

# On the Road to Kashgar

## *Murder and Commemoration of Adolph Schlagintweit*

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### Abstract

Three aspects linked to the circumstances of Adolph Schlagintweit's travel to Kashgar are contextualised with the Great Game and Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia. First, Chokan Valikhanov's friendship with the eminent explorer Pyotr Semenov sheds light on the linkage between Russian and German geographers. Second, the acquaintance between explorers in Russian services and the Schlagintweit brothers in their quest for reaching the Tien Shan Mountains. Third, the news of Adolph Schlagintweit's execution on August 26, 1857, their reception in St. Petersburg and thirty years between his murder and the consecration and inauguration of the memorial dedicated to him.

### Keywords

Chokan Valikhanov – Pyotr Semenov – Nikolai Petrovsky – Great Game—exploration – Central Asia – Xinjiang

### 1 Exploration of Routes into the Heart of Central Asia

Two years after vague news had reached that the 28-year-old Adolph Schlagintweit was cruelly executed in Kashgar on 26 August 1857, Captain Chokan Chingisovich Valikhanov, who was in Russian service, also reached Kashgar disguised as a trader and contributed a much sensational report on little-known Kashgaria. Both pioneers had managed to enter the “forbidden” Kashgar (Fig. 1).



FIGURE 1 The location of the Kashgar oasis in relation to the surrounding Kun Lun Shan mountains, the Takla Makan Shamo desert and steppe  
KARTA DESYATIVERSTNAYA TURKESTANSKAGO VOENNOGO OKRUGA, 1: 420,000,  
TAŠKENT, SHEET R[ANG], VIII L[IST] 8, 1897

One left again and became famous during his short life, the other had a monument erected and was soon forgotten.

Chokan Valikhanov's account is full of insights into society there was translated into English in London and played an important argumentative role in the heated debates that fuelled the Great Game just as the Schlagintweit brothers' extensive findings did. Both daring expeditions were only the beginning of a multitude of adventurous expeditions and missions that set out for High Asia on behalf of the European adversaries in the Great Game to explore lucrative trade routes and worthwhile targets for future territorial claims.

The routes taken varied over the course of time, and the patchy network of explored routes became more closely meshed. If, after the coastlines had been

fully surveyed, it was initially the exploratory missions to the sources of the great rivers that were chosen as the next target—as with John Wood on the way to the source of the Oxus—this was soon followed by the daring traverses across the Himalayas, Kun Lun Shan and the Pamirs into the Central Asian oasis towns (Wood 1841). The Karakoram appeared as a central divide between the more familiar south and the mysterious north, whose potential was in many ways unknown. Between the voyage of the naval lieutenant Wood and the route explorations of the Indian spies disguised as pilgrims in the service of the British Crown lay the Schlagintweit expeditions commissioned by the “East India Company” (Waller 1990; Raj 2007; Brescius et al. 2015; Kreutzmann 2015; idem 2017). While Hermann and Robert Schlagintweit ended their long sojourn in South Asia by boarding vessels from Kolkata or Mumbai, Adolph set out overland from Sultanpur in the Kulu Valley (Himachal Pradesh) to cross the Karakoram on the unexplored route through the Changchenmo Valley and across the dry Depsang Plateau. His declared aim was to cross the Kun Lun Shan to reach East Turkestan and the Fergana Valley. Why he had separated from his two brothers for this purpose remained hidden in the dark for a long time. Adolph Schlagintweit produced the watercolour that was to be his last on 5 August 1857 on the Kilian Pass as he crossed the Kun Lun Shan on his way to Kashgar; this was followed a few days later, on 11 August, by his last diary entry in Karghalik, today’s Yecheng. He was supposedly the first European to explore Kashgar and other Silk Road oases since the Venetian Marco Polo in the 1270s and the Portuguese Jesuit Bento di Góis (Benedict Goës) in 1604 (Schlagintweit/Schlagintweit 1859: 8; Davies 1862: App. IVA: xxii.e; Schlagintweit-Sakünlünski 1869; Schlagintweit 1890; Hofmann 1957: 59; McKenzie 1989: 15; Finkelstein 2000: 179).<sup>1</sup> Carelessly forgotten are the Jesuits from Austria, Portugal and Spain who explored and surveyed on behalf of and in the service of the Chinese emperor, and who certainly visited Kashgar when producing their atlas work during the Qianlong era in the second half of the 18th century (Enoki 1955: 11). Thus, Adolph Schlagintweit can be regarded as a successor of the Portuguese Jesuits Felix da Rocha (Fu Zuolin) and Joseph d’Espinha (Gao Shensi), who, together with their Manchu colleague Minggantu, set out in 1759–1760 for the first systematic survey and cartographic records of the southern Silk Road oases and the Pamirs (Millward 1999: 69). Another Jesuit, Michel Benoist (Jiang Youren) from Burgundy, completed the work and published the “Qianlong Atlas” a few years later (Millward 1999: 72; see also Foss 1988: 228; Postnikov 1998). Adolph Schlagintweit, unlike his brothers had deliberately chosen the overland route

1 The dates for painting the last picture vary between 4 and 5 August.

via Kashgar and the Fergana valley for his return to explore alleged *terrae incognitae* outside the East India Company's zone of influence one hundred years after the Jesuits' explorations. The timing does not seem to have been well chosen; Kashgaria was in a turbulent phase. Misunderstandings and misjudgements of the situation led him to an area of little security.

