

of wood. The outside wall on the south-west of iv had completely disappeared, except for remains of layers of Toghrak branches at the south corner. Fallen timber strewed the slope some 150 feet lower down in plenty. The fall of the wall was evidently due to the foundations here having slid down the precipitous rock ledge. It was through a gate on this side that the keep-like main structure within the fort i (Fig. 330) was entered. This appeared to have been originally built with walls of coarse brickwork, 4 feet thick, which were subsequently strengthened to a thickness of 8 feet on the north, east, and south. The fact that the main west wall of the fort adjoining i was built of a different material seems to indicate that i was the earliest structure occupying the site. It had contained more than one story; for the square holes found in the walls, well below their top level in their present broken condition, were obviously intended to carry a flooring. The interior space, 20 feet square, was found filled with débris including burned timber to a height of some 7 feet.

Walled  
outer court.

On the north-east a narrow apartment, ii, 20 feet long and only 6 feet wide, had been spared between the 'keep' and the fort wall (Fig. 331). The latter was found here much broken, and through it ii appeared to have communicated with the outer court v by means of a flight of stairs. This court v, situated on a level more than 20 feet lower than the area of the fort proper, was clearly marked as a later addition. Its walls, though also of considerable thickness and built with sun-dried bricks of the same size as those of the fort, lacked the strengthening layers of tamarisk brushwood and the timber reinforcing the latter, and consequently had suffered more damage, especially at the north corner. The space enclosed by them, about 90 feet by 29, had probably been roofed over; for charred timber was abundant among the débris and refuse, and all the brickwork was reddened by fire. The masses of horse-dung found on clearing the space along the north-east wall and elsewhere showed plainly that this outer court, through which the fort was entered, had served mainly for stabling. The gate led through the 10-feet thick wall on the south-east.

Tower  
crowning  
hill-crest.

The tower (Fig. 329) which crowned the crest, at an elevation of 225 feet above the top of the clay banks by the river-bed and at a distance of over 60 yards from the west bastion of the fort, was of remarkable solidity. In construction, size, and conical shape it curiously recalled the familiar watch-towers of the Tun-huang Limes. It was built of flat and fairly regular pieces of hard clay, no doubt brought from the banks lining the foot of the hill above the river, with layers of tamarisk branches at intervals of 10 inches and Toghrak posts and beams inserted in the masonry. Its base measured 25 feet on the south-west and north-east, and apparently 22 feet on the two other sides. But, as the south-east face was badly broken, the apparent greater length of two sides cannot be depended upon. The extant height was over 20 feet. Even without ascending to its top, the view ranged far up and down the broad bed of the river and its jungle belt, and beyond to the distant high ridges of bare sands.

Excavation  
of 'keep'.

The excavation of the remains within the fort was but the beginning of labours which were to keep us busy for three long and hot days. Marks of recent burrowing within the 'keep' i clearly showed where the Tibetan wooden slips brought to me at Islāmābād had been obtained. But these diggings had left the heavy débris lower down undisturbed, and on clearing this a number of Tibetan documents on small tablets, exactly like those found in the Mīrān fort, were recovered, besides rarer fragments of Tibetan records on paper. More of such relics, evidently left behind by the last occupants of the fort, turned up among débris thrown into the recess iii outside the entrance of the room i. Of miscellaneous small objects found in the latter I may mention a reed pen, M. Tagh. i. 006, cut with nib exactly as a pen found at Mīrān; a wooden die, M. Tagh. i. 007, with numbers arranged as in its ivory pendant from Mīrān; a wooden key of the Khādalik type, M. Tagh. i. 0011; and the well-made terra-cotta saucer in the form of a tortoise, M. Tagh. i. 0029 (Plate LI).