

not different from that of other official Chinese. These men were ignorant of every nationality except their own; they knew that no Chinaman, no native of Sin-Chiang, would willingly travel as I was travelling, and they attributed to me some mysterious purpose. I was looked upon as a secret agent of the Indian Government, though no suspicion had ever less foundation in fact. I was no agent of the Indian Government, nor even in their service; and there was nothing secret in my proceedings. It was true, however, that while I was in Raskam and adjoining lands the Mir of Hunza was negotiating with the Taotai of Kashgar for permission for the Kanjuts to return to Raskam to cultivate the land. This Kanjut claim was well known on the Taghdumbash Pamir, in the Kulan Urgi valley, and other places; the matter was continually being brought to my notice as if it were of special interest to me, and so sick of the Kanjuts and their claim to Raskam did I become, that I forbade my men to mention either in my hearing. To expect Celestials to discard their suspicions would be tantamount to attributing to them enlightenment and common sense, in both of which blessings they are conspicuously wanting.

As it was impossible to descend the valley of the Yarkand River, we were compelled to ascend the Pil valley. Having paid off the Nosh Tung men, I despatched Islam on a second mission to Tashkurghan for money, making him the bearer of a letter in which I mentioned also Sonam's buboes. The messenger set out with the Nosh Tung men, to accompany them as far as Pichanyart.

One of the most important of the men who came with the fresh yaks was Yul Bash, who had accompanied me the previous winter from Mazar Sultan to Bazar Dara. He had then persistently asserted that he knew nothing of the country between Sanglash and the west end of