

gravel, supports the thirty people of Vash Sheri. During the months of June, July, and August, the melting snow on the mountains — thirty or forty miles away — increases the river's volume enormously. Hearing of the large amount of water wasted among reed-beds, a considerable number of people have come to Vash Sheri during the thirty years since it was settled, but most have gone away after a year or two. In summer, they had more than enough water for their fields, but during the planting season of April and May, the supply often ran short. Under the present conditions of climate and irrigation, a population of thirty or forty is all that the river can support.

Long ago, the number must have been many times as great. Formerly, the river followed a more westerly course. At the end of the old channel, and at the same distance as the modern hamlet from the mountains, I traversed the ruins of a Buddhist town covering an area two and a half miles long by one mile wide. Here, as at Niya and elsewhere, the ruins consist of two parts. The older village covered the whole area. Its houses have completely disappeared; but if it were settled as densely as the pottery indicates, or as densely as the modern villages, its population must have numbered five hundred or more. The later village, or the later part of the original village, as the case may be, occupied only the upper portion of the ruins. Traces, sometimes very faint, of sixteen houses can be seen, and some must certainly have disappeared or escaped notice. It is safe to say that near the time of its abandonment the village must have had a population of a hundred souls, — three times as many as the modern hamlet, — and that earlier it must