

Yārkhūn. This portion of the main valley is practically nothing but a succession of more or less formidable rock defiles, rarely broken by alluvial fans which alone offer room for cultivation. Yet in spite of the great natural difficulties which the route through this part of the valley presents, and which, as my personal narrative shows,⁷ even the construction of the modern bridle-path has not entirely effaced, it must always have been an important line of communication; for it alone connects Chitrāl proper with the complex of fertile side-valleys to the north-east, which form Kāshkār-Bālā, and with the hill-tract of Mastūj on the headwaters of the Yārkhūn.

Evidence of the antiquity of the tracks which accompany the river-gorge on either side exists in two rock-carvings of unmistakably Buddhist character. The first was reached from the main route by crossing the river above the village of Moroī to the right bank, and marching along this to a point about three miles above the village of Prait. Here, almost exactly opposite to the small hamlet of Jomshili, the narrow track skirts a steep spur strewn with rock débris, at an elevation of about 150 feet above the river. At one point, known as *Pakhtōrīdīnī*,⁸ a great boulder, apparently granite, immediately above the track, bears the carefully engraved representation of a Stūpa and below it an inscription of eleven Brāhmī characters (Fig. 5). Although the smooth water-worn surface of the boulder had suffered a good deal from weathering, the outlines of the Stūpa design could still be followed.

As seen from the reproduction of a drawing made to scale (Plate 2), they show a section of a Stūpa, conforming very closely to the architectural arrangements which I had observed in most of the extant Stūpa ruins of the regions of Kāshgar and Khotan.⁹ There are the characteristic three bases successively receding, the traditional significance of which I have already discussed at some length in *Ancient Khotan*;¹⁰ above them the high cylindrical drum; next, a projecting cornice surmounted by the proper Stūpa dome, which is approximately hemispherical in shape. Above the dome, in conventional outlines and drawn with a rather primitive attempt at perspective, appear the orthodox succession of 'umbrellas', apparently seven, the lowest resting on supports which seem to slant outwards from the top of the dome. Through the last three of the umbrellas is seen passing the central pillar which in reality carried the whole series of 'umbrellas', and which, according to an early tradition, symbolized the beggar's staff planted on the top of Buddha's own Stūpa model.

After the admirably lucid exposition given by M. Foucher of the development of the type of Stūpa which he calls 'Transition',¹¹ the regular form of all such monuments so far discovered north of the Hindukush, and largely prevalent also in the valleys to its south, it is unnecessary to prove at length how accurately the design of the Pakhtōrīdīnī rock-carving agrees with it in all essential details. It will suffice here to call attention to particular features which might hereafter prove of interest in interpreting or restoring certain features of actual structures now in ruin. Starting from the foot we have the three receding square bases, the inception of which the tradition recorded by Hsüan-tsang about certain small Stūpas near Balkh, traced back direct to a model prescribed by Buddha himself.¹² It is important to observe this threefold arrangement of the base, both here and in the rock-carved Stūpa representation of Charrun described below; for possibly it is another indication of the infiltration of influence from across the Hindukush, and especially from the side of ancient Bactria, which I emphasized above in discussing the cultural and political history of Chitrāl.

Inscribed
rock of
Pakhtōrī-
dīnī.

Rock-
carving of
Stūpa.

Features
of Stūpa
design.

⁷ See *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 41 sqq.

⁸ Thus or *Pakhtūrīdīnī* I heard the name pronounced. In *Desert Cathay*, i. p. 42, 'Pakhturinidini' has been printed by mistake.

⁹ Cf. the sections and plans of the Stūpas of Tōpa-Tim, Mauri-Tim, Niya Site, Endere, in *Ancient Khotan*, ii. Pl. XIX,

XXII, XXIX, XXXVII.

¹⁰ See *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 83 sq.

¹¹ See Foucher, *L'Art du Gandhāra*, i. pp. 64, 72 sqq.

¹² Cf. Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, i. p. 112; Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, i. pp. 47 sq.; *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 83 sq.; Julien's translation, *Mémoires*, i. p. 33, is less exact here.