

56 miles of my cyclometer, reckoning from Toksun to Kumush. By Lü-kuang 呂光 on the frontier of Yen-ch'i or Kara-shahr, 40 li distant, must be meant a halting-place at or near the present Kara-kizil (Map No. 51. D. 4), where water is obtained from a deep well, and the natural frontier of Kara-shahr, corresponding with the watershed towards the Bagrash Lake, is entered. Thence, beyond the P'an-shih 盤石 tract, the military station of Chang-san-mieh 張三滅 is reached after 100 li more. There can be no doubt that the cultivated area of Ushak-tal (Map No. 51. A. 4) is meant, though the actual road distance from Kara-kizil is over 30 miles. 'Going towards the south-west for 145 li one passes the road station called Hsin-ch'êng 新城 ("the new city") and crossing the Tan 淡 River (the Kara-shahr River) arrives at the garrison town of Yen-ch'i 焉耆.' That by the station of Hsin-ch'êng a place approximately in the position of the present town of Kara-shahr must be intended is made clear by the bearing and distance. The situation of the ancient capital of Kara-shahr will be discussed presently.

Hsüan-tsang's
miraculous
spring.

We must regret that Hsüan-tsang begins his *Hsi-yü-chi* from Yen-ch'i, or A-ch'i-ni 阿耆尼, as he calls Kara-shahr, but does not describe the route by which he arrived there from Kao-ch'ang or Turfān; for the account we receive of this journey in his *Life*⁴ is not as clear as it might have been in the great traveller's own record. M. Chavannes has assumed that he followed the route which the T'ang itinerary describes,⁵ and on general grounds this appears probable. But obscurities of detail remain, and it must be remembered that the present high road is not the only route by which to reach Kara-shahr from Turfān.⁶ If Hsüan-tsang followed the main route, which certainly is the easiest, I think that we may identify the miraculous 'spring of the Master A-fu', about the origin of which the *Life* tells a lengthy legend, with the remarkable spring which issues from a sheer wall of rock in the deep gorge passed by the route about a mile below the station of Arghai-bulak (Map No. 54. B. 3), and from which this derives its name. There is no water to be found elsewhere on the route above this point until Kumush. But it must be mentioned that the *Life* describes the spring as issuing from a 'monticule de sable, au sud de la route', whereas the *Arghai-bulak* issues from a cliff of what seemed to me granite or gneiss, and flanking the route on the west. On the other hand, the statement that the Master, after passing the night with his companions by this spring, started by daybreak and traversed, evidently the same day, 'the Yin-shan or "mountain of silver", which is very high and large', would well accord with the long march by which the elevated plateau above mentioned is crossed from Arghai-bulak to Kumush. That the pious pilgrim was attacked by robbers when proceeding west of this mountain would well agree with the topography of the route beyond Kumush; for the broken ground crossed there would specially facilitate such exploits from the higher valleys north which afford fair grazing for nomads.⁷

Position of
Kara-shahr
district.

My stay in the Kara-shahr region was too short and the extent of the ground that I actually visited, away from the line of the main route and certain ruined sites, too limited to justify my attempting here either a systematic survey of its geography or a review of the data we possess regarding its early history. But among the geographical features distinguishing the Kara-shahr territory there are some so striking, and of such obviously great importance as determining its history, that a brief account of them seems called for here.

Kara-shahr in some respects occupies a unique position among the districts comprised within the Tārīm Basin. Immediately adjoining from the north-east the great flat trough which extends in

⁴ Cf. Julien, *Vie*, pp. 46 sqq.

⁵ Cf. Chavannes, *Turcs occid.*, pp. 6 sq.

⁶ Another route through the mountains further west was followed by Roborovsky (see his Map II), and there may be more in the hills south-west of Toksun.

⁷ Up to the pass above Arghai-bulak (Map No. 54. B. 3) the route in the gorge is protected from sudden attacks on either side by the impracticable nature of the flanking ridges. Beyond it as far as Kumush the ground is for the most part a bare gravel 'Sai' precluding all surprise.