

through which Yāsīn had passed. I found some of these abandoned lands in course of being reoccupied by recent emigrants from Badakhshān. Their presence, together with many imported articles of dress and the like, were a sign of the vicinity of the Oxus region and of the influence that its civilization has always exercised beyond the Hindukush watershed.

Yāsīn proper, the largest village in the district, stands in the stretch of fertile ground, covered with rich fields and orchards, that extends for about four miles along the right bank of the river below the issue of the Nasbar valley (Fig. 41). A day's halt there enabled me to visit the late Rāja Shahīd-ul-'Ajam, then Governor of Yāsīn, in the old and now half-decayed castle that had sheltered his Khushwaqt ancestors during generations of strife and bloodshed. In the plentiful wood-carving of its tumble-down halls the predominance of Persian architectural ornament was unmistakable, clearly pointing to models from distant Badakhshān. It was interesting also to observe signs of the time-honoured feudal devotion linking Yāsīn people with the race that for two centuries and down to quite recent times had almost constantly misruled them.

Visit to  
Yāsīn  
castle.

From the rest-house situated not far from the outlet of the Nasbar-gol, on ground now undergoing reclamation after prolonged abandonment, I proceeded to examine the spot, a quarter of a mile to the south-west, where some old remains were reported to have been brought to light by shepherds, about three years before my visit. I found there, at the rock-strewn foot of the hill-side, the remnants of a walled platform measuring about 18 by 30 feet, and on it a small circular mound formed of rough stones and rubble and probably marking the last relic of a completely decayed Stūpa. The mound had been levelled almost to the ground by digging; but among the debris thrown down on its north side a careful search brought to light eight small clay seals,<sup>3a</sup> of which the best preserved showed the relievo representation of a Stūpa with five 'Chhatras' and around it traces of the Buddhist formula *ye dharmaprabhavāḥ*, &c., in Nāgarī characters of the late type common in Tibet. These clay seals, similar to those found at the sites of numerous Buddhist shrines in India and Central Asia, had evidently formed part of a votive deposit disturbed when the mound was dug into.

Old remains  
at Yāsīn.

Just to the north of Yāsīn and the mouth of the Nasbar valley there extends on the right bank an almost level plateau, about three miles long and one mile wide, known as Dasht-i-taus. It is known to local tradition to have once been cultivated, and its position is such as to permit of its easily being brought under irrigation again by a canal from the Nasbar stream. At the south-western extremity of this plateau, where it falls off with precipitous cliffs of conglomerate towards the bed of the Nasbar-gol, there rise the much-decayed walls of a ruined fort known as *Chumarkhan*. As seen in the plan (Pl. 1), it forms an irregular quadrilateral, with a face about 170 feet long crowning the cliffs above the stream and a keep-like structure in the centre measuring 18 by 20 feet within (Fig. 40). The walls, built of flat pieces of slaty stone and large rubble pieces inserted between them, are as much as three feet in thickness, but now rise nowhere to more than five feet above the ground. That it was meant to guard the approach to the Dasht-i-taus plateau from the Nasbar valley, across a narrow saddle immediately below the north face of the fort, there can be no doubt. The advanced state of decay of the walls points to their considerable antiquity. Popular tradition ascribes the fort to the same age as the cultivation of the Dasht-i-taus.

Ruined fort  
of Chumar-  
khan.

Resuming on August 27th my journey up the main valley, I rode along this now utterly barren plain and was shown in several places traces of an old canal coming from the side of the Nasbar stream. Its line was quite distinct from that of a smaller canal derived from the Tui stream farther

Remains  
of Dasht-  
i-taus.

<sup>3a</sup> Yāsīn. 01. Eight clay seals of one type. In low relief: Stūpa with four-tier base on row of roundels; five or more umbrellas above. Background covered with rows

of Nāgarī chars. Very poor impressions; several broken. Aver. diam. 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " ; thickness  $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Pl. XI.