

SECTION II.—KĀSHGAR DURING THE HAN EPOCH

Northern
route from
China.

The earliest account of Kāshgar is found in the Annals of the Former Han Dynasty. We owe it to that great expansion of Chinese power into Central Asia which commenced under the Emperor Wu Ti (140-87 B. C.) after the famous journey of Chang Ch'ien (circa 139-127 B. C.) had extended Chinese knowledge of the 'Western Regions' to the Oxus and the confines of Persia. Appropriately enough Su-lê is first mentioned by the Annals in connexion with the northern of the two great roads which led from the Yü Gate (Yü-mên-kwan) and the region of Sha-chou to the Oxus and Yaxartes¹. This northern road, described as passing through Turfān (the ancient Kao-ch'ang), and thence along the southern foot of the T'ien-shan range as far as Su-lê, undoubtedly corresponds to the route via Sha-chou, Hāmi, Turfān, Kara-shahr, Kuchā, and Ak-su, which still remains the most frequented line of communication between the interior of China and Kāshgar. From Su-lê 'this road passing westward across the Ts'ung-ling mountains, goes on to Ta-wan, K'ang-chü, and the Yen-ts'ai country', regions which were long ago identified with the ancient Sogdiana². The well-known route from Kāshgar over the Terek Pass into Farghāna forms the direct and easiest approach to them from the whole of the Tārīm Basin.

Notice in
the Han
Annals.

The specific notice of the Annals concerning Su-lê informs us that the kingdom had its capital in the city of Su-lê, distant 9,350 li from Ch'ang-an, i. e. the modern Hsi-an-fu. 'The kingdom contains 1,510 families, comprising a population of 8,647, with 2,000 trained troops³.' The mention of a variety of Imperial officials stationed there shows that Su-lê, under the Chinese protectorate, finally organized about the middle of the first century B. C., formed an administrative centre of some consequence. The particular reference made to its 'market for goods' indicates the early commercial importance of Su-lê, and this is amply accounted for by the statement that 'the road to the Ta-Yue-chih, Ta-wan and K'ang-chü lies direct west.' For Chinese trade in the direction both of Sogdiana and Bactria, of the rapid growth of which after Chang Ch'ien's mission the Han Annals give us a series of interesting glimpses, Kāshgar must certainly have formed a convenient emporium⁴. The road distances recorded in the same notice eastwards to Wu-lei, the seat of the Chinese Governor-General (2,210 li), and southwards to So-chü (560 li), afford us little help, since the position of these two localities cannot be determined with certainty⁵.

According to an interpretation recently suggested by Dr. Franke⁶, we should have to recognize a reference to the foundation of Su-lê in a passage of the Former Han Annals which mentions the migration of the well-known Central-Asian tribe of the 塞, whose name is variously transcribed *Sök*, *Sz'*, *Sse*, *Ssu*, *Sa*, *Se*, &c., and whose identity with the Sacae of classical records and the Indian Śakas has long ago been established. We are told there how the king of the Sök or Sz', driven forth by the westward pressure of the Great Yüeh-chih, moved south and

haze, like a kind of Ultima Thule. Compare my remarks in the introduction to my *Rājatarāṅgīnī* translation, I. pp. 31, 35, also note on *Rājat.* viii. 2762-64.

¹ See, for a lucid analysis of the historical notices concerning these two ancient routes, Richthofen, *China*, i. pp. 459 sqq.

² Compare Wylie's translation of *Notes on the Western Regions* from the Former Han Annals, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, x. (1880), p. 21; as regards the

position of *Ta-wan* (with its capital near the present Uratepe) and of *K'ang-chü*, see Richthofen, *China*, i. pp. 450 sq.

³ See Wylie, *ibid.*, x. p. 49.

⁴ Compare Wylie, x. pp. 44 sqq.; Richthofen, *China*, i. pp. 455 sqq., 463 sq.

⁵ Regarding Wu-lei (Wylie, *Wu-luy*) see Richthofen, *China*, i. p. 460, note 2; Wylie, *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶ See 'Kaschgar und die Khorošthi', *Sb.P.A.W.*, 1903, pp. 739 sq.