## 2 Knowledge of the Death of Adolph Schlagintweit

In 1858, the two surviving brothers Hermann and Robert set various levers in motion to obtain information about the circumstances of his death. They asked the Russian Foreign Minister, Prince Alexander Gorchakov, for official assistance in their efforts to clarify the matter.<sup>2</sup> Prince Gorchakov commissioned the West Siberian administration under Governor Gustav Khristianovich Gasfort to investigate. Through the military governor for the territory of the Siberian Kazakhs, Major General von Friedrichs, who in turn delegated the investigation of the circumstances to his representative, Colonel K.K. Gutkowski, the senior Kazakh sultans of the border districts were persuaded to gather information with the following letter:

I humbly ask you, gracious sir, to find out the fate of Adolf Schlagintweit by means of the High Sultans in the border regions and areas of the Siberian Kazakhs and Kirghiz as well as the caravan leaders and persons who have connections to Qoqand and Tashkent!<sup>3</sup>

It was not until 28 May 1859 that Ibragim Zhaikpaev, the Sultan of the Akmolinsk district (*okrug*), confirmed the execution that had taken place, according to testimony from local informants.<sup>4</sup> The aforementioned Chokan Valikhanov first reported in detail on the circumstances of Adolph Schlagintweit's execution under the reign of terror of the Qoqand-born Wali Khan in Kashgar in the "Geographical Chronicle" section of 1861 in the "Proceedings of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society":

2 Campbell (2014: 202) quoted from the brothers' letter to Prince Gorchakov dated 8 November 1858 (Central'nyj gosudarstvennyj arxiv Respubliki Kazaxstana (CGARKaz f. 345, op. 1, d. 648, l. 4); see Jerofejewa 2012: 210).

3 Own translation from Jerofejewa (2012: 211–213); see Campbell (2014: 202), who quotes from sources in the Kazakh Central State Archive (CGARKaz ll. 1–10b).

4 Campbell (2014: 202), based on sources from the Kazakh Central State Archive (CGARKaz ll. 15–15ob).

On the banks of the river Kyzyl the Hodja [Wali Khan] erected a pyramid of human heads and he took scrupulous care to raise his monument: the heads of all the Chinese and Muslims who had been killed were collected from all places and brought to the pyramid. Many important people were victims of this cruelty and among them was a European, a traveller. This was Adolph Schlagintweit, one of three famous explorers of India. Coming from Yarkand, he posed as an English scientist (hakim). The inhabitants, expecting that this European would be able to help with his advice in the siege work to conquer the Chinese strongholds, were delighted at the stranger's arrival. He was led to Wali Khan Tura, who, unfortunately, was at that time insane from the use of hashish; before him, the traveller commissioned a merchant named Naman Bei from Margelan, as well as a relative of Wali Khan Tura, to buy some pieces of brocade as a gift for the Hodja. But the cruel leader's meeting with the traveller ended tragically. Wali Khan wanted to see documents from the latter and when the latter replied that he would only hand them over to the Khan of Qoqand, to whom they were also addressed, Wali Khan, full of irascibility, immediately ordered him beheaded. The meeting took place at the governor's house from where Schlagintweit was led through the town via the new marketplace with the mosque. Eyewitnesses report that the Fereng [stranger] was of tall stature, wore native clothing and the long hair of his uncovered head was tousled by the wind. The execution took place behind the town and the chopped-off head was placed on the pyramid. All this happened in August 1857. The property of Adolph Schlagintweit and his papers passed into the hands of the Hodja and their fate is unknown. (N.N. 1861: 22–23)

A footnote to the contemporaneous report names the informants and sources:

Mr Valikhanov gathered all these details from eyewitnesses, residents of Kashgar and, among others, from his wife, who herself saw the executioners leading Schlagintweit to execution. The very fact that Mr Valikhanov married in Kashgar shows that he was there for quite a long time and managed to collect the material presented here, which had previously been published in one of our newspapers. (N.N. 1861: 23)

Until then, the scanty reports had remained vague. In the same year that Chokan Valikhanov reached Kashgar, the British clients of the Schlagintweits were only able to compile vague statements from witnesses, some of them not very credible, all of whom were heard far away from Kashgar (Schlagin-

twit/Schlagintweit 1859). It was not until 6 February 1869 that Hermann von Schlagintweit-Sakünlünski, in a report to the “Mathematisch-physische Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften”, informed of a letter from Amritsar which, taking into account the sighted new moon at the beginning of the Muslim month of mourning *muhartram* in 1857, calculated the date of Adolph Schlagintweit’s death to be 26 August, according to the testimony of Abdulláh (Schlagintweit-Sakünlünski 1869).<sup>5</sup> His companions Abdulláh and Mohámmad Amín survived the expedition, were arrested, tortured and temporarily enslaved before they could escape and report about the circumstances (Fig. 2). The surviving brothers did not blame Mohámmad Amín for the tragedy as Hermann von Schlagintweit-Sakünlünski (1861: 1/39) noted:

