

But our reconnaissances of the previous days had sufficed to convince me that this valley offered no possible outlet south or south-eastwards which Johnson could have used with yak transport. Trained mountaineers from Europe might indeed make their way over more than one col I had sighted on the crest overhanging the glacier to the south-east. But for load-carrying men, let alone yaks, the barrier was quite impassable.¹

The Kitai Diwan Pass of Johnson is entered on Stein's map II, but the identification seems not to be quite sure, for he says: »But certain features, due as it proved afterwards to erroneous sketching, still effectively interfered with any clear identification.»² For this pass Johnson has 17,500 and Stein 16,500 feet. Stone-cairns indicated that the road across the pass had been used.

In spite of the defence given to Mr. Johnson and in spite of the fact that very weighty evidence must be required to suggest of a professional surveyor that he could mistake his position or his peak, it must be said that his excursion to E 61 seems very doubtful. In his paper, quoted above, which is the single report of his journey at my disposal, he only states the fact that he has ascended the three peaks. »From these peaks, however, I could not get a view of any of the important towns of Khotan, which I was so anxious to see», which is easy to understand as the distance is 85 miles. From his camp on the Kara-kash River he despatched a messenger to Khotan, who returned after 20 days. »While waiting at the Kárakásh for a reply to my letter, I employed myself in visiting several peaks, in order to fit sufficient points on the plane table for extending the work across the Kiun Lun Range, and in taking observations for determining the rate of my watch.» Further: »From the encampment of Brinjgá the road follows down a ravine for one march and then crosses over numerous passes and streams, including the Khotan River, which is crossed by a wooden bridge, till it gets into the plains of Khotan near Beziliá.» The latitude of Khotan is nearly correct. At the point where the Khotan River flows from east to west (on Johnson's map even S. W.), and where he crossed it, the latitude is 36° 26'. On Stein's map the east-west flowing part of the river is at 35° 50'.

In the text there is not a word about the experiences on the difficult and interesting journey from Kara-kash to E 61, and on the map there is no red line showing the route, which in a straight line is given as 52 miles. But regarding the easy and uninteresting excursion from Khotan to Keriya, which is only 33 miles as the crow flies, there is both a red line on the map and at least a few words in the text, saying:

During my stay at the capital of Khotan I employed myself in extending my researches, by making a hasty journey to the town of Kiriá, situated about 40 miles east of Ilchí. I rode there in one day, on horses posted for me by the Khán, spent a day there, and returned on the third, having meanwhile left my things at Ilchí.

¹ Op. cit., p. 204.

² Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 469.