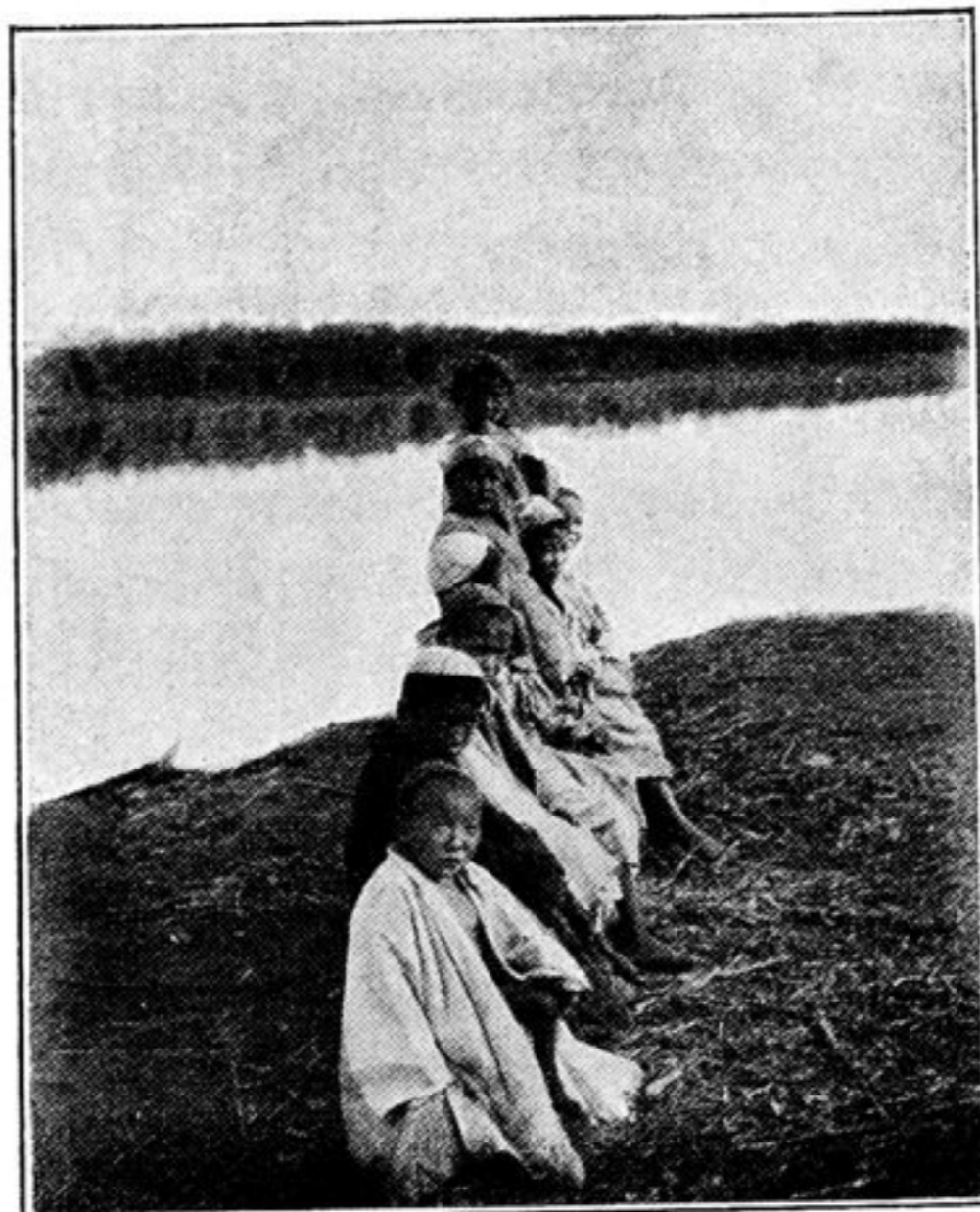


Between Tosghak-tschantschdi and the Tarim at Soghot there is a narrow strip of low dunes, something like 3 km. across. Now it is clear that a belt of sand which is interpolated in this manner between these two winding waterways, and between their wind-sheltering forests, must have originated at a time when the country presented quite a different aspect from what it does now. It cannot have accumulated here even during the waterless period of the Ilek; it must have been deposited at a time when the water of the united Tarim and Kontsche-darja was discharged into the old Lop-nor.

Tosghak-tschantschdi belongs to the administrative district, or *tabesi*, of Tikenlik, and Kum-tscheke to that of Tscharklik; hence the boundary between the two districts runs between these two places.

We now steered north-east across the lake (depth, 3.36 m.), and so returned to the Sollak-akin (also called Kona-akin), the old bed of the Ilek, which here is also used by the water. Hence it is only that part of the river-bed which lies east of Tosghak-tschantschdi which was deserted about 20 years ago. In this upper part of the Sollak-akin the current was extraordinarily slow, often imperceptible, a result partly due to its great depth, 7.5 m., partly to the fact that there were other currents running through the reeds. On the whole this river-bed presents precisely the same appearance as does the lower Ilek: the water is deep, dark-coloured, and bright, and the banks are planted with forest and kamisch. Then leaving this bed on the left, we paddled across a kamisch lake, and into the bay which brought us closest to the shore of the Arka-köl on the east. The tongue of land between the two, 810 m. across, consists of low dunes, with a tiny salt-pool in the middle, and solitary poplars and tamarisks. Across this we dragged our canoe, a smaller one than we used before. On the western shore of the lake the dunes are pretty high, and the reeds all round its shores are tolerably thick. In the creek where we first approached the lake we found a small canoe, a proof of what I had already been told, namely that fishing is carried on in the Arka-köl.



CHILDREN OF THE TARIM.