

5—600 feet high, which form a beautiful contrast to their ordered surroundings. We rode down the tilled fields, which we reached in half-an-hour, and winding among houses, ariqs and fields, the road took us round the eastern part of the mountain, where it turned to the west, and in a quarter of an hour we entered the gate of Uch Turfan with its Chinese inscription. On the eastern summit of the mountain, in an inaccessible place, the ruins of an old tower, built of stone, were visible. Just behind Uch Turfan a small fortress stands on the mountain high above the town, connected with the Chinese fortress at the foot of the mountain by a crenellated mud wall. It was probably erected before Yaqub Beg's time, but was occupied by him and now by the Chinese.

Immediately beyond the town gate the Sart town and bazaar begin. A fat old Sart, whose appearance would be put down anywhere as Jewish, stopped my horse, introduced himself as the Russian aksakal and offered me the hospitality of his house. I did not wait to be asked twice and am now thoroughly enjoying being able to work in a room with two glass windows and a sheet-iron stove which gives off plenty of heat, even if it does smoke.

The road we have travelled during these four days cannot be called hard, though it is only traversable by horsemen, pack-horses and camels. It would require an enormous amount of work to make it fit for wheeled traffic and must be considered impossible.

The following are the roads from here over Kelpin to Maral Bashi:

- I. Over Aqyar along the highroad Maral Bashi — Aqsu. There is water and fuel, and fodder can be bought in the villages on the route. This is the usual caravan route and usually takes 4 days, of which 2 from here to Aqyar (spending the night in a village Atshetak with a bazaar). Good road.
- II. Over the Qara Teke and At Jailik mountains, a hard mountain road only used by Kirghiz, not by caravans. No water, but fuel available. A large number of mountains with narrow, dangerous paths. Takes 3 days and nights.
- III. Over the Segyzkan at (or Saksaganat) mountains (the way I travelled), 3—4 days and nights. Water after the rainy season for 3 months, snow in winter; a little grass; fuel. Also used by caravans.
- IV. Over Arptshutshak and Gulcha Bashi on the road Uch Turfan—Kashgar; 5—6 days, of which 2—3 between Gulcha Bashi and Kelpin (1 of these without water). This part of the road good, without passes in the river valleys with mountainous walls. No fuel.

Uch Turfan is the first town with beautiful scenery that I have seen in Chinese Turkestan. The whole valley is lovely, set in its frame of endless mountains, and two small groups of mountains, the one on the south and the other on the east and very close to the town, contribute considerably to its beauty. These latter inaccessible mountains with their almost perpendicular sides are particularly picturesque. Their eastern end wedges itself into the Chinese fortress at their foot, the walls and ditches of which, running in pedantically straight lines, form a striking contrast to the whimsical silhouette of the mountain. A wide zigzag road, protected by two crenellated mud walls,

*February 18th.
Uch Turfan.*