

Place Names as an Ecotourism Resource for the Alai Valley of the Kyrgyz Pamir

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Abstract

This study examines the place names shown on the 1:200,000 topographic map of the Lenin Peak area, located in southern Kyrgyzstan. A total of 125 place names were researched and divided into five distinct categories: names related to physical characteristics such as topography (77), names related to flora and fauna (23), names related to colour (17), names after people (13), and names with other meanings (44). The study argues that place names can be an important ecotourism resource for the area in question. Furthermore, this study includes nine place names that are not shown on the map but are regarded as potentially important for tourists. Developing ecotours using the place names may lead to an enhanced experience for tourists visiting the area.

Key words : The Kyrgyz Republic, Pamir-Alai Mountains, place name, ecotourism development, ecotourism resource, tourists' satisfaction

I. Introduction

Research on place names¹⁾, known in the field as toponymy, has been conducted from various perspectives worldwide (e.g., Kagami, 1965; Russell and Cohn, 2012). Place names or toponyms often have meanings derived from the surrounding landscape (fauna, flora, geology, or landforms), history, archaeology, political movement, as well as folk legends (e.g., Bunkse, 1978; Gelling, 1984; Harry, 2010; Russell and Cohn, 2012). Many of the place-names in the Kyrgyz Republic (hereafter referred to as Kyrgyzstan) also have such meanings, which could potentially be used as an ecotourism resource. However, tour guides have not yet made a practice of interpreting the place names that are expressed in the local languages,

save for a few cases, e.g., *Tulpar-Köl Lake* (wind-ed horse lake) near the *Lenin Peak* Base Camp (place names in *Italic* denote those shown on the studied map). This is partly because local guides are generally not trained to interpret such place names to tourists, and partly because an up-to-date place-name list in English is not currently available.

This study will first identify and list the meanings of the place names in the Alai area of southern Kyrgyzstan (Fig. 1), with an eye for the potential benefits for ecotourism in the area. Next, the study will give examples of cases where use of the place names shows potential as an ecotourism resource.

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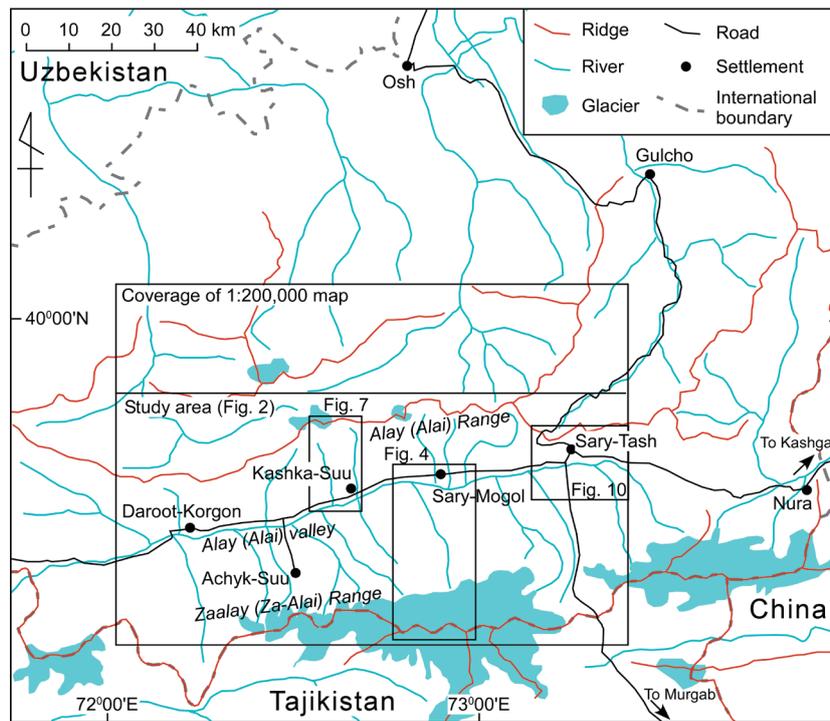


Fig. 1. Study area

II. Study area and methods

1. Study area

The study area is composed of the *Alay (Alai)*²⁾ *Valley*, which is sandwiched between the *Alay (Alai) Range* to the north and the *Zaalay (Za-Alai) Range* to the south (Fig. 1). The *Alay (Alai)* and *Zaalay (Za-Alai) ranges* are collectively called the Pamir-Alai Mountains. While some European atlases and maps have shown the range as the ‘Trans Alai Range’ (e.g., 1:500,000 ‘The Pamirs’), it is rarely referred to as such by Kyrgyz nations. Some local people also call the *Zaalay Range* as Chong-Alai Range (big Alai Range).

Administratively, the study area belongs to Osh *Oblast* (province or region) and is divided into two *Rayon* (districts): *Alai Rayon* (the eastern half) and *Chong-Alai Rayon* (the western half). Furthermore, the two *Rayon* are subdivided into six *A.A.*³⁾ (*Aiyl Aimak*, i.e., sub-district, local municipality composed of one or more settlements), among which only *Kashka-Suu*, *Sary-Mogol*, *Taldy-Suu* and *Sary-Tash A.A.* are geographically important in the context of tourism development.

In 2005, the total number of households in the six *A.A.* was 7,836 with the total population of 39,199 (according to unpublished data obtained from the local administrative offices).

This area is geographically situated in the remotest area of Kyrgyzstan, where economic development lags far behind the rest of the country (Watanabe et al., 2009; Gaunavinaka, 2010). The primary industry is animal husbandry. Transhumance of sheep, goats, horses and yaks is an established tradition in the area, while the tourism industry is extremely limited.

Anarbaev and Watanabe (2008) and Watanabe et al. (2009) have described the current state of tourism in the area, establishing that there exists the potential for ecotourism development based on an abundance of natural and cultural resources. The largest destination for tourists in the area is the *Lenin Peak Base Camp (Lenin Base Camp)*. Approximately 1,000 climbers and trekkers visit the Base Camp every year. The majority of them spend most of their time at the Base Camp (3,600 m a.s.l.) and Camp 1 (4,200 m a.s.l.).

Sary-Tash is regarded as a connecting point between Osh and Kashgar, in the Chinese Pamir, or Murgab, in the Tajik Pamir. No hotels are available except for a limited number of guesthouses ('homestays') in *Sary-Tash*.

2. Methods

The place names in the study area were taken from the 1:200,000 topographic map ('*Lenin Peak*'), which was published in English by the Kyrgyz State Service of Geodesy and Cartography in 2008⁴. This map is sold in a map shop and a scattering of souvenir shops in Bishkek. In addition, there are a limited number of topographic maps covering the area: the Soviet Military 1:100,000 topographic map 'Kashka-Suu' (J-43-14), the Soviet Military 1:50,000 topographic map J-43-14-G (these are not available at local market), and the 1:600,000 'Batken and Osh Oblasts' map (which is available locally). The Swiss-made 1:100,000 'Lenin Peak Climbing Map', a highly precise contour map available online (Hauser, 2011), covers the southeastern part of the study area. These maps were also consulted in this study.