Mohámmad Amín, a rather aged Turkistáni, from Yárkand, rendered us most faithful and important services during our expedition to Turkistán. He had formerly carried on extensive trading operations between Tibet and the Russian frontier, which seemed to have brought him into great trouble with the Chinese Government. His manner of treating the natives, and the cordial reception every where given to him, plainly showed that amongst his countrymen he was a well known personage, and considered as a man of great respectability and influence. It is principally owing to his excellent arrangements, carried out under difficulties which seemed at first insurmountable, that we found it possible to penetrate to the north of the Kuenlún ... He was also Adolphe’s chief guide during his last and fatal journey to Yárkand and Káshgar. As far as we are able to judge, no blame whatever can be attached to him in connection with the murder of our brother.

In the end, two skulls were handed over to the British authorities, each supposed to have belonged to Adolph Schlagintweit; both turned out to be heads of Asian provenance which was confirmed by the dentist Francis Lloyd after detailed examination in Lahore.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the head probably remained a part of the pile of skulls erected by Wali Khan in Yangihissar, the new town of Kashgar (Bellew 1875: 306).<sup>7</sup> The head and body were never identified or buried in a known location.

5 The calculation of the date of death is embedded in a detailed discussion of the Muslim calendar; see also Schlagintweit 1890a: 462. A brief note is also found in Forsyth 1875: 189.

6 Kumar and Saxena (2013) quoted from the official report by Lloyd (1884); see also Schlagintweit 1890a: 462.

7 The scene of the pyramid of skulls is recorded in the famous painting by Vasily Vereshchagin



FIGURE 2 Adolph Schlagintweit's travel route from India to Kashgar as well as Chokan Valikhanov's routes towards Kashgar  
SCHLAGINTWEIT/SCHLAGINTWEIT 1861; SCHLAGINTWEIT 1890A; DESIGN BY HERMANN KREUTZMANN

3 The Perception of the Schlagintweits in Russia

The Schlagintweits and their research were not unfamiliar to scholars in Saint Petersburg. The news from Kashgar shocked the members of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. Its prominent member and later Vice-President Pyotr Petrovich Semyonov had come to Berlin for the summer semester of 1853 to meet colleagues of common interests and to study with Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Ritter, who in turn had both been admitted to the Imperial

— titled "Apotheosis of war" from 1871. The painting which is displayed in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow is reproduced in Kreutzmann (2020: 65).



Russian Geographical Society in 1846 as its first foreign members (see Berg 1954: 194; Aldan-Semyonov 1965: 44; Kick 1969: 91; McKenzie 1989; Bailey 2008: 94–95, 98).<sup>8</sup> During his visit, Pyotr Semyonov met leading contemporary researchers:

In Berlin, Semyonov met with some colleagues from the university. Among his friends were: the young doctor of philosophy Gustav Jentzsch, the doctor of geology Söchting and the future famous scientist Ferdinand Richthofen. The inquisitive and travel-hungry Richthofen listened with pleasure to Semyonov's stories about Russia and Central Asia. And when Pyotr Petrovich introduced him to his plans for the Tien Shan journey, Richthofen exclaimed with delight: "A wonderful idea—to reach the unknown mountain range from Russia! I will follow your example and advance to the Tien Shan, but from the side of the Chinese Empire ..." Pyotr Petrovich became acquainted with the doctors of Munich University, the brothers Adolph and Hermann Schlagintweit (Fig. 3). The Schlagintweits were also contemplating a Tien Shan journey, but via India. Now there were still three people, apart from Pyotr Petrovich, who dreamed of opening up the secrets and mysteries of the celestial mountains to geographical science, but there was no rivalry between them. They consulted among themselves all the details and all the difficulties of the forthcoming expeditions. The Schlagintweit brothers informed Semyonov that their travel plans were supported even by Alexander von Humboldt. (Aldan-Semyonov (1965: 44)

On that day in Berlin, four explorers met who wanted to explore one and the same mountain range from three points of the compass, encouraged each other in their intentions and enthusiasm, and confidently initiated each other into their respective plans. Alexander von Humboldt was also initiated into the plans and proposed different routes of the eminent and daring scientists to explore the Tien-Shan (Aldan-Semyonov 1965: 44–47; Mursajew 1960: 52). Only Pyotr Semyonov was able to implement his plan and reached his goal. Ferdinand von Richthofen never managed to reach Kashgaria and the Tien Shan during his explorations in China between 1868 and 1872 (Waugh 2007). It was Adolph Schlagintweit's expedition alone that was to end fatally in Kashgar. Already in the spring of 1857, his colleagues Pyotr Semyonov and Chokan Valikhanov had met in Omsk and discussed Adolph Schlagintweit's

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8 Between 1856 and 1874, Pyotr Semyonov was instrumental in translating Ritter's *Asiatic Studies*, and especially the volumes concerning Central Asia, into Russian.





