

*November 29th.* It is with a strong feeling of something that is certainly not regret that I enter the name of the goal of this journey at last in the margin of my diary. My illness in Yarkand made me doubt seriously whether I should ever reach Khotan. Now that I have accomplished this and am feeling well again, my spirits are beginning to revive, and my head is full of plans.

*Khotan.*

The journey to-day was full of changing views. We started half-an-hour later than usual. This time it was I who slept so soundly that the despairing tinkling of my little alarm clock could not wake me to life. I had had a bad night owing to a slight mishap. When I lay down, my sleeping bag seemed to smell peculiarly of smoke. Without troubling to investigate, as I knew that I had not smoked or had a light close to it, I lay down and fell asleep, well satisfied with a new combination of my overcoat and fur coat to protect me from the cold night. I awoke, half choked by smoke. Reluctantly I stuck my head out of the bag and was astonished to see some points of light glowing in the corner, where my stove was standing. Two towels, hung up to dry during the night, were already burnt, ignited by the sack that had begun to smoulder; too large a fire had been made for the night. All that was left of the sack were a few glowing embers. There was nothing for it but to crawl out of the warmth, throw water on the sack and air the room, already cold. By the time I had finished a good time had passed and so I overslept myself.

From Zawa the road crosses a small river Jana flowing just east of the bazaar from S to N. There is a good bridge and plenty of trees for repairs, if necessary. The eastern bank is fairly high and in some places steep. On the top of the bank there are several houses, rather prosperous judging from the outside, between which the road runs. Direction SE, in some places E; ground slightly broken, though no hills worth mentioning. The soil is sandy, but there are tilled fields everywhere on either side. Numbers of ariqs, dry at present, indicate a plentiful supply of water. After proceeding for about 2 1/2 hours we crossed an untilled spot with much gravel, probably the old bed of a river. Two rows of trees on either side of the road indicated, however, that it was not filled with water nowadays. On the other side, at a slight distance, we came to a bazaar and village, Qaraqash, and immediately beyond we crossed a narrow river, Barjan su. Half the road was covered with ice, a sign that there was no shortage of water. Ten minutes later we came to the bed of the river Qaraqash, at least 2/3 of a mile wide here and covered with boulders. At this season it is dry, but deep furrows indicate that at some seasons of the year it is impossible to ford it. In March, April and May it is said to be navigable only in barges, three large enough to carry arbahs without unharnessing the horses being visible near the road. On the opposite side the village of Chatak begins. There we passed a pretty Chinese house built for welcoming mandarins on their arrival or for speeding those who were departing. In official China everything is foreseen and regulated. A short distance from here there is another narrow river. After about four hours' journey we entered the Borazan district and drove through the Dusham bazaar. Soon we reached another deep, but this time narrow river bed, Iliak. For a time the road ran between two mud walls, but soon open fields were again visible. About 1.30 p.m. we reached the wall of the Chinese town. It was a bazaar day here and the street we passed along was crowded. The inquisitive crowd pressed round the arbah at the risk of getting crushed under its massive wheels.