A total of 125 place names were read for study, all located in the *Alay* (Alai) *Valley* of the 1:200,000 topographic map excluding the northern part of the map (Fig. 1). The place names in the study area are derived mostly from the Kyrgyz language, with some origins from Russian and Tajik Pamiri. The authors inquired as to the meanings of the place names with a number of local residents and tour guides. Four of the authors (TW, MA, YL and TS) actually participated in the existing tours led by local guides, during which we interviewed the local guides about the interpretation of place names. In addition, the authors found that some place names that are not shown on the 1:200,000 topographic map would be helpful during ecotours in the area. Additional place names that are not shown on the map, therefore, were also examined in the field, especially the

place names that can be used for interpretation to tourists.

In general, the classification of place names has been inconsistent in previous toponymic studies conducted elsewhere in the world; thus, there is an absence of effective, consistent, and standardized typology for toponym specifics (Tent and Blair, 2011). Gammeltoft (2005), for example, classified place names into three groups: relationship, quality, and usage, while Rennick (2005) identified eight groups. For the purposes of this study, place names on the 1:200,000 map have been divided into five groups: (1) names related to physical characteristics such as topography; (2) names related to fauna and flora; (3) names related to colour; (4) place named after people, and (5) names with other meanings.

III. Results

1. Classification of the place names on the topographic map

Of the 125 place names on the map, 77 names are related to physical characteristics such as topography, 23 are related to fauna and flora, 17 are related to colour, 13 places are named after people, and 44 names have other meanings. Forty-nine place names have combined meanings: five with both physical characteristics and fauna/flora, 12 with both physical characteristics and colour, three both with fauna/flora and colour, two with both physical characteristics and personal name, and 27 other combinations. The results are shown in Table 1, and the distribution of the examined place names is shown in Fig. 2. Neither the authors nor the local inhabitants consulted were able to identify the meaning of *Jipak-Suu* (Table 1; No. 39). As shown in Table 1, some of the names are likely to be misspelled on the map if they are not the case after transformation.

2. Place names related to physical characteristics

As shown in Table 1, the majority of the place

names in the study area are related to physical characteristics such as topography (77 out of 125 names; 61.6%). Among them, the names related to rivers and water rank at the top, followed by mountains, passes and tracts, suggesting their importance for the daily-life of the local people.

The study area receives such little precipitation that the local people have to rely heavily on irrigation for agriculture and winter-hay production. A river is one of the most important elements closely related to the daily-life of the local people. A river is locally called *darya*, *suu*

Table 1. Place names in the Alai valley, Kyrgyzstan

No.	Local name shown on 1:200,000 topographic map	Meaning	Category					
			Physical characteristics	Fauna & flora	Colour	Personal	Others	Unkown
1	<i>Achyk-Suu</i>	Open-river/water	○					
2	<i>Achyk-Tash</i>	Open-stone	○					
3	<i>Agachart Pass</i>	Tree pass		○				
4	<i>Ak-Suur Pass</i>	White-marmot pass		○	○			
5	<i>Alay (Alai) Valley/Range</i>	Stormy place/beautiful place valley/range < <i>Alay</i> should be <i>Alai</i> >	○					
6	<i>Altyn Dara</i>	Gold drainage	○					
7	<i>Archa-Bulak</i>	Juniper-spring	○	○				
8	<i>Archa-Davan Pass</i>	Juniper-region pass		○				
9	<i>Arkar Peak</i>	Female Marco Polo Sheep (argari) peak		○				
10	<i>Ashuu-Küngöy Pass</i>	Sunny-side pass	○					
11	<i>Ashyk-Suu</i>	Overflow-River. <i>Ashyk</i> is used when water is overflowing from a river bank. Also, be-loved river.	○					
12	<i>At-Jayloo Mountain/Glacier</i>	Horse-summer pasture Mountain/Glacier < <i>Jayloo</i> should be <i>Jailoo</i> >		○				
13	<i>At-Jolu Pass</i>	Horse-road pass		○				
14	<i>Balyk-Jungan</i>	Fish-washed-place < <i>Jungan</i> should be <i>Jungan</i> >		○				
15	<i>Begmat Mountain</i>	Personal name (Mr. Begmat Mountain)				○		
16	<i>Berk-Suu Pass</i>	Head-of-river pass < <i>Berk</i> should be <i>Börk</i> >	○					
17	<i>Bezymyanny Glacier</i>	Nameless glacier in Russian language					○	
18	<i>Bortumshuk</i>	Sharp rock on mountain ridge	○					
19	<i>Bulak-Suu, Bulak Mountain</i>	Spring-water, mountain with spring	○					
20	<i>Chak</i>	Personal name after local governer's name				○		
21	<i>Chetki-Aryk</i>	Last-/outside-small river channel	○				○	
22	<i>Chevirtke Pass</i>	Grasshopper pass < <i>Chevirtke</i> should be <i>Chegirtke</i> >		○				
23	<i>Chong Kashka-Suu</i>	Big clean-water/river	○				○	
24	<i>Chukury</i>	Hollows. <i>Chukur</i> is hole. <i>Chykury</i> is plural in Russian.	○					
25	<i>Dam-Jayloo River</i>	Resting-/moist-summer pasture river < <i>Jayloo</i> should be <i>Jailoo</i> >	○					
26	<i>Daroot-Korgon</i>	Daroot-fortress					○	
27	<i>Djyl'ma</i>	Wide/flat/smooth < <i>Djylma</i> should be <i>Djailma</i> >	○					
28	<i>Estoniya Peak</i>	Estonia's peak (after country's name)					○	
29	<i>Gaz Pass</i>	Duck pass < <i>Gaz</i> should be <i>Kaz</i> >	○					
30	<i>Gudur Tract</i>	Bumpy area < <i>Gudur</i> should be <i>Güdüür</i> >	○					
31	<i>Jamman-Jar</i>	Bad-/dangerous-gully < <i>Jamman</i> should be <i>Jaman</i> >	○				○	
32	<i>Jamman-Kyrchyn</i>	Bad-young-tree/bushes < <i>Jamman</i> should be <i>Jaman</i> >		○			○	
33	<i>Janay-Dartak</i>	Clumsy-/healthy-Mr. Janay (Personal name) < <i>Dartak</i> should be <i>Dardak</i> >				○	○	
34	<i>Jangy-Korgon</i>	New-fortress					○	
35	<i>Jany-Jer Pass</i>	New-land pass	○				○	
36	<i>Jar-Bashy</i>	Beginning of gully	○					
37	<i>Jash-Tilek</i>	Young-wish					○	

