

P'o's commentary (c. A. D. 300) on *Shan-hai ching*, 16, 2b: «Its water cannot bear [even] a goose feather» (其水不勝鴻毛). It has long been noticed that there was an exact counterpart of this legend in ancient Greek notices on India: «Ktêsias records that in India is a pool of water called Side in which nothing will float but everything sinks to the bottom» (PLINY, *Hist. Natur.*, XXI, 2; J. W. MCCRINDLE, *Ancient India as described by Ktêsias*, 59-60); «This is the sort of account which Megasthenês gives us of an Indian River: Its name is the Silas; ...there is nothing which it can buoy up, nor anything which can swim or float in it, but everything sinks down to the bottom...» (cf. J. W. MCCRINDLE, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenês and Arrian*, 197; also pp. 65-66 for parallel quotations from other authors than Arrian). The Weak Water has even been connected with Herodotus' ὕδωρ ἀσθενές, «Weak Water», in «Ethiopia». «Silas» is certainly the correct form («Side» must be due to a clerical error in a Greek Ms. [Δ instead of Λ]), and LASSEN was right in tracing the name to the Skr. Śilā, or Śailodā, both based on śilā, «stone», and designating a river which changed everything into stone. The Indian and the Greek fables can be reconciled by considering that any object changed into stone would sink to the bottom, but the fact remains that the agreement is closer between the Chinese and the Greek traditions than between them and the Indian one. Although I cannot trace the traditional explanation of the Chinese name to a date certainly prior to c. A. D. 300, it may be much more ancient; the name «Weak Water» (or even «Drowning Water») is in itself suggestive enough, but, even if we no longer ascribe to the *Tribute of Yü* its traditional very remote antiquity, it certainly much antedates Ktêsias and Megasthenês. CONRADY's attempt (*Die chinesischen... Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-lan*, 160-161) to explain Skr. Śilā > Greek Silas as being derived from Sēr, Seres, through popular etymology, is not acceptable. For the last twenty centuries, Chinese scholars have been at great pains to identify the Jo-shui. Because of misunderstood texts or traditions, various real or fictitious rivers, in nearly all the quarters of the world, have come to be designated as Jo-shui, and the effort of native commentators and geographers has tended to reduce either all or most of them to a common stream through an imaginary network of multiple sources, branches and underground courses (cf. the conflicting opinions collected in the *Chung-kuo ti-ming ta tz'ü-tien*, 697). In late Han times, a Jo-shui was mentioned in northern Manchuria, and an authoritative commentator on the *Shu ching*, 胡渭 Hu Wei, quite seriously suggested that it may be the Jo-shui of Kan-su which, after passing through the Chü-yen Marsh (*i. e.* after being the «Etsingol»; see «Eçinai»), flowed underground to Manchuria and then emptied itself into the Eastern Sea. Most ancient sources associate the «Weak Water» with the K'un-lun Mountains, the Western Queen Mother (Hsi-wang-mu) and the 'Flowing Sands'. The most ancient and common tradition has been to look for all these in Kan-su, but, particularly owing to the influence of Buddhist cosmogony, the whole group was later transferred to regions north-west of the Himalayas, our «K'un-lun Mountains» included. Moreover, we have seen that the *Wei lio* spoke of a «Weak Water» to the west of the Mediterranean Orient; this was west of the Hsi-hai or «Western Sea», but fate had it that the same term Hsi-hai was used from Han times as a designation of the Kōkō-nōr, which added to the imbroglío. In T'ang times, a precise location of the «Weak Water» is given by the *Chiu T'ang shu*, in the account of Kao Hsien-chih's campaign of 747 to the 'Lesser P'o-lü' (= Gilghit); the 娑夷 So-i (*Sâ-i) River of Gilghit is expressly stated there to be «the Jo-shui of ancient times, which could bear neither a blade of grass, nor a seed of mustard, nor a feather, nor a hair» (cf. CHAVANNES, *Doc.*