In the Past Three Years, What Have I Seen in Kashgar's Gaotai Neighbourhood?

Introduction

Crimes against humanity dehumanise their victims (*The Economist* 2020). The systemisation of this violence conceals individual identity and personal suffering. Meanwhile and despite best intentions, a certain degree of dissociation inheres in reporting on these crises from afar. At worst, victims are reduced to numbers; at best—so it seems—they become anecdotes.

Indeed, the crisis unfolding in Uyghur, Kazakh, and other Turkic communities in the Tarim and Junngar Basins—now clamped tightly within the Chinese administrative region officially called the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region—denies its victims of their dignity. Countless numbers of

indigenous academics, artists, doctors, farmers, grandfathers, grandmothers, parents, sons, and daughters alike have been stripped of their personhoods and generically branded as ‘extremists’. They must now endure in prisons, detention centres, reeducation camps, and factories. The ‘lucky ones’ remain at home where their days are interrupted by flag-raising ceremonies (*Global Times* 2020), political ideology classes, and visits from government cadres (Byler 2020). No one is completely spared from this terror.

Recently, human faces are being put to this suffering. In small but growing numbers, victims are being introduced to the world. The cases of internationally renowned scholars such as Ilham Tohti and Rahile Dawut have garnered the attention of human rights organisations, academic societies, and journalists. Relatives of victims living outside of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) are also documenting the disappearance of their loved ones and providing testimonies through Shahit Xinjiang’s Victims Database and other grassroots organisations. Yet, I cannot help but wonder, in despair, how many victims’ stories are left untold and unknown beyond their immediate families—especially those who do not have family outside China. Who speaks for them?

For the last 30 months, I have joined other scholars, journalists, and activists documenting this crisis and the trauma it has created in Uyghur and Kazakh communities. I have uncovered and shared hundreds of pages of documents revealing the crimes of the Chinese Party-state. Families are being torn apart, parents weep for their detained children (Zhang 2017), and police complain about inhumane conditions in overcrowded detention centres (Xinyang Detention Center 2017). Yet, few government reports, cadre blogs, or official statistics haunt me as much as the following story.

Written in Chinese for a social media site popular in the PRC, the story details the experiences of the author—a Han woman trained as an journalist—in Kashgar’s now almost completely demolished *kona sheher* (in Chinese 高台) neighbourhood. Over the course of three summers, the young Han woman befriends Akbar, a middle-aged Uyghur father, husband, and artisan. In 2017, he laments the loss of his community and holds little hope for the future. However, his fate was crueler than he likely ever imagined. Upon returning to Akbar’s home in 2018, the author learned from his sobbing wife, Muyesar, that he had been sentenced to prison for 13 years because of ‘a problem with [his] cellphone’. Muyesar’s love for her husband is preserved in their wedding picture, a much happier time captured in the eternity of a photograph. The author returned once more in the fall. Akbar’s family had moved; their once warm house instantly turned into an empty container. Now at this spot, the existence of Akbar, his family, and his home have been reduced to old photographs and the fading memories of his elderly neighbours.

Akbar’s story is both unique and common. No one will experience the grief caused by Akbar’s loss exactly the same way as his wife and his children. Yet, similar to Akbar’s family, thousands of Uyghurs and Kazaks are grieving for their parents, children, siblings, cousins, friends, and neighbours at this very moment. Their suffering must not continue in silence.

Timothy Grose

Associate Professor of China Studies, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

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In the Past Three Years, What Have I Seen in Kashgar’s Gaotai Neighbourhood?

May 9, 2019

Essay and Photographs by «Anonymous»

Translated by Chinese for Uyghurs

> *Due to security concerns, the identity of the author and the link to the original source are omitted. Akbar and Muyesar are pseudonyms created by the Xinjiang Documentation Project. The full information is documented off site.

Kashgar’s Gaotai neighbourhood is an ancient Uyghur settlement in the westernmost city of China. Some people say that Xinjiang is like a game of Go, the southern part of Xinjiang being the ‘eye’, whereas Kashgar, they say, is the ‘eye’ of southern Xinjiang.* As the only surviving in the old city of Kashgar, Gaotai neighbourhood has attracted much attention. Stability maintenance, urbanisation, preservation of the old city, ethnic culture, economic development—too many issues are haunting the neighbourhood. Akbar, a resident of Gaotai, was an electrical appliance merchant who traveled extensively before returning to Kashgar. He has seven children and a simple wish in life: ‘Having enough to eat.’ This article recounts the changes that his family has lived through over the course of three years, from 2016 to 2018.