(to be continued)

No.	Local name shown on 1:200,000 topographic map	Meaning	Category					
			Physical characteristics	Fauna & flora	Colour	Personal	Others	Unkown
38	<i>Jetin-Chukur Tract</i>	Seven-hollows tract if <i>Jetin</i> is <i>Jeti</i> . Or single hollow if <i>Jetin</i> is <i>Jetim</i> .	○				○	
39	<i>Jipak-Suu</i>	<i>Jipak</i> -River (There is no meaning in Kyrgyz)						○
40	<i>Jiptik Pass</i>	Difficult pass					○	
41	<i>Jolchu-Too Mountain</i>	Traveller's mountain	○				○	
42	<i>Kabyk</i>	Ravine	○					
43	<i>Kalmak-Ashuu Pass/Mountain</i>	<i>Kalmak</i> -pass/mountain (<i>Kalmak</i> is a tribe's name)					○	
44	<i>Kaman-Suu/Glacier</i>	River/glacier of boar	○	○				
45	<i>Kapa-Tör</i>	Big-/plain-highland < <i>Kapa</i> should be <i>Kara</i> >	○				○	
46	<i>Kara-Suu/Glacier</i>	Big-/main-river/glacier	○				○	
47	<i>Kara-Kabak</i>	Big-ravine	○				○	
48	<i>Kara-Kindik</i>	Big-navel (In the middle of mountain there is something looks like a cave. It can be a navel in the scale of a body)	○				○	
49	<i>Kara-Otök Pass</i>	Pass suitable as winter place. < <i>Otök</i> should be <i>Ötök</i> >					○	
50	<i>Kara-Shyabak</i>	<i>Nigra-teresken</i> . < <i>Shyabak</i> should be <i>Shybak</i> >		○	○			
51	<i>Kara-Töbö Mountains</i>	Big-summit-top (Local people also call <i>Kara-Döbö</i> , which means big-hill)	○				○	
52	<i>Kashka-Suu</i>	Clean-water/river	○				○	
53	<i>Katta-Aryk</i>	Big-channel	○				○	
54	<i>Katta-Beshik</i>	Big-cradle	○				○	
55	<i>Katta-Boz</i>	Big-/grey-range	○		○		○	
56	<i>Katyk-Art Pass</i>	Difficult pass < <i>Katyk</i> should be <i>Katyn</i> >	○				○	
57	<i>Kauk Pass</i>	Shell/hull pass < <i>Kauk</i> should be <i>Kabyk</i> >		○				
58	<i>Kichi-Bel Pass</i>	Small-pass pass	○				○	
59	<i>Kichi Kashka-Suu</i>	Small clean-river/water	○				○	
60	<i>Kindik Pass</i>	Navel-pass	○					
61	<i>Kochkorchu</i>	Ram breeder		○			○	
62	<i>Kök Döbö</i>	Green/blue hill	○		○			
63	<i>Kök-Bulak</i>	Green-spring, arround of spring is always green grass	○		○			
64	<i>Kök-Kiyik</i>	Blue-mountain sheep		○	○			
65	<i>Kök-Suu</i>	Blue-river	○		○			
66	<i>Kondu Mountain</i>	Settled mountains	○					
67	<i>Kongur Pass/Suu</i>	Nice-/pleasant-pass/river	○					
68	<i>Kongur-Töbö Mountain</i>	Nice-/pleasant-hill mountain	○					
69	<i>Korjenevskiy Peak/Glacier</i>	Personal name (Mr. Korjeneveskiy Peak/Glacier)					○	
70	<i>Korumdu</i>	Fenced, filled by stone	○					
71	<i>Korumdu-Chukur Tract</i>	Rocky hollow tract	○					
72	<i>Kosh-Köl Lake</i>	Twin lakes	○					
73	<i>Kosh-Korgon</i>	Twin fortress					○	
74	<i>Krasin Peak</i>	Personal name (Mr. Krasin, L.B. Peak)					○	
75	<i>Kukazyk Peak</i>	Dry poll < <i>Kukazyk</i> should be <i>Kuu-Kazyk</i> >	○					
76	<i>Kulcha</i>	Male mountain sheep < <i>Kulcha</i> should be <i>Kuldja</i> >		○				
77	<i>Küngöy-Ötök</i>	Sunshine holow, suitable place for winter camp with livestock	○	○				
78	<i>Kurgak</i>	Dry					○	
79	<i>Kuruk-Say</i>	Dry-/empty-river	○				○	
80	<i>Kuugandy Pass</i>	Duitable for winter pass					○	
81	<i>Kyzyl Küngöy</i>	Interesting sunny side	○				○	
82	<i>Kyzyl-Art Pass</i>	Red-pass pass	○		○			
83	<i>Kyzyl-Agyn</i>	Red-stream	○		○			
84	<i>Kyzyl-Daryya</i>	Red-river	○		○			
85	<i>Kyzyl-Eshme</i>	Red-pattern of rocks	○		○			
86	<i>Kyzyl-Say</i>	Red-river	○		○			
87	<i>Kyzyl-Suu</i>	Red-river	○		○			
88	<i>Kyzyl-Turuk</i>	Red-settlement			○		○	

(to be continued)

