

and the Little Pāmīr. The third column, which used 'the northern gorge', may possibly have followed the Shākh-Dara, or Ghund-Dara Valley of Shighnān, to the Oxus branch coming from the Great Pāmīr or Victoria Lake, and may, by subsequently crossing the watershed towards the Āb-i-Panja, have descended upon Sarhad from the north. It is highly probable that the division of the Chinese forces, as well as Kao Hsien-chih's move into the distant Shighnān, were intended to reduce the difficulties about supplies and transport which for so large a body of troops must have been as serious then, in the inhospitable Pāmīr region, as they would be now.

The topographical indications contained in the description of the battle by which the Chinese general rendered himself master of Lien-yün and of the route it was intended to guard, fully confirm these identifications. The stronghold itself was occupied by a thousand men, and the river in front being in flood offered a serious obstacle. Kao Hsien-chih, however, with a picked body of mounted men, succeeded in crossing unopposed and without loss. He at once led his troops, whom this success had filled with confidence, to the attack of the main force of the enemy, eight or nine thousand in number. They were posted fifteen li, or about three miles, to the south, where advantage had been taken of the mountainous ground to erect palisades. The Chinese general, having gained the heights, i.e. turned the fortified line, engaged the defenders in a fight which ended in their complete defeat with heavy loss and the precipitate flight of the survivors during the night. It is evident that this battle was fought at the entrance of the defile which leads to the Barōghil Pass ⁴.

Capture of
Lien-yün
and the
Barōghil
Pass.

Kao Hsien-chih decided to leave behind in his camp certain high officers who were opposed to a further advance, together with three thousand men worn out by the previous hardships, and ordered them to guard Lien-yün. With the rest of his troops he pushed on, and after a three days' march arrived on the summit of 'Mount T'an-chü'; 'from there downwards there were precipices for over forty li (circ. eight miles) in a straight line.' By a trick Kao Hsien-chih prevailed upon his wavering troops to effect their descent into the valley, and after three more marches was met by 'the barbarians of the town of A-nu-yüeh' offering their submission. The next day he occupied A-nu-yüeh, where the commander of his advance guard had previously entrapped the five or six chief dignitaries of the king of Little P'o-lü who were supporting the Tibetans. These he executed, and then hastened to break the bridge which led over the So-yi river at a distance of sixty li (circ. twelve miles) from A-nu-yüeh. 'Scarcely had the bridge been destroyed in the evening when the Tibetans, on foot and mounted, arrived in great numbers, but it was then too late for them to attain their object. This bridge had the length of an arrow shot; it had taken a whole year to construct it. It had been built at the time when the Tibetans, under the pretext of using its route, had by deceit possessed themselves of (Little) P'o-lü.'

Chinese
invasion of
Yasīn.

It is easy to trace on the map the successive stages of the Chinese general's progress. All details recorded of it agree accurately with the route that leads over the Barōghil saddle (12,460 feet above the sea) to the sources of the Mastūj river, and then, crossing south-eastwards the far higher Darkōt Pass (15,200 feet), descends along the Yasīn river to its junction with the main river of Gilgit. Three days are by no means too large an allowance of time for a military force accompanied by baggage animals to effect the march from the Oxus

Crossing of
Darkōt Pass
(Mt. T'an-
chü).

⁴ The account of this encounter vividly recalls the attempts made by Tibetan strategy in 1904 to bar the advance of the Tibet Mission Force near Guru and again on the Karo-Lā. In each case the main Tibetan force was content to await the attack behind stone walls erected across the open ground

of the valley, leaving it free to their opponents to occupy the commanding heights on either side. Considering how scanty timber must at all times have been about Sarhad, it appears probable that by the 'palisades' mentioned in the translation walls or sangars constructed of loose stones are really meant.