

and Afrāz-gul, taking only the minimum of indispensable baggage, set out on August 2nd by the most direct route connecting Kashmīr with Chilās, our immediate goal. During one pleasant march it took us north-westwards through the fertile forest-girt Lōlāb, one of the most attractive of the many side valleys of Kashmīr. Then striking almost due north we proceeded into the drainage area of the Kishangangā. Passing through its deep-cut gorges (Fig. 1) and ascending the valley of Kēl (Fig. 13), we crossed after six more marches the watershed towards the Indus by the Barai pass (14,250 ft. above sea-level). Here we reached the border of Chilās territory, and two more days of hard marching, one leading across the snowy Fasat Pass (15,200 ft.), carried us down, through increasingly barren ravines (Fig. 3), to the fort and village of Chilās by the Indus. Bad weather had pursued us from the time we first entered the mountains above the Lōlāb right up to the Indus watershed, and had added to the difficulties of tracks, in many parts of which the loads had to be man-handled to enable our baggage animals to pass.

The physical features of the route as far as the watershed do not call for a detailed description here; for since the occupation of Chilās in 1893 it has been fully surveyed, and some account of it may be found in various route books and gazetteers of Kashmīr territory.² But the ground has an antiquarian interest that rewarded me for the fatigues undergone and that deserves to be noted here. I have discussed at length, in *Ancient Khotan*, the interesting Chinese records of the military operations which led to the temporary occupation of 'Great and Little P'o-lü', i. e. Gilgit and Yāsīn, by Chinese imperial forces during the first half of the seventh century A. D.³ I have there fully explained the significant fact, which we learn from a memorial addressed in A. D. 749 by the ruler of T'u-ho-lo or Tokhāristān to the Imperial Court, that the Chinese garrison placed in the territory of P'o-lü after Kao Hsien-chih's famous expedition of A. D. 747, completely depended for its maintenance upon food supplies imported from Kashmīr. As I pointed out, 'the difficulties which the letter of the T'u-ho-lo ruler so graphically represents . . . are exactly those with which the Kashmīr rulers [in Sikh and Dōgrā times], and in more recent years the military authorities of the Indian Government, have had to contend in their occupation of Gilgit'.⁴

Historical
interest of
route.

Now the direct occasion for the memorial of the Tokhāristān prince was an attempt made by the king of Chieh-shuai, a territory adjoining Tokhāristān on the south-east, to cut off the route by which the Chinese in P'o-lü drew their supplies from Kashmīr. The attempt was instigated by the Tibetans, who were then threatening the Chinese dominion in Eastern Turkestan, and the Chinese occupation of Yāsīn and Gilgit was especially designed to prevent the Tibetans from joining hands with the Arabs on the Oxus.⁵ As regards the name Chieh-shuai 竭帥, found also in other texts with slight variations as Chieh-shih 竭師 or in the abbreviated form Chieh 劫,

Attack
from
Chitrāl,
A. D. 749.

² For recent surveys of the ground traversed by this route, and by others leading farther west from the Kishangangā and the Kunhār to Chilās that will be mentioned below, see Survey of India maps 43 E, F, I, J; for revised accounts of routes, Major K. Mason's *Routes in Western Himālaya*, pp. 82-90.

³ See *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 11 sqq. For the translations and notes by which M. Chavannes first rendered these important historical notices in the T'ang Annals and other Chinese records fully accessible to research, cf. his *Documents sur les Tou-kiue occidentaux*, pp. 166 sq., 214 sq., 296.

⁴ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 12.

⁵ In the document reproduced by M. Chavannes from the *Ts'ê fu yüan kuei*, *Turcs occid.*, p. 214, we are told that Chieh-shuai, relying on the protection of its high mountains, had allied itself with the Tibetans. Its chief 'knows that

the territory of P'o-lü is limited, its population dense; that the cultivated area is small, and consequently when garrison troops are placed there, the supplies fail. It then becomes necessary to purchase salt and rice in Kashmīr (*Ku-shih-mi*), and it is thus that the difficulty is met. Now the traders' caravans must, on going and coming back, all pass by the kingdom of Chieh-shuai; its king has therefore accepted the presents offered by the Tibetans, who claimed to establish a stronghold in his territory with a view to getting possession of the important route that leads into P'o-lü. Since Kao Hsien-chih opened up P'o-lü, there have been 3,000 more troops there, and P'o-lü has been crushed by this. The king of Chieh-shuai, in agreement with the Tibetans, has taken advantage of the exhausted condition of P'o-lü and decided to invade it.'