FIGURE 3

Adolph and Hermann Schlagintweit shown as alpine researchers prior to their endeavour and explorations in India and adjacent regions

COURTESY OF THE ARCHIVE OF THE GERMAN ALPINE CLUB, FILE NUMBER DAV FOP 1 FF.2527.0

Kashgar project. Chokan Valikhanov already expressed serious concerns about the security situation there, especially as travellers with Russian and English passports were generally denied entry to Kashgar (Aldan-Semyonov 1965: 132). The Qoqand regime in Kashgar, in order to maintain trading privileges in the important Silk Road oasis, sought to keep competitors out under a religious pretext—the protection of the Muslim population (Marthe 1867: 86–87).

Parallel to these considerations, however, it is also important to note that a fierce race for exploratory honours had begun here. Two young explorers, Adolph Schlagintweit and Chokan Valikhanov, were direct competitors on the path to fame for the early exploration of Kashgaria. Pyotr Semyonov and Chokan Valikhanov agreed that they had a mission to accomplish in exploring Central Asia. While one had chosen the Tien Shan as his destination, the other was on his way to new shores further east. Kashgaria lay in the

Chinese realm and outside Tsarist influence. A central figure for the realisation of both plans became the more experienced Pyotr Semyonov, who convinced the governor of Western Siberia, Gustav Khristianovich Gasfort, of the idea to seriously pursue and realise the practical possibility of pushing Russia's fluid borders further south (Aldan-Semyonov 1965: 133–134; Bailey 2008: 123–126). For Kashgaria, a benevolent agreement and written permission from St. Petersburg are necessary for the daring venture. A permissive expedition permit to “explore the political and military situation of Kashgar, its history and geography, and the situation of trade” was obtained in November 1857 with the support of E.P. Kovalevsky, head of the Asian department of the university (Aldan-Semyonov 1965: 170–171). A year later, Chokan Valikhanov reached Kashgar, stayed there for six months and returned to St. Petersburg the following year from his successful Kashgaria expedition. There the successful pioneer vividly reports on his experiences and findings to the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (Aldan-Semyonov 1965: 199). In this context he describes the gruesome murder of Adolph Schlagintweit in all the details he had found out with his interlocutors. Kermit McKenzie (1989: 15) has suggested that Chokan Valikhanov travelled to Kashgar disguised as a merchant to investigate the circumstances of the tragic execution of his friend and colleague Adolph Schlagintweit on behalf of Pyotr Semyonov. At this meeting, Pyotr Semyonov demands that the memory of Adolph Schlagintweit be kept alive, but in what form is not yet clearly defined (Aldan-Semyonov 1965: 200). The construction of the later monument, however, drags on for a long time and coincides with a time when the Great Game had entered its hot phase.

In recognition of his pioneering work, Chokan Valikhanov was admitted to the distinguished society as a young member and an exceptional non-Russian (*inorodec*) on the suggestion of Pyotr Semyonov (McKenzie 1989: 14). During this period of success in St Petersburg society, he continued the acquaintance he had begun in Siberia with Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, and they remained on friendly terms throughout their lives (Futrell 1979; McKenzie 1989: 13). They had become friends in Siberia, where Dostoevsky had been exiled in 1849 and deprived of his civil rights and sentenced to eight years in the camps and military service. There, Chokan Valikhanov had also met Pyotr Semyonov during his training at the cadet school (Bailey 2008: 104).

The expeditions of the Schlagintweit brothers were regularly reported at the meetings of the “Imperial Russian Geographical Society” in St. Petersburg. High expectations were pinned on the announced nine-volume work supposed to contain a synopsis of the scientific results. When the first volume was published in 1861, a detailed ten-page review was published in which it was made clear



FIGURE 4 Chokan Valikhanov (1835–1865), pioneer of Kazakh and Kirghiz studies

PORTRAIT BY ABYMKHAN KASTEEV, 1951; COURTESY  
REPUBLICAN MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS NAMED AFTER  
A. KASTEEV IN ALMATY

that a high scientific value was attached to the volume (Beketov 1861: 21–30). In the same volume, the “Proceedings of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society” contained a detailed report by the new member Chokan Valikhanov on the circumstances of the execution of the alleged British agent in Kashgar.<sup>9</sup> Chokan Valikhanov (Fig. 4) himself outlived Adolph Schlagintweit by barely eight years and died of tuberculosis at the age of 29 in 1865. Despite his short life span, the Central Asian nobleman in Russian military service is still considered one of the great explorers of Kashgaria and the founder of Kazakh-Kyrgyz ethnography and geography. In its obituary, the Imperial Russian Geographical Society called his journey to Kashgar “the most outstanding geographical achievement since the time of Marco Polo”.<sup>10</sup> Thus the two pioneers of Kashgar research, who had been mutually accused of espionage, already belonged to the past at

9 The version disseminated by Chokan Valikhanov, who describes Adolph Schlagintweit as a British agent (Valikhanov/Veniukof 1865: 228), is adopted in greater or lesser detail by almost all subsequent authors, cf. Venjukov 1874; Kuropatkin 1879: 124–125. Bailey (2008: 160–162) cites a variety of reasons for the expedition, which goes far beyond exploratory activities to highlight the geopolitical and expansionist dimensions of gaining knowledge.

10 Quoted from Bailey 2012: 186; see Futrell 1979; McKenzie 1989: 14.

the height of the Great Game without reaching even the age of 30 (Venjukov 1874; Kuropatkin 1879: 124–125; Bailey 2012: 184–185).

