

59 years old; his father Ishá Kasi had been 74; and *his* father, Mehemet Arsu Bek, 77. It was in the lifetime of the last-named that the people about Tikenlik first began to journey to Korla to buy flour, and bake themselves bread. Previous to that they had lived upon fish, the stalks and sprouts of *jäkän*, wild-duck caught in snares, and the eggs of both wild-duck and wild-geese. The father of Mehemet Arsu Bek was Kun Nias Bek, and he lived to between 70 and 80 years of age; his hut stood beside the Turkomak-köl, where the stream of Koj-tutuni begins. The father of Kun Nias was called Arsu Baj, and he both lived to about the same age and dwelt at the same spot, beside the same lake. In his days this lake is said to have been as bare of vegetation as most of the lakes in that locality are now; indeed the natives are said to have imported and planted *jäkän* (sedge) there. At the same epoch the westernmost bed of the Tarim did not exist; the river flowed through the present Kuntschekisch-tarim, though it would seem to have followed a different route, for the country around the existing Tikenlik was then desert, which indeed extended westwards right away to the big sand. Arsu Baj's father was Tschulum; he lived to between 70 and 80, and was the son of Säfär, who is said to have been the first Lop-man to have settled in this region. All these generations are stated to have dwelt beside the lakes of the Kontsche-darja, which during the course of time naturally underwent many changes and migrations. They knew nothing about agriculture or the keeping of live-stock, but lived entirely upon what they could procure from the water. The canoe was therefore their most important possession; they made their clothing, their nets, their ropes, and their cords for snares all of the fibres of plants. Since then however their mode of life has greatly changed, for they have become in no slight degree agriculturists, and sustain themselves also by breeding sheep. Then again, the easier communication between Tscharklik and Korla, and the periodical visits of the traders, have enlarged their demands upon life.

The road from Turfan to Dargh-ilek ran through Jigde-bulak in the Kuruktagh, and crossed the Ilek by a big bridge — probably the district I discovered in 1896, still called Turfan-köbruk. At that time the whole of the Tarim flowed past Dargh-ilek and through the Jätim-tarim. Indeed Naser Bek believed that the reason the Jätim-tarim was given the name it bears was precisely because it was subsequently abandoned, or as it were neglected.

These data however are neither sufficiently definite nor reliable to admit of precise determinations of date being deduced from them. The key to the calculation is in fact the answer to the question, how old was each of these men when his son was born? Assuming that they were each between 30 and 40 years of age, Säfär would have been born about 1640. In that case the changes which Naser Bek spoke of would be spread over a period of 250 years. The fact of the lakes having been for a certain period free from reeds would seem to indicate that they were then recent creations. Naser Bek's information agrees excellently well with what I was told by old Kuntschekan Bek of Abdal in 1896. What the country looked like before the 17th century cannot of course be satisfactorily inferred from local tradition. Consequently it is impossible from the local tradition to draw any conclusions as to the time when the great lake or marsh of Kara-koschun was for-