

tsang's record refers. Throughout Chinese Turkestan graveyards are invariably attached to supposed 'Ziārats' of saints. We may therefore safely look upon the graves now found within the enclosure, and the sanctity claimed for the ground, as a distinct trace left behind by the legend which in Hsüan-tsang's days ascribed the foundation of the hospice to the action of a holy man.¹⁵ But there was ocular evidence also of suitability of the spot for a hospice, in the shape of two huts erected under Chinese orders for travellers' shelter some two hundred yards away. Characteristically enough, though dating only since 1903, when Sarikol was raised to the dignity of a regular civil district, the huts looked already half-ruined.

Goëz'
account of
Tangi-tar
gorge.

In spite of the well-advanced spring and the favourable snow conditions provided by a heavy grey sky, it took us nearly five hours to struggle across the snow-beds of the Chichiklik plain and those of the very gently sloping valley eastwards down to the Kirghiz camp at Tar-bāshi, about 3,000 feet lower. I could well realize the trials presented at other times by that bleak plateau, close on 15,000 feet above the sea, as I recalled the account left by Benedict Goëz, the brave Jesuit lay-brother, who traversed this route in 1603 on his journey from India in search of fabled Cathay. After crossing the Pāmīr he and the large 'Kāfila' of merchants to which he had attached himself for safety had at the hamlets of the 'province of Sarcil', i. e. Sarikol, 'halted two days to rest the horses. And then in two days more they reached the foot of the mountain called *Ciecialith* (i. e. Chichiklik). It was covered deep with snow, and during the ascent many were frozen to death and our brother barely escaped, for they were altogether six days in the snow here. At last they reached *Tanghetar* (Tangi-tar), a place belonging to the Kingdom of Cascar (Kāshgar). Here Isaac the Armenian fell off the bank of a great river into the water, and lay, as it were, dead for some eight hours till Benedict's exertions at last brought him to. In fifteen days more they reached the town of *Iakonich* (Yaka-arik), and the roads were so bad that six of our brother's horses died of fatigue. After five days more our Benedict going on by himself in advance reached the capital which is called *Hiarchan* (Yārkand), and sent back horses to help on his party with necessaries for his comrades. And so they also arrived not long after safe at the capital, with bag and baggage, in November of the same year 1603.'¹⁶

Passage of
Tangi-tar.

I have quoted the record left of this pious traveller's experiences in full, as it not only serves as a vivid commentary on the dread of the Chichiklik plateau as reflected in Hsüan-tsang's story, but helps also to fix exactly the locality of a curious incident related of his own passage in his biography. From the places mentioned in Goëz' notes it is certain that the route he followed was identical with the present main caravan track which descends from the Chichiklik plateau via Tar-bāshi, and at Chihil-gumbaz, two marches further east, diverges from the route leading to Kāshgar. Tangi-tar, meaning 'the narrow gorge', which Goëz distinctly refers to, is the name borne by the deep-cut and very difficult defile through which the waters of the Tar-bāshi Valley find their way down to their junction at Toile-bulung with the streams coming from the Yam-bulak, Yangi-dawān, and Tor-art Passes (see Map, No. 3). The route enters it about two miles below the Kirghiz grazing-grounds

¹⁵ On this account I felt justified in including a brief notice of this site among the instances of the survival of Buddhist local worship in Central Asia discussed in the article which I contributed to the memorial volume presented to Professor I. Goldziher on his sixtieth birthday (Budapest, 1910) and also published in the *J.R.A.S.*, 1910, p. 839 sqq. I have there called attention to the fact, already established in *Ancient Khotan* as regards the Khotan region, that 'practically all sites that the early Chinese pilgrims describe as sacred to the Buddhist population of their time are still to

this day marked by Muhammadan *Ziārats* of note, and that the popular legends attached to the latter often retain clear traces of the earlier Buddhist traditions related by the pilgrims'.

¹⁶ See Sir Henry Yule's translation of Goëz' notes as put together by Ricci, in *Cathay*, ii. p. 562. All the localities mentioned in the extract with the exception of *Yakonich*, had already been correctly identified by Sir H. Yule in 1866, notwithstanding the very scanty information then available about the route from Badakhshān to Yarkand.