

human being until after a ride of about sixteen miles I reached the shrine which was to offer me shelter for the night. The tomb of Saiyid Burhanuddin Padshahim ("my Lord S. B."), seems a very popular place of pilgrimage for the people of the Keriya and Khotan districts, and the comfortable quarters and appearance of the five Sheikhs in attendance on the saint's resting-place attest the veneration enjoyed by the latter. The Sheikhs were unable to tell me any particulars of the holy man's story, except that he was connected in some way with the still holier Imam Jafar Sadik, worshipped at a famous desert shrine where the Niya River ends.

The Sheikhs, who receive so many hundreds of pilgrims every year, know how to prepare for the comfort of "paying guests." So I found a neat little room with felt carpets and a blazing fire ready to receive me by the side of the saint's tomb. While waiting for my baggage, which did not arrive till late in the evening, I had plenty of time to think of the curious inroad made by civilisation, as represented by this sacred establishment, into the solitude of the desert. The shepherds who frequent the lonely grazing-grounds of the Keriya River, cannot fail to benefit largely as regards their knowledge of the outer world by the stream of pilgrims that passes in the autumn and spring to the local saint's tomb. Is it possible that the Buddhist shrines I unearthed at Dandan-Uiliq had also been once the object of similar pilgrimages?

Three fairly long marches brought me from the 'Mazar' into Keriya. They led along the side of the Keriya River and through scenery very much like that passed on the first day after we had struck its bank. Every day we saw some reed-huts of shepherds, but their occupants seemed to have moved away from the river. The belt of vegetation grew broader as we progressed further south, but the thickets of trees gradually became rarer and most of the ground was covered only with tamarisk scrub and Kumush. These alone will grow in the loose sand which the fertilising water is unable to reach. The spots where we camped for the night, Bulak