

closely agreed with the Stupa of Topa Tim I had discovered six years before between Guma and Moji. Its lowest base seems to have measured about thirty-four feet square. It was curious to note that, in spite of the complete destruction of the outer facing of masonry, the rows of small sticks of willow and tamarisk which once supported plaster mouldings could be traced over a considerable portion of the base. Nowhere around the mound could I find any mark of ancient habitation. The bare gravel Sai showed not even fragments of old pottery, those most lasting indications of early occupation. Hence it is clear that the Stupa must have risen then as it does now on the bare Dasht between Puski and Zanguya. Half a mile to the east of it flows the stream of Puski, and just across the latter stands a modest mud-built Mazar, evidently the inheritor of the worship once paid to the Stupa.

That the area of cultivation could not have changed greatly in this neighbourhood is proved by the débris-strewn Tati which I found extending for about three-quarters of a mile below the fields of Jangal-bagh, the northernmost of the tiny oases which constitute Puski. The ground, a soft loess, is here thickly covered with fragments of ancient pottery, mostly of fine texture and remarkable hardness. More of this Tati had been reclaimed for cultivation when the new colony of Jangal-bagh was established here some twelve years before my visit; and as there is ample water for further irrigation, it can only be a question of time before the rest of the Tati disappears again under fields—and the deposits of loess dust which accumulate over all cultivated areas.

The torrid heat of the day passed at Puski was made bearable by the satisfaction I felt on finding after my return to camp that Musa and his loads had just arrived safely from Sanju. He had crossed the Kara-koram with the first caravan of the year. The carrier who had undertaken to deliver my loads at Khotan at a freight charge of sixty rupees per pony-load from Kashmir to Khotan, had lost half of his animals on the passes, and only with great difficulty had they been replaced by freshly hired ponies from the Kirghiz encampment of Suget. Just before