

ditions which we were situated I felt would be worse than useless; and though all of us were keen and ready to go on, I gave the order to return. I then read off the large aneroid, and found the hand stood at 19·90. I set the index pin directly opposite to the hand, and we started down hill. At 3 p.m. on the 7th I reached you, it having taken $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours of marching from the "Twin Cones."

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. E. STAIRS, *Lieut. R.E.*

P.S.—The following are the generic names of the plants collected by me. Emin Pasha has kindly furnished them:—

1. Clematis.	14. Sonchus.	27. Asplenium.	} Unknown.
2. Viola.	15. Erica arborea.	28. Aspidium.	
3. Hibiscus.	16. Landolphia.	29. Polypodium.	
4. Impatiens.	17. Heliotropium.	30. Lycopodium.	
5. Tephrosia.	18. Lantana.	31. Selaginella.	
6. Elycina (?).	19. Moschosma.	32. Marchantia.	
7. Rubus.	20. Lissochilus.	33. Parmelia.	
8. Vaccinium.	21. Luzula.	34. Dracæna.	
9. Begonia.	22. Carex.	35. Usnea.	
10. Peucedanum.	23. Anthistiria.	37. Tree-fern.	
11. Gnaphalium.	24. Adiantum.	38. One fern.	
12. Helichrysum.	25. Pellia.	39. One polypodium.	
13. Senecio.	26. Pteris aquilina.		

Mr. Rockhill's attempt to reach Lhasa.

IN our July number (*ante*, p. 439) we gave a brief account of the first stages in the journey of Mr. W. W. Rockhill (formerly Secretary to the American Legation in Peking), who set out from Peking last winter with the hope of reaching Lhasa. The following is a short narrative of his journey, which he has communicated to Mr. H. H. Howorth, M.P., in a letter dated from Chung-king, Ssu-chuan, August 2nd, 1889.

He says:—Imagining, I hope not rashly, that you and the Royal Geographical Society might like to be informed concerning a journey through China, Mongolia, and Eastern Tibet, on which I have been occupied since last winter, I write to give you a short summary of the places through which I have passed. I left Peking in the early part of December, passed through Chil-li, then through Shan-si, and crossing the Yellow River at Tung-kuan, entered Shen-si. Then I went to Hsi-ngan-fu, and thence to Kan-su, which I traversed in its entire length to Sin-ning. I stopped for some time at the lamasery of Kumbun (called in Chinese T'ar-ssu), or rather at the village of Luser, within a few minutes' walk of it. Here I was detained for some time by the great difficulty of getting men willing to go through the Sifan country

around the Koko-nor. The Sifan, whom Prjevalsky has dubbed Tangutans (the Mongol name for them), call themselves Bo-pa (written Bod-pa), the name used by all Tibetans, save those of East Tibet, in speaking of themselves; hence it would be infinitely better to call the Sifan Tibetans, or Northern Tibetans.

Finally I set out with four men, six horses, and six camels, went round the north side of the Koko-nor, and then south-west to Dulan-kuo (not Dulan-kit, which is impossible Mongol, Dulan-kuo meaning "hot place"), the residence of the Ching-hai-wang. I did not follow the same route as Prjevalsky. Leaving Dulan-kuo, I crossed the Tsaidam (the Chinese call it Wu-Tsaidam, or the Five Tsaidam, from its five principal divisions) to Barong Tsaidam (i. e. South Tsaidam). Thence I went to Shang, east of Barong, a large piece of country, which is governed by a lama from Trashil'unpo, it having been presented to the Talé lama by the prince of Tsaidam as a gift. The river which passes at Shang (erroneously put down on our maps as Bayan-gol), called the Yohuré-gol, is the principal river of the Tsaidam. I ascended its course to its two sources, south of the Kuen-lun range (why Kuen-lun?), in the lakes called Tosu-nor and Alang-nor (the latter lake is frequently called Areki-nor, Alang being a rather obscene word). During this trip I crossed the Kuen-lun range by two very high passes, both of them difficult: the Arumyè-Kor, near the Tosu-nor (the aneroid read on the top of pass 16·75 and 16·65), and the Nomoran-ula, near the Alang-nor (aneroid 16·95). This section of country has never been explored before.

