

animals across the Kwen Lun range between Polu and the Tolan Khoja River, one would have to examine every valley in that stretch of country; but I think it highly probable that no such route exists. I was assured that the Kiria valley cannot be ascended as it is blocked by lofty cliffs over which the river falls. This statement is confirmed by the fact that men going from Polu to the upper waters of the Kiria to shoot yak, invariably go and return by the At To Pass and Kha Yak Day.

As the gorge between Tolan Khoja and Khuyek was said to be impracticable for a caravan, we went almost due south for a few miles from Kara Sai, up a very narrow valley inhabited by shepherds. Crossing a low and easy pass, we entered the region drained by the Tolan Khoja River, where the hills were comparatively low and were covered with vegetation. We passed one or two wretched hovels close to the confluence of the Itula Khan and the Tolan Khoja Rivers, and reached Khuyek on the left bank, where, though there were no inhabitants and little grass, we halted for the night.

Next day we marched up an easy slope, from the top of which we had to descend a rather steep declivity to Sarok Tuz (Yellow Salt) on the left bank of the Tolan Khoja, just below its junction with a river of about equal volume, the Tuzlok Sai (Salt River), and close to a large saline spring whose waters leave a white deposit. This spot might possibly be of some importance, for it was said to be the point of separation of the two routes to Ladak. The place was very cheerless and without inhabitants, except three or four men who formed a Chinese post, established about a month before. This small company was quartered in a very porous tent, in front of which floated a huge yellow flag. I asked the official in command how it happened that a post had been established at such a place, and was informed that