

I was more than once surprised to find even in most unlikely places, and among people of the humblest calling, individuals who had learned to read and write Turki<sup>25</sup>. The amount of knowledge imparted by the schools attached to many mosques and Ziārats is, indeed, very limited; yet the fact of their being frequented when no material gain can be secured from instruction seems to indicate the possibility that education under an earlier civilization and under more favourable political conditions was once more widely spread and aimed at a far higher standard.

Leaving this one point apart, we are justified in asserting, as the result of the inquiry just concluded, that all the distinctive features of character and ethnic disposition which our Chinese records indicate for the people of ancient Khotan can be traced unimpaired in the present inhabitants of the oasis. Inasmuch as such a striking survival can be explained most readily as a result of direct inheritance, the inquiry so far distinctly supports the conclusion that the racial character of the Khotan people has not undergone any fundamental change since the period of the T'ang dynasty.

#### SECTION IV.—THE POPULATION OF KHOTAN: ITS PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND RACIAL ORIGIN

We must now proceed to examine whether the conclusion arrived at in the previous section is borne out by the physical characteristics of the people. In this part of our inquiry we shall have to follow a different method; for while I succeeded in bringing back a small but carefully collected amount of exact anthropometrical materials relating to the present inhabitants of Khotan and the neighbouring oasis of Keriya, there is as regards the earlier population no trustworthy evidence with which to compare these data. With the exception of a single brief remark to be mentioned below, the early Chinese records do not notice in any way the physical appearance of the people of Khotan. Archaeological evidence also fails us; for those pictorial and sculptural representations which have come to light from old sites, and which might possibly be supposed to be modelled on contemporary local types, are too few to be of use in regard to anthropological questions. Finally, my explorations have not yielded any human remains which could with certainty be assigned to any particular historical period.

In view of these circumstances the only safe course is to examine in the first place the conclusions based on anthropological evidence which competent analysis has drawn from the measurements taken by me on inhabitants of Khotan and Keriya. A comparison of these conclusions with the available historical and antiquarian information may then show whether they can be reconciled with the assumption of the race having remained unchanged in its main constituents since the close of the pre-Muhammadan epoch. The necessity for concentrating all my labours on archaeological tasks, and the fact that but a very small portion of my time could be spent within the present inhabited area of the Khotan region, rendered it impossible for me to secure anthropometrical data from more than a limited number of individuals. Considering the restricted amount of material thus available, I have reason to feel grateful that

<sup>25</sup> I thus found, e.g. that a considerable proportion of the children of the shepherd families which wander with their flocks in the lonely jungles along the Keriya river had been at school for varying periods at the Ziārat of Burhānuddīn

Pādshāhim or in Keriya Town. Yet the appearance and conditions of life of these people might at first sight be easily mistaken by a traveller for those of semi-savages.