

have made these very extensive open valleys very attractive ground to nomadic tribes of early times such as the Yüeh-chih, the later Indo-Scythians and the Huns.

But we all suffered a great deal from almost daily downpours of icy rain and sleet, and from the extensive bogs we encountered at the head of the great valleys and even on the broad watershed plateaux towards the Pacific drainage. The natural difficulties were increased very considerably by the helplessness of our Chinese pony-men and what I may politely call their deep-rooted physical aversion from taking risks. Again and again they made organized attempts at desertion which threatened to leave us without transport, but luckily they could be suppressed without frustrating our plans.

By marches aggregating over 400 miles, we managed during August to cross and survey in detail the three northernmost ranges of the Central Nan-shan, all rising to snowy peaks of 18,000 to 19,000 feet, between the longitudes of Su-chou and Kan-chou. In the course of these surveys all rivers descending to the oases as well as the Su-lo-ho were explored to their glacier-fed sources. The magnificent ice-crowned range which divides the headwaters of the Su-lo-ho from the Khara-nor and Koko-nor drainage was surveyed along its northern face, and proved to rise both in height of individual peaks (over 20,000 feet) and of crest-line considerably above the northern ranges.

From the wide mountain-girt basin some 13,000 feet high containing the Su-lo-ho sources (Fig. 77), we made our way over bog-covered uplands to the headwaters of the Ta-t'ung river, where we touched the Pacific drainage. Thence we regained the upper valley of the Kan-chou river and