

Abdullah Khān, 'the Turk', as noted above, figures vaguely in Chitrāl-Mastūj tradition as a ruler preceding Khairullah and succeeding the Ra'is or pre-Muhammadan dynasty. So he can scarcely be far removed from the seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Tradition does not assert that he actually built a fort here, and thus it seems to me very probable that the local name and the story I heard mark but a recollection of a former attempt made in Abdullah Khān's time to reoccupy this area of ancient cultivation. This assumption is supported by the mention made of the site in those remarkably accurate route surveys which Mughul Bēg, the native author, recorded about 1790. He tells us: 'Leaving Gazzin (i. e. Gazan in Jhōpu), you cross the river of Chitrāl or Ḳáshkár by a wooden bridge, and, proceeding for a distance of twelve kuroh north, reach Sar-i-Yár-Khún, the name of a desolate village at the foot of the mountains of perpetual snow—Tíraj-Mír or Sarowar.'<sup>15</sup> The description of his further march up to the 'Kotal or Pass of Palpí Sang', i. e. the Barōghil, and the distance given from Gazan, which agrees exactly with that to Abdullah-Khān Lasht, make it certain that this abandoned village site is meant by the author, and that he saw it much as it must have appeared before its recent reclamation.

Site of  
'Abdullah  
Khān's  
Lasht'.

Beyond Abdullah-Khān Lasht there extends along the river for over two miles a broad belt of jungle with thickets of willows, wild poplars, and juniper, called Chakār-kuch. Though now in places almost impenetrable, this jungle undoubtedly occupies ground once under cultivation, as shown by the lines of heaped-up stones marking the division of fields, by walled-up terraces, &c. The juniper forest continues, though with reduced width, as far as Kankhun-kuch, where a stream joins from a high pass leading across the main Hindukush watershed to Sanīn in Wakhān. Here I halted for the night. The total length of the open ground along the right river bank from above Imkip to Kankhun-kuch is fully eight miles, with a maximum width of one and a half miles, and over the lower half of this distance cultivation had been resumed in patches.

As I rode for miles past these abandoned village lands, now gradually undergoing reclamation, the sight brought back forcibly to my mind the passage of the T'ang Annals which mentions *A-shê-yü-shih-to* as the chief place of the mountain territory of Shang-mi or Mastūj.<sup>16</sup> Considering that there is certainly no larger cultivable area anywhere in the Yārkhūn Valley, and taking into account also the position assigned in Wu-k'ung's itinerary to Chū-wei, of which *A-shê-yü-shih-to* was the chief place,<sup>17</sup> it appears to me certain that 阿賒颯師多 *A-shê-yü-shih-to*<sup>18</sup> is but the Chinese transcription of an earlier form of the name of *Shuyist*, still applied in a general way to the whole of this tract of cultivable ground.

*A-shê-yü-*  
*shih-to* of  
T'ang  
Annals.

Local opinion, as I heard it at the time, was inclined to attribute the former abandonment of these lands to the increasing cold brought about by the advance of the glaciers. The latter, it is true, began from this point onwards to figure very conspicuously in the landscape. Just opposite Abdullah-Khān Lasht, a huge river of ice, known as Shayōs, was pushing its dark snout from the south low down towards the river bank (Fig. 14). The terminal ice-wall, fully 100 feet in height as it looked to me from across the river, was said to have moved forward considerably during the last few years, and a comparison of the position assigned to it in the map which is based on a survey of 1895

Abandoned  
village lands.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Raverty, *Notes on Afghānistān*, p. 188.

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Wu-k'ung after leaving Hu-mi, or Wakhān, first mentions Chū-wei (or Shang-mi) and then passes through Ho-lan and Lan-so before reaching Yeh-ho (*recte* Yeh-to) or Yasīn territory; cf. Chavannes-Lévi *L'itinéraire d'Ou-k'ong*, p. 12, and above, p. 8. In view of the explanations I have given there as to Wu-k'ung's route down the Yārkhūn and thence through Lāspur, it is clear that the 'capital' of

Chū-wei must be placed far up the Yārkhūn to permit of the mention of the territory of Ho-lan between it and Lan-so, i. e. Lāspur.

<sup>18</sup> The initial character 阿 is one of those several characters with the phonetic value of *a* or *ho* which figure at the commencement of transcribed names without representing a phonetic value; see Julien, *Méthode pour déchiffrer*, p. 53. It must be remarked, however, that the Indian names there given as examples all begin with *r*.