

chase, for there is much game. And among other kinds, there are the animals that produce the musk, in great numbers.²

NOTE I.—Though the termini of the route, described in these two chapters, are undoubtedly Si-ngan fu and Ch'êng-tu fu, there are serious difficulties attending the determination of the line actually followed.

The time according to all the MSS., so far as I know, except those of one type, is as follows :

In the plain of Kenjanfu	3 days.
In the mountains of Cuncun	20 „
In the plain of Acbalect	2 „
In mountains again	20 „
	—
	45 days.
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[From Si-ngan fu to Ch'êng-tu (Sze-ch'wan), the Chinese reckon 2300 *li* (766 miles). (Cf. *Rockhill, Land of the Lamas*, p. 23.) Mr G. F. Eaton, writing from Han-chung (*Jour. China Br. R. A. S.* xxviii. p. 29) reckons: "From Si-ngan Fu S.W. to Ch'êng-tu, *via* K'i-shan, Fung-sien, Mien, Kwang-yuan and Chao-hwa, about 30 days, in chairs." He says (p. 24): "From Ch'êng-tu *via* Si-ngan to Peking the road does not touch Han-chung, but 20 *li* west of the city strikes north to Pao-ch'eng.—The road from Han-chung to Ch'êng-tu made by Ts'in Shi Hwang-ti to secure his conquest of Sze-ch'wan, crosses the Ta-pa-shan."—H. C.]

It seems to me almost impossible to doubt that the Plain of Acbalect represents some part of the river-valley of the Han, interposed between the two ranges of mountains called by Richthofen *Tsing-Ling-Shan* and *Ta-pa-Shan*. But the time, as just stated, is extravagant for anything like a direct journey between the two termini.

The distance from Si-ngan fu to Pao-ki is 450 *li*, which *could* be done in 3 days, but at Polo's rate would probably require 5. The distance by the mountain road from Pao-ki to the Plain of Han-chung, could never have occupied 20 days. It is really a 6 or 7 days' march.

But Pauthier's MS. C (and its double, the Bern MS.) has viii. marches instead of xx., through the mountains of Cuncun. This reduces the time between Kenjanfu and the Plain to 11 days, which is just about a proper allowance for the whole journey, though not accurately distributed. Two days, though ample, would not be excessive for the journey across the Plain of Han-chung, especially if the traveller visited that city. And "20 days from Han-chung, to Ch'êng-tu fu would correspond with Marco Polo's rate of travel." (*Richthofen.*)

So far then, provided we admit the reading of the MS. C, there is no ground for hesitating to adopt the usual route between the two cities, *via* Han-chung.

But the key to the exact route is evidently the position of Acbalect Manzi, and on this there is no satisfactory light.

For the name of the province, Pauthier's text has *Acbalect Manzi*, for the name of the city *Acmalect* simply. The G. T. has in the former case *Acbalect Mangi*, in the latter "Acmelec Mangi *qe vaut dire* le une de le confine dou Mangi." This is followed literally by the Geographic Latin, which has "*Achalec Mangi et est dictum in lingua nostra unus ex confinibus Mangi.*" So also the Crusca; whilst Ramusio has "*Achbaluch Mangi, che vuol dire* Città Bianca de' confini di Mangi." It is clear that Ramusio alone has here preserved the genuine reading.

Klaproth identified Acbalect conjecturally with the town of *Pe-ma-ching*, or "White-Horse-Town," a place now extinct, but which stood like Mien and Han-chung on the extensive and populous Plain that here borders the Han.