

SECTION V.—THROUGH LOWER DARĒL AND TANGĪR

Site of
Mazār-kōt.

On August 18th I proceeded from Gumāre-kōt on my way down the main Darēl valley. Before crossing the river to the left bank, where most of the cultivated area in this part is situated, I paid a visit to the mouth of the Nullah known as Gīme-gāh. There above the decayed walls of a village site called Mazār-kōt I was shown a spot which, according to the tradition of the Samagiāl tract, was held sacred in pre-Muhammadan times and is known by the name of *Gīme-deo*. A rough stone slab standing upright to about four feet from the ground was said to have been an object of worship. Close by to the north was a confused heap of rocks, evidently brought down by a landslip; we were told that it had destroyed in its fall two large earthen images of 'Būts' which are believed to have somehow survived until a few generations ago.

Abandoned
cultivation
terraces.

Moving south from here we passed a great deal of ground with abandoned cultivation terraces. On the top of a plateau said to have been irrigated until some fifty years ago I found the remains of a walled enclosure of the usual type, known as Dukē-kōt. A fine view was obtained from this plateau over the rich village lands of Samagiāl southward. But above them on the left bank of the river it also included extensive terraced slopes which irrigation no longer reaches. Nothing was remembered of the canals which once had carried water to them. But that their abandonment could scarcely be ascribed to want of water became clear when we crossed the river by a bridge below Gumāre-kōt; for its volume, as measured here, proved over a thousand cubic feet per second.

Villages of
Samagiāl.

While following the canal that irrigates the main portion of the Samagiāl lands (carrying about twenty cubic feet of water per second), I had occasion to note the remarkably solid construction of the embankment that carries it. The sight of the fine trees planted along it carried the mind back to Europe, and their size testified to the antiquity of the canal alignment. Samagiāl was found to contain two populous and compact villages, Birō-kōt and Dodō-kōt, situated about a mile from each other. The second, near which also stands a large fort constructed about the same time as the new circumvallation of Rajī-kōt, presented, with its closely packed houses (Fig. 36) and several places of worship (Fig. 28), the appearance of a small town. The estimate of 540 households given to me for Samagiāl could scarcely have been much exaggerated.¹ At a fine Ziārat situated in a shady grove by the river below Dodō-kōt I was particularly struck by the presence in the bold wood-carving of ancient decorative motifs with which I was already familiar from Graeco-Buddhist reliefs, including the acanthus leaf, lotus, Stūpa and what I took to be a derivative of the 'Buddhist rail'.

Poguch and
its shrines.

Below Dodō-kōt the valley contracts, and no cultivation is met with until the rich terraced fields of Poguch are reached, some two miles lower down. The luxuriance of the fruit trees and vines among which its homesteads are scattered, bore witness to its fertility and sheltered climate in contrast to the barrenness of the lower hill slopes around. But what interested me specially at Poguch were its shrines, the most renowned throughout Darēl. Passing down between shady orchards to the left bank of the river I visited first the Ziārat known as *Moyubaike*, where a large grove of old trees shelters the graves of six brothers of Shāha-khēl Bāba, who is the chief object of worship at Poguch. All I could learn about them was that the brothers were holy men who shared in the martyrdom of Shāha-khēl Bāba.

Ziārat of
Shāha-khēl
Bāba.

The sanctuary of the saint himself lies at the mouth of a stony Nullah on the other side of the deep-cut river and about 200 feet above it. Apart from several structures serving as places

¹ The other figures relating to the number of households communicated to me by Mehtarjao Shāh 'Ālam for Darēl were as follows: Mankiāl including Rashmāl and Chaturkand,

510; Poguch, 140; Gayāl, 500. The total number of families then in permanent occupation of land in the valleys of Dudishāl and Khanbarī was believed to be less than a hundred.