

the notice of the T'ang Annals already quoted and by a gloss of the *Hsi-yü-chi* which states that the indigenous name of the territory was *Hu-mi*. The same annotator also indicates as an alternative name *Chên-k'an* 鎮侃 or *Huo-k'an* 鑊侃. The latter form is found also in the notice, and may possibly be looked upon as another attempt to reproduce the name Wakhān.¹³

'The kingdom of Ta-mo-hsi-t'ie-ti', thus the *Hsi-yü-chi* tells us,¹⁴ 'is situated between two mountains; it is an ancient territory of the Tu-huo-lo (Tokhāra) kingdom. It is about fifteen or sixteen hundred li from east to west, and four or five li¹⁵ from north to south, but in its narrowest part not above one li. It lies along the River Fu-ch'u (Oxus) 縛芻 of which it follows the windings. There are mounds and hills of different heights, and plains covered with sand and stones; an icy wind blows there. The only crops are wheat and pulse, and there is little vegetation.¹⁶ This country produces excellent horses which, though small of size, stand long journeys with ease. Manners are not regulated by customs. The people are of a violent and coarse disposition; their appearance is common and ill-favoured; they wear woollen garments. For the most part they have greenish-blue eyes and thereby differ from other people. There are about ten convents, containing but a small number of monks.'

Hsüan-tsang's description of Wakhān.

'Hun-t'o-to is the capital of the kingdom. In the centre of the town there rises a convent built by the first king of the country. For its construction the hill-side has been cut and a gully filled in. In the beginning when the kingdom had not yet received the doctrine of Buddha, the people sacrificed solely to evil spirits; but for some centuries past the beneficent influence of the Law has commenced to spread.' The pilgrim then relates at great length the pious legend about the Arhat who induced the king after his cherished son's death to adopt Buddha's teaching. He also describes the miracle observed in the great Vihāra of the convent where a canopy of gilt copper suspended above a stone statue of Buddha used to move with the worshipper as he circumambulated the image, and to stop when he stopped.

The physical features of the long and narrow valley of Wakhān, as shown by the map or described by modern travellers are here given with great accuracy. The length of the valley from east to west is, indeed, over-estimated, since the total marching distance from the Wakhjir Pass down to Ishkāshim, even allowing for sinuosities of the track and the difficult ground above Sarhad, cannot exceed two hundred miles at the utmost. But the relative narrowness of the inhabitable strip of ground along the whole valley is well brought out, and it must be remembered that Hsüan-tsang had no opportunity to test personally the length of the main valley since his route across the Pāmirs left it at Langar Kisht to ascend to Victoria Lake.¹⁷ His description of the ground, confined, as usual with him, to the actual route, duly reflects the frequent interchange of shingle-covered fans, rocky undulations, and stretches of riverine sand with fields and meadow land.¹⁸

Correctness of Hsüan-tsang's description.

His remarks about the products of Wakhān still hold good. All observers agree that the strong wind that blows with little intermission throughout the winter and spring down the valley, influences unfavourably the climate and the growth of vegetation. Of the endurance shown by the small but wiry Wakhī ponies I had ample occasion to gather personal experience.¹⁹ Constant

The people of Wakhān.

to Mastūj across the Barōghil branches off. That *Ta-mo-hsi-t'ie-ti* transcribes a Skr. **Dharmasthiti* is likely enough. But the origin of this name escapes us.

¹³ Cf. Watters, *Fuan Chwang*, ii. p. 280.

¹⁴ I follow Julien's translation, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 201 sq., except where otherwise marked.

¹⁵ Thus Watters; Julien by an oversight has 'quatre à cinq cents li'.

¹⁶ Thus Watters; Julien has: 'On sème peu de blé et de légumes, et l'on cultive en quantité les fleurs et les arbres fruitiers.'

¹⁷ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 30.

¹⁸ I take my information from General Barrow's excellent *Gazetteer of the Eastern Hindu Kush*.

¹⁹ Cf. *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 72 sqq.