

returning at night contrary to my orders, he astonished me by saying that between Tarim Boko and Tir there was a dreadful ghost (or spirit of some sort), and that he had hastened back that he might not have to travel over that part of the way alone. Against undue risks from want, exposure, and other dangers of the way I could, in general, make adequate provision, but dangers arising from ghosts were quite beyond my reckoning, though it was now evident that they ought not to be ignored.

When I went back to Tir several of the villagers, none of whom possessed more than the bare means of subsistence, complained to me that a Chinaman who had come amongst them two days before was living at their expense. This man had given out first that he was a clerk to the Chow-Kuan of Karghalik; then, that he was a soldier; and when he came to visit me he stated that he was a collector of petty taxes. He appeared to be no better than an impostor, and I advised the villagers to send one or two of their number to Karghalik to lay their complaint before the Chow-Kuan. But in Tir, as in other parts of the world, everybody's business was nobody's business, and the Celestial continued to live on the best, paying not a dachen for his supplies. The villagers, calling the man a robber, and thinking that Europeans possessed unbounded influence, begged me to do something for them, on the ground that they could do nothing for themselves. About two years before this they had had a dispute with the Kirghiz respecting some grazing ground on the Bazar Dara side of the Kukalung Pass. They had drawn up in their own language a petition to the Chow-Kuan, setting forth their claims; this document they placed in the hands of the official interpreter for translation and presentation to the magistrate; but the interpreter had been got at by the Kirghiz, and waited for a bribe from Tir as an inducement to perform his