

taken. The first party from Charchan, after capturing the Bēg and what valuables they could secure at Vāsh-shahri, had proceeded quickly to Charkhlik, pretending to have been sent by the order of the Tao-t'ai of Kāshgar to arrest the Amban on an accusation of anti-revolutionary plotting. Attacked in his Ya-mên at nightfall and deserted by his attendants and the local headmen whom he had hurriedly gathered, the helpless magistrate had had to flee for life. He hid in a cultivator's house for the night; but his refuge was betrayed, and when the bandits set fire to the place in the morning and forced him to come out he was struck down and captured, all the local Muhammadans looking on with placid indifference. He was then subjected to tortures until he disclosed the place where his official moneys were hidden, and after some days cruelly put to death.

Revolu-  
tionary  
régime at  
Charkhlik.

The leader of the band of 'patriots' had set himself up as Amban *ad interim* and was duly obeyed by the local headmen, Rōze Bēg himself included. The Ya-mên establishment promptly resumed work under him; a letter justifying the 'patriots' action was duly dispatched to the Governor-General at Urumchi, and for a few days all seemed to go on smoothly, while the party helped themselves freely to what good things and money the head-quarters of the poor Lop district could offer. Fortunately the new Amban's 'revolutionary' régime proved short-lived, and the introduction addressed to him which I had brought from Charchan proved as useless as that addressed to his predecessor. Within less than a week there arrived from far-away Kara-shahr in the north a small detachment of reliable Tungan troops. The previous Amban had been forewarned and had summoned help; they came too late to save him, but quickly avenged his murder. Commanded by a capable young officer and stealthily introduced at night into the oasis by the same adaptable Bēgs, these soldiers found little difficulty in surprising the 'revolutionaries'. Most of them were killed in their sleep, their leader dispatched after brief resistance, and the rest captured. So tranquillity reigned once more at Charkhlik, and Rōze Bēg was now displaying his zeal as a supporter of legitimate authority, by laying an ambush for more 'patriots' expected to come from Charchan, eager to share the spoils of 'office' and ignorant of the turn affairs at Charkhlik had taken. In this loyal task he duly succeeded within a day of my passage, thereby adding some more captives to the list of those subsequently executed at Charkhlik.

Historical  
interest of  
outbreak.

The story of this short-lived revolt deserved brief record here partly for its quasi-historical interest and partly because the conditions that it created at Charkhlik had some influence, as it turned out, on the execution of my plans for the winter's work. This revolutionary coup was the last of a succession of outbreaks that since 1912 had threatened the maintenance of proper Chinese control, and with it of peace and order, in the Tārīm basin. Its course illustrates the traditional weakness of the indigenous Muhammadan population; the facility with which any adventurers from outside, even if of a race far from warlike, can exact from it temporary obedience; and also the time-honoured Chinese methods of restoring order.<sup>14</sup> I shall presently explain how the administrative confusion arising from these local events first hampered the preparations for my travels, and then proved to be good fortune in disguise; for it saved them from being frustrated by official obstruction.

Ruined site  
of Vāsh-  
shahri.

I had examined the ruined site west of Vāsh-shahri when I first passed there in November, 1906, and a full account of it has been given in *Serindia*.<sup>15</sup> My rapid visit on this second occasion revealed very few structural remains other than those previously described, and none of importance.

<sup>14</sup> The way in which the energetic young Chinese officer sent from Kara-shahr with his handful of Tungans surprised the murderous gang of 'revolutionaries' in their sleep and practically disposed of them curiously recalls, *mutatis mutandis*, the method followed by the great Chinese leader Pan Ch'ao when in A. D. 73 he saved himself at the Shan-shan

capital, perhaps at the very site of Charkhlik, from a dangerous situation by attacking at night with only thirty-six men the camp of the unsuspecting Hun envoy and exterminating him and all his followers; cf. Chavannes, *Trois généraux chinois*, *T'oung-pao*, 1906, pp. 218 sqq.

<sup>15</sup> See *Serindia*, i. pp. 306 sqq.