Darah (valley) to Kila Rach, the residence of the Hákím of the Shakh Darah District of Shighnan. From Rách a road continues down the stream to Bar Panjah.

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On our own road, two miles beyond Ab-i-Matz, is Boharak, an occasional halting place of caravans, stated by our guide to be the commencement of the Great Pámír. Here, the valley, hitherto half a mile across, widens into a large flat open plain, one and a half miles in width, said to have abounded in former years with the magnificent Pámír sheep (*Ovis Poli*). Of these we saw nothing but bones and skulls. Severe murrain has within the last few years carried off not only nearly the whole of the wild sheep, but also the ibex. Six miles beyond Boharak was our camp at Yol Mazár (road-side temple), two miles short of which is a large stream joining the river on its left bank, and of equal bulk with it. Near the camp a smaller stream entered on the right bank. I ascended this for some distance and found an open grassy valley in which there were some huts in ruins, and some obvious traces of former cultivation; it was doubtless once the residence of Kirghiz. At our camp, which was at an elevation of about 12,000 feet above the sea, there was plenty of fire-wood and grass, this was the highest point in the valley at which good fire-wood was found, although further up and throughout this Pámír there was abundance of "boortsee" and grass. Two inches of snow fell at night, but the morning, though cold, was fine.

We were now fairly in the Great Pámír; the grassy valley, about a mile broad, was bounded by terraces formed by low spurs coming down in gentle slopes from the mountain ranges on both sides. On the 29th April we continued our march along the Pámír to Bilaor Bas. The road was excellent throughout, as in fact it was the whole way, from Panjah to Ak-tásh, although at starting there are numerous steep ascents and descents. This day's march was along the right bank of the river, through a grassy plain, bounded on both sides by low undulating hills. The valley gradually widens, but the flat grassy portion is nowhere much more than a mile in width, the ascent was steady, and the road everywhere first-rate. Shortly before reaching camp we passed on our left the Ab-i-Khargoshi which flows from and through the Khargoshi plain, beyond which, at a day's journey from camp, is the Alichur Pámír, which nominally belongs to Wakhán, but practically to Shighnán.† In it lies a small salt lake "Tuz-kul" from which no water flows, and beyond which the drainage goes to Shighnán. Two days' march from this lake, *i.e.*, three days from our camp, the Alichur stream is said to fall into the Murghábi. The Alichur Pámír is reported to be higher but smaller than the Great Pámír, and to possess roads going in every direction.

On the 30th we continued along the Great Pámír for 20 miles to Mázar Tupa, the plain getting gradually wider and wider as we advanced, until a breadth of six miles is attained. The valley is not so well defined, as that of the Little Pámír, where steep mountains bordered the plain on both sides. Here low spurs from the mountain ranges north and south run into and are hardly to be distinguished from the plain. The mountains on the south are considerably higher than those on the north, the former rise to about 5,000 feet‡ and the latter to about 2,500 feet above the river bed, giving absolute heights of 18,000 and 15,500 feet, respectively.

The next day five miles of very gentle ascent brought us to the west end of Wood's Victoria Lake, which, like its sister in the Little Pámír, was supposed to have two outlets. Of that to the west there could be no doubt; through a channel some 12 paces wide, a little stream 6 inches deep, and with a velocity of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles an hour, emerged from under the ice with which the lake was covered, and flowed steadily westward. The temperature of the water was  $38^{\circ}$ , and

Wood's Lake

\* *Vide* Appendix. Section Routes.

† *i.e.*, according to the statement of the Wakhis who accompanied us.

‡ Elevations of hills were measured with an "Abney's clinometer," which I always used to carry in my pocket. Their positions were fixed by the intersections of compass bearings taken at different points on the line of march; the heights of the latter were determined hypsometrically.