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*The author’s metaphor is inspired by the game of Go, in which the ‘eye’ is defended and supposed to be impenetrable. The game of Go is built on the logic of territorial conquest.

Akbar: From Electrical Appliance Merchant to Musical Instrument Artisan

The midday sun falls on the rooftops, pigeons set off from the balcony, there isn't a breath of wind in the air. The sky is strikingly blue.

Houses made of poplar wood and mud carry a dark, unchanging colour tone. When a layer of earth peels down, a generation ages away.

This is the Gaotai neighbourhood of Kashgar.

In Kashgar, China's westernmost city, it's hard to find a Uyghur settlement as ancient as Gaotai. Built on a loess cliff which is more than 40 meters high and 800 meters long, the neighbourhood has a history of more than 600 years.

Three summers ago, I met a musical instrument maker named Akbar there. He resided in the neighbourhood with his wife and seven children, in an old house in which his family had lived for generations.

I had a long conversation with him that afternoon, and before I knew it, it was already late in the evening. When I was about to leave for the hostel, it suddenly started to rain heavily. We were all surprised as it rarely rains in Kashgar and, since there was no rain gear in the house and it was pouring, I stayed.

On that rainy night, Akbar's wife, a curvaceous Uyghur woman, was sitting on a decorated red rug by the window, embroidering a colourful doppa.

Their home sits on the outskirts the neighbourhood. In the night, the yellow lamplight illuminates its worn-out earth walls, and the colourful lights of a Ferris wheel on the grass slope swept around. Sometimes the light would fall on the face of Akbar's wife. She was wearing a yellow headscarf and had many wounds on her hands from the hat-embroidering work. She had no job, this was her only source of income. She sat in silence, as Akbar gazed at Kashgar in the rain.

The texture of the rain appeared all the more lustrous in the yellow light of the night, and the water kept falling without a sign of stopping. The sheep that graze on the Gaotai meadow had long since returned to their pens. The rain amplified the silence of these raw-earth houses.

It was getting late, so I took my leave. Akbar tried a few times to persuade me to stay, and then let me have my way. As a southerner who grew up soaking in the rain, I didn't find it odd to walk in a shower. But I underestimated the rain on that summer night in Kashgar. The drops poured down from the sky, harsh and cold, and soaked all my clothes at once. A few years ago, one would have to cross a

meadow to get to the road from Gaotai. During that rainstorm, that meadow had become completely muddy—grass, mud, and water blended together, and it became very slippery. With my camera on my back, I struggled to maintain my balance and, as I was about to reach the road, I tripped and fell.

With my face and clothes covered in mud, and water in my mouth, I was a shivering mess. It was then, in that fierce, insulating rain, that I felt a connection with the sky and earth of Kashgar, like those children who roll over in dirt. In the split second when I tripped and fell, it all became quite interesting to me. The rain is cold there, just like how the sun is fierce. It was raining dense and hard. I stopped a five-yuan taxi on the side of the road and went back to my hostel next to the Id Kah mosque. The rain, too, stopped just in time. To this day, whenever it rains, I still think of that night, with the ferocious downpour, yellow light, grey and black mud, and Akbar's family, who gathered around in that damp night to eat noodles topped with tomato.

In Kashgar, Xinjiang, rain is rare, but you can always see the yellow lamplight in house windows. Sometimes it comes from a single yellow light bulb, sometimes from several big, carved lamps. Once, late at night on a full moon, a friend of mine and I went into the lanes of Gaotai. Taking a walk in the neighbourhood at night is a unique experience. Those winding alleys have no streetlights and are illuminated solely by the moon in the sky. The moon glows brightly in the inky blue sky, just like it did thousands of years ago. The running earth walls and moonlight of Gaotai give this place an unforgettable sense of home. Within the urban zone of Kashgar and on the outskirts of the old city, the image that Gaotai preserves for us belongs to the Middle Ages—ancient, calm, and solemn. In summer nights, people in the neighbourhood sit in front of their homes, chatting by the moonlight. When the wind blows, the goose-yellow lamplight leaks out through the red curtains in the room. Like those in other homes, the curtains of Akbar's home have been fluttering for more than a hundred years.

