

identity of which with the territory of *Shan* 山 of the Han Annals has been rightly recognized by M. Chavannes, as well as by the Chinese antiquarian Hsü Sung, can with complete certainty be located in the western Kuruk-tāgh.⁷ Of the territory of *Wei-li* which lay 240 *li* to the west of the 'capital' of Mo-shan, it has been shown that it corresponds with equal clearness to the tract south of Korla which is irrigated by canals from the Konche-daryā and is now known from its recent administrative head-quarters as Kara-kum or Konche (Map No. 25. A. 1, 2).⁸ The map will show that Li Tao-yüan, or rather the source from which his information was gathered, when referring to a river-course which passed south of *Mo-shan*, i.e. the western Kuruk-tāgh, and continuing to the east passed south of the 'town of Chu-pin' towards Lou-lan, must allude in the first place to the Konche-daryā; for this skirts all along the foot of the western Kuruk-tāgh, and, in respect of that portion of its actual course which extends from Sai-cheke (Map No. 25. B. 2) down to the vicinity of the ruined watch-station Kurghān to be described farther on (Map No. 25. C. 2), lies in the direct continuation of the line of the Kuruk-daryā.⁹ And that a direct connexion once existed between the portion of the Konche-daryā course just mentioned and the Kuruk-daryā at Ying-p'an was conclusively proved by the dry river-beds we subsequently found south of Kurghān bearing in the direction of Ying-p'an.

The Konche-daryā, which now from above Kurghān takes a more southerly course, approaching branches of the Tārīm east of Tikenlik and ultimately being absorbed by it, is by itself a considerable river. It carries the whole of the drainage which the Kara-shahr valley receives from the high T'ien-shan range and its well-watered plateaus of Yulduz, after the Baghrash lake has helped to store it, particularly at the time of the melting snows. Owing to the effect of the big reservoir thus created, the volume of the Konche-daryā is far less affected by seasonal variations than that of any of the rivers flowing into the Tārīm basin. This point, which has already been duly noted by Dr. Hedin,¹⁰ must necessarily add to the value possessed by the water-supply of the Konche-daryā, wherever local conditions would permit it to be used for purposes of irrigation. The large volume of this supply is well attested by available measurements.¹¹ Hence we might well be inclined to assume that the water brought down by the Konche-daryā, when it flowed in what is now the dry bed of the Kuruk-daryā, would by itself have sufficed for maintaining such cultivation as once existed at its ancient deltaic termination around the Lou-lan site.

Volume of
Konche-
daryā.

But two considerations must warn us against drawing this conclusion too hastily. One is an obvious consequence of the fact that in an area where the differences of level are so slight as they are in the whole of this riverine belt of the Lop region, frequent and extensive changes in the river-courses are bound to occur. Therefore, just as we now find the Konche-daryā interlacing

Konche-
daryā inter-
lacing with
Tārīm
branches.

⁷ See above, p. 292 sq.

⁸ See *Serindia*, iii. p. 1231; below, p. 777.

⁹ The view here expressed as regards the direct connexion between the Konche-daryā and the Kuruk-daryā had been rightly indicated already by Colonel Kozlov in a passage of his paper on 'Lob-nor' in the *Journal of the Russian Geographical Society*, 1898, xxxiv, p. 112, as quoted by Hedin, *Reisen in Z.-A.*, p. 74.

Colonel Kozlov was the first explorer who, in 1893, actually touched the Kuruk-daryā at two places south of Ältmish-bulak and again at Ying-p'an. The passage quoted shows that he fully appreciated the true significance of his discovery.

¹⁰ Cf. Hedin, *Reisen in Z.-A.*, p. 69.

¹¹ Dr. Hedin on March 11 observed a discharge of nearly

72 cubic metres or about 2,530 cubic feet per second at the bridge of Korla, and rightly called attention to the notable fact that the level of the river undergoes practically no change even at the time when the ice melts. It is significant that on March 27 he found almost the same volume, viz. 69 cubic metres per second, at Turfān-karaul or Konche-örtang (Map No. 25. C. 3); cf. *ibid.*, p. 77. I myself measured a discharge of about 1,890 cubic feet per second on March 28 at the ferry near Karakum. This was the season when the first spring irrigation absorbed much water in the oases about Korla.

It deserves to be noted also that the Konche-daryā, flowing throughout in a deep-cut single main bed, is unfordable all the way from Korla to below Tikenlik.