

impossible to accept as evidence of this identification either the alleged local tradition of Yōtkan or that attaching to the mound of Naghāra-khāna, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the south-east, which M. Grenard—on insufficient grounds, I believe—has assumed to have belonged to the ancient capital¹. The careful inquiries made by me among the old villagers of Yōtkan conclusively prove that until the accidental discovery of the first finds in Niāz Ḥākim Bēg's time nothing whatever was known of the 'old town' beneath the ground, nor of any tradition existing about it. Even now the villagers' opinion about the origin of the remains is of the vaguest. In fact, the only statement made to me about an ancient city having once stood here was clearly traceable to the view expressed by a former European visitor. A tradition of a somewhat more genuine kind certainly locates an old town, the residence of the heathen ruler of Khotan, in the immediate vicinity of Naghāra-khāna. But it does not in any way connect the latter site with Yōtkan, and its own derivation is, as we shall see, subject to doubts².

Evidence
for location
of ancient
capital.

In reality the proof for the location at Yōtkan of the old Khotan capital lies in the exact agreement of the site with the topographical indications furnished by the Chinese Annals, in the character and abundance of its antiquarian relics and—last but not least—in the ease with which we are able to identify from this starting point the positions assigned by Hsüan-tsang to the prominent Buddhist shrines he visited in the vicinity of the capital. The evidence derived from the latter sites must be left for discussion in the last section of this chapter.

Topogra-
phical
record of
938 A.D.

Among the notices which the Annals contain relative to the position of the capital of Yü-t'ien, those derived from Kao Chü-hui's report on the Mission of 938 A.D. are certainly the clearest and most accurate. We have already seen that they place the White Jade river or the Yurung-kāsh at a distance of 30 li to the east of the city, the Green Jade river, corresponding to the present Yangi-Daryā branch of the Kara-kāsh, 20 li to the west of it; and the Black Jade river or Kara-kāsh another 7 li further to the west³. A look at the map of the Khotan oasis will show how closely the distances here indicated agree with those actually measured between Yōtkan and the nearest points of the rivers. Taking Khalche as our starting point, we have a little over seven miles to the left bank of the Yurung-kāsh near the present Ilchi. The 30 li of the report would, according to the average equation of 5 li to the mile, take us within a mile of the actual river-bed; and it is certainly noteworthy that this is exactly the width of the low-lying waste ground, once undoubtedly part of the Yurung-kāsh flood-bed, which separates the eastern edge of Khotan town from the river. The remains of an old embankment marked in Dutreuil de Rhins' plan of Khotan show clearly that the floods of the Yurung-kāsh must even in recent times have approached the town quite closely⁴. Turning to the western river-beds the agreement is, if possible, still more striking. From Khalche to the nearest point on the Yangi-Daryā measures four miles, which corresponds exactly to the 20 li of the report; while the distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles separating the Yangi-Daryā from the right bank of the Kara-kāsh is as close an approach to the 7 li of the notice as we could hope for.

The close accord between the actual distance separating the Yurung-kāsh and Kara-kāsh rivers and the aggregate of the measurements recorded in the report of the mission of 938 A.D. attests the accuracy of the latter, irrespective of the position assumed for the old capital. The firm evidence thus secured makes it of less consequence that earlier records of the Annals

¹ See *Mission D. de Rhins*, iii. pp. 127, 138.

² Compare for Naghāra-khāna and the lake of Aiding-Kul, section v.

³ See above, p. 179.

⁴ See *Mission D. de Rhins*, i. p. 96. The river is now

endeavouring to shift its bed again further to the west, and embankments have to be maintained in order to keep it out of the stretch of ground which evidently once formed part of its flood-bed; see Hedin, *Reisen in Z.-A.* p. 26.