It was in 2016 that I first met Akbar. I was roaming along the perimeter of Gaotai. Beneath a thicket of hops, Dutar music suddenly came into my ears. As I followed the rich, melodic sound, I walked through the curtains and saw the then 47-year-old Akbar. He was surrounded by piles of tools for making Uighur instruments. His head was bowed and was immersed in the music. Akbar had thick eyebrows and a high nose bridge; his skin was a little tanned, the Kashgar sun had evaporated the excess moisture from his body. My arrival was a little abrupt, yet he didn't find it odd. When the song ended, he began to talk to me.

He was one of the few middle-aged Uyghurs who could speak Chinese in the neighbourhood. As a former businessman who had travelled extensively to sell electrical appliances, Akbar had been to many inner-China cities, where he sold refrigerators and air conditioners to Han people. In inner-China, his face was always conspicuous in the crowd. Later, when his business couldn't continue, Akbar returned to Kashgar with the refrigerators he didn't manage to sell. In order to make a living, he taught himself how to make musical instruments. This talent did not need to be learned; it came from his memory.

In the old days, a wedding in Gaotai would always make the whole lane bustle with noise and excitement. For two whole days, the lanes paved with diamond and square-shaped tiles would be filled with song and dance. Music and dance would flow over the neighbourhood like water. It is watching these scenes that Akbar became enchanted by the dutar, the ghijäk, the rawap, the tambur, and the qalun. The tambur has a wide range and a crisp tone, while the Rawap has a bright, pure,

high-pitched vibrant tone, like a horse galloping on the grassland, and the solos are often stunning. These melodies formed Akbar's earliest memories of sound. (As years pass, the people playing these instruments changed from old men dressed in chapan to young men in suits; yet, when these instruments are sounded Uyghurs regain their [musical] history).

Akbar playing music (2016).

For Akbar, the music that once flowed in his ears became the work of his hands. He air-dried and sawed the mulberry and walnut, made carvings on them, and adjusted the angle of the bow and the strings. As he did so, the body of the Dutar came out, and as he continued, the music notes of the Gidjak came out. The instruments found their voices, and everything came alive.

The instruments Akbar made (2016).

It took about seven days for Akbar to make a musical instrument like the Dutar, the Rewap, or the Gidjak by hand. When it was done, he would then take it to the Kashgar East Gate International Bazaar to sell it. In 2016, a Dutar made by Akbar could be sold for 600 yuan. In 2017, one could only be sold for 450 yuan.

‘It is too hard to earn money,’ Akbar said. ‘Sometimes I make a lot of instruments, but can’t sell them.’

Akbar and the instruments he made.

But one can’t just sit around, there had to be work on hand. So every day, he tinkered under the trellis

where hops grow.

He has seven children. His eldest daughter was divorced, his second son was working as an apprentice in a barber shop after having given up football dreams, his third son was in middle school, and his youngest daughter in elementary school. The whole family's livelihood relied on Akbar's instrument making and his wife's hat-embroidering work.

The year 2017 had been relatively tough for Akbar, but he was almost 50 years old. What hardship hadn't he seen before?

'Difficulty will pass, in a year or two,' Akbar said. 'As long as we still have things to eat.'

Akbar's neighbours were rapidly moving out of Gaotai. His childhood friends had left. At noon, the sun of 37 degrees north was baking these raw-earth houses.

‘Our house looks quite worn-out on the outside, but if you walk in, you’ll see that it’s pretty inside.’

In Akbar’s yard there were all kinds of plants, pomegranate flowers, oleander, apricot, and in the summer it is filled with a luxuriant green. ‘Look, here’s a carving left by my grandfather. I don’t want to move.’ His family had lived in the neighbourhood for five hundred years.

Akbar’s home in Gaotai neighborhood. All the flowers and trees are planted by him (2016).

In 2017, the neighbourhood became more worn-out. Crumbling and weathered, time was demonstrating its power in a place that hadn’t been tainted by modernity. Houses in Gaotai are built on cliffs—when a new generation is added onto the family population, an additional floor would be built on top of the ancestor’s house, and it goes on like this, generation after generation. The houses here are made of raw-earth. Many children in Kashgar grow up with the earth, and neighbourhood seems like a metaphor for Kashgar’s childhood. It’s innocent, unadorned, and rough. Now, it is almost like an old man, and you can see from Gaotai the Kashgar of the past, which belongs to an era of brown raw-earth and corner buildings across the street. It trembles and leads you to a time that will never return.

Gaotai neighbourhood (2017).

I arrived here at noon. The sun was blazing and the neighbourhood was surprisingly quiet. The sun shone on the old yellow houses, casting black shadows. The uninhabited lanes were quiet. Even children became rare to see here. I walked past the ruins, past the wooden doors firmly shut, I walked past shattered walls and dried trees. A strange feeling arose in me—rather than ‘decaying beauty’, ‘deadly silence’ would be a more suitable way to describe Gaotai at the present.

