

exposure to a harsh climate and the coarse dress prepared from the skins and fleece of the sheep which constitute the Wakhīs' sole riches, give the inhabitants of this bleak high-lying valley a hard, quasi-savage air. There can be little doubt that the people were in Hsüan-tsang's time, as now, of that fine Galcha stock representing the *Homo Alpinus* type which has held the western and southern slopes of the Pāmirs from very early days.²⁰ The Wakhīs I saw, like the closely allied Sarikolīs, showed all the physical characteristics of the Irānian hill Tājiks in remarkable purity, an observation which the anthropometric records and photographs taken by me fully bear out.²¹ Fair hair and blue eyes are very common among them, and this accounts for the special reference which Hsüan-tsang makes to the latter. Coming from the side of Kābul where the racial composition of the population must then have been strongly influenced by Indian elements, and through Tokhāristān, where the original Irānian stock had during successive periods undergone a considerable admixture of Turkish and other foreign blood, the change in the appearance of the people after entering Wakhān must have been doubly striking to the pilgrim.

Old capital
of Wakhān.

V. de Saint-Martin first recognized the identity of Hsüan-tsang's *Hun-t'o-to* 昏獸多 with the present *Khandūt*, a fairly large village some twenty miles below the confluence of the two branches of the Āb-i-Panja and still serving as the chief place for one of the four administrative divisions of Wakhān.²² The importance of the position is marked by the ruins of an ancient fort, opposite the present fort-village, which Wood mentions; it is ascribed to pre-Muhammadan times and locally known as *Zamr-i-ātish-parast*.²³ The advantages here offered by plentiful cultivation and magnificent grazing-grounds are such that the present rulers of Wakhān are said to have contemplated at one time the removal of the seat of government from Kila Panja to Khandūt. Whether the place still retains traces of the Buddhist sanctuary mentioned in Hsüan-tsang's account only local investigation could prove.

Wu-kung's
passage
through
Wakhān.

The last Chinese notice of Wakhān during T'ang times is due to Wu-k'ung who, coming from Kāshgar in A.D. 751, passed through the district on his way to Chū-wei or Mastūj. Laconic, as is his wont, the pilgrim confines himself to the mere mention of the 'kingdom of Hu-mi' 護密, which he reached after successively crossing 'the Onion Mountains' (Ts'ung-ling), 'the passes of Yang-yü' and 'the kingdom of the five Ch'ih-ni (or Shih-ni) of the valley of Po-mi'.²⁴ By the last named undoubtedly the Pāmirs are meant, and the mention made with them of 'the kingdom of the five Ch'ih-ni (or Shih-ni)', i. e. Shighnān,²⁵ probably merely indicates that they were then reckoned as belonging to that hill chiefship on the Oxus. The aggressive strength of the hardy mountaineers of Shighnān, which asserted itself down to modern times in frequent raids across the Pāmirs, is duly noted in the T'ang Annals' account of Shih-ni and in Hsüan-tsang's description of Shih-ch'i-ni.²⁶ The reference to the Ts'ung-ling Mountains clearly shows that Wu-k'ung's route lay across Sarikol, whence he is likely to have reached Wakhān by way of the Naiza-tāsh Pass (Yang-yü?) and the Great Pāmīr.

Marco
Polo's ac-
count of
Vokhān.

After Wu-k'ung's narrative of his journey the Chinese sources of information about the Pāmirs and the adjoining regions run dry for nearly a thousand years. But that the routes leading across them from Wakhān retained their importance also in Muhammadan times is attested by the

²⁰ Cf. for references to the Galchas and their cognates further east, *Ancient Khotan*, pp. 144 sqq.

²¹ See now Mr. Joyce's *Notes, &c.* in *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, xlii. p. 467.

²² See Julien, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 425.

²³ Cf. Wood, *Source of the Oxus*,² p. 218, where the name of the village is given as *Kundut*.

²⁴ See Chavannes et Lévi, *L'Itinéraire d'Ou-k'ong*, pp. 10 sq.

(*J. as.*, 1895, t. vi. pp. 346 sqq.)

²⁵ Cf. for this certain identification Chavannes, *Turcs occid.*, p. 162, where the full account of this territory forming the northern neighbour of Wakhān is reproduced from the T'ang Annals.

²⁶ Cf. for Hsüan-tsang's account of Shighnān and its troublesome people, Julien, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 205 sq.; Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, ii. p. 281.