No.	Local name shown on 1:200,000 topographic map	Meaning	Category					
			Physical characteristics	Fauna & flora	Colour	Personal	Others	Unkown
89	<i>Kyzyl-Tuu</i>	Red-flag			○		○	
90	<i>Kyzyl-Ungküür</i>	Red-cave < <i>Ungküür</i> should be <i>Üngküür</i> >	○		○			
91	<i>Ledianoy Mtn. Range</i>	Icy mountain range	○					
92	<i>Lenin Peak / Glacier</i>	Personal name (after Lenin)				○		
93	<i>Makash-Döbö</i>	Personal name (Makash hill)	○			○		
94	<i>Ming-Jar</i>	1000 gullies	○					
95	<i>Ming-Teke</i>	1000 male (ibex)		○				
96	<i>Nichke-Suu</i>	Narrow-/sallow-rivier	○					
97	<i>Orto-Aryk River</i>	Middle-channel river	○					
98	<i>Orto-Chukur Track</i>	Middle-hole track	○					
99	<i>Pogranichikov</i>	Border guards/patrols					○	
100	<i>Sary-Mogol</i>	Name of Kyrgyz tribe					○	
101	<i>Sary-Tash</i>	Yellow-stone	○		○			
102	<i>Shart Pass</i>	Quick pass (you have to pass only when you need to be quick)					○	
103	<i>Shiman</i>	Personal name (Shiman)	○			○		
104	<i>Shiman-Bel Pass</i>	Personal name (Shiman's pass)	○			○		
105	<i>Skobelev Peak</i>	Personal name (Mr. Skobelev Peak)				○		
106	<i>Sovetskaya Latvija Peak</i>	Name after country (Soviet Latvia Peak)					○	
107	<i>Sverdlov Peak</i>	Personal name (Mr. Sverdlov Peak)				○		
108	<i>Syngar-Jar</i>	Broken-/half-gully	○					
109	<i>Taka River</i>	Horse-shoe river		○				
110	<i>Taldy-Suu</i>	Willow-river	○	○				
111	<i>Taldyk</i>	Place with willow		○				
112	<i>Tarasha Peak</i>	Difficult/strong peak					○	
113	<i>Tarasha River</i>	Difficult/strong river					○	
114	<i>Tash-Küngöy</i>	Sunny-side stone	○					
115	<i>Tegizbay Pass</i>	Tribe's name				○		
116	<i>Teke-Saldy Pass</i>	Ibex-breeding pass		○				
117	<i>Tsuryupa Peak</i>	Personal name (Mr. Tsuryupa Peak)				○		
118	<i>Tulpar-Köl Lake</i>	Winged, destrier horse-lake	○	○				
119	<i>Tuyuk-Suu</i>	Closed-/locked-water/river	○					
120	<i>Tuz Pass</i>	Salt pass < <i>Tuz</i> should be <i>Tüz</i> =straight pass>	○					
121	<i>Tüz-Ashuu Pass</i>	Straight-pass	○					
122	<i>Uluu-Bel Pass</i>	Great-hill pass	○				○	
123	<i>Uu-Tash Mountain</i>	Poison-stone mountain	○				○	
124	<i>Ylay-Suu</i>	Turbid-water	○					
125	<i>Zaalay Range</i>	After (trans) Alay (stormy, beautiful) Range. Locally also called Chong-Alai (big Alai) Range. (<i>Zaalay</i> should be <i>Za-Alai</i> >	○					
		Total	77	23	17	13	44	1

(originally, 'water') or *agyn*. *Say* (*sai*) is used for a place with signs of the occasional occurrence of a dry river. There are 25 (20.0% of the total) place names meaning 'river', 'spring' and 'water' (e.g., *Achyk-Suu*: open-river/water, *Altyn Dara*: gold drainage/river, *Bulak-Suu*: spring-river, and *Kashka-Suu*: clean river/water).

Another characteristic of the place names in the study area is a strong relationship with hum-

mocky moraines (Fig. 3), which often correspond to the place name of *Chukur*. The place name of *Chukur* is recognized in northern Tajikistan as well. Hummocky moraines are widely distributed at the foot of the north-facing slopes of the *Zaalay* (*Za-Alai*) Range. Local people are well aware of the topographic characteristics because the surface of the hummocky moraines is suitable for livestock grazing, the largest local industry.

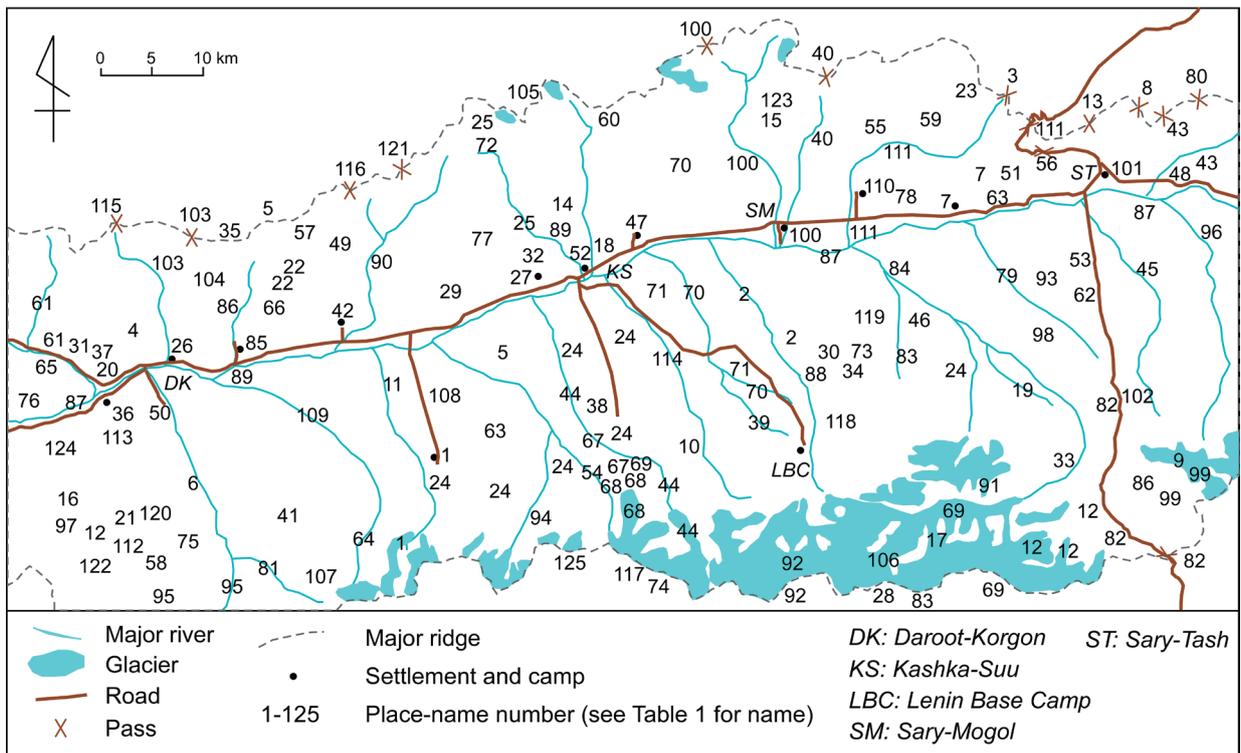


Fig. 2. A map showing the place names in the study area
Numbers contained in this figure correspond to those found in Table 1.



Fig. 3. The *Lenin Glacier's* hummocky moraine from a distance
The highest peak is *Lenin Peak* (Photo: 24 July 2009, TW).

The hummocky moraines are believed to provide 'strong (good) grass' to their livestock. The relative height from the bottom to the top of the moraines ranges from 10 to 100 m.

The place name of *chukur* is usually used for a large area. The individual small-scale hummocky moraine areas have localized names: *Achyk-Tash Tract* (open-stone tract), *Gudur* (should be *Güdü*) *Tract* (bumpy tract), *Jetin-Chukur* (should

be either *Jeti-Chukur* or *Jetim-Chukur*) *Tract* (seven-hole/cavity tract or single-hollow tract), *Korumdu-Chukur Tract* (rocky-hollow tract), and *Orto-Chukur Tract* (middle-hollow tract). The place names showing holes inside of the moraine surface (e.g., *Chukury* and *Jetin-Chukur Tract*) indicate the existence of many small lakes on the moraine surface, which are an important resource of drinking water for livestock. Figure 4 exem-

plifies three tracts on the hummocky moraines of the *Lenin Glacier*: *Gudur* (*Güdüür*), *Achyk-Tash* and *Korumdu-Chukur*.