In only one year, from 2016 to 2017, 90 percent of the residents had moved out. I was worried that Gaotai would lose its authenticity due to government renovation. But now it seems that the loss of residents has ‘degenerated’ Gaotai even more. It is a settlement that needs to be preserved by people living in it.

Gaotai neighbourhood (2017).

Akbar's home sits in the outermost part of Gaotai. Due to the renovation of the area, he was supposed to follow the call and move before Eid al-Adha 2016, as he was one of 18 households living on the periphery of the neighbourhood.

Between the old and the new, there are always plenty of dilemmas. The government's biggest concern was that the mud houses in Gaotai could collapse in heavier rain; in addition, there was no fire safety infrastructure inside and, in the event of a fire, fire trucks couldn't get in. The government was hoping that in consideration of their safety, people would move out.

'You were supposed to move out in 2016, so why haven't you moved out now?'

'The leaders said: well, Kashgar is complicated nowadays, security is the priority, everything else would have to wait,' Akbar said.

'So you're not moving?'

'I will move, but I don't know when. If I move, the government will give me two new apartments of 100 square metres. I plan to sell the new apartments and get a house with a big yard in the countryside,' Akbar said.

'Why?' I found it a little strange. I thought to myself that if I had two apartments and rented one of them out, it would be a regular source of income.

'I have seven children. They are still young, a 100 square meter apartment is not enough. We Uyghurs, we have a lot of children, and we like to all live together.'

Akbar would rather go from being a Kashgar urban resident to being a rural man than have his children scattered.

Urbanisation, preservation of the old city, ethnic culture, economic development, too many issues are haunting Gaotai.

Young people in Gaotai neighbourhood (2016).

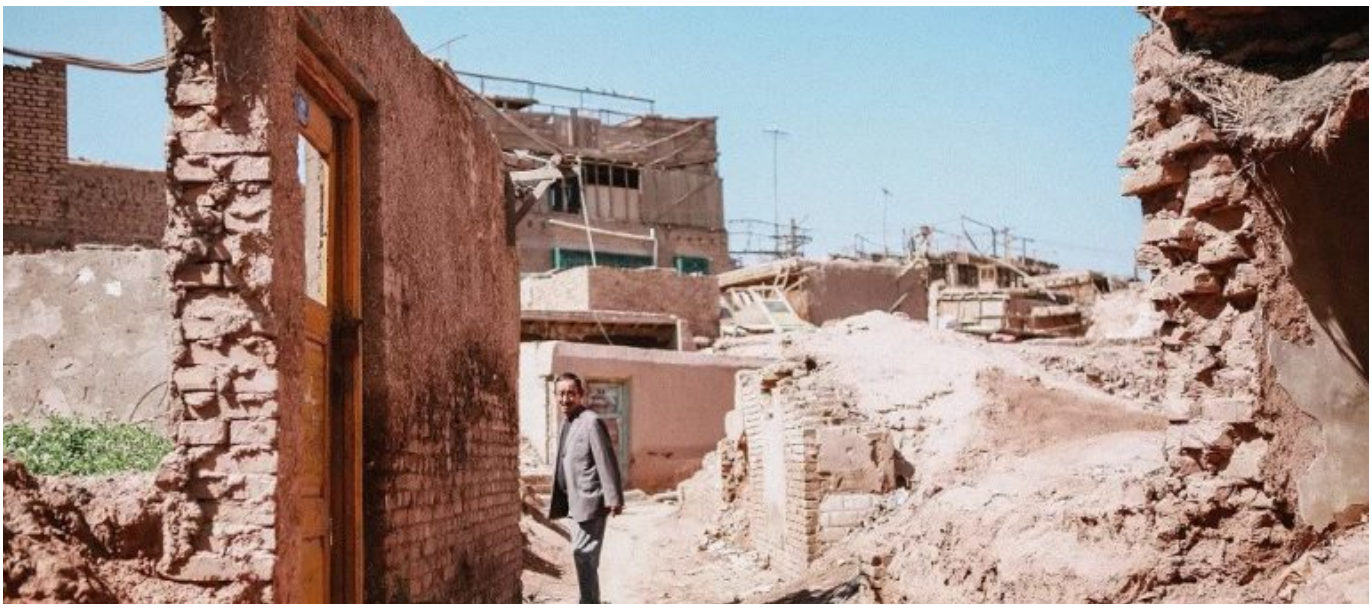
On WeChat, a friend of mine was interested in Uyghur identity. ‘Do they prefer to call themselves Uyghur or Chinese?’

