

Kuku-nōr helped to save Little P'o-lü from fresh Tibetan aggression. But it is the famous exploit by which the great Chinese general Kao Hsien-chih in A. D. 747 brought an army across the Pāmīrs, defeated the Tibetan invaders on the Oxus, and led his troops across the Darkōt pass into Little P'o-lü in the face of formidable natural obstacles that has furnished us with particularly interesting details. The topographical evidence elucidated by me when previously discussing the full record preserved by Kao Hsien-chih's biography in the *T'ang shu*,⁵ leaves no doubt about the remarkable accuracy of that record. The description of the bold move across the ice-covered heights of Mount T'an-chü exactly fits the Darkōt pass. The distances indicated conclusively prove that the town of *A-nu-yüeh*, where the king of Little P'o-lü then resided, must be located at the present Yāsīn. In the same way it is certain that the bridge across the river *So-i*, the prompt destruction of which under Kao Hsien-chih's orders prevented the timely arrival of Tibetan reinforcements and thus ensured the immediate submission of the king and the people, corresponds to the bridge across the Gilgit river near the present Gūpis, by which alone Yāsīn can be reached from the route leading up the main Gilgit valley.⁶

expedition
across
Darkōt,
A. D. 747.

Remote as these Hindukush valleys may seem, we can yet, thanks to the Chinese record of Kao Hsien-chih's expedition, realize the importance they assumed at a momentous juncture of Asiatic history. The deep impression created by the occupation of Little P'o-lü is significantly reflected by the closing remark of the *T'ang Annals* on that success: 'Then the Fu-lin (Syria), the Ta-shih (Arabs) and seventy-two kingdoms of divers barbarian people were all seized with fear and made their submission.' But Chinese control over this region was not destined to last long. I have already had occasion above to refer to the Chinese garrison which Kao Hsien-chih left behind in Little P'o-lü, and to the difficulties of supply that its maintenance entailed. Very interesting light is thrown upon the conditions thus created by the representation which the ruler of Tokhāristān addressed in A. D. 749 to the Chinese Emperor and which has been fully analysed by me elsewhere.⁷

Chinese
garrison
left in
Little
P'o-lü.

From the Chinese records we know that in A. D. 750 effective Chinese intervention, once again under Kao Hsien-chih's leadership, relieved P'o-lü and the mountain territories to the west from Tibetan pressure. But with that general's complete defeat in A. D. 751 by the Arabs, Chinese power in Central Asia was destined to decline rapidly, and the withdrawal of its distant outpost isolated in the midst of the Hindukush cannot have been delayed for many years. Yet as late as A. D. 753 we are told of an expedition led by Kao Hsien-chih's successor against Great P'o-lü or Baltistān, which can scarcely have been undertaken from any other base than that furnished by the Gilgit valley;⁸ and the arrivals of embassies and tribute from Little P'o-lü is recorded right down to A. D. 755.⁹

Later
Chinese
interven-
tion.

⁵ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 9 sq.; *Serindia*, i. p. 55 sqq.; also my paper *A Chinese expedition across the Pamirs and Hindukush*, *G.J.*, 1922, Feb., pp. 112 sqq.

⁶ I may point out here that the identification of the *So-i* river with the main branch of the Gilgit river which comes from Ghizar and is joined by the Yāsīn river at Gūpis is in no way impaired by the mention made elsewhere in the notice of Little P'o-lü furnished by the *T'ang Annals* that its capital *Yeh-to* 孽多 stood on the river *So-i*; see Chavannes, *Turcs occid.*, p. 150. I believe that a town is there referred to occupying the position of the present Gilgit fort and cantonment, which nature has marked out for the chief place in the main Gilgit valley.

But the natural advantages and importance of this position did not prevent those chiefs of Yāsīn who in modern times made themselves temporarily masters of Gilgit from keeping Yāsīn as their ordinary place of residence. Climatic considerations alone would account for this preference. Hence the statement about *Yeh-to* is quite compatible with what the Chinese record tells us of the presence of the king of Little P'o-lü at *A-nu-yüeh*, i. e. Yāsīn, at the time of Kao Hsien-chih's exploit.

⁷ See *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 11 sqq.; for the document itself, see Chavannes, *Turcs occid.*, pp. 214 sq.

⁸ Cf. Chavannes, *Notes addit.*, *T'oung-pao*, 1904, p. 88, note 2.

⁹ See Chavannes, *loc. cit.*, pp. 85 sq., 93.