

further upon the large 'Tati' area known as 'Kōne-shahr', which marks the site of an earlier settlement (Map No. 22. c, D. 4).<sup>8</sup> That this was occupied also during part of the Muhammadan period was made probable by a Sung copper coin with the Nien-hao *Chih-ho* (A. D. 1054-6), which I purchased, and a Muhammadan silver coin shown to me at Charchan, both declared to have been found on the wind-eroded 'Tati' near Yalghuz-dong-mazār.<sup>9</sup>

Irrigation  
resources of  
Charchan.

In the north and north-west also the cultivated area had been appreciably extended. Moreover the endeavour to utilize the old canal, marked on the map as *Yangi-üstang*, for a new colony to the west and north-west of the present oasis had been successfully resumed. Water in the reopened canal had been brought to the point where the caravan route crosses it, and a couple of miles to the north I observed ground cleared, and homesteads built, in anticipation by prospective settlers. I have already remarked upon the abundant water-supply assured to the oasis by the Charchan river and upon the possibility of greatly extended irrigation, if only means are found of overcoming the difficulties in respect of labour that result from the geographical position of Charchan and the economic conditions prevailing in the Tārīm basin. That the existing canal carries far more water than can be used for the cultivation of all land actually taken up on the left bank was evident from what I saw on a visit to the canal head, situated about seven miles from Charchan-bāzār, and on the route to Kapa.<sup>10</sup> The main canal, there about 60 feet wide and 2½ feet deep, is filled at all seasons, and the condition of the ground on either side showed that it is liable to be frequently flooded by overflow from the carelessly kept embankments. Nowhere either there or about the cultivated area did I notice any salt efflorescence. The fertility of the soil is proved by the fact that fruit of all kinds, with the exception of grapes, can be grown in plenty at Charchan even on newly reclaimed land.

My two days' halt at Charchan had enabled me to hire nine additional camels much needed for my contemplated work in the Lop desert. But if I was thereby reassured as regards the important problem of transport, this was more than counterbalanced by the news I received there that a serious disturbance had just occurred at Charkhlik, the chief inhabited place of the Lop region and the necessary base of supplies and labour for my intended explorations.

'Revolutionaries' at  
Charchan.

The Chinese revolution of 1911-12, which resulted in the downfall of the Manchu dynasty, had been accompanied in many parts of the 'New Dominion' by local outbreaks against the provincial administration. These had been confined entirely to the Chinese element and been fomented mainly, if not solely, by the small but turbulent floating population of ex-soldiers, office-seekers and gamblers who are to be found in all the principal towns of Chinese Turkestan and are ever on the look-out for illicit gain by blackmail and, if chance offers, by plunder. By 1913 the authority of the new republican administration backed by Yüan-shih-k'ai's central government had gradually asserted itself. In the northern and western oases it had curbed the influence and power for mischief of these undesirable Chinese elements, known to the peaceful indigenous population by the comprehensive designation of *kamar-bāz*, i. e. gamblers, or as *kara-sepech*, 'black hats', from the imitation of quasi-European costume adopted by them since the revolution. In the south of the Tārīm basin, however, the complete absence of reliable Chinese troops had prevented energetic measures being taken against them, and in consequence I had found both at Khotan and Keriya the Chinese district magistrates seriously hampered by the machinations of the leaders of these so-called 'revolutionaries', in reality adventurers and gamblers. A number of these appeared to have found a convenient field of activity in the distant oasis of Charchan. Through

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Serindia*, i. p. 301.

<sup>9</sup> The crystal bead, Char. 02 (see List below), was said to come from the same site.

<sup>10</sup> The head of the main canal has been correctly shown in the map. The separate canal there marked to the north

is but a branch of it. Another small error is the omission of route crosses in red along the route leading south as far as the canal head and along the caravan road where it crosses the oasis from west to east.