

art, are of a type that, like that of the DarĒl wood-carvings to be presently mentioned, though of early origin, may have persisted unchanged for centuries. Of the approximate date when Muhammadanism was established in DarĒl I was unable to learn any reliable tradition. No clear *terminus ad quem* can therefore be fixed for these remains; judging from what is known about the introduction of Islām in Gilgit and the neighbouring tracts,¹³ I think it unlikely to have been much earlier than the fifteenth to sixteenth century. The local greybeards with me knew that the spot had been sacred to the 'Kāfirs', and told of a large carved stone slab which had been carried away from here years ago to the mosque of Chaturkand village and which was supposed to have been once worshipped as a 'Būt'. But they did not remember whether it was found at the burial-place itself or among the debris of a large structure the square walls of which could be traced on a terrace immediately below.

That traditions of pre-Muhammadan times still linger in DarĒl was proved by a piece of folk-lore connected with a 'site' that I passed on my way down to Chaturkand. About a mile to the south-east of Bojō-kōt and not far from the little village of Shigebal ensconced among the fruit trees, I was shown a stretch of waste ground covered with shapeless stone-heaps and known as Matalōt. It is supposed to mark the site of a village destroyed in ancient times by a hail of stones and boulders, owing to the anger of a snake-shaped divinity. Only one old woman and her daughter, who on that day had brought the divinity its appointed food offering, escaped the destruction of the night of punishment. It is clear that we have here a story of the revengeful Nāga so common to Indian lore of Buddhist times. The form which his revenge is supposed to have taken at once brought to my mind the old legend recorded by Kalhaṇa of the destruction of the town of Narapura, which Kashmīr tradition locates near Vij^abrōr (Vijayeśvara) and ascribes to the Nāga Suśravas.¹⁴ In that legend of the origin of the stone-waste of Ramaṇyāṭavi (Rembyār^a)¹⁵ we have a close parallel to the interpretation which DarĒl folk-lore has put upon the boulder-buried stretch of ground of Matalōt.

A walk of half a mile to the east brought me to Chaturkand; this and Rashmāl, a mile or so farther north, are the largest of the Mankiāl villages.¹⁶ Within a rough enclosure I found a thick cluster of relatively large houses, with rubble walls and gabled roofs in timber (Fig. 35). Chaturkand was said to number some two hundred families and presented quite the appearance of a small town, though many of its inhabitants were away in summer quarters near their holdings or on grazing grounds. The large stone slab from Bojō-kōt which I went to see at the mosque had been built into the open hearth of a kind of guest room adjoining the place of prayer and could not be fully examined. The exposed surface, nearly five feet in length, showed no carving. But in the timber ceiling above the hearth I was interested to note exactly the same arrangement of successively reduced squares which I had occasion to observe, in the course of my second journey, in the architecture of old Chitrāl and Mastūj dwellings and of which we find the prototype preserved in stone in the ceilings of temples both in Gandhāra and Kashmīr.¹⁷

The pillars supporting the ceiling showed rough but vigorous relievō decoration, of which I subsequently found numerous examples elsewhere, in the ornamental wood-carving of mosques,

Legend of
Matalōt
waste.

Villages of
Chaturkand
and Rash-
māl.

Decorative
wood-
carving.

¹³ Cf. Biddulph, *Hindu Koosh*, pp. 134 sq.

It deserves to be noted that according to information recorded by Biddulph, *Hindu Koosh*, pp. 113 sq., burning of the dead appears to have been practised by Dard people, in some of the more remote valleys at least, 'till a very recent period'. See also Drew, *Jummoo and Kashmīr*, p. 429; *Ruins of Khotan*, p. 24. ¹⁴ See my note on *Rājat*, i. 201-2.

¹⁵ Cf. my note on *Rājat*, i. 263-5.

¹⁶ The local name Chaturkand or Chaturkan is found also elsewhere in the Hindukush region; it is borne e. g. by a village in the Ashkūman valley and by another in Nagar, above the Hunza river.

¹⁷ Cf. *Serindia*, i. p. 48 (Figs. 15, 16); iii. Pl. I; Foucher, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. pp. 143 sq. I noticed similarly arranged ceilings also in houses in Yāsīn (see below, pp. 44 sq.) and in Roshān.