

it is conducted. The frequency and regularity of these deposits, together with the fineness of the silt itself, account for the total absence of stratification which I noticed in all the banks of earth laid bare by erosion in cultivated fields around Kurghān-Tim and elsewhere in the Kāshgar oasis. We shall see that the same observation holds good of the great layer of fertile soil which covers the débris of the ancient Khotan capital, and that its testimony to the origin of this soil is decisive.

Finds of  
ancient  
pottery.

Long, however, before the study of identical conditions elsewhere had enabled me to explain the rise of the ground-level near Kurghān-Tim, the fact itself was brought home to me by other evidence. According to a communication made to me by Mr. Macartney at the time of my first visit to the mound, fragments of ancient pottery and also some large earthenware jars had, since his arrival at Kāshgar in 1890, been found embedded in the soil near the ruin, several yards below the present surface. It appears that these finds had been made at some point of the eroded ground on the southern face of the mound. There is scarcely room to doubt that these objects, whatever their age, correspond in character and in their manner of preservation to the pottery débris, terra-cottas, &c., derived from the 'culture-strata' of Yōtkan.

It is evident that the extent of the rise of the level around or above ancient remains, being dependent on several factors necessarily differing in various localities, cannot by itself furnish precise indication of relative age. But it may be noted that a rise of fifteen feet would by no means be inconsistent with the assumption that the Kurghān-Tim Stūpa was abandoned, and its immediate vicinity converted into fields, about the time when Islām was introduced into Kāshgar; for at Yōtkan, too, where the covering layer of alluvial soil varies from nine to twenty feet in thickness, the finds of coins go down to issues of the Sung Dynasty (960-1126 A.D.). Excavations around the mound might possibly have brought to light some direct evidence of the latest date up to which the Stūpa had remained an object of worship; but a variety of practical considerations prevented me from undertaking them<sup>4</sup>.

Interior  
structure of  
Stūpa.

Fortunately, however, the exposed portion of the ruin itself shows unmistakable proof of the antiquity of the structure at the time of its abandonment. On the north-eastern side, where the cutting into the dome is almost vertical, it is easy to distinguish an inner core of solid masonry, clearly separated from an outer mantle, for a vertical distance of about 35 feet. The photograph taken of the northern face of the mound, and reproduced in Fig. 14, shows distinctly the line of junction between the inner hemispherical dome and the outer mantle, at the point marked *A* in the ground-plan, and indicated in the photograph by a ten-foot rod. There can be no doubt that this outer mantle of masonry dates from later repairs, by which the original dome of sun-dried bricks was encased in fresh masonry and consequently enlarged. That this method of repair and extension was not infrequently applied to Stūpas, is proved by the construction of the famous Manikyāla Stūpa in the north-western Punjāb where the successive enlargements are attested by separate coin-deposits, and by other examples<sup>5</sup>.

Form of  
original  
dome.

It is due to the protection afforded by the outer mantle that the outline of the original dome can be clearly traced at this place. Judging from the view presented by the photograph,

<sup>4</sup> Excavations such as could reasonably be expected to yield useful evidence would, owing to the depth of the original ground-level, have demanded considerable sacrifice of time and money. On the other hand, the utterly ruined condition of the visible remains did not offer much hope of the lower and more accessible portions of the structure having preserved enough of their original outlines, &c., to justify the heavy expense of clearing them. There was besides a quasi-

diplomatic difficulty about such an undertaking. The Chinese local officials, when consulted on the point, stated that a prior right to excavation had been reserved to M. Petrovsky, the Russian Consul-General, and there were circumstances which seemed at the time to render a specific application to the latter inexpedient.

<sup>5</sup> Compare *Archaeol. Survey Reports*, ii. pp. 159 sq.; Foucher, *L'Art du Gandhāra*, pp. 78, 92 sqq.