In the same year, the Gorchakov Memorandum was written, in which the Chancellor of the Russian Empire, Prince Alexander Gorchakov, stated that Russia's future lay in Asia and that the southern extension of the Turkestan provinces was to be located in the Hindukush (Immanuel 1895: 385; Hauner 1989: 1). Prince Gorchakov was as animated by a project of civilisation in the newly conquered territories of Central Asia as his European rivals. Both derived their claim to dominance from an alleged higher cultural level of their societies. Now the civilising mission had come to the fore in interaction with imperialist interests. The race had taken on a new quality. A chain of fortifications and military posts was supposed to secure the troubled border region from rivals, resistance and raid, thus helping to control and stabilise the colonised economic areas. A confrontation with British India was accepted and remained inevitable in a narrowing intermediate zone. Both opponents of the Great Game legitimised their interference from the idea of European superiority, saw themselves as part of a single civilizational sphere and a common teleological process whereby population growth necessitated expansion. Thus, when the British and Russian Empires looked at each other across the Hindu Kush and Tian-Shan, some actors within each understood themselves to be part of the same historical and professional endeavours and saw their erstwhile “rivals” as both equals and potential models of imperial rule.<sup>11</sup>

The modernisation and Christianisation of “pagan” territories as a white man's burden in the wording of Rudyard Kipling determined contemporary British discourse and motivated numerous individuals to great efforts (Kreutzmann 2017: 39–40). For example, in the late 19th century, the British Consul General in Kashgar, George Macartney, endeavoured to implement the abolition of slavery in Central Asia as well. Similar intentions and projects can be claimed by members of the contemporary Russian intelligentsia such as the influential Pyotr Semyonov, who, after holding other offices in the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, was elected its vice-president in 1873. As early as 1877, the military geographer and explorer Mikhail Veniukoff [Venjukov] published a treatise on the effectiveness of Russian engagement and the progress made to date in Central Asia, in which he formulated the missionary mandate to civilise the peoples living there through industrialisation and pushing back Islam (India Office Library and Records: Political and Secret Department Memoranda: IOL/P&S/18/C17). Alongside a multitude of other advocates for

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11 Campbell (2014: 200) who attributes this view to Pyotr Semyonov-Tyan-Shanskii (1892).

increased engagement in Central Asia, in January 1881 none other than Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky intervened in the discussion with his essay on “Geok-Tepe. What is Asia to us?” by raising complex questions: “What is the need of the future seizure of Asia? What’s our business there? This is necessary because Russia is not only in Europe but also in Asia; because the Russian is not only a European but also an Asiatic. Moreover, Asia, perhaps, holds out greater promises to us than Europe. In our future destinies Asia is, perhaps, our main outlet!” (Dostoevsky 1919: 1044). It was the time when the Great Game entered its hot phase. Spheres of influence were being shifted, and on neutral ground like in Kashgar, the great powers Russia and Great Britain were looking for the opportunity to take advantage.

#### 4 The Great Game in Kashgar

Since the tea merchant Robert Shaw and the participants of the mission led by the British envoy Thomas Douglas Forsyth had reached the southern Silk Road, sent out their scouts and profited from good travel conditions during the interregnum of Yakub Beg in Kashgaria, the objectives and purposes of exploration changed (Shaw 1871; Forsyth 1875; see for the wider aspects of exploration in Central Asia Dabbs 1963; Gorshenina 2003; Kreutzmann 2007). While the Schlagintweit brothers were still exploratory pioneers and had prepared the ground for scientific broad-based knowledge gathering, subsequent expeditions and researchers changed their focus and directed it towards archaeology and art history as well as history and politics. Kashgar became a destination included in the travel plans of many adventurers, explorers and spies (Kreutzmann 2015; idem 2017). We have more detailed knowledge of this because the Kashgar oasis became a place where British-Russian rivalries were personally and vehemently fought out on Chinese territory. The protagonists George Macartney and Nikolai Petrovsky played out their own Great Game here (Skrine/Nightingale 1973). After the Chinese government had already authorised a Russian consulate in Kashgar in the Treaty of St. Petersburg in 1882, Great Britain sought an equal formal representation. George Macartney was initially tolerated only as a British representative in Chini Bagh, the later consulate location, from November 1890 (Skrine/Nightingale 1973: 16, 23, 168). Both rivals exploited the weaknesses of the Chinese administration on the periphery of the “Middle Kingdom” in Xiyu, the western frontier, which had been called Xinjiang, the new territory, since 1884.

Nevertheless, the playing field was not as easy to master as the British and Russian protagonists had imagined dealing with their Chinese counterparts.

In his correspondence between 1884 and 1888, Nikolai Petrovsky repeatedly mentioned Adolph Schlagintweit and his interest in erecting a memorial monument in his name. While he was initially concerned that a similar fate might befall him, his later comments were marked by displeasure that the Chinese authorities did not support or at least tolerate his plans as he had wished (Petrovskij 1884).<sup>12</sup> Eastern Turkestan, where Kashgar was the arena of imperialist adversaries, seemed to become more significant for China; however, a higher level of engagement and effective presence was still a long time coming (Kreutzmann 2015; idem 2017). Here we now see how, 30 years after the assassination of Adolph Schlagintweit, Pyotr Semyonov's proposal was taken up again by Nikolai Petrovsky and a monument to Adolph Schlagintweit was erected in Kashgar at the instigation of the "Imperial Russian Geographical Society". The place where Adolph Schlagintweit met his tragic fate was chosen as the appropriate site.

