

Johnson's Itinerary (including his own journey to Kiria) it is only 338 miles from Ilchi to Lob. Mr. Shaw, as we have seen, gives us a little more, but it is only even then 380. Polo unfortunately omits his usual estimate for the extent of the "Province of Charchan," so he affords us no complete datum. But his distance between Charchan and Lob agrees fairly, as we have seen, with that both of Johnson and of Shaw, and the elbow on the road from Kiria to Charchan (*supra*, p. 192) necessitates our still further abridging the longitude between Khotan and Lop. (See Shaw's remarks in *Proc. R. G. S.* XVI. 243.)

["This desert was known in China of old by the name of *Lew-sha*, i.e. "Quicksand," or literally, "Flowing sands." (*Palladius, Jour. N. China B. R. As. Soc.* N.S. X. 1875, p. 4.)

A most interesting problem is connected with the situation of Lob-nor which led to some controversy between Baron von Richthofen and Prjevalsky. The latter placed the lake one degree more to the south than the Chinese did, and found that its water was sweet. Richthofen agreed with the Chinese Topographers and wrote in a letter to Sir Henry Yule: "I send you two tracings; one of them is a true copy of the Chinese map, the other is made from a sketch which I constructed to-day, and on which I tried to put down the Chinese Topography together with that of Prjevalsky. It appears evident—(1) That Prjevalsky travelled by the ancient road to a point south of the true Lop-nor; (2) that long before he reached this point he found the river courses quite different from what they had been formerly; and (3) that following one of the new rivers which flows due south by a new road, he reached the two sweet-water lakes, one of which answers to the ancient Khas-omo. I use the word 'new' merely by way of comparison with the state of things in Kien-long's time, when the map was made. It appears that the Chinese map shows the Khas Lake too far north to cover the Kara-Koshun. The bifurcation of the roads south of the lake nearly resembles that which is marked by Prjevalsky." (Preface of E. D. Morgan's transl. of *From Kulja across the Tian Shan to Lob-nor*, by Colonel N. Prjevalsky, London, 1879, p. iv.) In this same volume Baron von Richthofen's remarks are given (pp. 135-159, with a map, p. 144), showing comparison between Chinese and Prjevalsky's Geography from tracings by Baron von Richthofen and (pp. 160-165) a translation of Prjevalsky's replies to the Baron's criticisms.

Now the Swedish traveller, Dr. Sven Hedin, claims to have settled this knotty point. Going from Korla, south-west of Kara-shahr, by a road at the foot of the Kurugh-tagh and between these mountains and the Koncheh Daria, he discovered the ruins of two fortresses, and a series of milestones (potais). These tall pyramids of clay and wood, indicating distances in *lis*, show the existence at an ancient period of a road with a large traffic between Korla and an unknown place to the south-east, probably on the shores of the Chinese Lob-nor. Prjevalsky, who passed between the Lower Tarim and the Koncheh Daria, could not see a lake or the remains of a lake to the east of this river. The Koncheh Daria expands into a marshy basin, the Malta Kul, from which it divides into two branches, the Kuntiekkich Tarim (East River) and the Ilek (river) to the E.S.E. Dr. Sven Hedin, after following the course of the Ilek for three days (4th April, 1896) found a large sheet of water in the valley at the very place marked by the Chinese Topographers and Richthofen for the Lob-nor. This mass of water is divided up by the natives into Avullu Kul, Kara Kul, Tayek Kul, and Arka Kul, which are actually almost filled up with reeds. Dr. Sven Hedin afterwards visited the Lob-nor of Prjevalsky, and reached its western extremity, the Kara-buran (black storm) on the 17th April. In 1885, Prjevalsky had found the Lob-nor an immense lake; four years later Prince Henri d'Orleans saw it greatly reduced in size, and Dr. Sven Hedin discovered but pools of water. In the meantime, since 1885, the northern (Chinese) Lob-nor has gradually filled up, so the lake is somewhat vagrant. Dr. Sven Hedin says that from his observations he can assert that Prjevalsky's lake is of recent formation.

So Marco Polo's Lob-nor should be the northern or Chinese lake.

Another proof of this given by Dr. Sven Hedin is that the Chinese give the name of