

There is no need for us here to follow the successive operations by which Pan Ch'ao, in spite of scanty support from the distant Empire, succeeded in gradually consolidating Chinese control over the Tārīm Basin and making his influence felt even in Sogdiana and among the Indo-Scythians on the Oxus. But it is worth notice that it was not until A.D. 94 that Pan Ch'ao, with the help of a large locally raised force, to which along with seven other kingdoms Shan-shan supplied its contingent, succeeded in completing his conquest by the subjugation of the Kara-shahr region.¹⁰ As long as that territory remained beyond direct control, the route leading to the Tārīm Basin through Hāmi and Turfān could not have been safely used by the Chinese for military and commercial purposes.¹¹ This circumstance must have greatly increased the importance during that period of the route which connected Tun-huang with Shan-shan and thence bifurcated to skirt the oases along the foot of K'un-lun and T'ien-shan respectively.

Shan-shan's importance during Pan Ch'ao's campaigns.

There will be occasion later to discuss this route and its bifurcation in detail. Here it must suffice to note how the natural difficulties presented by the desert nature of the first part of the route have found expression in Pan Ch'ao's own words. In a report addressed to the throne in A.D. 78, which the Annals reproduce *in extenso*,¹² he refers to his policy of 'using barbarians to attack barbarians', but at the same time asks for a small Chinese force to furnish a nucleus for the troops of the various kingdoms with which he proposes to subdue Kuchā. In order to prove that the supplies necessary for the maintenance of this Chinese contingent would neither involve expense to the Empire nor cause local difficulties, the general emphasizes the fact that 'at So-ch'ê and Su-lê (Yārkand and Kāshgar) the cultivated soil is fertile and ample; the pastures there are luxuriant and extensive', and significantly adds: 'this region cannot be compared with the one which extends between Tun-huang and Shan-shan.'¹³

Pan Ch'ao's reference to desert route to Shan-shan.

In A.D. 105, a few years after the aged Pan Ch'ao had retired, the Western Regions, of which he had been Protector-General, revolted, and as the Imperial Government was unwilling to make fresh efforts in those distant territories, the Huns soon reasserted their former predominance.¹⁴ In order to ward off the resulting attacks of the Huns who were ravaging the Tun-huang border, So Pan, a Chinese general, was in A.D. 119 sent to garrison Hāmi. Thereupon the king of Shan-shan, along with the ruler of Turfān, made his submission. But a few months later So Pan and his small force were destroyed by the Huns, and the king of Shan-shan, seriously threatened, turned to Tun-huang to implore help.¹⁵ The Imperial government contented itself with appointing an assistant 'Protector of the Western Countries', to reside at Tun-huang, and with declaring a nominal supremacy. But in the course of the deliberations at court which preceded this decision, and which are recorded at great length by the Later Han Annals in the biography of Pan Yung, Pan Ch'ao's son,¹⁶ we read for the first time of a protective measure closely concerning the Lop region and its ancient topography.

Hun troubles after Pan Ch'ao.

Besides the appointment of the officer already mentioned to command a small force at Tun-huang, Pan Yung proposed that 'a *Chang-shih* of the Western Countries should be sent, at the head

Pan Yung proposes military colony at Lou-lan.

¹⁰ Cf. Chavannes, *T'oung-pao*, 1906, pp. 234 sqq.

¹¹ Though the biography of Pan Ch'ao does not mention the specific reason, it appears probable that this prolonged resistance of Yen-ch'i or Kara-shahr and the consequent obstruction of the true Northern route were directly due to the close vicinity of the Huns on the north and to the facility with which they could make their power felt in the Kara-shahr region. A reference to the map shows how easy of access Kara-shahr and the basin of the Baghrash Lake are from the great grazing valleys of Yulduz and the Kunges

River in the T'ien-shan. These must have been favourite haunts of the Huns, just as they were later on of the Turks and Mongols. It is this geographical feature which has determined the peculiar rôle of the Kara-shahr tract in the history of Chinese Turkestan; cf. below, chap. xxix. sec. i.

¹² See *T'oung-pao*, 1906, pp. 224 sqq.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 226.

¹⁴ See *T'oung-pao*, 1907, p. 160.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 161, and *T'oung-pao*, 1906, p. 246.

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 1906, pp. 246 sqq.