

We spent a night there in the residence of the Hákim and went the following day to Khush Tográk, its southern township, about eight miles to the south-east. After arrival there we pushed on two or three miles to the Káshghar River, which we tried to cross in order to shoot in some jungle at the other side; but the ice was now breaking up and was so dangerous that our conductors would not venture to take us over, although the head-quarters party had crossed over a few days before on the ice without the slightest difficulty. Next day we continued our return journey, and forded the river several miles higher than where we had attempted its passage the day before. It took us nearly an hour to cross the river, the combined water, ice, and mud making the passage so difficult that our Turkestani attendants had to strip off their four or five superfluous suits of clothing and go to the assistance of our baggage animals, who, after a good deal of plunging and floundering, at last got across without accident.

Between Khush Tográk and the river there are, at this time of the year, extensive swamps, caused in the manner I have before described. Near this place the waters of the Artysh and Káshghar River mingle together; but in the hot and irrigating season the whole of the water from the Artysh River is said to be expended before reaching the junction, and the Khush Tográk village is then exclusively watered from the Káshghar River.

In the early winter when the ice first begins to form, it partially blocks up the streams and the mass of ice growing larger and larger, great frozen lakes are often formed where in summer there is merely a rapid stream of water. This makes it impossible in winter (the season of our travels) to form any accurate idea of the real size of the streams. After passing the river and crossing a few miles of salt waste we came to Faizabad, a large village on the road between Marálbáshi and Aksu. On this march I saw, for the first and only time in Turkestan, large numbers of geese and duck, all flying eastward.

It was market day in Faizabad, and the crowd attending the bazar was about as large and dense as that I had previously seen at Altyn Artysh, from which circumstance I should infer that the population of the surrounding district is about the same. On the following day (3rd of March) we returned to Káshghar, a march of 37 miles over a perfectly flat country, the road winding almost the whole way through a populous and well cultivated district. We passed successively the scattered villages of Sheaptal, Sang, and Yanduma, every village as usual composed of several hamlets, each with its separate name. At Sheaptal it was market day, but it was too early in the day to be able to form any estimate of the population attending, though on the march we met crowds of people thronging to it. The road crosses several large canals which leave the southern branch of the Káshghar River several miles above Káshghar and irrigate the whole of the ground south, south-east, and east of the city. One of them bears the name of Yamunyar, and possibly a portion of its waters comes from the river of the same name, which, rising in the Little Karakul Lake flows past Opal and Tashbalig, where it divides into numerous branches and canals, some of which probably intermingle their waters with canals from the Káshghar river. The two together form a net-work of rivers and canals which it is nearly impossible to unravel, and which is moreover constantly changing almost from day to day.

From the time of leaving the head-quarters camp at Bash Sogon, the weather was most unfavourable: snow and clouds prevented my seeing the hill tops by day or the stars by night. This lasted until our return to Ui Bulák, 26 miles west of the Belowti Pass. At Ui Bulák, Faizabad and intermediate stations I was more fortunate and was able to secure good star observations, both for latitude and time. These, combined with a rough compass survey which I made of the whole road, have enabled me to map it with a fair amount of accuracy, although the distance traversed during our absence from Káshghar, *viz.*, 340 miles, was accomplished in little more than a fortnight.

Excursion to the Pámír Steppes and Wakhán.

Shortly after our return to Káshghar from the Artysh Districts a party, under the orders of Colonel Gordon, consisting of Captain Biddulph, the late Dr. Stoliczka, and myself, was sent *via* Sarikol (Táshkurghán) to Wakhán, and I was instructed to take what advantage