

lined red. On rev. part of vesica (?) of variegated rings of green and white, and red robe (?). Gr. M. $3\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Bal. 0133. Fr. of painted wood with seated Buddha; head $\frac{3}{4}$ to R. p., grey robe, blue lotus, red ground and blue nimbus. Outlines black. Much defaced. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2} \times 1$ ".

Bal. 0134. Fr. of painted wood. Traces only of paint, red and blue on both sides. $6\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{3}{4} \times \frac{7}{16}$ ".

Bal. 0135-7. Three flakes of painted wood, showing white and pink cloud scrolls outlined black. Gr. fr. $4\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$ ".

SECTION IV.—THE NIYA SITE REVISITED

March to
Niya oasis.

During a busy halt of three days at Keriya town I was able to attend to much practical work, and to secure the hire of twelve additional camels. Information that had reached me opportunely while at Khotan through Ibrāhīm, 'the miller', my old guide of 1901 and 1906, induced me then to spare time for a renewed visit to the fascinating remains of the ancient site beyond the termination of the Niya river, buried by the desert sands since the third century A. D. By December 8th I reached the small oasis of Niya. There Ibrāhīm's statement that ruined houses had been traced to the south of the area previously explored by me was after some tergiversations confirmed by 'Azīm Pāwān, a Niya hunter, who was reported to have come upon them a year or two earlier. The effective orders issued by Tai Ta-lo-yeh, the scholarly and helpful Amban of Keriya, and the friendly recollection the local people had preserved of my previous visits, made it possible to raise within a single day forty labourers as well as the month's supplies required by my caravan for the journey to distant Charchan.

Termination
of Niya
river.

The three rapid marches that carried us beyond Imām-Ja'far-Sādiq's shrine (Map No. 19. B. 1, 2) lay along the usual pilgrims' track, which I had previously followed. The only changes here noted had reference to the terminal course of the Niya river. The abundant summer floods of the preceding two years had caused it partially to revert to the old eastern bed, which was found completely dry in 1906. Near Chuk-toghrak, some miles above the bifurcation of the two beds, the river still carried about 100 cubic feet of water per second. But most of this volume is soon lost in the wide riverine belt of fine grazing and jungle farther down, and where we met the dying river course again about two miles above Imām-Ja'far-Sādiq, it had shrunk to only about 7 cubic feet per second. But even so the available water had permitted a new small 'Tārīm', cultivated by three families, to be opened at Yoghanché, some four miles farther up, in addition to the other little patches of cultivation at Kapak-askan and Kutaklik-tārīm already noted in the 1906 map.

Colony of
*Tülküch-
köl-tārīm.*

An observation made at Tülküch-köl-tārīm, the last tiny colony situated about two miles below the sacred settlement (see map in Pl. 4), was of distinct geographical and also antiquarian interest. In 1906 I had noted the fertility of its fields cleared in the luxuriant jungle, and during the following few years the little colony had increased to about fifteen households, new settlers having been brought there from Keriya by Nūrullah, its founder.¹ When pitching my camp there on the evening of December 12th I noticed the marked extension of the carefully fenced fields and the comfortable new house in timber-and-wattle that Nūrullah had since 1906 built for himself. In a large orchard planted at the same time fruit trees of different kinds had grown to a fair height, pleasing evidence of the fertility of the soil.

Canal head
destroyed
by flood.

Unfortunately the unusually large summer floods of the last three years instead of benefiting Nūrullah had spelt misfortune for his colony and threatened to bring about its extinction. They had caused the water carried by the terminal channel to take a more westerly course, reverting towards the old deep-cut 'Yār' which our previous survey shows, and had carried off the barrage upon which the canal irrigating the Tülküch-köl fields depended for its service. The supply received by them in 1911 and 1912 from a small newly made canal had been quite inadequate,

¹ Cf. *Ruins of Khotan*, p. 350; *Serindia*, i. p. 212.