

pigeons kept at the shrine are propitiated with food offerings by all modern wayfarers manifestly marks a survival of the Buddhist legend. Just like Hiuen-Tsiang's rats, so now the holy pigeons which have taken their place are supposed to recall the memory of a great victory. It was in fact the first striking instance of that tenacity of local worship which my subsequent researches showed for almost all sacred sites of Buddhist Khotan. In Kashmir and on the Indus it had been no small advantage for me to find the position of old Buddhist or Hindu shrines I was in search of marked invariably by Muhammadan Ziarats. So I might well take it for an auspicious omen that my entry into Khotan territory brought me across a pious local custom which the Muhammadans of this region had derived from their Buddhist ancestors.

Three miles beyond this curious shrine the road emerged from the sandy billows on to a low-lying marshy plain. Here we halted near the solitary hut of Tarbugaz Langar. The news of my coming had preceded me from Pialma. So late in the evening I received the visit of the Beg of Zawa, the next village tract. He was a fine-looking, genial old man, and I appreciated his kindly welcome on this my first night on the soil of Khotan. Camels and baggage ponies had felt the length of the previous day's march. So I decided to divide the remainder of the journey into two short stages. Soon after leaving Tarbugaz cultivated ground was entered, and three miles from it I passed the mud fort which was erected in Yaqub Beg's time, closing the road to Zawa, the first large village of Khotan.

From there onwards there lay an unbroken succession of gardens, hamlets and carefully cultivated fields on both sides. The road itself is flanked by shady avenues of poplars and willows for almost its whole length. Autumn had just turned the leaves yellow and red on most of the trees, and after the monotonous khaki of the desert marches this display of