3. Place names related to fauna and flora

There are 23 place names related to fauna and flora in the area (Table 1). The place names related to wildlife indicate either a current habitat or past habitat of a particular species. Izumiyama et al. (2009) has shown that argali, or Marco Polo Sheep (*Ovis ammon*), a keystone species within the area, is extinct in most parts of the area except the national border with Tajikistan. Table 1 shows that there are five place names showing argali or ibex (mountain sheep): *Arkar Peak* (female argali peak), *Kök-Kiyik* (blue-moun-

tain sheep), *Kulcha* (originated from *Kuldja*; male mountain sheep), *Ming-Teke* (1,000 males, or many male ibex) and *Teke-Saldy Pass* (male [ibex] breeding pass). *Kulcha* is located near the areas where massive ‘illegal’ hunting of ibex is still practiced (Izumiyama et al., 2009), and where argali are already extinct. The remaining three areas correspond to the areas where local hunters have suggested that the small remaining number of argali can be found. While only one place name is related to marmots (*Ak-Suur Pass*; white-marmot pass), marmots can be observed in abundance throughout the area.

The place names showing livestock are also identified: *At-Jayloo* (should be *Jailoo*) *Mountain/Glacier* (horse-summer pasture mountain/glacier), *At-Jolu Pass* (horse-road pass), *Kochkorchu* (lamb breeder), and *Taka River* (horse-shoe river).

Place names related to forests and trees in the area are the following: *Agachart Pass* (tree pass), *Archa-Bulak* (juniper-spring), *Archa-Davan Pass* (juniper-region pass), *Jamman-Kyrchyn* (bad tree/bushes), *Kara-Shyabak* (should be *Kara-Shybak*, black-*teresken* or black-shrub trees), *Korumdu* (enough forests), *Taldy-Suu* (willow-river), *Taldyk* (place with willow), and *Tarasha Peak/River* (wood-sliver peak/river). According to the map, forests (shown as ‘woods’ on the 1:200,000 topographic map) have almost disappeared in the area: only a few small patches of forests near *Daroot-Korgon* are shown. Local people that were interviewed confirmed that juniper forests had once grown on the upper slopes of the southern flank of the *Alay* (*Alai*) *Range*. Today, as a result of extensive deforestation, only scattered trees can be observed on the upper slopes (Watanabe, 2008), although the region in general is too arid to sustain thick forests. Nevertheless, the number of place names related to forests and trees is large.

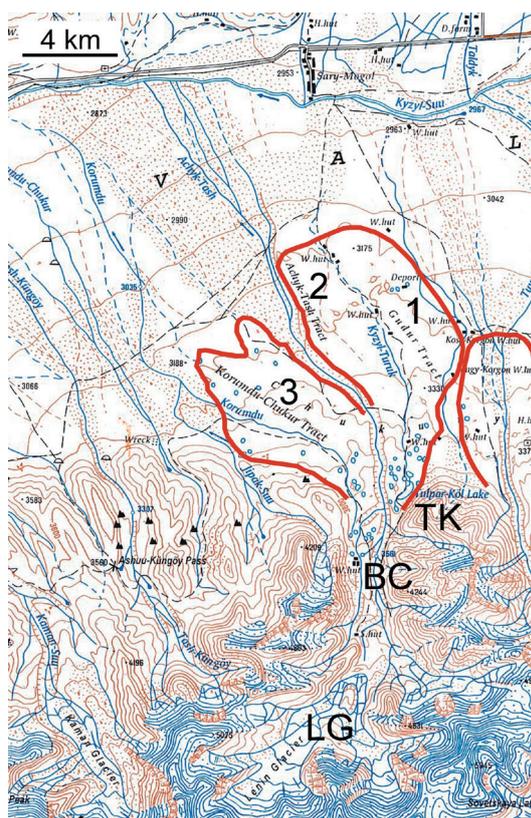


Fig. 4. Examples of three tracts on the hummocky moraines and the location of *Tulpar-Köl Lake* (Labels added to a part of the 1:200,000 topographic map. Contour intervals: 80 m).

Red line: Margin of the hummocky moraines, 1: *Gudur* (*Güdüür*) *Tract*, 2: *Achyk-Tash Tract*, 3: *Korumdu-Chukur Tract*, TK: *Tulpar-Köl Lake*, LG: *Lenin Glacier*, BC: *Lenin Peak Base Camp*.

4. Place names related to colour

Nearly 14% of the place names (17/125) are

related to colour (Table 1), suggesting that it holds some importance for the local people. Place names showing ‘red’ are most common. There are nine names with the component *Kyzyl-* (red-), which suggests the existence of red geology in the northern flank of the *Zaalay* (Za-Alai) Range. Six place names have the component of *Kara-*, meaning ‘black’⁵⁾: e.g., *Kara-Kabak* (black-basin), and *Kara-Kindik* (black-belly navel). Four place names meaning ‘blue or green’ have the component *Kök-*: e.g., *Kök-Bulak* (blue-/green-spring) and *Kök-Suu* (blue-/green-river). Other major place names showing colour are *Sary-Tash* (yellow-stone) and *Katta-Boz* (big-/grey-range).

Most of the 17 names showing colour have combined meanings: 12 names have the combined meanings of colour and physical characteristic (e.g., *Ak-Art Pass*: white-hill pass, *Kara-Töbö Mountains*: black-summit mountains, and *Kök-Bulak*: blue-/green-spring). One name has the combined meaning of colour and fauna (*Kök-Kiyik*: blue mountain sheep), one name has the combined meaning of colour and flora (*Kara-Shyabak*=*Kara-Shabak*: black-teresken or black-shrub trees), and four names are combinations of colour and others (*Kyzyl-Eshme*: red-pattern, *Kyzyl-Turuk*: red-settlement, *Kyzyl-Tuu*: red-flag, and *Kyzyl-Ungkür*=*Kyzyl-Üngkür*: red-cave).

