

barbarians, kept the new road well away from Hāmi and carried it through waterless desert wastes, which at least offered protection from those dreaded nomadic foes.

Barkul during Later Han period.

China's political control over the 'Western Regions' had completely ceased for over sixty years when, apparently through a weakening of Hun power, the Emperor Ming of the Later Han dynasty was enabled in A.D. 73 to start those operations which, mainly through the efforts of the famous general Pan Ch'ao, brought the Tārīm basin and the adjoining territories again under Chinese domination. This time it was from the side of Hāmi and the easternmost T'ien-shan that the Chinese advance took place, and to this fact we owe the comparative abundance of references in the Later Han Annals to the region of Barkul and the historical events that it witnessed. These data are supplemented by an interesting Chinese inscription of A.D. 137 preserved near the town of Barkul, and its publication in M. Chavannes' masterly treatise *Dix inscriptions chinoises de l'Asie Centrale*³ has given that great scholar occasion to collect in the same place a number of Chinese records that throw light on the role played by Barkul during the second epoch of China's Central-Asian expansion.

Huns of 'White Mountains'

The importance of this role is brought out in a striking fashion by the account of the imperial deliberations in A.D. 72 which preceded the start of that renewed expansion.⁴ We are told in it that one of the military leaders who subsequently were entrusted with the initial enterprise urged the following view: 'It is necessary first to attack the tribes of the *Po-shan* 白山 (the 'White Mountains') and to secure *I-wu* 伊吾 (Hāmi) . . . At I-wu there is the tribe *Hu-yen* 呼衍 which is in the south of the Hsiung-nu; to destroy it will mean to break the left (eastern) horn [of the Hsiung-nu]. After that it will be possible to attack the Hsiung-nu.' The term 'White Mountains', as a modern Chinese text quoted by M. Chavannes points out, was used in Han times for the designation of the snowy range south of Barkul. But we can scarcely go wrong in assuming that it extended also to the immediately adjoining Karlik-tāgh.

Chinese advance upon Hāmi in A. D. 73.

The account given of the operations actually carried out in A.D. 73 directly takes us to the eastern extremity of the T'ien-shan.⁵ We are told in the Later Han Annals that they were undertaken against the Northern Huns by three separate forces starting from *Chiu-ch'üan* 酒泉 or Su-chou, *Chü-yen* 居延 which is said to be situated near the termination of the Etsin-gol, and from *P'ing-ch'êng* 平城, near Ta-t'ung fu in Shan-hsi. Leaving aside the last column, which was manifestly intended to threaten the Northern Huns in their main seats on the Altai, it is clear that the other two must have been operating towards the Karlik-tāgh from the south-east and east across the Pei-shan. The force operating from the side of Su-chou reached the T'ien-shan, defeated the Hu-yen king with great slaughter and put him to flight as far as the lake *P'u-lei* 蒲類, or the lake Barkul. The victory was gained under the leadership of Pan Ch'ao and first brought distinction to this great commander. A garrison was then left in the town of I-wu or Hāmi. In the following year, A. D. 74, Chinese forces, moving out 'from the K'un-lun 崑崙 barrier of Tun-huang,⁶ attacked and defeated the barbarians of the White Mountains on the shores of the lake *P'u-lei*'. The advance was continued to *Chü-shih* 車師, i. e. the territory comprising both Turfān and the tract about the present Guchen to the north of it, and a 'Protector of the Western Countries' was installed there.

Huns of Barkul defeated.

It is clear from the notices here summarized that the Chinese forces intended to re-establish imperial control in the 'Western Countries' had first to defeat the Huns established in the eastern

³ See Chavannes, *Dix inscriptions*, pp. 17 sqq.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 19, for an extract from the *T'ung chien kang mu*.

⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 19 sq.

⁶ Regarding this head-quarters station on the Limes of Tun-huang, probably guarding the section to the NNE. of the oasis through which the present route towards Hāmi passes, cf. *Serindia*, ii. p. 754; Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 26.