

as to position. Just as rivers in China periodically change their courses, the Tarim may at different times have filled parts of the saline, clay steppe with its overflow, and this becomes all the more probable on reading the interesting description which Prejevalsky gives of recent occurrences in the river-bed of the Tarim. Particularly worthy of attention is the upraising of the river-bed, like that of the Po and Hoang-ho, above the surrounding plain; allowing the natives to draw off the water for fishing purposes, and assisting the river to change its course by bursting through its embankments at flood times. In this way the Tarim may have left its easterly channel, as hitherto marked on our maps, and the present river flowing to the south-east, with the two lake-basins at its end, perhaps from the neighbourhood of Akhtarma, may be of comparatively recent origin. In such case, the earlier lake-bed had a more northerly situation than at present, and became dried up in course of time.

A third and likelier explanation is that, besides the two water-basins seen by Prejevalsky, there remains a third, communicating with the Tarim by an arm. — — — The map (Chinese) also shows* farther to the south-east, and wholly unconnected with the Tarim, another lake called Khas-omo, the centre of which is about 3° east and $1\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$ south of Korla, not far from where Prejevalsky places Kara-koshun. The question suggests itself, if this Khas-lake does not answer to the black Koshun of Prejevalsky.

This would involve the following, *that the Tarim formerly had only one easterly course to the true great Lob-nor, but later, at the place where it is now joined by the Ugen-darja, it threw off a branch to the S. E., which became the main river; and that this branch discharged into the once isolated Khas-lake, enlarged it and made it the chief reservoir.*

Many arguments may be adduced in support of this presumption besides those already mentioned.

(a) The Chinese map represents plains south of Lob-nor, but mountains south of the Khas-lake, and these with reference to the positions of Prejevalsky's lake and Korla occupy the same place that the Altyn-tagh mountains do.

(b) South of Khas-lake the main road to the east leads in the direction of Sha-chau, and from it another branches off southward to Tibet, just as on Prejevalsky's map both roads are placed to the south of Kara-koshun.

(c) Prejevalsky found that the name of Lob-nor was not applied to either of his lakes, although, from the inquiries of Shaw, Forsyth, and others, it is well known far and wide. But he met with it, evidently without learning its exact meaning, at that part of the Tarim to the east of which the true Lob-nor must lie.

(d) Concurrent historical notices on the former trade-routes from China to the west point with certainty to the conclusion, that the region of the true Lob-nor was undisturbed by them, and that they crossed much farther to the south and west of Khas-omo, so that there, and not at Lob, lie the kingdoms of Leu-lan**, Shen-shen, etc., which are named in history as situated near »the salt-lake».

* That is, in addition to the lake of Lop-nor proper.

** Himly writes this name Lâu-lan.