

also of pre-Muhammadan date. The crumbling walls, from three to five feet in thickness, are built of sun-dried bricks of practically the same size as those of the Stūpa. To my regret the accidental loss of the plane-table sketch I had made renders it impossible to indicate here the exact size and shape of the two fortified areas. But the photograph in Fig. 34 of the one occupying the north-west end of the ridge and situated at a distance of about 168 yards from the other, will help to give an idea of their appearance and state of preservation. This detached fort is confined to the top of the narrow ridge of clay and gravel which rises to about forty feet above the 'Dasht' level, and proved nowhere more than eighty feet in width. The best-preserved portion of the enclosing wall to the south-east (seen on the extreme right in Fig. 34) stands to a height of some twenty feet and still shows a row of loopholes. The position was rendered particularly strong by the ridge falling away here to the river bed in very precipitous cliffs, about 120 feet high.

The other fortification, nearer to the Stūpa, showed an outer enclosure on level ground southward, with two massively built towers, about eighteen feet square, on its east face. The interior was covered with coarse pottery débris, marking prolonged occupation. A very curious feature was a line of double walls, running from a point near the south-east corner of the enclosure in the direction of the ruined Stūpa for a distance of about fifty-six yards. The walls, separated by a distance of ten and a half feet from each other, showed inferior construction and a line of holes at a height of about six feet above the ground. Were they meant for loopholes—or intended to hold wooden pegs for fastening large clay images, if this strange passage had served as a kind of Vihāra approach?⁶ Neither here nor within the main enclosures did I see débris or structural remains inviting excavation. Nor was there much hope of relics of interest, such as written records, surviving to any extent on ground bare of the protecting cover of drift-sand, and in most parts exposed on its slopes to the full effects of such downpours as this north-western rim of the great basin from time to time knows.

Rock-carved
cellas of
*Öch-mer-
wān.*

About one mile beyond Khākānning-shahri north-westwards the road to Ārtush passes, on its left, below a long sandstone terrace rising with an almost vertical rock face above the flat riverine 'Dasht'. There, carved into the rock at a height of about fifty feet above the top of the detritus slope which has accumulated at the foot of the terrace, and about as much below the overhanging brink of the latter, gaped the three niches which have given to the locality its name *Öch-merwān*, 'the three windows' (Fig. 30). The doorways, carefully carved from the rock within shallow recesses, showed slightly slanting jambs, and seemed to measure about eight feet in height and about six across, with a similar distance left between them. At the back of the shallow central niche I could easily make out the painted head of a Buddha, with hair-knob and halo, black on white, which Sir G. Macartney appears to have been the first to notice; it is recognizable also in the photograph.

The two side niches seemed much deeper, and suggested a connecting passage behind, which would permit the orthodox circumambulation or 'Pradakṣiṇā' of the sacred image in the small central niche, after a plan which I found subsequently illustrated by numerous cave-shrines near Tun-huang and Kuchā. Square holes cut into the rock at irregular intervals below the niches had once served to carry the scaffolding needed for access to this little cave temple. To clamber up to it with the help of a rope let down from above proved impossible, and there was no time to improvise a rope-ladder such as, I understood, had been used by the Cossacks who first visited the caves. Since they had been examined also by members of the Prussian archaeological mission, I could rest content with what my glasses showed me.

Early history
of Yārkand.

The journey which brought me in five days (June 23-7) from Kāshgar to Yārkand, lay by the

⁶ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 487, for the traces left by such wooden fastenings in the walls of the Rawak Vihāra.