

names "marsh" and "lake" are both used for Lop-Nor in the Chinese work where the history of the town is recorded. According to Himly's translation, "Lop-Nor streamed over its banks, and laid waste the land; the foundations of the city still exist. In the time of Chi-ta [1308-1311 A. D.] the overflowing water, which in the morning reached the west gate, and in the evening the east gate, was driven by the wind into the form of a dragon." Apparently, the level of the lake rose so as to overwhelm the city completely. It is impossible to determine whether the rise was temporary like that of 1900, or permanent. The Lopliks do not appear to have come to Lop-Nor till some centuries after the destruction of the Dragon Town. When they came, the lake still appears to have been larger than now. A familiar tradition relates that in the days of their ancestors, two or three centuries ago, the lake and the Tarim River were larger than to-day. One of the most intelligent among them said to me: "The water grew less, and that made the fish die. Then our fathers could not get enough to eat, and they began to die or move away."

More trustworthy evidence of the recent greater size of the lake is found in six little strands discovered by Hedin in his survey of the old lake-bed. They lie below the main twelve-foot strand, and appear to correspond closely to the lower set of old beaches at Lake Pangong. They are marked by rows of tamarisk bushes, mostly small, showing that the strands were temporary, and also by sand and limnea shells. On the older strands the bushes are for the most part dead, while on the younger many are living. There is no other vegetation in the vicinity. The fact that even on the oldest