

Old Trade Route

About twelve miles to the south of this shrine, near that of Hazrat Begum on the desert are the indistinctly traceable fortifications of a castellated city now called Shahri Nuktá Rashid. It is more or less completely buried under sand, but the mound tops are wind swept, and strewed thickly with bits of pottery, China, and glass; coins too are said to be found here, and Sir Douglas Forsyth got one of them from the keeper of the neighbouring shrine. In the opposite direction, to the west of the present town, are the ruins of another city, apparently very ancient and strongly fortified by high battlemented mounds the substantial walls of which are in parts still fairly traceable. As an instance illustrative of the dry character of the climate here, I may mention that we found sheets of matting, such as are used at the present day in the foundations of walls, still in excellent preservation under the layers of raw bricks composing the structure of the battlements; although, as we were assured and as history tends to prove, the place has been in ruins for eight hundred years. The original name of this city is lost, and it is now known simply by the name Tam = "Wall," and the people know no more of its history than that it formerly belonged to the Kingdom of Nuktá Rashid, the *Káfir*, and was destroyed by Ali Arslán Khan, the *Ghází*. Further north than Tam, near Chárshamba Bázár, are the ruins of Oktú or Oktay. They are described as built of stone, and as being more substantial and more extensive than any others in the division. This is probably that Ota through which in early ages passed the caravan road from Kashghar over the Bolor range and through Karátakin to Balkh for the outlets west and south by the Oxus and Bamian respectively. The other great trade route was from Káshghar over the Tirik pass to Úsh or Osh and on along the Jaxartes. It is still in use as the caravan road to Orenburgh. The first has been long since abandoned as a trade route.

Yángi Hissár—"Newcastle," as the name and etymology indicate, dates only from the Muhammadan conquest; but from its appearance and the remains of walls in the vicinity it would seem to occupy the site of some more ancient city.

Every street has its *bang* shop, generally a mean little shed, in which two or three pipes are at the disposal of the passers by. There are besides, several opium divans, places more like a pawnbroker's shop than anything else. Obscure chambers, dimly lighted by a row of flickering lamps along the floor, on which lie the somnolent devotees of this "thief of reason and riches." On shelves ranged round the walls are neatly folded and labelled bundles of their household chattels even to the clothes off their backs, all kept in pawn till released by cash payment. We shall return to this subject under the head of agricultural products. Suffice it here to say that the abuse of these deleterious drugs is prevalent throughout the country. I have thus referred to it in this place, because I observed that the people of Yángi Hissár were more generally addicted to these forms of intoxication than those of Yarkand or Káshghar; a point in which they do not belie the character given them by common report.

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*Káshghar*.—This State is situated in the angle of junction between the great mountain ranges of Alátágh and Bolortágh, and for purposes of government includes the steppes of Pámir and the glens of Sárígh Kúl. But these last, being beyond its proper limits, are excluded from the present reckoning, and will be described separately hereafter.

Its limits are: On the north—Balauti Hill which separates it from the canton of Úsh Turfán; Tirikti Fort and Tásh Rabát on Alátágh which separate it from the Kirghiz of Isígh Kol; Chakmák Fort and Kará Aylák of Atbáshí which separate it from the Russian outpost on the Nárín; and the Aktágh range which separates it from Úzkand in Andiján; Mingyol outpost at foot of the range. On the west—Tirik Dawán which separates it from Úsh in Andiján; and Karátágh and the hills down to Chíshtágh—"Tooth Hill," north of the Chachiklik Pass, which form the eastern border of the Aláy Pámir. On the south—the Khan Arík canal (from Yamányár branch of Kosán River), Tazghún and Yapchang. On the west—the desert from Fyzábád to Kol Táylák and Súghún.

Within these limits the population is estimated at 16,000 houses, or at seven per house, at 112,000 souls. Of these 5,000 houses are allotted to the city and its immediate suburbs, and the remainder are thus distributed amongst a number of considerable market towns and agricultural settlements. Along the hill skirt to the west—Opal 800 houses, Táshmalik 700, and Múshí 400. Along the hills to the north—Mingyol 200 houses, Sarman 300, Artosh 2,000,