‘Whether it’s Uyghurs, Tajiks, Han, they’re all Chinese. I deeply hate the terrorists, they made the atmosphere very tense, and the money hard to earn. But such people are only one in a thousand, like five fingers, some are longer and some are shorter, don’t you think?’ Akbar held out his palm and gestured to me.

He went on to deliver his speech. I could see that compared to 2016, in 2017 his ideological understanding had greatly improved. Every Monday, all residents of Kashgar have to attend the national flag raising ceremony, followed by an hour-long speech on ‘national unity’ by community-level cadres. It was clear that Akbar had become very familiar with the topic of national unity.

In front of non-Uyghur people, many Uyghurs have to give a response about their views on their own ethnicity.

In 2017, when talking about the future, Akbar looked ‘perplexed.’ He said he didn’t have many aspirations, ‘as long as there’s enough to eat.’



Akbar in the alleyway of Gaotai (2017).

Akbar's Wife: From Doppa-making Artisan to Clothes Vendor

In the spring of 2018, I came once again to Akbar's home in Gaotai.

There was no sight of Akbar. Only his wife and children were home, sitting on the bed in the back room. The lights weren't on, the TV flickered faintly.

Not expecting me, Akbar's wife suddenly pushed me out of the room. I was embarrassed. After a few minutes, she reopened the door. It turned out that she was dressing up. She had put on a delicate, bright makeup, with foundation, eyebrows, lipstick. She had tied up her hair and was in a dress with black and white stripes. She was wearing a pearl necklace and pearl earrings. Her body was sparkling, her look and her hairstyle were completely different.

After she dressed up, she hugged me tightly and asked her children to take a picture of us together. In the past, when I went to Akbar's home, I could only talk to Akbar most of the time because of the language barrier. His wife was always cooking or embroidering her hat silently aside, so I didn't expect her to remember me. It wasn't until then that I learnt her name: Muyesar.

I gave Muyesar the family photo I took the last time when I visited. As she looked at the image of their family last year, tears began streaming down her freshly-made up cheeks. She leaned against the door and covered her mouth, her shoulders trembling. She was crying and trying to hold back the sound.

It was only after a friend translated for us that I learnt that Akbar had been sentenced to 13 years in prison for breaking the law in the 'strike hard and maintain stability' campaign launched in Xinjiang. He was serving his sentence in Aksu.

Muyesar didn't know the exact reason for Akbar's prison sentence, she only knew that it was 'a problem with the cellphone'. After a while, she wiped off her tears and went into the bedroom. She took out her wedding photo with Akbar. In the photo they were both young. Akbar was wearing a black tie, while she was in a white wedding dress. Her skin was fair, and they were both holding roses in their hands. She looked at the camera and squeezed out a smile. It was now the twenty-fifth year their marriage.

Thinking back to six months ago, Akbar had said to me: 'Difficulty will pass, in a year or two.'

He had no idea that thirteen years of prison life were awaiting him.

Before I left, Muyesar gave me a hat embroidered by herself. The hat was covered with pomegranate flowers, gold and silver threads shimmering. As she looked through the photos, I saw that her hands

were covered with wounds, and the wounds were all calloused again. They were from the embroidering work. It was an expensive gift and I refused to accept it. Her son said: ‘Mom made it just for you, you must accept it this time.’ I was speechless and touched, I could only express gratitude in my broken Uyghur.

The calloused wounds on Muyesar’s hand (April 2018).

It was Sunday, the busiest bazaar day in Kashgar. In order to support the family in Akbar’s absence, Muyesar not only had to embroider hats, but also had begun selling clothes at the Bazaar. She loaded her scooter, took her son, and went to the East Gate International Bazaar to start setting up her stall. Watching her as she rode away on her scooter, I never imagined that this would be the last time I saw her.

Akbar’s Neighbour: From a Mother of Six to an Isolated Elder

On that day, before arriving at Akbar’s home, I met an elderly Uyghur woman who lived alone next door. The old lady was in her seventies and was brushing teapots in front of her house. There were only two teapots in total, and she was brushing them back and forth endlessly, one after the other. Seeing the photo in my hand, she suddenly held my hand and took it. She looked at it carefully, and then kissed the effigy of Akbar, tears rolling down from the corner of her eyes. She kept three solo portraits of Akbar. They had been neighbours since many generations ago. She was speaking Uyghur in an agitated manner, but I couldn’t understand her. She then said it again in a rusty Chinese: ‘This man … there is not.’