## 5 A Memorial Monument for Adolph Schlagintweit in Kashgar 30 Years after His Murder

The erection of the monument prompted the younger brother, Emil Schlagintweit, to write a report for the Philosophical-Philological and Historical Class of the Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Munich with the findings he had gained in the meantime, the statements of which were based on two official letters from the Russian Consul Nikolai Petrovsky to his superiors (Schlagintweit 1890a: 457). Surprisingly, Emil Schlagintweit still speculated at this time about the exact goals his older brother might have pursued with his journey. Only the vague statement that Qoqand was his destination can be found in his diary, his letters and the statements of his servants (Schlagintweit 1890a: 466). After initial delays on the part of the Chinese authorities, Consul Petrovsky succeeded in having the site of the event transferred to his control on 30 June 1888 (N.N. 1890: 216). A year earlier, the memorial plaque made by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society had already been dedicated to the event, which took place thirty years ago, with the words:

To the travelling Adolf Schlagintweit fallen at Kashgar as a victim of his high devotion to geographical science on 14/26 August of the year 1857. This monument is erected by the Russian Consul Nicolai Fedorovich

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12 Letter to F.R. Osten-Sacken, 1.3.1884 from Kashgar (Petrovskij 2010: 145–146).

Petrovsky with the cooperation of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society in 1887. (Schlagintweit 1890a: 471–472)

In his address on 12 December 1888, Nikolai Petrovsky repeated the wording quoted at the beginning of Chokan Valikhanov's account of the circumstances of the execution. His report to his superior authority in St. Petersburg reveals the paradoxical situation that had arisen. The murder of a German traveller in British service by a rebellious local potentate from the Fergana Valley who had seized the control of Kashgaria motivated a Russian consular official to erect a monument in Kashgar one generation after it had happened. As the Chinese officials there initially refused the request, Nikolai Petrovsky intervened at the Foreign Office in Beijing and received support from the German and Russian envoys there, Maximilian von Brandt and Alexei Kumani (Baskhanov 2021: 16). It did not take long for an imperial directive to grant the site. The Russian consul himself took a photograph from the place-finding mission; it shows the Chinese and Russian delegations in Yangihissar.<sup>13</sup> At the same time and at Petrovsky's urging, the vice-president of the "Imperial Russian Geographical Society", the Privy Councillor Baron von Osten-Sacken, and other members had sought donations for a memorial plaque. The great explorer Nikolai Przheval'sky also campaigned for the monument.<sup>14</sup> The Society's treasury report for 1888 shows a sum of 113.30 roubles for the monument for the financial year 1886–1887. There seems to have been little willingness to donate elsewhere. There are no references to external donations for the erection of the monument. Nikolai Petrovsky made a valiant effort to secure artefacts from the expedition; on the black market in Kashgar he acquired a thermometer from the Berlin firm Ch.F. Geissler, marked with a brass fitting in the name "Schlagintweit", which came from the expedition's holdings.<sup>15</sup> Because of the hostile Chinese attitude, it was considered in the meantime to mobilise the potential influence of German envoys in Beijing, it was even contemplated to erect the monument on the Russian cemetery in Kashgar.<sup>16</sup> It was not until 1888 that the

13 The photograph is reproduced as book cover to the collection of Petrovsky's and Lutsch's Kashgar photographs by Baskhanov and Rezvan (2021) titled "The land transfer ceremony for the construction of Adolf Schlagintweit monument in Kashgar" (NA RGO. Razriad 112. Op. 1. D. 24. I. 1).

14 Petrovskij, N.F. 1887a: Letter to N.M. Przheval'sky, dated 30.1.1887 from Kashgar (Petrovskij 2010: 194–195).

15 Petrovskij, N.F. 1886: Letter to F.R. Osten-Sacken, dated 4.8.1886, from Kashgar (Petrovskij 2010: 183–185); see the reference in Schlagintweit/Schlagintweit 1866: 28; Schlagintweit-Sakünlünski 1869; as well as Lansdell 1893: 11/44.

