

High plateaus S. of main K'un-lun range. descending from the great main range of the K'un-lun which overlooks the Yurung-kāsh headwaters from the south. A series of lake basins extends along the foot of those spurs at elevations of 15,000 to 16,000 feet; but the streams draining the wide valleys to the north rarely reach them, and are lost in vast detritus fans.⁷⁴ Crossing the debouchures of these valleys we made our way still westwards over the easy divides, separating the lake basins; but progress was made very trying by the inclement weather and by the utter barrenness of the ground which together with the great elevations told heavily on our ponies and donkeys. With the transport nearing exhaustion and the fodder supply running out it was impossible to spare time either for triangulation or visits to the heads of the valleys descending from that portion of the southern K'un-lun range which stretches from the triangulated peak 8/52M (23,309) south-eastwards, as far as circ. long. 80° 30'.

Johnson's route retraced. After six long marches from where we had left the Pölur-Lanak-lā route (C. 468), we reached the east end of a large salt lake, now mostly dry, which a party of the G. T. Survey of Ladāk appears to have sighted some forty-five years before.⁷⁵ Marching thence to the north-west for three more days over very dismal ground, we passed dry salt-encrusted lagoons and struck by September 17th traces of the forgotten route by which Hājī Habibullah had tried to open direct communication with Ladāk and over which Johnson had been taken to Khotan in 1865.⁷⁶ As we followed the track still clearly marked by cairns and other relics, and crossed two easy passes to the north-west, the main range came again into full view and allowed our position accurately to be fixed with the help of two triangulated peaks (4/52M or E 57; 6/52M or E 58) of the G.T. Survey. At last we emerged on September 18th in the valley of an eastern feeder of the Kara-kāsh where some abandoned stone-huts still showed Johnson's camp 'Kárakāsh'.⁷⁷

Ascent to glacier col in search of Yangi-dawān. It only remained to trace Johnson's route to his 'Yangi-diwān Pass' by which he crossed the main K'un-lun range towards Karanghu-tāgh. A line of cairns showed the side valley where the pass would have to be looked for; but towards its head all trace of the old route had become obliterated by advancing masses of ice and snow. Information gathered from some Kirghiz who had joined us lower down in the Kara-kāsh valley, induced me on September 22nd to make a reconnaissance with the surveyor due north up a steep glacier which appeared to offer the nearest approach to the watershed. When after a very trying ascent over much-crevassed ice and *névé* it was gained on a snowy col for which hypsometer and aneroid readings indicated a height of about 19,900 feet, the extensive view opening northward supplied the hoped-for links with our former surveys of 1900 and 1906 from the Khotan side of the main range.⁷⁸ But instead of the 'Yangi-dawān' which was to give access eastwards to a tributary of the Yurung-kāsh (Chomsha-jilga?), we had reached the crest-line of the main range where it overlooks the glacier-fed headwaters of the Panāz river which flows into the Kara-kāsh.

Junction of K'un-lun ranges. The triangulated snowy peak, 3/52 M, 23,071 feet, rising to the east of our position, effectively blocked all view towards the unexplored portion of the range flanking the Yurung-kāsh headwaters. But as a compensation this highest of our survey stations furnished definite proof of the interesting orographic fact that the high peak in question represents not merely the point of junction of the two K'un-lun ranges between which the Yurung-kāsh rises, but that it is also the head of the great northward spur dividing the drainage areas of the Yurung-kāsh and Kara-kāsh rivers.

Frostbite accident. Unfortunately this important gain to our survey work was attended by a very serious accident to myself. The delay at that icy height necessitated by mapping and photographic work, together with incidents arising from a late and hurried descent to escape the risk of being altogether

⁷⁴ See Sheet Nos. 15. A.-C. 2; 10. D. 2; *Desert Cathay*, ii. pp. 459 sqq.

⁷⁵ Compare in the *Map illustrating the routes taken by Mr. Johnson* the lake shown in circ. 80° long. 35° 10' lat., with the one to south of our C. 475 in Sheet No. 10. D. 2; see *Desert Cathay*, ii. pp. 465 sqq.

⁷⁶ Cf. above pp. 7, 13 sq.; *Desert Cathay*, ii. pp. 468 sq. The cairn symbol in the N.E. corner of Sheet No.

10. C. 2 corresponds approximately to 'Camp Yangpá' in Johnson's map.

⁷⁷ See Sheet No. 10. C. 1; cf. Stage 18, in Itinerary attached to Johnson's Report, dated April 22, 1866, to the Superintendent, G.T. Survey.

⁷⁸ See Sheets Nos. 10. C. 1; 9. C. 4. For the ascent to the col and the view gained from it, cf. *Desert Cathay*, ii. pp. 476 sqq., with Panorama XIII.