5. Place names after people

There are 13 places named after people (personal names) in the area (Table 1). The names of the major peaks and glaciers tend to take the personal names (Fig. 2). *Lenin Peak* or Peak Lenin (also Lenin Chokusu in Kyrgyz and Pik Lenina in Russian), 7,134 m, the highest peak in the area, is a good example of the personal names. *Lenin Peak*, which was discovered by Prof. Alexei P. Fedchenko in 1871, was first named Mount Kaufmann after the then governor of Turkestan, Mr. Konstantin P. von Kaufmann. The peak was renamed *Lenin Peak* in 1928. Local

people sometimes call the peak Mt. Jel-Aidar (Mt. Wind’s God) or Mt. *Achyk-Tash* (Mt. Open-Rock) (Anarbaev and Watanabe, 2008). According to Mr. Oljobai Kutbidin Andarov (2008, personal communication), *Lenin Peak* had been known locally as *Pik Kaman* (wild pig, boar) as well. However, the name of *Kaman* seems to be inappropriate, because the current names of *Kaman Suu* (boar river) and *Kaman Glacier* (No. 44, Fig. 2 and Table 1) are originated near an unnamed peak (6,717 m), west of *Lenin Peak* (No. 92).

Korjenevskiy Peak (6,008 m) and *Korjenevskiy Glacier* seem to be related to the famous Korjenevskaya Peak (7,105 m), near Ismoil Somoni Peak (former Kommunizm Peak, 7,495 m) in Tajikistan. Korjenevskaya Peak in Tajikistan was named after Evgeniya Korjenevskaya, the wife of Russian geographer, Nikolai L. Korjenevskiy, who discovered the peak in August 1910. *Korjenevskiy Peak* in Kyrgyzstan is not as high as Korjenevskaya Peak in Tajikistan, but *Korjenevskiy Glacier* is the longest valley-glacier in the Pamir-Alai Mountains.

Sovetskya Latviya Peak (5,554 m) is also named after a person, i.e., the president of the Republic of Latvia, and seems to be related to the name of *Sovetskya Latviya Peak* (6,218 m) in Tajikistan. The peak received its name when Imant Egbert and other alpinists from Latvia scaled *Sovetskya Latviya Peak* in Tajikistan in July 1960. The peak was renamed to *Latvia Peak* in 2009 (country’s name); however, the one in the *Zaalay* (Za-Alai) Range is marked as *Sovetskya Latviya Peak* on the 1:200,000 topographic map.

6. Other place names

The place names that fall aside the four categories all possess a special significance. Three place names are related to the fortresses: *Doroot-Korgon* (daroot-fortress), *Jangy-Korgon* (new-fortress), and *Kosh-Korgon* (twin-fortress). These place names are strongly related to the period of Kokon Khanate and to the influence of



Fig. 5. *Tulpar-Köl Lake* (winged-horse lake) on the hummocky moraine, east of the *Lenin* Base Camp. The *Alay* (Alai) Range is in the skyline beyond the *Alay* (Alai) Valley (Photo: 25 July 2009, TW).



Fig. 6. *Besh-Köl Lake* (five-lake lakes), south of the *Sary-Mogol Pass* (Photo: 5 August 2010, TW)

the Russian Tsarist Imperia.

Three names are related to a Kyrgyz tribe: *Kalmak-Ashuu Pass/Mountain* (*Kalmak* is the name of a Kyrgyz tribe), *Sary-Mogol* (*Mogol* is also the name of a tribe), and *Tegizbay Pass* (*Tegizbay* is the name of a tribe). These place names indicate some controls/management of the places by the tribes.

IV. Discussion: Importance of the place names in ecotourism

1. Examples from the existing trekking courses

There are four established trekking destinations in *Sary-Mogol A.O.*, to which the CBT (Community-Based Tourism) office in *Sary-Mogol* takes the small groups of visitors⁶⁾: *Tulpar-Köl Lake* course, *Daroot-Korgon* via *Achyk-Tash* to *Lenin Peak* Base Camp course, *Sary-Mogol Pass* course, and *Jiptik Pass* course.

Among them, the *Tulpar-Köl Lake* course from *Sary-Mogol* to *Tulpar-Köl Lake* is the most common (Figs. 4 and 5), and most local guides working for the CBT *Sary-Mogol* office explain the meaning of *Tulpar-Köl* to their clients. This is a rare case where local guides actually interpret the place names in the area. The local guides, however, said that they never interpret other place names to the clients, except for *Darbozo Tash* (see the description about the *Jiptik Pass* course below). *Gudur* (*Gürdür*) Tract and *Achyk-*

Tash Tract can be interpreted as the base of the topography that sustains *Tulpar-Köl Lake*.

The *Daroot-Korgon* via *Atchyk-Tash* to *Lenin Peak* Base Camp course (Fig. 1) is designed mostly for bicycle tourists. This course traverses many rivers such as *Taka* (horse-shoe), *Ashyk-Suu* (open-river), *Syngar-Jar* (broken-gulley), *Kök-Bulak* (blue-/green-spring), *Ming-Jar* (1,000-gullies), *Kaman-Suu* (boar-river), *Tash-Küngöy* (sunny-side-stone), *Korumdu-Chukur* (rocky-hollow), *Korumdu* (fenced area) and *Achyk-Tash* (open-stone), and passes the hummocky moraines known as *Jetim-Chukur Tract* (seven-hollow tract or single-hollow tract) and *Korumdu-Chukur Tract* (rocky-hollow tract) as shown in Fig. 2 and Table 1.

On the way to the *Sary-Mogol Pass*, there is *Mt. Begmat* (named after a person; 4,482 m) and *Mt. Uutash* (Mt. Poison Rock/Stone). The patches of dwarf juniper forest that still remain in the valley, various alpine plants blooming in the summers, and many waterfalls flowing from the bedrock wall are the main tourist attractions. Just below the *Sary-Mogol Pass*, there is a glacial cirque with a series of small lakes, called *Besh Köl*, meaning ‘five lakes’ (Fig. 6). The name of the lakes is not shown on the 1:200,000 topographic map.

There are no place names along the route to the *Jiptik Pass* on the 1:200,000 topographic map, except *Jiptik-Suu* (enough-rope-river) and *Jiptik Pass* (difficult/enough-rope pass). This course

passes *Darbozo Tash* (gate rock): *Birinchi-Darbaza Tash* (first-gate rock) and *Ekinchi-Darbaza Tash* (second-gate rock), none of which are shown on the 1:200,000 map, but the local guides of the CBT *Sary-Mogol* office do interpret these place names to their clients.

2. Examples in the future ecotour-course development

Our filed surveys identified additional two potential ecotour-courses in the area: the *Dam-Jailoo* course and several *Sary-Tash* courses. The following section discusses the place names found along these potential courses.

(1) *Dam-Jailoo* course

Kashka-Suu A.A. is the legal owner of the land where the *Lenin* Base Camp is located. The *A.A.* receives the usage fees of camp sites operated by 6–13 trekking/tour companies. Although the *A.A.* began to receive the usage fees in 1995⁷⁾ the local area has not received a significant share of the considerable revenue created by the trekkers or climbers who visit the area so far. In other words, the current tourism in the *Lenin* Base Camp has a problem with money leakage: most tourism-generated revenue does not stay in the local area because the involvement of the local community in tourism is negligible (Anarbaev and Watanabe, 2008). *Kashka-Suu A.A.* has no hotels or homestay accommodations, and provides no attractive programmes to trekkers/climbers.

