

abandoned cultivation traced there to the south-east of Yangi-hissār and Bugur, together with the 'Tatis' reported south of Charchi, strongly support this assumption³—a distinctly shorter, because straighter, line would have been available for ancient traffic between the ruined station marked by the mound of *Tim* at the western end of Korla cultivation and Bugur.⁴ The length of the stage, 200 *li*, indicated between the town of *Yü-shu* and the military post of *Yü-lin* (literally the 'elm grove') suggests that no place of any importance was passed by the road of T'ang times between the Korla oasis and a station somewhere to the south of Eshme or Chādir. This is easily accounted for by the nature of the country through which the assumed direct route line must have passed.

Location of
stations W.
of Bugur.

It would serve no useful purpose, in the absence of direct archaeological evidence, to propose conjectures about the exact location of the next two stages, *Lung-ch'üan* (the 'Dragon Spring') and *Tung-i-p'i*. That these must be looked for to the east of the present cultivated area of Bugur seems clear. As regards *Ch'ih-an* and *Hsi-i-p'i*, the last two stages before Kuchā, we may allow ourselves perhaps to be guided on the one hand by the proportion of the distances and on the other by the physical conditions that determine halting-places on the line which the road west of Bugur must have followed in ancient times as it does nowadays. If we are right in doing so, either the present small roadside station of Chöl-ābād or the ruined post of Kuyuk-tura to the east of it would suggest itself as a likely position for *Ch'ih-an*. The distance given as separating *Ch'ih-an* from Kuchā, the seat of the An-hsi Protectorate, 120 *li*, is double that which the itinerary shows between *Ch'ih-an* and the nearest post eastwards, *Hsi-i-p'i*, viz. 60 *li*. This same proportion of 2 : 1 holds good, as the map shows, if we compare either the distance from Chöl-ābād to Kuchā with the distance from Yangi-ābād to Chöl-ābād, or the distance from Kuyuk-tura to Kuchā with that from Lai-su to Kuyuk-tura.

³ Cf. above, p. 789. I had heard in 1908 of such wind-eroded sites with pottery debris south of Charchi being visited by villagers when in search of fuel.

At Eshme, too, I was told of an old *terelgha* traceable at a considerable distance to the south of the present small oasis. This itself was revived by forcible colonization subsequently to the Chinese reconquest after the last Muhammadan rebellion.

⁴ The village of *Köne-örtang*, the 'old postal station', shown in the map and about four miles north of Bugur-bāzār, marks the approximate point where the direct route coming from Korla probably passed into the cultivated area of Bugur. As its name shows, it was also the regular stage for traffic before the present district head-quarters were established at Bugur-bāzār.