



*The Djentai in Aqsu
with his wives, children
and servants.*

parted from each other the best of friends, when he left in the dark accompanied by his servants with coloured paper lanterns.

Chinese Aqsu is a comparatively tidy town, if tidiness can be spoken of at all in connection with this country. Two main streets run through it, one in particular having many rich Chinese shops with good stocks of cloth, garments, ornaments, toilet articles and luxuries, china, and metalwork of Chinese or Japanese make. The three large infantry barracks within the town wall, the Djentai's large yamen and two cavalry barracks in close proximity to the town prove that the Chinese have not been blind to the strategic importance of Aqsu, its position at the point where the roads to Kashgar and Khotan branch off, making it, in a way, the key to Chinese Turkestan. But here, again, the garrison is reduced to a minimum and the men with their features worn by age and stamped by vice present a pitiable appearance. In the E and N the town is enclosed by an eminence of 2 or 3 fathoms, leading to a barren and waterless plateau of löss; in the S and W it is confined by the Dulan üstang, an arm of the Aqsu darya that flows from the place, where the Aqsu and Taushqan darya unite. From the middle of May to the middle of July the water is so high that it cannot be forded. Otherwise the depth seldom exceeds 40—80 cm. The breadth varies from 5 to 10 fathoms. The whole area below the plateau of löss is cultivated and inhabited, though the houses are not close together anywhere. The fields are marshy in some places. North of the town a Sart bazaar of appreciable size has grown up. The bazaar street extends for quite $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile in the NW and almost reaches the ridge of löss which describes a curve and leads to the Aqsu of the Sarts.