Meanwhile, the *Kashka-Suu* area's ecotourism resources are not limited to the *Lenin* Base Camp area. A smaller peak, *Bürküt-Too* (3,462.6 m on the 1:50,000 Russian topographic map, J-43-14-A), which is located to the northwest of *Kashka-Suu* and near the entrance to the *Dam-Jayloo* (moist-or resting-summer pasture) valley, has no name on the 1:200,000 topographic map (Fig. 7) nor on other maps. *Bürküt-Too* (Fig. 8), which means 'eagle mountain' (Table 2), provides a great point to view the *Alay* (Alai) *Valley* and the *Zaalay* (Za-

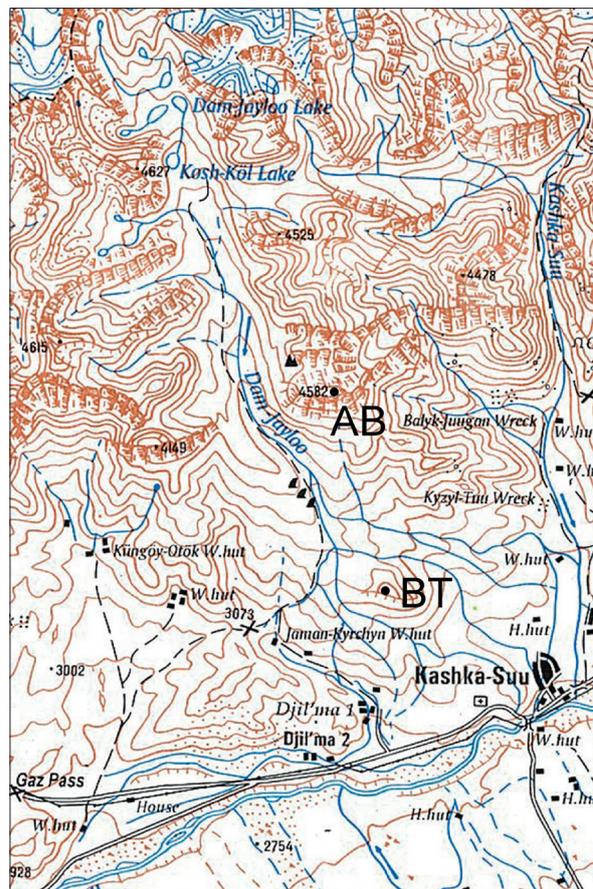


Fig. 7. A part of the 1:200,000 topographic map showing the *Dam-Jayloo* valley (Labels added, Contour intervals: 80 m)
BT: Bürküt-Too, AB: Mt. Alip Bai.



Fig. 8. View of a small peak of Bürküt-Too (Eagle-Mountain), west of *Kashka-Suu* village
Tourists can enjoy spectacular scenery of the *Alay* (Alai) *Valley* and the *Zaalay* (Za-Alai) *Range*, including the summit of *Lenin Peak*. View towards the south. (Photo: 22 July 2009, TW)

Alay *Range*, despite being unknown by tourists or tour guides. The summit of Bürküt-Too can also serve as the destination of a one-day hike from the *Kashka-Suu* village. The one-day hike to Bürküt-Too is possible from the *Lenin* Base Camp if a vehicle is provided, but its programme

should be developed in conjunction with tourism facilities in the village to ensure that the income generated goes back to the local economy.

In addition to the above sites it would be feasible to develop a one-night trekking course to the *Dam-Jayloo* valley (Fig. 9). Some local families stay in *yurts* (movable tents) there, grazing their sheep and goats in summer. Tourists can enjoy the experiences of staying in a *yurt*, tasting fresh milk, yogurt and cheese, and exploring the area on foot, amidst the grazing livestock. Landforms such as the moraines and rock glaciers as well as the names of various alpine flowers would also be of interest to tourists.

During their stay in the valley, tourists might enjoy learning place names as well. Mt. Alip Bai (4,582 m, AB in Fig. 7) is located in the north of Bürküt-Too. *Alip* is the name after a hunter, and *Bai* denotes ‘rich’ (Table 2). Local tradition has it that *Alip* hunted wildlife for local inhabitants who had no food during World War II. There are lakes

in the uppermost valley: *Kosh-Köl Lake* (twin-lake lakes) and *Dam-Jayloo Lake* (moist summer pasture lake) (Fig. 7).

(2) Sary-Tash courses

As stated above, *Sary-Tash* is regarded as a transit point between Osh and Kashgar or Murgab. Tourists travelling between Osh and Kashgar or Murgab and vice versa by car usually stay in *Sary-Tash* for a night, while few cyclists choose to stay overnight. *Sary-Tash* holds several possibilities in ecotour-course development, but there are currently no short tour-courses of the area.

It would be relatively easy to develop half-day or one-day courses in the various summer pastures, where interpretations of the place names could be provided. For example, *Makal-Döbö Jayloo* (meeting/discussion-hill summer pasture), *Alay Jayloo* (beautiful place summer pasture), and *Nichke Jayloo* (narrow summer pasture) would

Table 2. Some place names that are not shown on the 1:200,000 topographic map

Number	Place name	Meaning
E1	Besh-Kul	Five lakes. <Besh-Kul = Besh-Köl>
E2	Booke-Talar jailoo	Being robbed by Booke (person's name) summer pasture
E3	Bürküt-Too	Eagle mountain
E4	Kok-Bulak Jailoo	Kok-Bulak = Kök-Bulak; see No. 63 in Table 1 (Used by the Kamchatka <i>Keziüü</i> group in Sary-Tash)
E5	Makal-Döbö jailoo	Meeting-hill summer pasture (hill where a meeting is taken place)
E6	Mt. Alip Bai	Mt. rich Mr. Alip (person's name)
E7	Tar-Bulung jailoo	Narrow trough summer pasture
E8	Tumanchy Jailoo	Foggy summer pasture (Used by the Erkeshtam <i>Kezuu</i> group in Sary-Tash)
E9	Tura-Bulak jailoo	Right-/straight-spring summer pasture <Tura=Tuura>



Fig. 9. *Dam-Jayloo* (Jailoo), the view of the valley below (Photo: 23 July 2009, TW)

offer tourists the opportunity to experience the local cuisine, complete with fermented mare's milk (*kymyz*), in a *yurt*. Half-day tours offering the chance to see groups of grazing sheep/goats, which are called *Keziüü*⁸⁾, could be an attraction to tourists (Fig. 10, Table 2). Along the courses, various place names such as *Kok-Bulak* (*Kök-Bulak*, green-spring), *Kara-Döbö* (*Kara-Töbö*, big-hill), *At-Jolu* (horse-road), and *Tumanchy* (foggy area; not shown on the 1:200,000 topographic map), would add to the experience if interpreted as part of the activities offered in the pasture area.