After exploring this country, I went back over the Nomoran-ula to Barong Tsaidam to see the Dsassak. My intention was to take the high road to Lh'asa, and I hoped by pushing on very rapidly (in the style of Fred Burnaby) to get to the Tibetan capital. The road traverses an entirely uninhabited country till one reaches Nag-ch'u-ká, twelve days from Lh'asa. At Barong Dsassak, the camp of the Dsassak, I heard that the Russian expedition to Tibet had reached Lh'asa. I was assured that they had reached their destination by a number of persons, including the Dsassak, so I decided to try and get through East Tibet by way of Ch'amdo, Bat'ang, and Lit'ang. I exchanged my camels for ponies, laid in a supply of tsamba and butter, and was so fortunate as to get a good guide to take me as far as Jyè-Kemdo, south of the Dré-ch'u. For thirteen days we travelled south over a very high country, only traversed here and there by low ranges of hills. We suffered a great deal from the cold and the rarefied air. The horses also fell off rapidly, and by the time we reached the south side of this desert, out of my seventeen horses about five only were serviceable. We crossed the Kuen-lun range by the Hato Pass, a better but stonier pass than the Nomoran (Hato means "stony," Nomoran "easy"), and the Yellow River (Ma-ch'u) at its sources, a couple of miles west of the Ts'aka-nor.

Here I may note that there is no lake called Oring-nor east of the Ts'aka-nor, but one called Tsaga-nor. Ts'aka-nor means "salt lake," but I do not know what Tsaga means. After crossing the Ma-ch'u we crossed the big marsh called Karmat'ang. I mention this place only to note that we all, animals included, suffered more from the rarefied atmosphere while crossing this plain than we did on mountains much higher. I cannot explain this, but it was undoubtedly the case. My men were in great fear while around the sources of the Yellow River and Karmat'ang, as this part of the country is very frequently traversed by the Golok, with whom Prjevalsky had a serious fight when trying in 1884 to travel by the same route. We fortunately got through safely to Nam-ts'o, as the northernmost district of K'ams or Eastern Tibet is called. The Diba, a mighty fighting-man, and very wealthy for these parts, was very kind to me. He also assured me that the Russians had reached Lh'asa about February of this year. After two days spent with him, and long talks over the subject, I persuaded him to give me yaks and a guide as far as Jyé-kundo (two days south of the Dré-ch'u). The promise of a revolver if I reached this place helped on matters very materially.

Jyé-kundo figures in the survey of the Pundit A—K as Kégido, why I cannot imagine, as such a name is unknown. It is called Jyé-kundo or Jyé-kor. Here I must remark that while the Pundit's survey is extremely accurate, he has in nearly every instance got the names of places, rivers, and mountains wrong. Thus he writes Kégido for Jyé-kundo, Kanzégo for Karozé, Jokchen for Zoch'en, Dango for Chango, &c., &c.

We followed a narrow mountain trail over a number of snow-covered peaks (we were in the latter part of May) for four days, when we came to the banks of the Dré-ch'u. Here we nearly got stopped by the natives, but fortunately by a forced march we reached a place near Zonyik-gomba and crossed the river, which was very swift and about 50 to 60 yards broad, swimming our horses and yaks, and crossing ourselves in small skin boats like coracles. In these four days we lost four horses, which we had to abandon in the snow. Two days more brought us to Jyé-kundo, the first Tibetan town we had seen. There are several small villages north of it, all the way from near where the Déba of Nam-ts'o lives, but they are of little importance; the rich people all live in tents.

At Jyé-kundo my troubles with the lamas commenced; there is a large lamasery here of about 2000 lamas, and the *pönbo* of Jyé-kundo is a lama. He forbade the people buying anything of me, or selling me anything, serving me as guides, or hiring me yaks. This put me in a most difficult position. The road branches here, one road going to Ch'amdo, another to Tachienlu. The first place is about 15 days distant, the latter 30 days. If I could get to Ch'amdo I should feel safe, as I knew the two Ch'amdo *kanpo*, who had brought the tribute to Peking some four years ago, and who had asked me, should I ever

