

successfully pushed across the glacier-covered Hindu-tash Pass, some 17,400 feet above the sea, into the high valley of Pusha.

For nearly half a century the latter has figured in our maps as almost the only local name within the blank of *terra incognita* left between Karanghu-tagh and the middle course of the Kara-kash river. But nothing was known of the position of Pusha, nor of the topography of the valleys and mountains around it which fill the great bend of the Kara-kash river; for in 1862 Schlagintweit, the only European who had approached this difficult region, had turned back from the north foot of the Hindu-tash Dawan, and had not been able to record what observations he may have gathered there before he was murdered at Kashgar.

The advance of a big glacier on the north side has since so effectually barred access over the Hindu-tash Pass that among the Kirghiz of the upper Kara-kash Ram Singh could find only a single man who ten years earlier had visited Pusha. He had grown old and lame, and could do no more than indicate from the watershed the general line he remembered having followed down the steep and much-crevassed glacier, over six miles long. It was an adventurous descent which Ram Singh effected here, and though from his usual taciturnity it was not easy to extract a detailed description, the risks he and his few Kirghiz companions had run were only too evident. In spite of my warnings he had neglected the precaution of roping when crossing the glacier, with the result of more than one narrow escape from hidden crevasses.

Sheltered behind the great icy barriers of the main range, and accessible from the Khotan side only by execrably bad mountain tracks, he had found an Alpine valley singularly rich for these parts in water and grazing-grounds. The abundance of flowers greatly struck the Surveyor, and also the thriving condition of the flocks owned by the Taghliks of Pusha. Lower down he had come upon scattered homesteads and cultivation. When subsequently he crossed the succession of deep-cut side valleys which descend to the right bank of the Kara-kash east of the