

hill-men of Hunza carry cheerfully three times each month across the snowy pass and through the awful river-gorges behind it!

Icy blasts from the south accompanied us all the way to Bayik, and still pursued us next morning when we continued the march downwards to where the Taghdumbash river makes its sharp bend to the north. There I was able to investigate the remains of an ancient stronghold which, though of considerable historical interest, had by an unfortunate chance escaped me on my former passage. Hsüan-tsang, the famous Chinese traveller, on whose track I was happy to find myself again, had, when returning about 642 A.D. from long pilgrimages to Buddhist shrines of India, passed from Badakhshan across the Pamirs into Sarikol. Of the royal family of the latter region he relates in his Memoirs a curious legend.

According to old popular tradition it traced its origin to a princess of the Chinese Han dynasty who had been betrothed to a king of Persia. On her progress towards her royal spouse she had reached Chieh-p'an-t'o, or Sarikol, when the roads east and west became blocked by robbers. For safety she was placed by her escort on an isolated mountain peak protected by precipitous cliffs. But there the well-guarded princess received visits from the sun-god, and, being found *enceinte* when the road became again open, was induced by her escort to remain in Sarikol and to establish her reign there. From her miraculously born son the chiefs ruling that mountain region were supposed to have sprung.

Already in 1900 I had heard, but too late for a visit, of remains of ancient walls perched on precipitous cliffs on the left bank of the Taghdumbash river near the bend already referred to. A story commonly known to Sarikolis and Kirghiz that King Naushirwan, an ancient Persian ruler, had once placed his daughter there for safety, clings to the ruins and accounts for their popular designation, 'Kiz-kurghan,' meaning in Turki 'the tower of the princess.' This story was plainly a genuine relic of the fuller tradition current in Hsüan-tsang's days, and