

houses. In one place I could still make out a row of Jigda or Eleagnus trees as planted in an orchard. An old 'Taklamakanchi' myself, I had no difficulty in distinguishing the fissured trunks of apricot and other fruit trees from the bleached débris of poplars once enclosing these orchards. A fine piece of decorated cut-glass was the best among the finds of small objects picked up on that evening's wanderings. Even its hard smooth surface showed grinding by the corrosive force of driving sand.

Camp was pitched some three miles to the east, where a belt of flourishing Toghrahs, tamarisks and desert scrub marked the line of an ancient river bed traced on my first visit to Rawak. There was a gorgeous sunset, and after the heat of the day the distant vista of the great snowy range southwards was doubly refreshing. The night brought quite a sensation of chill, and next morning I enjoyed a gloriously clear view of the whole Kun-lun from Sanju to the mountains about Polur. With the help of my binoculars I could distinctly recognize the glaciers to which my climbs from the Nissa and Karanghu-tagh valleys had taken me, the grand peaks triangulated in 1900, and the fantastically serrated lines of the outer ranges between Kara-kash and Yurung-kash. This splendid mountain panorama kept dazzlingly before my eyes as I rode steadily southward towards the tract of Hanguya. After ten miles or so I arrived at the ruined Stupa of Arka-kuduk Tim, already visited in 1901, and on the strength of old Turdi's teaching could enlighten Roze as to its true name. For the route to the Ak-terek site, however, which was my goal, I had to trust wholly to Roze himself; for though I knew it to be situated somewhere on the Tatis which fringe the desert towards Hanguya, a search for it might have cost long days,—so extensive are the pottery-strewn areas marking ancient occupation which crop up over square miles wherever the dunes leave the ground bare.

The six miles' ride over absolutely sterile dunes, closely packed here and rising to twenty-five feet or so, was made very trying by the fierce heat with which the sun beat down through an atmosphere of such clearness as Khotan rarely sees. Reflection from the glittering sand full of