travel in Tibet, to come to their town; but it proved utterly impossible to get a guide. The *pönbo* had left Jyé-kundo to go to Tendo, some four days north, to consult with other chiefs about what he should do with me. I felt it was not safe to await his return, so leaving all my luggage behind I started off for Tachienlu with two Chinese and a Horba Tibetan, who did not feel bound, being a Kanzé man, to obey the *pönbo's* orders. Thirteen days' travel south-east, during which time we once more crossed the Dré-ch'u and the Za-ch'u, brought us to Kanze, another large Tibetan town with a very large lamasery. On the road we camped away from all villages, lamaserics, &c., only trusting ourselves with the *Drukpa*, or black-tent people, who were always extremely kind. The road we followed is very much travelled by caravans, mostly of tea-merchants. Nearly half the tea for Lh'asa, Trashil'unpo, Ch'amdo, Lari, &c., passes by this route, as, though longer than the road by Lit-ang, Ba-t'ang, &c., it is easier travelling. At Kanze the lamas were even worse than at Jyé-kundo, and wanted to turn me out of town at once, but I managed to rest my ponies and men there for three days, when I left for Dawo, as the Chinese call Jésemji, six days south-east. At Chango (not Dango), we had some trouble, but got off safely, and from there we followed the Nya-ch'u down to Dawo. The Nya-ch'u here bends south and the Za-ch'u empties into it some two days south. This place is called on the map Nichong gomba; the Dawo lamasery is called, however, Nitsung or Nintsung gomba, and its lamas are deemed a most riotous and dangerous set. In fact, the lamas of the three great lamaserics of these parts, viz. Zoch'en, Ch'ango and Dawo, are more soldiers than monks, being all well armed and well mounted. From Dawo we went to T'ai-ling (Gata in Tibetan), and then crossing a pass at the Hai-tzu-ahan, a splendid snow-clad peak at the head of a lovely valley, we descended the valley of the Che-ch'u to Tachienlu, which we reached in five days from Dawo, having come from Jyé-kundo in the remarkably short space of 23 days. I waited at Tachienlu 15 days for my luggage to turn up, but as nothing came I left for Ya-chau, whence I came down on a small bamboo raft to Kia-ting-fu, from which place a boat brought me here.

I made a survey of all the routes from Sining to Tachienlu with prismatic compass and aneroid, except from Kanze to Dawo, but the pundit's survey is very exact here, and it is only the names which require altering. During the journey from the Tsaidam to Jyé-kundo we had to endure a great many hardships, but they were much more endurable than the continual worry and apprehension of being turned back which we experienced between the latter place and Tachienlu, thanks to the unfriendliness of the lamas. Had I been dressed in European costume and not spoken Chinese and Tibetan, I believe I should not have reached further than Nam-ts'o, but I always wore Tibetan dress, and lived as the people did, on tsamba and tea. In fact, during

the whole journey I never used any European articles of dress or food. The work of surveying gave me great trouble and fatigue. I made my sketch on an approximate scale of four miles to the inch, and hope it may prove of service. Wherever I could I left the route followed by pundit A—K, so as to break new ground.

The Mongols of the Tsaidam are very imperfectly depicted by Prjevalsky, and they proved most interesting. The Dsassak of Barong Tsaidam and the Déba of Nan-ts'o spoke to me a great deal about the Russian traveller. The latter told me that when he reached the Dré-ch'u he would not cross in the skin boats, but wanted to make wooden rafts, so that he could get his camels across. It was a great mistake bringing these beasts to this country, as they are useless over the stony, uneven ground. Seeing he could not make rafts, he turned back, a singularly unenergetic step on the part of so experienced a traveller. When Szeohenyi in 1880 tried to take this route from Sin-ning to Tachienlu, he was assured by the Chinese authorities that no route existed, and so had to give it up. Had I tried it from Tachienlu I should not have been able to travel along it, but I reached the country from the desert side. No one ever travels between Sin-ning and Tachienlu this way, save a few petty officials and a few Kamba traders going to Tankar. For administrative purposes all the Kamba from Jyé-kundo north are under the rule of the Chinese Amban at Sin-ning, those south of that point under the governor-general of Ssu-ch'uan. The Chinese of Kan-su call these people Hung-mao-tzu ("Redcaps"), the Ssu-ch'uanese *Man-tzu*.

Polyandry prevails among those leading a sedentary life, but not among the Drukpa; the explanation is that the soil capable of culture being very limited, the brothers in a family do not want to divide it, so they take one wife and live together, two or three wives or a wife for each being an impossibility while living together. One brother goes on trading expeditions, another looks after the live-stock, while the wife is general superintendent and councillor, making all purchases and sales for the family. The people living in tents, not cultivating the soil, have no reason to practise polyandry. Among the Tsaidam Mongols polyandry exists, but I am inclined to think that it is rather promiscuity than a real institution. I must now bring to a close my narrative. Should the Royal Geographical Society like it I will prepare a paper on the subject of my journey, and send the route sketch and my observations to enable the Society to work out a map. This, I believe, would prove of value and correct many errors on the existing maps.
