

that in the sandy desert the creatures might suffer from hunger and thirst. It looked as if we should fail of our purpose, and I determined to buy my own camels at the next opportunity in Keriya, no matter what happened. After a long conference with the Beg and various men of influence that day at Dumuka, I went to bed with my mind made up to a delay of at least three or four days. In the morning, however, I heard camel-bells, and went out to find seven good animals grazing on the poplar trees. Da'ud, one of my Chantos, had heard that a small caravan from the mountains was expected to pass that night, for men with camels do not travel by day in warm weather. He went out to the main road and waited till midnight, when the caravan arrived and he corralled it. We sent post-haste for the owners, who arrived that afternoon. In view of the fact that we had "nine points of the law," they let us have the camels for a good stiff hire. When we returned with the animals safe and sound, some two weeks later, they expressed themselves as well satisfied with the bargain.

From Dumuka I sent the horses and my two Ladakhis, Ibrahim and Abdur Raman, eastward to Keriya. There they were to buy five camels, and have everything in readiness for a fresh start when I arrived two or three weeks later. I myself, with Da'ud, Ibrahim Beg, a camel-man, a camel-boy, and the five hired camels, proceeded toward the desert. We spent the first seven days in circling about in the zone of vegetation. Within a few miles of Dumuka, along the north and south line of a former course of the Dumuka or Ak-Sai River, I discovered the waterless, sand-buried sites of four small villages, evidently the ancient Buddhist equi-