

introduced in China. In their opinion this was equivalent to becoming foreign (Russian or British) subjects, a point of view that I had heard expressed before by Chinese of the same level of education. The Bogdykhan, who was under foreign influence, was willing to become the subject of a foreign power, but his mother, the Empress, was decidedly against it. They said she was a wise woman, who was doing the country inestimable service, while Yuan Shih-k'ai who had reformed the Tchili army, had sold himself to the foreigners. He would long ago have fallen before the Empress, if the foreign powers had not supported him and forced the Bogdykhan to retain this traitor.

There are large numbers of kekliks here, that can be heard cackling close to the walls of the sarai. Tchao and I shot a couple to-day and got a ducking as we crossed the river over the slippery stones. It is so warm and lovely here again S of the pass that, during the day I work out-of-doors, the more so as the hovels that are used as quarters are dirty, cold and miserable.

In Nansanku there are 2 sarais and a large, deserted Government sarai that is falling to pieces. The number of arbahs crossing the pass annually is less than ten, but from 400 to 600 camels pass in both directions. Nevertheless, the pass, when open, is possible for wheeled traffic. In several places the road is properly built and where the ground is very stony a heavy cart can probably get along. — The depth of the snow reaches $1\frac{1}{2}$ arshin. It lies from October or November to April. There are burans in spring, summer and autumn from the N or E.

The work of bringing in the second arbah, also almost entirely empty, was less strenuous now that the road had been made through the snow. At dusk we heard its bells and soon after it rolled into the yard driven by its victorious drivers. *October 25th. Hami.*

The remaining distance to Hami was said to be 147 li. In order to arrive in good time I started this morning at 3.30. The direction of the road was SSW. The ground was at first very stony with a perceptible slope southward. The further we went, the smaller the stones became and finally they turned entirely into gravel and we once more traversed one of the gravel slopes that are characteristic of the southern foot of the Tian Shan mountains. The Nansanku river kept us company, murmuring on the right of the road. According to my guide it does not flow far to the south, but is lost in the ground. By the time it grew light, the mountains were already some distance behind us. Their peaks and ridges were hidden by thick clouds. To-day our labours would have been harder, perhaps even impossible.

After rolling along for 4 hours across the plain where the bushy grass grows in tufts we at last got the troublesome arbahs to the ruins of the Santoloba sarai. Water is supposed to have been conducted here formerly from the Nansanku river, but there were no traces left of any ariq. In another 2 hours and 10 minutes we passed the ruins of another sarai and came to the remains of the small village of Nitchithudza 2 hours and 15 minutes later. It was, no doubt, destroyed during the Dungan revolt. We were close to a belt of trees that seemed to rise out of the surrounding sand like an island. A couple of similar islands were observed further to the NE. The ground, which had become sandy some distance