The old lady weeping at Akbar's photo (April 2018).

Maybe it had been too long since someone had last spoken to her. She took my hand and said: 'All my six children are gone … I live alone. My house is very big. Look, over here, and over there, those are all my houses. Next time you come, sleep at my place.' She said with the help of gestures: 'I …

your mother. You are my child. I live alone.'

Because I was going to visit Akbar, I had to said goodbye. It was only after arriving at Akbar's home and meeting his wife Muyesar that I learnt about Akbar's situation. Muyesar wanted to ask the old lady to return the photos of Akbar.

The old lady refused.

The old lady was furious: 'I've thrown the photos away!'

No matter how Muyesar tried to persuade her, the old lady was stubborn, as if the events earlier had never occurred.

Muyesar said: 'All her children are gone, the old lady has lost her mind, she has some mental problems.'

After visiting Akbar's family, I returned to the old lady's house to say goodbye. She was listening to the radio in the huge house. The crackling sound only made the room appear more silent.

'Oi, you stay here at night.' The old lady said.

I went upstairs and looked, all the rooms were empty and dusty.

The old lady's home (April 2018).

The old lady held me back and said: 'Don't go.' She shoved a teapot that she had just finished brushing into my arms.

'Here you go,' she said.

I hurried to refuse, saying: ‘It’s something you will need to use every day.’

‘Kashgar, plenty of stuff like this,” she responded. I put the teapot down and walked towards the door. She gripped my wrist with great strength and wouldn’t let go.

‘Oi, my goodwill, you don’t take it, I’ll be angry,’ she said.

She was surprisingly strong. Ten minutes later, my wrists were red and she was still gripping me so I took the teapot with embarrassment. I hurried to give her some money.

Loudly, she exclaimed: ‘Oi … I, have money, my children gave me lots and lots of money. You see … ‘

She reached into her pocket to dig out the money, but for a long time no money came out.

I quickly forced the money into her hands and left, not daring to look behind me. When I reached the edge of the neighbourhood, I turned around to look at her. She was leaning on her crutches, looking out behind the blue wooden door and red curtain of Gaotai.

I was scared to see her eyes—that disappointed, desolate look of a mother. The Kashgar look.

The old lady who lived alone stood in in the doorway for a long time (April 2018).

A Decade

The hottest season in Kashgar was over. In the fall of 2018, I returned to Kashgar. I was once again at Akbar’s house. As I approached Gaotai step by step, I saw that the door of Akbar’s house was wide open. All the flowers and trees had disappeared, so were the people inside.

They had moved away.

This house inhabited by generations of Uyghurs was left vacant.

Akbar’s family have moved out of Gaotai neighbourhood (October 2018).

It was then, after they had moved out, that I came to realise how much effort Akbar and Muyesar had put in to make this home cozy. I could still remember where the oil paintings, vases, carved wardrobes, Roman dressers, decorated rugs, fabric couch, crochet knit fabrics, chandeliers, musical instruments, and even where the induction stove and cutting board were. Akbar used to play the Tambur by the big window, and his image used to be reflected by that old dresser. This house must have many sounds in its memory.

Now, there is nothing left except some trash on the floor. Akbar used to say that he loved this house so much. I have no way of knowing for what reason or in what mood his family left Gaotai after Akbar’s departure, a place in which they lived for generations. Just like the meadow in front of the neighbourhood that has now been shovelled out, no one knows how many springs this place has seen.

A large meadow that used to be in front of the Gaotai neighbourhood (2016).

A field of reeds in front of the Gaotai neighbourhood (2016).

The meadow and the reed field in the photos above have now become a construction site (2018).

Today, Gaotai neighbourhood is completely off-limits to tourists, with security guards at every entrance. Akbar's neighbour, the old lady, still sits in front of her house. When I greeted her, she no longer remembered who I was and looked at me blankly. Indeed, for Kashgar I am just a visitor. She was waiting, perhaps, for her children who had left for too long, or perhaps for a child who would not leave.

I once met a child at Akbar's home. His father, Omer, was a famous earthenware pottery-making artisan from Kashgar. In 2017, after a trip to Shenzhen for an exposition, Omer was also detained.

‘Dad was sentenced to ten years,’ he said.

‘I will take the university entrance exam, finish university, and work for three more years. At that time I will have savings and will have bought a new house, then I can welcome my dad back. That will be exactly ten years from now,’ he continued.

