

on the map). Here there were a couple of houses occupied by Sarts, Dungans and Chinese, who sell fodder and food at high prices. In the winter there are about 20 Kalmuk yurts there.

The ground over which we passed to-day was nothing but sand, in some places entirely devoid of grass. Where there is any, it is unsatisfactory in quality, coarse and grows in tufts. For about seven miles we went either over sparsely wooded ground or over entirely treeless patches. The trees grow mostly in rows or strips coming from the mountains in the north. In one of these belts of wood about five miles from Tawilgha we passed through the village of Khakhatchi, consisting of a couple of mud huts inhabited by Kalmuks. In the winter Kalmuk yurts congregate here. The fields are small and poor. At about the tenth mile the road again intersected a narrow belt of wood and 2 1/2 miles from it we reached the village of Tchukhui on a small river of the same name, also lying in a stretch of wood coming from the NW. It is composed of 8 houses and is inhabited by Dungans with the exception of 2 houses occupied by Sarts. The houses look clean and prosperous. Wheat, maize and millet are grown here. The land yields up to an 8—10 fold crop, though often less owing to lack of water.

Close to the village there are the remnants of a ruin. It was probably built of unbaked bricks, though it was difficult to tell, as the outer surface of the walls had been washed away by rain. The size of the wall is about 200 × 100 yards. Ten turrets, or rather projections, can be clearly distinguished on the N part of the ruin. They project from the wall at very short intervals. In the middle a mound of earth towers over the whole. There are fragments of clay vessels of the usual kind on the surface of the ground. The local people say that they have found large water vessels of baked clay, tall and narrow in shape without any design, and round millstones.

A sandy plain, practically barren, starts almost immediately after the last house in the village; further on there is a marked admixture of fine gravel. The mountain on the left was very clearly visible to-day and did not appear to be very far distant. In the SSW and S a chain of mountains, indistinctly visible in the dusty atmosphere, seemed to run parallel to the road at a great distance.

After covering 24—25 miles we came to the village of Ushak-tal (or Ush-tala) on a small river, about 7 feet wide and bordered with a belt of trees. An impanj with a crenellated wall rises just before the village. In its northern part there is a temple dedicated to the god who watches over officials, towering above the dilapidated walls. A Chinese post station (mapoza) is housed in the fort. — There are about 100 houses in the village. Of these 5 are Chinese, 20 Sart and the rest Dungan. There are several large sarais and a little mazar. The people grow wheat, maize and millet. The land yields a 5—10 fold crop according to the water supply. There are general complaints of the shortage of water, but the houses look prosperous, thanks, no doubt, to the fact that the village is situated on a much used route. — There are said to be some abandoned lead mines in the vicinity that were worked about ten years ago.

