

Date of
circumvalla-
tion.

circular shape agrees with that of the ruined forts of Merdek, near the junction of Konche-daryā and Tārīm and of Ak-sipil near the Khotan oasis,⁷ and as the former may with much probability be ascribed to Han times, there is ground for attributing an early origin similarly to the Ying-p'an fort; for it lies comparatively near to Merdek (Map No. 29. A. 4) and on the direct line connecting it and the Lop tract with Korla and the oases along the foot of the T'ien-shan. But that its occupation, whether continuous or intermittent, continued down to T'ang times may be safely assumed. The K'ai-yüan coin found near the Stūpa Ying. I is evidence of this; and it may be inferred with even more certainty from the fact that, as shown by our exploration of the watch-stations on the way from Ying-p'an to Korla, the high road which they guarded continued in use down to the T'ang period.⁸

Ruin of
shrine
Ying. II.

About 100 yards from the western gate of the circumvallation rises the conspicuous ruin of a shrine (Fig. 342) built of solid masonry. Everything about it showed that, apart from a cutting, probably old, made from the west to the centre of the Stūpa dome which forms the core of the structure, 'exploration', unfortunately of a rather ruthless sort, had again taken place in recent years. The men who rejoined us from Tikenlik attributed the digging done here and also at some graves to be mentioned presently to a 'Tura' who had come some years before with a party of labourers from Turfān and subsequently passed on 'into the desert'. Knowing that neither the German expeditions nor M. Pelliot's had come to the south of the Kuruk-tāgh, I am led to conclude that the visitor meant may, perhaps, have been Mr. Tachibana. Owing to the damage which the structural parts of the ruin had suffered in the course of a very summary clearing, it was difficult to secure quite exact measurements for the plan and section shown in Pl. 38. This, and still more the complete destruction of all sculptural remains of the shrine, is particularly to be regretted, because it evidently had presented some features different from those usually to be found in Buddhist sanctuaries of this region.

Remains of
Stūpa and
colossal
statues.

A solid platform, measuring about 46 feet by 40 and 13 feet high, and built, like the rest of the structure, of bricks measuring $15'' \times 12'' \times 4''$, had carried in its centre a Stūpa. The original dimensions of this could no longer be determined with accuracy, owing to complete loss of the masonry facing. The diameter of the circular portion, which probably included a drum below the dome proper, measured approximately 17 feet. This rested on a base, about 23 feet square and close on 2 feet high, of which the projecting portion on each side appears to have been surmounted in the middle by a colossal stucco image. This sculptural adornment of the shrine was indicated by traces of plastered pedestals found here and there and by badly shattered fragments of coloured stucco found lying on the slopes of debris. Among them were pieces, apparently, of drapery, and a colossal head about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, now lacking all facial features. Judging from the width of the projecting part of the base, 3 feet 3 inches, the four colossal figures must have rested against the drum or dome of the Stūpa. That the figures were probably seated Buddhas may be concluded from the length of the pedestals, which apparently was close on 7 feet. Low remains of a square wall, only 14 inches thick, enclosing a narrow circumambulatory passage, were traceable on three sides of the base. In view of its weakness this wall could have carried only a wooden roof or veranda extending over the images, if there was any roof at all. Evidence of some wooden superstructure was found on the eastern side of the platform in the shape of some round posts of Toghrak wood projecting above the masonry. The effect of wind-erosion on the tops was very clearly marked, for the side facing to the north-east had been pared off and partly hollowed out, while the other side still retained the rounded outline and the complete diameter of over 7 inches. The platform here presented an open space about 15 feet wide in front of the Stūpa base, and there were traces

⁷ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 474 sq.; *Serindia*, i. pp. 452 sq.

⁸ See below, p. 770.