He was a first-year student in a key high school in Kashgar and had excellent grades. Some time earlier, he had been feeling down and got addicted to smoking. In order to motivate himself to quit smoking, he drew a ‘tattoo’ on his hand with a red ballpoint pen, of a word written in bold; ‘QUIT’.

‘Quitting the bad stuff, so that I can have a new life,’ he told me.

The ‘QUIT’ on his hand.

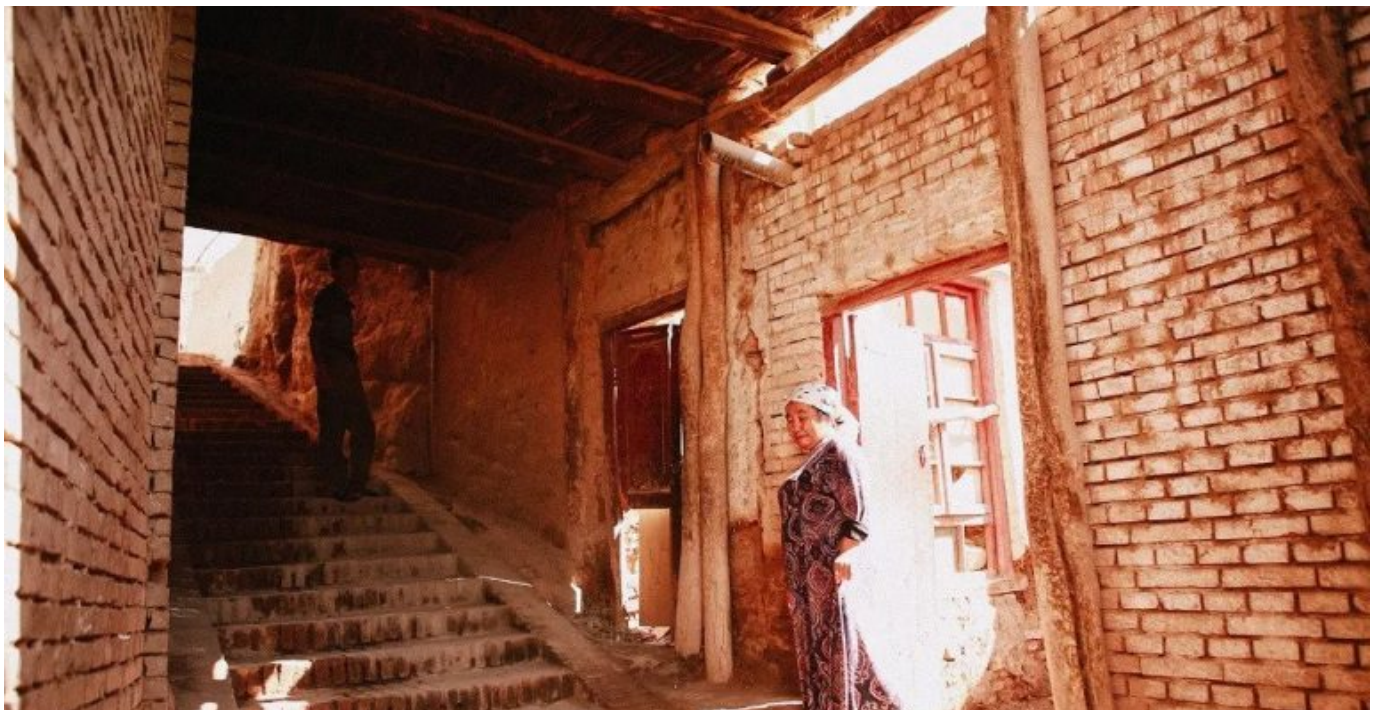
His father was the sixth-generation successor to Kashgar’s Gaotai folk art of earthenware pottery, and also the last generation. At this point, like the Gaotai architecture, a generation of Kashgar residents have begun to wither away. When they left this place, they had no idea that this would be their entire life in Gaotai.

