

PART IV.

THE SOUTHERN BORDER REGION OF LOP-NOR

This last part of my treatise is to deal with the finds obtained from three ruined sites at Charchan, Vash-shahri and Miran which I visited in 1928. They have been well known for many years. Though my collections from there are in no way unique they are nevertheless of interest as originating from stations on the Road of the South, the Silk Road which skirts the southern rim of the Tarim Basin.

I. CHARCHAN.

In "Serindia" STEIN gives a well presented collection of data about Charchan as furnished by Chinese historical records, of which I give a short extract here.

In Han-time the name of the oasis was Chü-mo, and it was still occupied towards the end of the third century A. D. It was the capital of a small kingdom. The Kharoshthi form Calmadana is most likely meant to reproduce the indigenous name of Charchan. According to the Buddhist pilgrim SUN YÜN it was called Tso-mo in A. D. 519, and was then held by the T'u-yü-hun, a nomad tribe occupying the high plateaus to the west of the Kuku-nor lake. In 640 Charchan was a part of the vast dominion of the Western Turks. When the famous HSÜAN TSANG returned from India about 645 he found no inhabitants inside the lofty city walls of Charchan, or Che-mo-t'o-na as he calls it; this name is apparently a reproduction of Calmadana. The place was garrisoned again some fifteen years after the passage of HSÜAN TSANG. In the period 674—76 its name was changed to Po-hsien. It is known to have been occupied in the beginning of the 8th century. At this time the place seems to have been called Padaki (Clauson, p. 302). The present name first appears as Cher-chen in a Tibetan record found in Miran. STEIN suggests that this new name is attributable to the change wrought by the T'u-yü-huns' occupation. It was partly destroyed by the Mongols, but when in 1273—74 MARCO POLO passed here, he says that Charchan was a province of Great Turkey, and that the people worshipped Mahomet.

STEIN is of the opinion that cultivation had disappeared by the end of the 18th century, probably for a long period earlier. Only after the first third of the last