

Chinese regard the latter as the road-sign that guided the Chinese troops here, when they came for the first time. Both stones are black and dripping with the oil, with which the arbah drivers anoint them to secure their protection for the axles of their arbahs during the coming journey. My own drivers were not neglectful in this respect.

Soon afterwards the road took a slightly SE course. On either side we saw ruins of houses, silent witnesses of the destruction caused by the Dungan revolt. In some places the firm sand and clay are mixed with gravel. The Tian Shan mountains also seem to have taken a SE direction. The ground in front of us forms a slight eminence, inclined to the N, beyond which a mountain rises, dividing the valley into two parts with broad outlets to the ESE and ENE. In front of it stands a solitary mountain that is said to be of sand. The dark clouds that had long been threatening, discharged a snowstorm which soon enveloped the mountains in darkness.

We reached Ku-shui after 5 or at most 5 1/2 hours (19—20 miles) on horseback. According to the Chinese the distance is 90 li. There are 2 sarais, wells and fuel; at times hay and straw are obtainable. There are 9 houses in the village, but they are not visible. On the whole, you see very few houses on the journey. If anything, the villages here are even more scattered than in the Kucheng district. Only occasionally does one see a small field. The road is good the whole way and there is plenty of grass. —At Ku-shui the winter lasts from October to May. The depth of the snow is 0.6 m. Snow in July and August. There are no burans.

Yesterday's high wind had turned into a NNW storm that raised clouds of snow and sand. The day was foggy and grey and the low clouds entirely obscured the mountains that I had noticed yesterday at a distance on the left. The road went on in an E or slightly ESE direction. The ground was of the same kind as yesterday, but with more gravel and perhaps rather less grass. About halfway the road took a SE course. The Tian Shan mountains now lost their connected character and seemed to run eastward in the shape of long, semicircular ridges separated by deep valleys going in the opposite direction. The mountains seemed lower, at all events the wooded belt went higher up their slopes than yesterday. We passed a couple of low ridge-like hillocks extending to the N from the mountains. Here and there we saw the ruins of houses on the right. The road crossed the bed of a stream flowing north. In front of us the valley was closed at a distance of a couple of dozen miles by a mountain ridge that appeared to go in a N—S direction and formed an angle with the Tian Shan mountains. The gravel soil became very stony in some places. The road took us over a dry, stony river bed up a short hill to the village of Sun-shui-tang, and into the narrow courtyard of a sarai, decorated with red lanterns, red curtains and Chinese proverbs printed on red paper. All this finery had been prepared for the Djentai in Barkul. He had been ordered to Hami by the Governor of Urumchi in connection with some disturbances among the population and was expected to return any day. Thanks to him, I had a brazier of coals yesterday and a heated kang, on which I lay and roasted myself at night. To-day the sarai was draped in red, we had tent seats, braziers of coal etc. A subaltern and several infantrymen are posted at every station to meet the general.

*October 21st.  
Sun-shui-  
tang station.*