

as well as the extent of this so-called 'ancient city' (to which he gave the name *Ak-tiken*) were very modest. Yet I felt that, in view of the interest attaching to the site owing to its isolated position so far north, a systematic examination was called for. For the loss of time implied by the distance I endeavoured to make up by hard marching. For an account of the six days' journey, during which I followed the course of the Keriya river downwards, I may refer to my *Personal Narrative*. During the first three marches I retraced the route which had brought me in January from Kochkar-Öghil to Keriya, while a detailed and accurate description of the physical features observed on the next three has already been recorded by Dr. Hedin<sup>5</sup>. The aspect of the river-banks was still as bleak and bare as two months before, but in place of the glassy sheet of ice there now rolled a muddy current, fed by the melting of the ice that had covered the marshes and pools about Keriya. It was the regular spring flood from the *kara-su* or 'black water' feeders of the river, while months would yet pass before the *ak-su* or 'white water' flood would bring down the melting snows of the mountains. At the Mazār of Burhānuddīn-Pādshāhim, where I had a cheerful welcome from the 'Sheikhs', my caravan was joined by Ghāzī Sheikh, the senior of the priestly fraternity. Being himself a large owner of sheep, he knew, of course, every living soul of the little community of nomadic herdsmen who graze the flocks belonging to Keriya 'Bais' in the riverine jungle belt. So it was easy for our Darōgha to strengthen the band of labourers I had brought from Keriya with fresh recruits from among the shepherds. The men joined readily enough; for uncouth and 'jungly' as their appearance was, in rough furs and sandals made of goatskins, they were all quite alive to the chance of earning a little hard cash that might come useful on their periodical visits to Keriya, where many of them have relatives living as cultivators<sup>6</sup>. So my band kept swelling on the way like a small avalanche.

On the evening of March 12 we had reached the shepherd station of Tonguz-baste, to the north-west of which I knew, from Dr. Hedin's account, the ruins of Kara-dong to be situated. Mullah Shāh, an experienced and intelligent shepherd, who was to guide us—Turdi Khwāja had been sent from Keriya with my mail to Khotan—turned up late at night, and after prolonged protestations of ignorance acknowledged that he had twice visited the ruins. Another shepherd, Muḥammad Shāh, known as 'the hunter' (Merghen), an active young fellow, was to help Mullah Shāh, his 'Ustād', in finding the track. This turned out no easy task. The morning was very hazy, and by the time the water-tanks had been filled and a depôt made of supplies not immediately needed, a stiff north wind sprung up, which by degrees developed into a regular Burān, the first of the season. For about seven miles we steered almost due north through Toghrak jungle invaded by deep sand, following mainly the course of an old river-bed which branches off from the present course of the Keriya Daryā, some six miles above Tonguz-baste, and still receives some water during the summer (see inset of map).

After passing a little pool known as Toldāma, with some water left behind by the last flood, our guides struck to the north-west. So far we had marched in a whirl of dust. But now, as the force of the storm increased, the air became so thick that it was difficult to see even for a hundred yards. With the fine sand driving into my face and accumulating under my eyelashes, in spite of goggles, it was difficult to see much of the route. But I noted that after a couple of miles the groups of Toghraks were left behind, and the sand-dunes rose in height, with many tamarisk-covered cones between them. After plodding on among these for another hour our guides, whose local sense was doubly assuring under such trying conditions,

Start from  
Tonguz-  
baste.

Approach to  
Kara-dong.

<sup>5</sup> See *Reisen in Z.-A.*, pp. 40 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> See the table of individuals of whom I took anthropo-

metrical measurements on this journey, in *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, xxxiii. p. 322.