

went to Lop. On the way they crossed the Julghunluk-terem, a little river-arm traversing saline soil, where also tamarisks grow, and the Kok-ala, another river-arm there divided into two branches. On the 26th April 1896 I found that the Tscharklik-su reached a little way below Nadschi-bidschin, and there overflowed its bounds at no great distance from the Kara-buran. According to Tschernoff's map the arms just mentioned proceed from the Tscharklik-su, and the K ok-ala, even though it was the beginning of January, still contained a little water. The »sign-post» of Kurban Bekning-ilesi is situated in a completely *schor* desert. And such the surface continues all the way to the shore of the Kara-buran. The sheets of water that still remained in this marsh were frozen over, and at the point where the expedition crossed it, it was more than two kilometers broad. Patches of yellow kamisch still projected through the ice. They were told however that that region had not been under water during the summer, and they themselves reported that, at any rate along the line of their route, the lake appeared to be greatest in winter. The truth is said to be, that in winter the water of the Tscharklik spreads itself over a considerable area in the form of sheets of ice, so big as to convey the impression of being lakes. After that they crossed the Tschertschen-darja on the ice and a quarter of an hour later reached Lopning- rt ng, a Chinese station-house at the fishing-village of Lop, in a district where tamarisk-mounds are plentiful.

The next day they went as far as Jakob Bek's fort, traversing a region that still belongs to the area inundated by the Tschertschen-darja, a fact to which several of the names allude. First came Kurban Bekning-teremi, or the River-arm of Kurban Bek, where they saw large sheets of ice or frozen lakes on both east and west. On the western shore of the lake of Kum-k l they rode through a belt of tamarisk-mounds, and then crossed the plain of Ullugh-tsch l, where steppe vegetation was growing. The next name is Nam-k l, where the ground was moist and kamisch was growing; but they saw no lake there, whereas Kum-k l on the other hand appeared to be a permanent lake. Their Kurghan is clearly identical with the place known to Prschevalskij and myself as Jakob Bek's fort.

From the third day's itinerary a few names are readily recognisable. Two small canals which issue through the right bank of the Tarim and water some grazing-grounds to the west of the river bear the names of Kurban Supaning-birintschitschapghani and Kurban Supaning-ikintschi-tschapghani. Other names are Jangi-k l, or the New Lake, though it then contained no water; J k n-boldschemal; Turnatoghdi-tscheke; and finally Tokum. At the three last-named points, as well as at Kurghan, their route touched westward-going loops of the river.

The names belonging to the fourth day are Tal-kirtschin-tscheke; Almontschuk, where they noticed two small marginal lakes, one on each side of the river; Arghamtschi-baghlaghan-tscheke; Jaghlik-tsch kken-tscheke, and lastly Arghan. Thus from Tscharklik to Arghan they followed the * rt ng-jol* or »great caravan-road», running along the right bank of the Tarim, no doubt because the surface on that side is free from sand, this having been swept away by the storms, whereas the eastern bank is encroached upon to a greater extent by the sand as well as pierced in several places by the deltaic arms of the river.