

dropped down into a hollow containing the charming little oasis of Shaftulluk, which stands at an elevation of close on 3,000 feet. Its luxuriant orchards and arbours are watered by a lively spring rising about 200 yards higher up. The still green foliage of the fruit trees was delightful to behold after the barren scenery through which we had passed since we crossed the range. No wonder that a Ziārat and mosque rose close to the life-giving spring, evidently to mark local worship of ancient date.

Next day an easy march of nineteen miles across a steadily descending Sai, first of stone and then of gravel, brought us down to the northern edge of the main Turfān oasis. The monotony was relieved only where the route skirted a portion of the shallow Wadi where the water of Shaftulluk, after flowing for about three miles below the surface, breaks out again in a little brook and irrigates in succession three tiny patches of cultivation known as Kīchik. After a march of about nine miles, we crossed a wide dry flood-bed coming from the outer hills. It is joined by several smaller Wadis farther on and carries occasional drainage towards the deep-cut 'Yār' bed which passes to the east of the ruined site of Yār-khoto.

March to  
edge of  
Turfān  
cultivation.

The view obtained on our descent of this big gravel glacis was exceptionally wide and clear. It extended from the snowy peaks of the watershed range right across the dark stretches of Turfān cultivation to the long white belt of salt-encrusted ground marking the lowest part of the Turfān depression. In the far distance, the desert hills of the Chöl-tāgh, forming the southern rim of the basin, came into view in dim outlines. As the ground sloped so uniformly, it was difficult to realize that the lowest portion of this vast vista lay close on four thousand feet below the point of departure of our march from Shaftulluk. The first strings of Kārēz wells, those characteristic features of Turfān cultivation, were passed on the bare gravel Sai two miles before we reached the edge of the cultivated area, as sharply marked off here as elsewhere around Turfān. A couple of miles more, past open canals and fields that appeared to have been recently brought under cultivation, brought us to the village tract of Yār-mahalla, where we were hospitably received in the comfortable home of Iḥrār Khān, the Nōgai owner of a cotton press and late Russian Ak-sakāl.

View across  
Turfān  
basin.

It only remains for us now to compare the results of our actual survey of the route we have followed from the ancient site north of Jimasa to Turfān, with what the previously mentioned itinerary of the T'ang Annals tells us of the journey from Chiao-ho or Yār-khoto to Pei-t'ing. The passage in Chapter XL of the *T'ang shu*, according to M. Chavannes' rendering, runs as follows: <sup>1a</sup> 'Starting from the sub-prefecture [of *Chiao-ho* 交河], if one moves northward for 80 *li*, one arrives at the hostelry of *Lung-ch'üan* 龍泉, "the Dragon Spring". Farther to the north, one enters a mountain gorge and passing through *Liu-ku* 柳谷, "the Valley of the Willows", crosses the [mountain called] *Chin-sha ling* 金沙嶺, "the Mountain of the Golden Sand", at the end of 130 *li*. Passing through the Chinese frontier post of *Shih-hui* 石會 one arrives at the town of the Protectorate of Pei-t'ing 北庭, at the end of 160 *li*.'

Itinerary  
from Yār-  
khoto to  
Pei-t'ing.

That *Chiao-ho*, the ancient capital of Turfān, literally '[the town] between the [two] rivers', is identical with the ruined site of Yār-khoto, 'the town between the Yārs', is subject to no doubt. Leading thence to the north-north-west the present route towards Jimasa and Guchen brings us Shaftulluk after a march of approximately 18 miles. This 'Langar' with its fine spring is undoubtedly the best halting-place for the traveller who crosses the barren glacis of the mountains towards the valley that gives the most direct access to the watershed northward. Accordingly we may quite safely place there the 'hostelry of *Lung-ch'üan*', 'the Dragon Spring', and recognize in its name an appropriate Chinese designation for the life-giving fountain in the midst of a stony wilderness. Chinese fancy has always been as prone to associate striking natural features with the celestial monsters as Indian imagination is to recognize works of Śiva, &c., in Svayāmbhū

Hostelry of  
'Dragon  
Spring'  
located.

<sup>1a</sup> See *Turcs occid.*, p. 11.