

conditions, and receive their water-supply from the same mountain range. For meeting the needs of a great administrative centre, its staff, troops, and the floating population that always collects at such places (e. g. at the present Urumchi), Bugur must have offered, in old times as now, much greater facilities than its small eastern neighbours.

The other point is furnished by a comparison of the distances which the *Ch'ien Han shu* indicates as separating Wu-lei from Wei-hsü, i. e. Korla, on the one side and Wu-lei from Kuchā, on the other. The former distance is stated to be 500 *li*, the latter 350 *li*. Now the actual road distances as measured by us on the high road from Korla to Bugur-bāzār and from there to Kuchā town amounted to 107 and 67 miles, respectively. The proportion between these mileages approximates closely enough to that between the figures in the *Ch'ien Han shu*, and would agree with it still more closely if it was possible, in ancient times, to follow a straighter line from Tim westwards.¹⁷ But the proportion of the actual road distances could in no way be reconciled with that of the Han text if Wu-lei were to be located at Yangi-hissār, and still less if at Chādir.¹⁸

Road
distances
indicated
for Wu-lei.

Strategic
importance
of Bugur.

It only remains to point out that the position of Bugur was excellently adapted from a strategic point of view for the seat of the chief representative of the Chinese Empire holding political and military control in the Tārīm basin. He could, from there, keep watch over the great northern highway along the foot of the T'ien-shan, which then as now was the chief artery of intercourse and commerce in the whole region. Its safety was of paramount importance to the west-bound silk trade of China. Near enough to the Lou-lan route to receive support from the Kan-su bases, the Protector General was in a position to guard those points at which Hun irruptions chiefly threatened to debouch. Political considerations also may well have played their part in fixing the administrative centre away from the much larger States of Kuchā and Kara-shahr, which were capable of offering serious opposition in times of trouble, and yet within easy striking distance of them both. Finally there was the advantage of having safe access on the south to the conterminous territory of Ch'ü-li, organized long before as a base of supplies for Chinese military needs, and thence also to Shan-shan or Lop, commanding the head of that 'southern route' with the protection of which Chêng Chi had been charged before he became Protector General.¹⁹ Conditions in more than one important aspect had changed greatly by the time when full Chinese control was again extended into the western regions under the T'ang. But even then we find the 'Protectorate of An-hsi' governing the 'Four Garrisons' established by A. D. 658 at Kuchā, only three marches west of Bugur.

SECTION III.—FROM BUGUR TO KUCHĀ

On April 12th I set out from Bugur for Kuchā by the high road, while Afrāz-gul with a local guide was sent southward in order to survey the ground along a dry branch of the Inchike-daryā, near which some ruins were reported in the direction of the south-eastern outliers of Kuchā cultivation. I wished myself to follow the high road in order to examine more closely some ruins that I had previously noticed on my passage in January, 1908, but which now seemed of greater interest in view of the observations collected along the ancient route from Ying-p'an to beyond Korla. For over ten miles after leaving Bugur-bāzār the road led through continuous cultivation except where it traversed a stretch of scrubby steppe covered with *shōr* before crossing an old river-bed known as Dinār from the name of a village higher up. Canals taking off from it irrigate the

Start for
Kuchā.

¹⁷ See above, ii. pp. 788 sq.

¹⁸ For the sake of comparison I may note here that the present Chinese official road reckoning, arrived at as elsewhere in the new Dominion by very rough measurements, puts the

distance from Korla to Bugur-bāzār at 520 *li* and that from Bugur-bāzār to Kuchā town at 300 *li*.

¹⁹ See De Groot, *Hunnen*, p. 206.