16 Petrovskij, N.F. 1887b: Letter to F.R. Osten-Sacken, dated 20.2.1887, from Kashgar (Petro-



breakthrough was achieved.<sup>17</sup> The monument was completed on 3 June 1889.<sup>18</sup> Consul Petrovsky then sent a report and a photograph of the monument, which was almost six metres high, to his superior authority in St Petersburg.<sup>19</sup> The photograph (Fig. 5) documents the third act of the commemorative action. It was taken at the “Monument to Adolph Schlagintweit at Kashgar in Chinese Turkestan, [fallen there on 26 Aug. 1857], with the dedication ceremony” on 30 November/12 December 1889 and is a testimony to the personal and political constellation at that time.<sup>20</sup> The subtitle reads “erected by the Russian authorities on 31/6 June 1889”.<sup>21</sup> On the left in front of the monument, the Russian consul Nikolai Fedorovich Petrovsky leads the European entourage consisting of 15 Cossacks, the consulate’s secretary Yakov Yakovlevich Lutsch, Dr. Josef Troll from Vienna, the Dutch Jesuit Father Hendricks, who performed the consecration act, assisted by a Polish consular clerk who had taken over the office of church servant.<sup>22</sup>

On the right, the Chinese administration had a high-ranking presence through a representative of the Taotai (provincial governor) from Urumchi and the Amban of Kashgar, who was subordinate to him, and had eleven people including an interpreter as a “Chinese entourage”. Neither a German nor a British representative was present at the event. Father Hendricks stood—as can also be seen in the line-up of persons in the backdrop for the photo—rather distanced from Consul Petrovsky. Later, the Russian consul plotted against him and had him expelled from Kashgar, so that the Jesuit, who was linguistically adept and interested in research, extended his already existing friendly

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vskij 2010: 196–197); Petrovskij, N.F. 1887d: Letter to F.R. Osten-Sacken, dated 29.4.1887, from Kashgar (Petrovskij 2010: 199–200).

17 Petrovskij, N.F. 1888: Letter to F.R. Osten-Sacken, dated 17.11.1887, from Kashgar (Petrovskij 2010: 210–213).

18 Letter from Consul Nikolai Petrovsky of 18 June 1889 to the “Chief of the Asian Department” in the “Ministry of Foreign Affairs” in St Petersburg (translated and reprinted in Schlagintweit 1890a: 467–469).

19 Among the few photographs of the monument is one belonging to the collection of Yakov Lutsch (item 26 in the Kunstkamera’s Collection No. 512 attributed to him). It was published by Baskhanov/Rezvan (2021: 455).

20 The photograph comes from the private collection of Stefan Schlagintweit and is reproduced by permission of the Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. The date differences refer to the Gregorian (12 December 1889) and Julian (30 November 1889) calendars, which were used in Germany and Russia respectively.

21 Consul Petrovsky’s report gives slightly different dates; according to it, the monument would have been completed on 3/15 June 1889 (Schlagintweit 1890a: 472).

22 Troll was the one who reported on the erection of the monument for the Leipzig “*Illustrierte Zeitung*” the following year (N.N. 1890).



FIGURE 5 The nearly six metres high monument “Denkmal für Adolph Schlagintweit”, commissioned by the Russian Consul-General Nicolai Feodorovich Petrovsky  
COURTESY: PRIVATE COLLECTION STEFAN SCHLAGINTWEIT, REPRODUCTION PROVIDED BY MUSEUM FÜNF KONTINENTE MUNICH

relations with George Macartney, served him as an informant and moved to his residence in Chini Bagh (Skrine/Nightingale 1973: 39, 107–117). However, as he was the only available Catholic priest in Kashgar at the time of the blessing, his services could hardly be dispensed with. The dedication of the monument can also be seen as an attempt by the Russian consul to underline his claim



FIGURE 6 Adolf Schlagintweit's monument in Kashgar

ILLUSTRIERTE ZEITUNG LEIPZIG 1 MARCH 1890, VOL. 94, NO. 2435: 216

to sole representation as the representative of European powers in Kashgar before the Chinese officials. Dr Josef Troll spoke after Consul Petrovsky and ... expressed his gratitude “that he, who spoke the same language as the deceased, was granted the privilege of witnessing the honouring act by which the explorer had also been duly honoured by the Chinese nation”.<sup>23</sup>

As early as 1887, Petrovsky had asked in a letter to Osten-Sacken to “whisper to Prussia and Bavaria that it was necessary for them to thank the Geographical Society for the donation for the monument”.<sup>24</sup> It was only after some delay that Baron Rudolph Gasser, then Bavarian envoy to Russia, could be persuaded to write a letter of thanks for the erection of the monument in 1892.<sup>25</sup> The monument (Fig. 6) soon fell into oblivion and was obviously not particularly

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from Consul Petrovsky's report (Schlagintweit 1890a: 472).

<sup>24</sup> Petrovskij, N.F. 1887c: Letter to F.R. Osten-Sacken, dated 3.3.1887, from Kashgar; quoted after Petrovskij (2010: 210–213): “Preussen und Bayern zu flüstern, dass es notwendig sei, dass diese sich bei der Geographischen Gesellschaft für die Spende für das Denkmal bedanken”.

<sup>25</sup> Petrovskij, N.F. 1892: Letter to F.R. Osten-Sacken, dated 14.5.1892, from Kashgar (Petrovskij 2003: 491–494).

