

Immediately after daybreak we moved off again in the same ENE direction. A few miles ahead of us the light ribbon of road seems to ascend the dark gravel slope. On the left in the cauldron-shaped valley we saw reeds and grazing horses. The mountains shutting it in seem to run into each other in front of us. After a climb of 4 hours we reached the highest point of the day, Huidjunza dawan, situated on the top of a gravel hill. The descent was along a gorge, 75 fathoms wide, the gravel bottom of which was covered with stones, mostly of small size. The granite mountains on either side are not very high and are dark in colour. 7 miles below the pass there are a sarai and the mapoza station Hui-ching-tzu. NE of it there is a cauldron-like valley, brick-red at the bottom. There are said to be large salt deposits there, round which yellowish-red grass grows. — At Hui-ching-tzu there is a well. There are westerly burans in spring and autumn 5—6 times a month. There is snow in November and December which melts at once. — The stony road still took us down into the valley. We reached the bottom in about 3 3/4 hours. The road then ran over level ground. We got to Utungvotzu station 1 1/2 hours later, an uninhabited sarai, a large mazar (Dungan, 8—10 years old) and a mapoza station. There is a spring with brackish water. The burans from the N are very strong and sometimes continue for several days without cessation. In spring and autumn they occur 6—7 times a month. There is no snow.

A severe storm that had raged since yesterday and impeded the arbahs exceedingly, forced me to give up the idea of going by the Chin-ku-ching-tzu sarai to-day, the last point with water before reaching the mountains. The road ran in an E and ESE direction across the valley, on the NE edge (?) of which the sarai is built. The road is level and good. Low thorny plants grow along it. On the right of the road there are said to be large salt deposits, but I saw nothing from the road but dry grass that looked brick-red, especially at a distance. Towards the end of the day we passed a narrow belt of deciduous trees turning yellow, on the right. Both from Utungvotzu and from here the cauldron-like valley seems to be enclosed on all sides by mountains. The wide opening to the SSW, indicated in Grum-Grzimailo's map, could not be found. The mountains are higher in the W, NW, N and NE. In the S and SSW they look yellow through field-glasses and seem to go in very slight undulations, obviously sand-hills.

4 roads meet at Chin-ku-ching-tzu. The main route from Kucheng and Hami, the less frequented road to Turfan and the rarely used road over Tola dawan to »peilu» and Barkul. Here there were 3 sarais, a post of 5 cavalrymen from the lianza at Lodun and a mapoza station. 4 wells supply plenty of slightly salt water. There is snow usually from October to February, 4—6 inches deep. Very strong burans from the W. In spring and autumn they are common. They occur several times a month and at times for several days on end. They also occur in the winter, but rarely in the summer. 20,000 camels pass annually in both directions and about 3,000 arbahs. The road over Turfan is only used in the winter. The snow in the region of Tashitow is said to be so deep that the Kucheng road is not used during November—January.