

that this northern route must have joined the main road which still leads through the string of oases, at the southern foot of the T'ien-shan, to Kāshgar.

Power of
Shan-shan
kingdom.

The Later Han Annals unfortunately do not furnish any topographical details about Shan-shan. But that this 'kingdom' was then of large extent and possessed considerable resources is proved by a record of the political conditions prevailing in the southern portion of the Tārīm Basin during the years A.D. 58-75.⁴ We are there informed that at the time when Kuang-tê, king of Khotan, subdued all the kingdoms from Ching-chüeh (Niya) to Su-lê (Kāshgar), 'the king of Shan-shan also began to become powerful. From this time, on the southern route these two kingdoms [of Khotan and Shan-shan] were alone great throughout the region east of the Ts'ung-ling.' A further reference to the same period is found in the statement of the Annals about Shan-shan having annexed *Hsiao-yüan*, *Ching-chüeh*, *Jung-lu*, and *Chü-mo*, all territories, as we have seen, ranged along the 'southern route' towards the confines of Khotan.⁵ This assertion of strength justifies the belief, suggested also by other data noticed below, that the Shan-shan of that epoch, corresponding to the Lop region in its widest sense, comprised a much larger area of settled occupation than can now be found near the terminal course of the Tārīm.

Shan-shan
threatened
by Hsien,
king of
Yārkand.

In A.D. 45 we find Shan-shan mentioned among the territories which, threatened by the growing power of Hsien, king of So-ch'ê or Yārkand, endeavoured to secure Chinese protection by sending princes as hostages to the Imperial court.⁶ But the help thus solicited proved of no avail; for in the year following An 安, king of Shan-shan, was attacked and defeated by the troops of Hsien, and, after the loss of a thousand men, was forced to take refuge in the mountains. The attack is said to have been provoked by the refusal of the Shan-shan chief, in reply to Hsien's demand, to cut the route which connected his territory with China. In this demand a clear proof may be recognized of the importance attaching to Shan-shan as the key of the most direct route leading into the Tārīm Basin from the confines of the Empire. Since the Empire was then not yet strong enough to resume political aspirations westwards, Shan-shan as well as Turfān was forced to seek support elsewhere by submitting to the Hsiung-nu or Huns in the north.

Pan Ch'ao's
operations
at Shan-
shan.

The importance for Chinese policy which Shan-shan derived from its geographical position is strikingly attested by the record of the events that it witnessed at the very commencement of the operations leading to the re-establishment of Chinese authority throughout the Tārīm Basin in the last quarter of the first century A.D. After sixty years of interrupted relations, as the Annals tell us, the 'Western regions' became again a field for Chinese political activity when the Emperor Ming-ti in A.D. 73 sent troops to the north to exact retribution for the raids of the Hsiung-nu or Huns.⁷ Having distinguished himself in the first expedition towards Hāmi and Barkul, Pan Ch'ao, still a subordinate commander but destined to become the reconqueror of the Tārīm Basin, was sent on a political mission to the 'Western countries'. It was at Shan-shan that he laid the foundation of his far-reaching success.⁸ Received at first with attention by Kuang, king of Shan-shan, but subsequently thwarted through the secret arrival of a Hun envoy, he promptly established his ascendancy over the king and his territory by a cleverly planned night attack on the Hun camp, which he surprised and, in spite of the smallness of his own escort, completely destroyed. After having thus secured Chinese control over Shan-shan, Pan Ch'ao proceeded westwards, and by a similar bold action assured the allegiance of the king of Khotan, who dominated the Southern route. By A.D. 74 he had extended Imperial authority as far as Kāshgar.⁹

⁴ See Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1907, p. 171 sq.

⁵ See above, pp. 219 sq., 295 sq.; *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 167.

⁶ Cf. Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1907, pp. 199 sq.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 156 sq.

⁸ For a detailed and interesting account of this initial ex-

plot in Pan Ch'ao's Central-Asian career, cf. his biography translated by M. Chavannes from the *Hsiao Han shu* in his paper *Trois généraux chinois*, *T'oung-pao*, 1906, pp. 218 sqq.

⁹ See Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1906, pp. 221 sqq.