

valley at its head is certainly far shorter and offers no serious difficulty for laden ponies.² During the winter months, when heavy snow lies on the passes crossed by the cart-road to the south, the Yeshil-köl route, which then runs partly over the ice of the lake, is in fact the only one used.

It therefore seems safe to assume that this, the most direct route, was that mainly followed by the Chinese travellers and troops of whose moves across the Pāmirs towards Shughnān we have definite historical record. Here it must suffice to refer to the account of Kao Hsien-chih's famous expedition of A. D. 747 across the Pāmirs and Hindukush, which I have fully discussed elsewhere,³ in the course of which that great commander personally led a considerable force from Kāshgar to Sarikol and Shughnān; also to the journeys of the Buddhist monk Wu-k'ung, who in A. D. 751-2 passed from Kāshgar to Shughnān, and on his way back from India more than thirty years later again passed from Shughnān to Kāshgar.⁴ In the case of the Chinese pursuit in 1759 of the fugitive Khōjas from Kāshgar, there is direct evidence of the use of this route in the Chinese inscription of Süme-tāsh to be referred to below.⁵ Nor would Süme-tāsh have been a scene of bloodshed in 1892 had its position at the eastern end of the Yeshil-köl not marked it out to the Chinese and then to the Afghāns as a suitable place for watching the route to Shughnān leading along the northern shore of the lake.⁶

Historical
use of
Yeshil-köl
route.

A further remark relates to the Būruman ridge, to which the route from the uppermost Ghund valley ascends immediately above the western extremity of the lake. With the experience recently gained at the large newly formed Sārēz lake, it was difficult to overlook those topographical features which seem to suggest that the Yeshil-köl derived its existence, at least in its present shape, from a similar cataclysm at some earlier period. To the eyes of the non-geologist the formation of the Būruman ridge closing the western end of the lake (Fig. 381) seemed to bear a close resemblance to the newly formed barrage which has created the Sārēz lake. Of features indicating that the damming up of the lake at the Būruman barrier was due to an accumulation of moraines⁷ I failed to see any trace. On the other hand a great gap on the deeply furrowed slopes of the range opposite showed the spot from which the landslide had shaken down the rock debris that now block what was before a deep-cut river-bed. The Būruman ridge, where the bridle-path crosses it, rises about 400 feet above the level of the lake,⁸ and Fig. 383 shows the fine view which it offers over the winding sheet of turquoise-blue water. The Būruman ridge is seen in Fig. 380, as it presents itself from the mouth of the Little Marjanai valley.

View from
Būruman
ridge.

About a mile before passing the picturesque little peninsula of Kamparchuk (Fig. 378) the route crosses a troublesome rock face, where the loads of the ponies had to be lightened. Farther on, near the grassy delta of the stream coming from the Great Marjanai valley, I was shown a circular stone enclosure, about 55 yards in diameter, known as Khitai-kurghān, and two smaller ruined enclosures of the same type within 200 yards' distance. They probably mark a station maintained during some period when the route to Shughnān was in use by Chinese. Of uncertain date are also three small destroyed mounds half a mile ahead. Near them a black stone block bears the Islamic creed and an invocation of 'Alī inscribed in sgraffito.

Passage
along lake
shore.

² Personal experience justifies my making this statement notwithstanding the remark of Schultz, *Forschungen im Pamir*, p. 66, about all traffic being obliged to make the great detour over the Koi-tezek pass.

³ Cf. *Serindia*, i. p. 53; *Geogr. Journal*, 1922, February, pp. 117 sq.

⁴ See S. Lévi et Chavannes, 'L'itinéraire d'Ou-k'ong', *J. As.*, 1895, Sept.-Oct., pp. 346 sq., 362; also below, p. 880.

⁵ See below, ii. p. 858; Curzon, *Pamirs*, p. 46.

⁶ See below, ii. p. 858.

⁷ The huge landslide is duly mentioned in Schultz, *loc. cit.*, p. 67, but the formation of the lake ascribed to moraines.

⁸ The Russian map shows the elevation of Yeshil-köl as 12,500 feet; Olufsen, *Unknown Pamirs*, p. 6, as 12,828 ft. (3,921 metres). My own aneroid record points to about 12,700 feet.