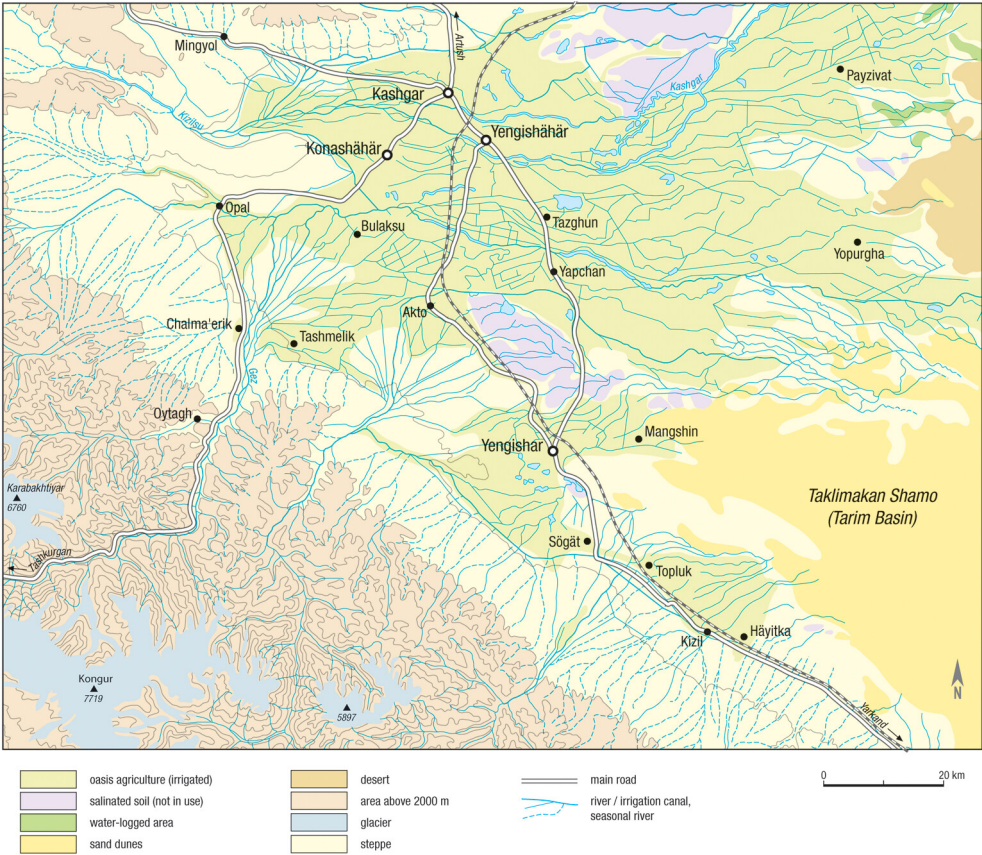


FIGURE 7 Kashgar oasis located at the foot of the glaciated peaks of the western Kun Lun Shan  
DESIGN BY HERMANN KREUTZMANN

protected or cared for. When Sven Hedin (1898: 1/247) visited the monument site in June 1894, he found only a ruin of the monument “now undermined by the spring floods”. A similar report was given by the Berlin Orientalist Martin Hartmann, who visited the site of decay in October 1902 and noted that the monument had crumbled, but that the plaque had been saved and was kept in the Russian Consulate (Hartmann 1908: 81). In the aftermath no references were recorded whatsoever; it seems that the monument and its plaque have completely vanished. The spot (Fig. 7) must have been a prominent one as it was the place where Schlagintweits murderer Wali Khan Tura had committed the execution and where he tried to divert the water course to cut-off the Chinese residents from any supply who had isolated themselves in the new city of Yangihissar (Landsdell 1893: 11/44). Today this historical spot has completely disappeared from the collective memory of the inhabitants of Kashgar.

## 6 Endgame and Lasting Merits

In 1906, the Russian Tsar honoured Pyotr Semyonov with the epithet Tyan-Shansky for his pioneering work in exploring the Tien Shan. Pyotr Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky was thus honoured in the same way as Hermann Schlagintweit, who had been allowed to use the surname Sakünlünski since 1864 in recognition of his research in the Kun Lun Shan (Schlagintweit 1890b: 346). This tribute is obviously in stark contrast to the British assessments. Emil Schlagintweit (1890b: 346) only counts among the honours for his elder brothers the elevation to the Bavarian hereditary nobility, the Russian honours and the admission to the Imperial Leopoldine-Carolinian German Academy of Natural Scientists.

The Great Game continued for another half century until the Asia Convention of 1907 established the boundaries of the British and Russian spheres of influence and the neutral corridors separating them (Kreutzmann 2015; idem 2017; idem 2022). Following the example of the Schlagintweit brothers, scientists set out, searching passages across the Himalayas, reporting on forage supply and firewood, botanising and conducting cultural studies for geographical and military route manuals (gazetteers) published by the Intelligence Bureau of General Staff India. The findings were used both for science and military planning. Something comparable happened on the Russian side; the Tsar and the Geographical Society (*Russkoe geografičeskoe obščestvo*), headed by a member of the Tsar's family, commissioned explorers from various European countries to conduct regional surveys and thematic research. Under the direction of highly educated officers, little-veiled military explorations took place. Rudyard Kipling perceived these activities as part of a white man's burden, while Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky also sought not only to justify the push into Central Asia as a civilising mission but interpreted and compared Russia's appropriations on its eastern periphery to British conquests in North America in the context of equality. The pioneer Adolph Schlagintweit's exploration of Kashgar, which ended tragically, sparked a long-lasting curiosity that has contributed to Kashgar's fascination to this day and made it an exceptional destination in Southern Xinjiang.

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