3. Examples in the villages with historical change

The authors found two place names that have been changed, excluding *Lenin Peak*. It might prove interesting for tourists if guides were to explain the stories behind these changes.

The village name *Kara-Kabak*, which means 'black/big ravine' (Table 1), had been called *Kyzyl-Dön* until 1952 and *YUKOS* from 1952 to 1980. *Kyzyl-Dön* means 'red-hill', and *YUKOS* (ЮКОС) was the 'South-Kigizian Experimental Station (Южно-Киргизская Опытная Станция),' where breeding of Kyrgyz merino sheep and other agri-

cultural works had been conducted. The present name was adopted in 1980. Russian residents had been dominant in the 1970s, but had mostly departed by the 1990s.

The current settlement of *Sary-Tash* (Figs. 1 and 10) was originally located to the east in the eastern margin of the 1:200,000 topographic map. The area is now called *Eski Sary-Tash* ('old Sary-Tash'), which is not shown on the 1:200,000 topographic map. *Eski Sary-Tash* is located in the valley of *Demei-Suu*, although all available maps mistakenly show the name of the river (*Demei-Suu*) as *Kalmak-Suu* (D in Fig. 10). The current name of *Sary-Tash* started in 1970 (see Shirasaka et al., 2013).

V. Conclusions

The authors identified 125 place-names in the Pamir-Alai region, which are shown on the 1:200,000 topographic map issued in English in 2008. This study demonstrates that it will be important to translate/interpret these names, when ecotourism becomes more developed in the area. However, where concrete ecotour courses are concerned, this study also found some additional place names that are not shown on the 1:200,000 topographic map, which should be added.

The authors have observed that so far, few if any tourists to the locations mentioned possessed topographic maps of the area. In the future, the meanings of the place names should be printed in guidebooks and on tourist maps, and should be learned by local and international guides for interpretation. Interpreting the place names adds additional values to ecotours, and understanding some of the names would promote awareness of the importance of nature conservation among both tourists and local inhabitants.

Notes

- 1) This study includes any places that have names on the 1:20,000 topographic map, although Rennick (2005) defines 'place' as a 'human settlement of some kind'

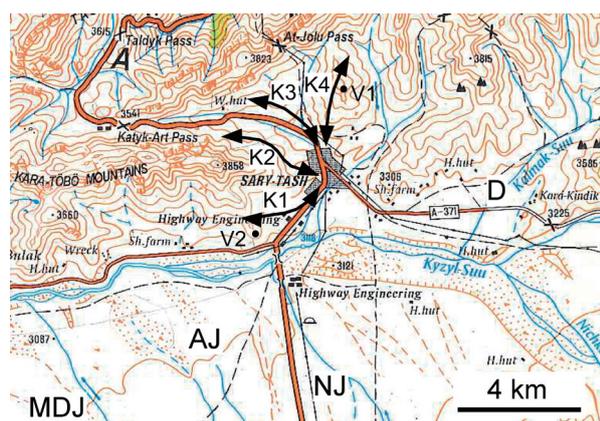


Fig. 10. Distribution of the place names around *Sary-Tash* (Base map: 1:200,000 topographic map)

K1–4: *Keziüü* routes (K1: Kamchatka *Keziüü* group using *Kok-Bulak* Jayloo (*Kök-Bulak* Jayloo), K2: *Kara-Döbö* *Keziüü* group using *Kara-Döbö* Jayloo (Jayloo), K3: *Öidöngkü* Maala *Keziüü* group using *At-Jol* Jayloo, K4: *Erkeshtam* *Keziüü* group using *Tumanchy* Jayloo), D: *Demei-Suu*, MDJ: *Makal-Döbö* Jayloo, AJ: *Alai* Jayloo, NJ: *Nichke* Jayloo, V1 & V2: viewpoint.



Fig. 11. Panoramic view of the *Zaalay (Za-Alai) Range* from a ridge of *Kara-Töbö (Döbö) Mountains* (V2 in Fig. 10), southwest of *Sary-Tash*. The highest peak in the skyline is *Lenin Peak* (No. 92), and the lowest ridge (col) is *Kyzyl-Art Pass* (red-hill pass, No. 82). (Photo: 08 June 2013, TW)

- (e.g., village, town or city).
- 2) The correct spelling of ‘*Alay*’ is ‘*Alai*’ although the 1:200,000 topographic map spells as ‘*Alay*.’
 - 3) A.A. (*Aiyl Aimak*) is a rural municipality governed by A.Ö., i.e. *Aiyl Ökümötü*, a local executive body.
 - 4) The map was first prepared for printing in 1991 and partially revamped in 2005.
 - 5) It is difficult to say that ‘*kara*’ is always used to express the meaning of colour. ‘*Kara*’ often denotes size/scale of the object or place. For example, *Kara-Sai* means ‘wide/large dry river’ as well as ‘black-river,’ ‘*Kara-Jol*’ means ‘main-road’, and ‘*Kara-Köl*’ means ‘large lake’ as well.
 - 6) Our interview survey shows that the annual number of tourists that the CBT *Sary-Mogol* office handled was about 260 in 2008, 280 in 2009 and 64 in 2011.
 - 7) The *Kashka-Suu A.Ö.* received a camp-site usage fee of 3,558 USD (175,320 Kyrgyz Som) in 2012. There was talk of increasing the fee as of July 2013.
 - 8) There are four groups of sheep/goats that follow the *Kezüü (Kezuu, Kezu)* system in *Sary-Tash* (Fig. 10), where members of participating families herd their livestock in turn according to a daily rotation (Squires, 2012, p450).

Acknowledgement

We thank Mr. Oljobai Kutbidin Andarov in Kara-Kabak, Mr. Berdish Berdibai in Sary-Tash, and Mr. Daniyar Öskönbaev and Mr. Doolatbek Belekbaev in Osh for

helping in the field and for helping translation of the place names. We also thank Ms. Aliya Kalchaeva of the Graduate School of Economics, Hokkaido University for checking the translation, and Mr. Markus Hauser, a cartographer, The Pamir Archive, Switzerland for access to the 1:100,000 map. Further, we thank Dr. Libor Jansky and Ms. Nevelina Pachova of the United Nations University, Bonn and Prof. Asylbek A. Aidaraliev, Chairman of the National Center for Mountain Regions Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for logistic support. This study was funded by the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (Grant Nos. 20251001 and 23251001).

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(Accepted on 20 September 2013)