

all these the engraved lines show a uniform brownish colour, while over the middle of the stone and to the left of the Stūpa, there appear much shallower graffiti of Arabic writing, easily distinguished by their light colour. This difference of colouring and the fact of the graffiti in the middle running across the central part of the Stūpa leave no doubt that these graffiti are of relatively far more recent date. In addition to these graffiti there appears between the top of the Stūpa and the Tibetan inscription the rough sketch of a horse and rider, showing a colouring similar to that of the former. The surface immediately below the Stūpa base has suffered by peeling, but retains traces of a flower or fruit-like design, also old. The roughly scratched figures of four-horned animals, evidently meant for mountain sheep, which are to be seen on the left side of the stone between the graffiti in Arabic characters, seemed to have been exposed to weathering somewhat longer than the latter.

Design of
Stūpa.

The Stūpa design (Pl. 1) is very peculiar, but the inverted bowl on its top, surmounted by what is manifestly meant for a *chhattra*, suffices to establish its character. The two lowest steps of the base and the much higher member above them certainly recall the threefold base of the Stūpa engraved on the boulder of Charrun in Mastūj which Fig. 6 and Pl. 2 of *Serindia* reproduce.^{8a} But the cross-like design intervening between the shaft and the inverted bowl bears but a very distant resemblance to the projecting plinth and the drum that the rock-engraved representations of Stūpas at Charrun and Pakhtōrīdīnī both display in a corresponding position below the dome. Peculiar, too, is the substitution of an inverted bowl for the hemispherical dome of the Stūpa, though Buddhist tradition has from an early date sought to recognize in this dome a symbolic representation of Buddha's *pātra* or begging bowl.⁹ With the curious presentation of the pedestal or supports meant to carry the 'Chhattra' may be fitly compared the equally coarse design which the Pakhtōrīdīnī rock-carving shows in the same place. Finally, poor as the drawing of the umbrella at the top is, there can be no doubt what it is intended to signify.

Tibetan
inscription.

Dr. A. H. Francke, to whom I submitted photographs of the rock-engraving together with carefully drawn copies of the Tibetan characters, was kind enough to furnish me, in a letter dated September 15, 1921, with a note on them reproduced in Appendix L. From this it is seen that the inscription names a certain *Lirnidor* together with his family or clan designation *rMe-'or*, probably taken from a locality, as the donor of a Stūpa. The fact of the personal name being put in the genitive is taken by Dr. Francke as an indication of the early date of the inscription, and this is in harmony with the palaeographic character of the letters, which, in that scholar's opinion, 'show the characteristic marks of the Tibetan script of the eighth and ninth centuries'.

From the relative position of the two, it is obvious that the representation of a Stūpa is contemporary with, if not older than, the Tibetan inscription. This chronological indication has its special archaeological interest with regard to the peculiar cruciform type of Stūpas which Dr. Francke has noted before among Ladākh rock-carvings.

Tibetan
invasion of
Gilgit.

Local tradition, so far as it goes back, knows nothing of Tibetans having ever established their rule or their Buddhist worship in Yāsīn. Hence all the more interest attaches to the statement in Dr. Francke's note that a Tibetan text mentions the conquest of the Gilgit region as having taken place under a Tibetan ruler of the eighth century. In view of this collateral evidence one is tempted to connect the Buddhist rock-carving on the Darkōt with that short-lived Tibetan advance on the uppermost Oxus which the T'ang Annals record towards the close of the second quarter of the eighth century and which Kao Hsien-chih's adventurous expedition successfully arrested.

Graffiti in
Arabic
characters.

The difference in the weathering shows that the graffiti in Arabic characters must be considerably later than the Tibetan inscription. They consist of the Shiāh invocation, *Yā Allah*

^{8a} Cf. *Serindia*, i. pp. 37 sqq.

⁹ Cf. Foucher, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. p. 64; Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, i. pp. 47 sq.