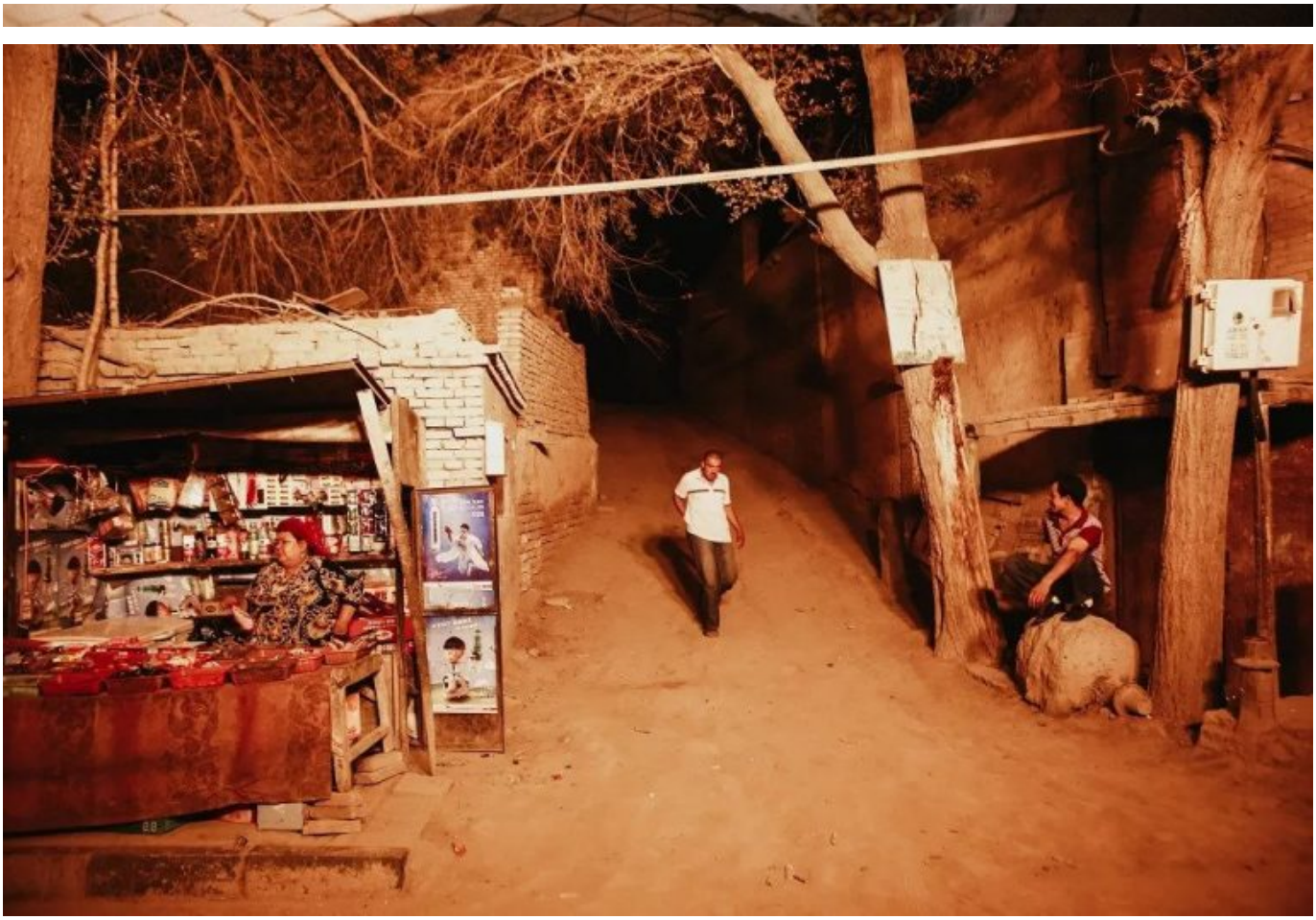
Afterword:

In August 2016, hearing that the Gaotai neighbourhood was to be renovated and its residents were soon to be moved out, I travelled from Fujian province to Kashgar. When I arrived, I found that the renovation was not going as planned. With Akbar being my guide, I visited some of the residents of

this raw-earth settlement, went into their homes, and . Under the narrow roof eaves, amid the delicate carvings, and in those corners where plants, silk threads, dirt, dust, and ruins gleamed as a whole, I grasped a sense of the texture of their existence. Untouched by urbanisation, Gaotai was a place that ‘had been turned into a bonsai, a specimen’. In the air, in the smells, and in the colours, one can always see the Kashgar of the past. Yet life there did not stay still. Over the course of three years, most of the people in the photos have moved out.

The wide Tuman River circles Gaotai, flowing peacefully through Kashgar. Under the 37-degree northern sun, the people of Gaotai neighbourhood were, too, like drops of water spattered by the Tuman—some joined the river, while some others are no longer to be seen.





Institute of Asian Research, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs
1855, C.K. Choi Building, West Mall
West Mall
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z1

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