

appearance of sand-dunes, but they must be very large to be visible at such a distance. 3—3 1/2 miles from the wood the road led to some low gravel hills on the right which became very considerable 2 or 3 miles further on. The road runs along their foot. Sy shi tchuenza, a solitary farm that lies 4 1/2 miles from the edge of the wood, is used by travellers as a resting place. There is a well with a limited quantity of good water, but it has to be cleaned yearly. There is snow from November to March or April up to 3 1/2—4 1/2 feet in depth. Westerly burans are common in the summer, rare in the autumn and weak in the spring. Some stone cairns like road marks could be seen on the other side of Sy shi tchuenza. Creeping plants grow sparsely on the plain. The ground dips slightly to the N and S behind the gravel hills. A few miles off we saw scattered groups of trees in the NE and a few lonely houses. We passed the ruins of a couple of houses on the left. About 8 miles from Sy shi tchuenza we came to another strip of ground with trees and a few deserted houses. 1 1/3 miles further on we passed through the large village of Lavtai, of which only the ruins are left. A tower of baked bricks alone has defied destruction and remains standing. This village, which gives you the impression of a big cemetery, affords clear evidence of the extent to which this country has been ravaged quite recently. A mile or two further on we reached the village of Santai, having ridden 22—23 miles.

The road was good to-day with the exception of some marshy places and many bridges, all of which were bad. During the greater part of the year the bridges are of no importance and in any case with the supply of timber available, they can easily be repaired.

Santai is a clean little bazaar of about 25 houses. It contains 4 sarais, one of which is excellent, a beautiful temple and about 20 shops. The garrison, in a tumbledown impanj, consists of 5 cavalymen (tubiao) of the lianza stationed in Tsimusa. — In the neighbourhood there are Laotai and Laokhuli, together about 40 houses; Sjiti with 20; Jan tji taiza with 10; Tama tchung with 10; Tungti with 20 and Tchyng jang khu with 30. Wheat, peas, gaolyan, flax (?), tchumiza, millet and a little opium are grown. Wheat yields a 10 fold crop, gaolyan 30 fold and the rest 6—7 fold. — The mountains are said to be rich in coal which is supplied in fairly large quantities to Urumchi.

*September 3rd.* We left Santai at 5 a.m. yesterday in an E and ESE direction. The country was similar to that traversed the day before. Tilled fields, scattered trees, clumps of trees and bushes and here and there a solitary farm. Close to the village we crossed a fairly considerable stream with clear running water. Almost all the other numerous watercourses, ariqs and streams we crossed were dry and bushes and trees grew in the beds of some of them. The road was good and mostly a few yards wide. The bridges, however, are all bad, but can be avoided everywhere. Marshy spots are rare. About 2 miles from Santai we rode through a small group of houses, the village of Khukhuke with 5 houses. A mile or two further E the village of Tchyng jang kho with 30 houses begins. A mile from it the wooded strip, proceeding S—N, ceases and a barren plain of sand or löss begins. Here we saw some ruins of houses. Bodgo Olo was only visible from time to time. The plain was succeeded by another wooded strip scarcely 2/3 of a mile wide about 1 1/2 miles from the last. It contains the village of Shuang tsakhöza with about 40 houses built among the ruins of