

*The mandarin in Khotan.*

and on its banks, as well as along the banks of the ariqs leading from it, there are masses of piecemeal relics and broken clay vessels etc. Not only the inhabitants of Yotkan, but others, too, carry on systematic excavations here in the hope of finding enough gold to cover the expense and leave a small profit. The objects found and sold to foreigners are regarded as a subsidiary source of income. The search is conducted mostly by washing and it is for this purpose that the water is led to the place or places, where the excavations are being made. A plot is bought by one of the villagers and is searched for several years; then it is ploughed and becomes tilled land. The finds are at a depth of about 2—2 1/2 fathoms (14—17 1/2 feet) from the surface. In the sections I was able to observe, this stratum is distinguished by its dark colour from the other strata, which resemble löss. On the fairly extensive areas where investigations have been made, the level has sunk to the humus stratum referred to, which causes the whole ground to present an uneven surface where differences in level occur without any kind of sequence. The fact that no remains of dwellings have been discovered is, no doubt, explained by the circumstance that the unbaked bricks that formed and still form the only building material of this district, do not possess sufficient powers of resistance to survive in a damp soil. In Takla Makan, however, where whole towns and villages have been buried under a layer of sand, as dry as dust, this defective building material has been preserved for centuries. It is surprising that no old trees are visible anywhere, except at Hezret Alame's mazar, where there are a few, the respectable dimensions of whose trunks give evidence of their great age. This mazar lies quite close to the village of Yotkan. The quantity of objects sacrificed to make the forest of staves and sticks that embellish the tomb, indicate that Hezret Alame's memory is highly revered by the population. In times long gone by he was hanged by the infidels and in memory of him the large area in which Yotkan is included, is called Borozan (boroz = to hang).