

position. The use of the designation of the ' Five Shih-nis ', with which we meet also in Wu-k'ung's narrative, is accounted for by the division of the territory into five valleys with distinct chiefships, and accords with a traditional notion to be presently mentioned. The reference to the warlike and marauding propensities of the people is perfectly borne out by the reputation the Shughnīs have enjoyed down to very recent times. Their raids are still a subject of lively recollection among the people of Wakhān, and there can be little doubt that the present occupation of Sarīkol by a population speaking a language differing but very slightly from Shughnī is the result of conquest from the side of Shughnān.⁴ Both raids and outside settlement must largely be attributed to the very limited extent of arable land in the narrow valleys of Shughnān and the absence of adequate grazing grounds. To this cause is due the migratory tendency and spirit of enterprise that the Shughnīs undoubtedly display at the present time. Driven forth by the poverty of their homeland, Shughnīs proceed annually in numbers to Farghāna for temporary work as farm labourers, while plenty of others seek employment as servants both at Kābul and at large centres like Margilān and Kōkand in the north. Coming from Wakhān with its rather ' tame ' submissive population, I was particularly struck by the independent and versatile ways of the average Shughnī.

The division of the territory into five separate autonomous chiefships, which the T'ang Annals specially mention, is a direct result of its geographical configuration. Instead of being confined to a single main valley like that of the Āb-i-Panja in Wakhān, the population of Shughnān lives in a series of different tracts, each having a distinct character of its own and separated from the rest by high mountains or the equally effective barriers of difficult river defiles. A look at the map shows clearly enough four such natural divisions : the valleys of Ghund and Shākh-dara, the valley of the Panj or Oxus from below Ghārān to the border of Rōshān above Kala-i-Wāmar, and Rōshān itself. The last appears always to have been closely linked politically with Shughnān proper, and the language spoken there is a dialect but slightly differing from Shughnī. If we assume that the land on either side of the Oxus was counted as a separate tract, which would be natural enough in view of the difficulties presented by the river crossing, we arrive at the five distinct chiefships. Else possibly Ghārān may have been included in the reckoning recorded by the Annals.

Division
into
autonomous
chiefships.

From inquiries which subsequently were greatly furthered by Tūrān Bēg, a very intelligent nonagenarian of Shākh-dara and a fountain-head of local information, I ascertained that the use of a closely corresponding traditional designation of Shughnān as *Haft ṣadhā-i-Shughnān* was still current. Local opinion was not quite agreed as to the tracts exactly counted among these seven ' Ṣads ', but generally favoured the inclusion of Darmārak, Kala-i-Bar-Panja, Parshenīw,⁵ Khāruk,⁶ Shākh-dara, Ghund, Rōshān. There was, however, consensus as to the fact that until the early part of the last century Ghund, Shākh-dara, and Rōshān were ruled by separate Mīrs acknowledging but a nominal subordination to the Mīrs of Shughnān, whose residence was at Kala-i-Bar-Panja.⁷ A somewhat similar state of things is likely to have prevailed in the seventh-eighth centuries A. D., from which the record in the T'ang Annals dates.

Traditional
reckoning of
seven tracts.

⁴ I was unable to trace definite traditional knowledge as to the date of this settlement of Shughnīs in Sarīkol. It is supposed to have taken place ' a very long time ago '. Yet, according to what I learned in Shākh-dara, relations of kinship are still maintained between certain families living there and others settled in Sarīkol.

⁵ Parshenīw is the chief village of the fertile tract along the right bank of the Oxus below Khāruk.

⁶ This is the Persian form of the name given to the valley below the confluence of the streams of Ghund and Shākh-

dara. The Shughnī pronunciation of the name sounded *Kharagh*. The officially adopted Russian spelling is *Khorok*.

The village of Khāruk, unimportant before it became the seat of the Russian military and ' political ' authority, was at the time of my visit said to include 60 homesteads. It also boasted of several shops kept by Shughnīs and a couple of Bajaurī traders.

⁷ According to Tūrān Bēg, tradition remembers five ' Mīrs of Shughnān ', succeeding to each other in direct descent : Shāh Wanjī, Shāh Amīr Bēg, Kōbād Khān, Abdur-