

So-lei, belonging to the territory of *Hu-mi*, which has been recognized with certainty as the present Wakhān on the Upper Oxus⁷. A glance at the map shows that the bearings, as well as the relative distances, here indicated are in remarkable agreement with the geographical position of that central and most productive part of the main valley to which the name of Gilgit properly applies.

The historical notices regarding 'Little P'o-lü', rendered accessible by M. Chavannes' researches, afford proof of the political importance which the Chinese attached to the Gilgit Valley as the main line of communication between the Upper Indus and the Oxus, and of the persistent efforts made by them during the reign of the Emperor Hsüan-tsung (713-755 A. D.) to close this route against Tibetan invasion. At the commencement of that reign the king of Little P'o-lü, Mo-chin-mang, came to pay homage at the court of Hsüan-tsung, who accorded him protection and constituted his country into a military territory called *Sui-yüan*. 'Owing to its proximity to the Tibetans his country suffered much from them; the Tibetans declared to him: "It is not your kingdom which we covet, but we wish to use your route in order to attack the Four Garrisons (i.e. the present Chinese Turkestan)"'⁸.

Gilgit in the eighth century.

In 722 A. D. Mo-chin-mang, having been deprived of nine townships by the Tibetans, applied for help. The Imperial Commissioner resident at Pei-t'ing thereupon declared: 'P'o-lü is the western gate of [the territories of] the T'ang dynasty; if P'o-lü is lost [to us] then the western countries will all become Tibetan', and he dispatched a force of four thousand chosen troops, under the prefect of Kāshgar (Su-lê), to his help. Mo-chin-mang thus succoured defeated the Tibetans and recovered the nine townships. The same historical work, the *Tzū chih tung chien*, which has preserved these details, records a fresh attack upon P'o-lü by the Tibetans fifteen years later. On that occasion, 737 A. D., Chinese action took the form of a diversion from the centre of the empire, which resulted in a great defeat of the Tibetans west of the Kuku-Nor and relieved P'o-lü⁹.

After Mo-chin-mang's death 'Little P'o-lü' was ruled in succession by his sons Nan-ni and Ma-hao-lai (Ma-lai-hi). The Imperial edict concerning the latter's investiture, in 741 A. D., is still extant among the records extracted by M. Chavannes¹⁰. He too seems to have died early, and his successor Su-shih-li-chih was won over by the Tibetans, who induced him to marry a Tibetan princess and thus secured a footing in his territory. In consequence 'more than twenty kingdoms (i.e. little hill states) to the north-west' of Little P'o-lü are said by the Annalist to have become subject to the Tibetans. Their customary tribute no longer reached the Imperial court.

⁷ See *Turcs occid.*, p. 279, also pp. 152, 154, where good reasons have been advanced for the assumption that the name which the Chinese represent by *So-lei* was really that of the main branch of the Oxus, now known as Panja. For another mention of this river made in connexion with Lien-yün, a stronghold which in all probability occupied the position of the present Sarhad at the point where the route from Yasīn over the Barōghil Pass strikes the Āb-i-Panja, compare below, p. 8. Whether the town *So-lei* stood in

the same place seems doubtful.

⁸ See *Turcs occid.*, pp. 150 sq. By the term 'Four Garrisons', the territories of Kāshgar, Khotan, Kuchā, and Kara-shahr, then occupied by Chinese forces, are meant; comp. *ibid.*, p. 113 note.

⁹ See extract given *Turcs occid.*, p. 151, note 2.

¹⁰ See for a translation of this document *Turcs occid.*, pp. 211 sq.