

Plateau
extensively
cultivated.

On October 21st we set out from Jimasa to cross the range to the south. The route first followed the high road towards Guchen for three miles, and then turned up the scrub and grass-covered alluvial fan over which most of the streams that water the Jimasa tract descend (Map No. 28. c. 1). A wide belt of cultivation was within sight to the east, and after we had reached the hamlet of Chiu-ts'ai-yüan, the low spurs on either side of the route were seen to be terraced into fields cultivated by rainfall only. A narrow defile leading through an outer chain of hills brought us to a wide open plateau stretching up gently towards the foot of the snow-covered range and almost everywhere under cultivation. The total absence of irrigation channels showed that here, on a belt stretching from about 4,500 to 6,000 feet in elevation, rain and snow assured enough moisture for successful agriculture. The farms of the Chinese colonists who have been attracted to this fertile ground are widely scattered over it in small isolated groups. It was only on reaching the far-stretching line of shops and inns at Ch'üan-tzū-chieh, where we halted (Fig. 292), that some idea could be gained of the extent and manifest prosperity of this settlement. Everything about the houses, temples, &c., pointed to recent occupation and rapid expansion. The place, which is built almost entirely of timber, serves as the trading centre for a wide stretch of submontane cultivation, dating from the reconquest of the 'New Dominion'. We found its booths and inns thronged with Chinese cultivators, Tungans and Turfān traders.

Nomadic
occupation
of grazing
grounds.

I was interested to observe also among this mixed crowd the fine stalwart figures of Kazaks, the latest arrivals in the neighbourhood. Their flocks and herds were grazing higher up in the valleys that debouch on this table-land between forest-clad slopes in full view from Ch'üan-tzū-chieh. I was struck again by the frequency among these Turkī-speaking nomads of fine 'Caucasian' features, such as greyish-blue or neutral coloured eyes and high-ridged or aquiline noses. Their appearance necessarily turned my thoughts to the people who once spoke 'Kuchean', the Indo-European tongue largely preserved in Turfān texts and there designated as *Tukhrī*. We must suppose them to have held in Han times both the Turfān basin and 'Posterior Chü-shih', the tract through which I was just approaching it. We are not likely ever to know how much of so-called 'Aryan' blood had been infused through intercourse with them into the succession of Turkish tribes, such as Huns, Avars, Western Turks, Uigurs, &c., who moved along the northern slopes of the T'ien-shan and temporarily extended their sway over this fertile submontane region. But that some such admixture must have occurred seems evident from the fact that just those portions of the T'ien-shan which comprise such excellent grazing grounds as those to be found between the northern slopes of the Bogdo-ula range and the valleys of Yulduz and Tekes, are bordered on the south by territories where we know that 'Kuchean' or 'Tukhrī' was spoken by the settled population of the oases.

Residence
of 'Posterior
king of
Chü-shih'.

I regret that the practical considerations previously indicated would not allow me time to explore the fertile submontane belt, which, from the information received, must be assumed to extend along the foot of the range both to the north-west and south-east of Ch'üan-tzū-chieh. There is, I believe, good reason to suppose that we have to look within it for the position for that residence of the 'Posterior king of Chü-shih' which both the Former and Later Han Annals agree in placing in the *Wu-t'u* valley 務塗谷.⁸ The *Wei lio* mentions the town of *Yü-lai* 於賴 as the capital of the 'Posterior king of Chü-shih'. But, as M. Chavannes has pointed out, this town may well have been situated in the *Wu-t'u* valley.⁹ We shall see farther on that the Chinese ambassador Wang Yen-tê, when proceeding in A.D. 982 from the 'Anterior Court' of the Kao-ch'ang kingdom or Turfān to the 'Posterior Court', undoubtedly followed the route leading across the Pa-no-p'a

⁸ Cf. Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1907, p. 211; also *ibid.*, 1905, p. 558; Wylie, *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, xi, p. 106.

⁹ See Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1905, p. 558, note 2.