

This single relic suffices to establish the Buddhist character of the ruins ; but a definite indication of their date is to be hoped for only if the ' finds ' previously made here can be traced and critically examined ; they may now be at Petrograd or elsewhere.

I returned to our camp at Uzun-pichin the same evening, and on the following day's march, which took us northward to Torpak-bāzār, the chief market-place of Yulduz-bāgh, I inspected a series of small sites reported in that direction. The first of these, *Kizil-shahr*, was found to lie about two miles to the WSW., on ground where patches of new cultivation alternated with strips of sandy steppe. Pottery debris of a coarse type gave a Tati-like appearance to the latter, where we came upon the ruins of a walled enclosure. The walls, built of stamped clay and about 15 feet thick at the base, form a quadrangle some 168 feet by 153 (see plan, Pl. 40), and are strengthened by small bastions. Through one of these, on the eastern side, leads the single gate. In places the walls still rise to 20 or 22 feet ; but inside, the whole of the ground had been levelled and brought under cultivation some three years before my visit. Neither here nor at a smaller walled enclosure (Pl. 40), about 102 feet square, which lies some 200 yards to the north, could we hope to find any definite indication of date ; but the fact that the walls of this second enclosure, built of stamped clay, had decayed into shapeless mounds distinctly suggested their antiquity.

Walled
enclosures
to N. of
Shahīdlar.

Proceeding northwards we passed, at a place known as *Tōpa-shahr*, some crumbling walls of clay, apparently belonging to abandoned village dwellings, and then reached a continuous area of newly reclaimed land, belonging to the colony of *Wang-yeri*. Here Mīr Sharīf pointed out a small mound, called *Sarai-tam*, as the place from which he, and later M. Berezovsky, had extracted remains of large ' Būts '. There was evidence of much burrowing, which must have completely destroyed whatever structural remains had existed above the level of the ground now brought under irrigation. Judging from Mīr Sharīf's information, an ancient burial-place had evidently existed in the immediate vicinity of the mound. Some twenty years before, and again during Mīr Sharīf's employment by M. Berezovsky, corpses were said to have been dug out here from coffins placed under low vaults of burnt bricks. Gold coins were believed to have been found in these tombs, and this report, whether true or not, would have sufficed to stimulate the exploitation indicated by the hollows pointed out to me. As all this ground has now passed under cultivation, such bodies as then escaped would have certainly since decayed. Azīz Palwān, whose home was not far away, subsequently produced for my inspection a specimen of the burnt bricks found in these tombs. It measured 17 × 12 × 3 inches, and was very hard, which my local informants, perhaps rightly, took for a sign of Chinese manufacture.

Report of
ancient
burial-place.

From *Sarai-tam* a march of some four miles, past the scattered farms of *Wang-yeri* and *Öch-kat-mahalla*, brought us to the curious triple ring of ramparts to which the latter village owes its name, *Öch-kat* meaning ' the three folds '. The site was approached across a belt of marshy fields, and was found to comprise three earthworks of irregular outline but probably intended to be roughly circular, placed one within the other. The rings formed by these ramparts are not concentric, the distance between the outermost and the next being about 400 yards on the north and 880 yards on the south. The total diameter of the area occupied by the triple earthworks appeared to be little short of a mile. The outermost rampart measured 78 feet at its base, where a drainage channel passed through it, and rose to a height of about 15 feet. The second ring was formed by a rampart about 52 feet thick at the base where we measured it. The third and innermost ring had a diameter of only 68 yards within its clay rampart, which towards the west rose to a height of nearly 20 feet. The spaces within the rings were occupied partly by fields and partly by marshy ground with abundance of tamarisk growth. No structural remains were to be seen, nor was it likely that they would have survived on such ground if they ever existed.

Triple
ramparts of
Öch-kat.