

a desert valley in the midst of the Ts'ung-ling Mountains. At this time the king of P'o-la-szü (Persia) took a wife from the Han country (China). She had been met at this point by an escort on her progress, when the roads east and west were stopped by military operations. On this they placed the king's daughter on a solitary mountain peak, very high and dangerous, which could be approached only by ladders, up and down; moreover they surrounded it with guards both day and night for protection. After three months the disturbances were quelled. Quiet being restored, they were about to resume their journey when the lady was found *enceinte*.⁵ Thereupon the king's envoy held council with his companions how to meet the consequences of this disgrace. From an attendant he learned that a divine person, coming on horseback from the sun's disc, every day at noon visited the princess. Afraid of the punishment awaiting him on return to his own country, the envoy decided to seek safety by remaining and gaining time. He then established the princess as ruler of the country. In due time she bore a son of great beauty and miraculous powers, who became a powerful king and was claimed as ancestor by the royal family of Sarikol in Hsüan-tsang's time.

That this legend was widely spread and firmly rooted in popular belief is proved by the unmistakable trace of it surviving in local tradition to-day. Already in 1900 I had heard, but too late for a visit, of remains of ancient walls perched on precipitous cliffs opposite to the fortified post of Ghujak-bai where the Tāghdumbāsh River makes its sharp bend to the north. To them clings a story known to Sarikolis and Kirghiz alike that King Naushīrwān, an ancient Persian ruler, had once placed there his daughter for safety. This is held to account for the popular designation of the ruins, *Kiz-kurghān*, meaning in Turkī 'the tower of the daughter (or princess)'. This story was plainly a genuine relic of the fuller tradition current in Hsüan-tsang's days, and I was therefore eager to use my march on May 30, from Payik down to Pising, for a survey of the site and ruins where it is still localized.

Modern legend of Kiz-kurghān.

But even before reaching them I was able to make a local observation of quasi-antiquarian interest; for at the foot of the spur known as *Koshun-kör*, near a small natural grotto, where we crossed to the left bank of the river, some six miles below Payik Karaul, I came upon ground showing marked traces of old cultivation in the shape of terraced fields and irrigation channels (*arik*). Part of the old arable land here was said to have been reoccupied by Wakhī settlers in recent times, but again abandoned. Also on the opposite right bank a considerable area was declared by my local guides to bear signs of ancient cultivation. These proofs of earlier occupation, fully ten miles higher up the valley than Pising and Dafdār, where cultivation at present commences, have a special interest with reference to the advantages offered by the Tāghdumbāsh Pāmīr as a route for caravan traffic between Wakhān and Sarikol.⁵

Traces of old cultivation.

About two miles below *Koshun-kör* the bold cliffs of *Kiz-kurghān* came in sight, almost facing the deserted post (*karaul*) of Ghujak-bai at the junction of the Tāghdumbāsh and Khunjerāb Rivers. The ruins proved to be situated on the extreme eastern end of a high and rugged spur which descends from the main Sarikol range in a south-easterly direction to the Tāghdumbāsh River, exactly at the entrance of the narrow defile extending from Ghujak-bai to Dafdār (see Plate 3). The end of the spur, as we approached it from the south along the steeply cut river bank, presents itself as an almost isolated rock promontory falling away in nearly perpendicular cliffs on the south and east, with its top ridge rising some 700 feet above the river (Fig. 27). Our subsequent survey showed that equally unscalable rock walls protect it on the north and west towards the narrow and wildly twisting valley known as *Kiz-kurghān* Jilga.

Position of Kiz-kurghān ruins.

The only approach to this frowning rock fastness lies over a low and narrow neck connecting it with the spur behind, and to this I climbed up with the Surveyor and Naik Rām Singh with con-

Ascent to Kiz-kurghān.

⁵ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 32 sq.; also above, p. 70.