

blow down the valleys.'⁶ It is probably for the sake of shelter from these winds that the humbler habitations, as in the neighbouring Wakhān, are often built partially below ground, a fact which explains the reference of the Chinese notice to 'caves' inhabited during winter. Yet in spite of the elevation—close on 8,000 feet at Mastūj and over 10,000 feet near Shuyist—the main valley is very fertile and, as a competent observer notes, 'capable of supporting a large population'.⁷ The lower portion of the main valley which lies between Mastūj proper and Charrun and is known by the name of *Khō*, enjoys a far more sheltered position, and the luxuriance of the orchards and arbours surrounding the villages from Būni to Sanōghar struck me greatly.⁸ It is clearly to *Khō*, which counts as a part of Mastūj, that the Chinese mention of the vine and pomegranate must be referred.

For the identification of the capital *A-shê-yü-shih-to* I must refer below to my detailed account of the site above Shuyist where I have located its position.⁹ Of the two alternative names which the Chinese notice records for the Yārkhūn Valley, one, *Chü-wei*, probably still survives in the modern *Khō*, the designation, as already stated, of that portion of the valley which lies below Mastūj. The way in which the term *Khō* appears in the names of various side-valleys of Kāshkār-Bālā, such as *Turī-khō*, *Mūl-khō*, *Lut-khō*, and the derivation from it of *Khōwār*, the name given to the Chitrālī language,¹⁰ suggest that it had once a wider application. In any case, the use made of the two characters *Chü* and *wei* in other Chinese transcriptions would accord well with the assumption that they represent a phonetic rendering of the earlier local name of which *Khō* is the modern derivative.¹¹

The name
Chü-wei.

The only historical reference which the T'ang Annals make to Chü-wei is significant of the importance which Chinese diplomacy in its struggle with Arab aggression attached even to the smaller mountain chiefships of the Hindukush region. The king of Chü-wei is mentioned with those of Udyāna and Ku-t'u, the modern Khotl north of the Oxus, as having been repeatedly approached by the Ta-shih or Arabs, during the K'ai-yüan period (A.D. 713-41), who wished to win them over to their cause.¹² They refused their allegiance, and in recognition the Emperor Hsüan-tsung in A.D. 720 sent envoys to invest the chief of Chü-wei as well as the other two rulers with the title of king.¹³ It is clear that at that time Mastūj must have had its own ruler distinct from Chieh-shih or Chitrāl which appears thirty years later supporting the Tibetan allies of the Arabs.¹⁴

Chinese
political in-
terest in
Mastūj.

Wu-k'ung's passage down the Upper Yārkhūn Valley in A.D. 751 or 752 on his way to Udyāna has been discussed so fully above that its mere mention will suffice here.¹⁵ But the notice of this region left by Hsüan-tsang calls for detailed examination. His 'Memoirs' tell us that 'after passing through the kingdom of Ta-mo-hsi-t'ieh-ti', or Wakhān, 'one passes to the south of a great mountain and arrives in the kingdom of Shang-mi 商彌'.¹⁶ This is described as measuring from 2,500 to 2,600 li in circumference. 'It is cut up by mountains and valleys, containing hillocks of

Hsüan-
tsang's de-
scription of
Shang-mi.

⁶ See *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1908, xvii. p. 214.

⁷ See Biddulph, *Hindoo Koosh*, p. 59.

⁸ Cf. *Desert Cathay*, i. p. 45.

⁹ See below, pp. 50 sqq.

¹⁰ Cf. Biddulph, *Hindoo Koosh*, pp. 59, 62. It deserves to be noted that Mughul Bēg gives to the valleys of Turī-khō and Mūl-khō the designations of 'Upper and Lower Kuhob', *Kuhob* being manifestly a Persianized reproduction of *Khō* or **Khov*; see *Notes on Afghānistān*, p. 160. The identity of Chü-wei with *Kobi*, Elphinstone's form for *Khō*, was first suggested by Yule, *J.R.A.S.*, N. S., vi. p. 114.

¹¹ Cf. Julien, *Méthode pour déchiffrer*, pp. 130, 224.

¹² See Chavannes, *Turcs occid.*, pp. 129, 292; also above, p. 20.

¹³ The exact date of this event which coincided with the Chinese support extended to a number of territories affected by the Arab danger, from Kashmīr to Samarkand, is indicated by another historical work, the *Tzū chih t'ung chien*; cf. Chavannes, *Turcs occid.*, p. 129, note 2; pp. 292 sq.

¹⁴ See above, pp. 29 sq.

¹⁵ Cf. above, p. 18.

¹⁶ Cf. Julien, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 206 sq., with which Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, ii. 282, agrees in substance.