

all these advantages in our favour the distance of some six miles to the top of the pass cost the hard toil of nearly five hours. As soon as the worst zone of crevasses lay behind us, I pushed ahead without waiting for the Surveyor. The clear atmosphere did not last long, but sufficed to deceive us thoroughly as to the distance and slope. What again and again I took for the crest of the glacier-filled valley proved but a shoulder on that easy but seemingly never-ending slope. I began to understand the story of Kao Hsien-chih's crossing, the dismay and confusion of his Chinese troops when, brought face to face with the precipitous descent on the south side of the pass towards Yasin, they realized to what height they had ascended. As long as the sky kept clear, the high glacier-crowned range which flanks the Darkot Pass from the west, with its pinnacles of spotless white, was a vision never to be forgotten. Its central peak, close on 23,000 feet high, keeps watch over the Chatiboi Glacier on its western face, and was subsequently visible in all its glory also from the Baroghil (Fig. 24).

But the sun could not long exert its full power. White mists settled on the slopes above us, and even the spurs nearest to the glacier showed only in veiled outlines. With the mist there mingled soon a fine spray of snow particles driven down by strong gusts of wind from the pass. At first I felt glad for the coolness they brought; for the reflection of the sun had irritated eyes and skin in spite of goggles and ointment. But soon the effect of this cutting wind made one wish for some shelter or better protection than a wrap round the head could afford. It was only during the following night, when I woke up with a face badly swollen and blistered, that I realized how intense the reflection must have been from the snow of the slopes and from the glittering silvery spray. As we got higher and higher the men began to complain of the 'poisonous air' and the headaches which it caused them. Their loads were light, but the soft snow lower down had sorely tried them.

At last some time after mid-day the rocky knob came in view which rises close to where the Shawitakh Glacier