

drain all the western and northern portions of the Lop basin. As we have already seen, there is no reason to believe that the ancient inhabitants of the basin were more skillful in the art of irrigation than their modern successors. Because of their isolated location, neither Lulan or Tikkenlik has ever suffered very greatly from war, and great disasters have not been due to human causes. Manifestly, the present condition of Tikkenlik is far inferior to that of ancient Lulan. This may be due either to a lack of settlers and of enterprise, as is usually assumed in such cases, or to physical causes. Let us examine conditions to-day as compared with those of two thousand years ago.

Previous to 1889, there was nothing which could properly be called a town, or even a respectable village, on the lower Tarim and Konche rivers. The only inhabitants were a few fishermen and shepherds, whose temporary dwellings and crude utensils of skin and wood leave only the slightest traces, not at all comparable to the houses and pottery of Lulan. In 1889, a Chinese amban, seeing so much good land and water going to waste, as he thought, attempted to found a town. He dug a canal and opened a tract of land at Jan Kul, thirty miles west of Tikkenlik, on the Tarim River. People from Turfan, Korla, Kucha, and elsewhere flocked in to get land. By 1890, the population numbered over two thousand; and Jan Kul, as the people say, "became a town," that is, a bazaar was established and an amban installed. Almost immediately, however, the fields became saline, and in 1892 the place was abandoned, most of the settlers returning whence they came. Meanwhile, in 1891, about a thousand people had come from Turfan to Dural, eight miles