

Tim site
near Nūra.

This glorious view was still clear when next morning I proceeded northward to visit an old site known as *Tim*, which had first been noticed by Professor Huntington.³ The route led first along a canal carrying ample water to the small outlying settlement of Yalghuz-bāgh, and beyond it through a sandy steppe in which a grass-covered Nullah clearly marked a former continuation of this canal, but of larger size, towards the deserted site. This proved to be situated fully 8 miles from the chief hamlet of Nūra. The 'Tim' which has given the site its name was found to be a circular mound built of layers of rubble and stamped clay, measuring about 36 feet across at the top, with a height of approximately 16 feet. Its interior had been completely dug up, no doubt for 'treasure'; its shape suggested that it represented the remains of a completely ruined Stūpa. About 250 yards to the north-east rose another mound of similar appearance, but smaller. This showed a diameter of about 21 feet with a height of 6 feet, and was built of sun-dried bricks, $14'' \times 8'' \times 3''$. It, too, had been completely cut through.

Débris-
strewn area.

Pottery débris was abundantly strewn over the ground for about half a mile south of the large mound and was said to extend northward for a 'Pao-t'ai's distance' (about 2 miles or so). The potsherds, of which specimens are described below,⁴ seemed all very hard and to resemble in their colouring, dark red or terra-cotta, and make those found at the Hanguya Tatis, Rawak, and Yōtkan. One small terra-cotta fragment, Nura. 005, appears to have belonged to some relieve. No coins were found by us, nor were any heard of. I believe it may be taken for certain that the site was occupied in Buddhist times, but there is nothing to show that it marks a large settlement. I saw no pottery remains beyond the old canal, which still carries the surplus water of Yalghuz-bāgh at this season, and passes some 35 yards to the west of the larger mound; to the east of the latter they disappeared after about 500 yards. This makes it probable that the old settlement occupied, just like the present Nūra, a narrow strip of ground. A plain of fertile loess stretches as far as the wide rubble bed of the river which descends from Sai-bāgh and after heavy rain is said to carry its flood-water down to the 'Sai' east of Domoko.

Pilgrimage
place of
Tört-Imām.

This was the last old site to be visited by me on this journey; for the picturesque little oasis of *Tört-Imām*[lar], the 'Four Imāms', to which that day's march brought me, retains no traces of antiquity in spite of its fame as a pilgrimage place and the legends which cluster around its sacred tombs.⁵ That these Muhammadan shrines owe their existence to some earlier local worship is all the same very probable; but as the oasis lies far off from the high road, embedded between long bare foot spurs of the mountains, it was not likely to attract the attention of those Buddhist pilgrims to whom is due whatever we know of the ancient *topographia sacra* of Khotan.

However, our old Chinese sources do not fail us altogether about the geography of this region;

³ Cf. Huntington, *Pulse of Asia*, p. 165.

⁴ The following are specimens of ceramic fragments found at the *Tim* site of Nūra:

Nura. 001. Pottery fr. from coarse hand-made vase of reddish brown ill-levigated clay. From slightly bulging shoulder projects stump of broken (probably horizontal) handle. Here is scored horizontal line crossed by row of short perpendicular lines. Below, small incised circles, three rows, set in inverted triangle. Below again, raised horizontal line, below which incised hatching. $3'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{7}{16}''$.

Nura. 002. Pottery fr. from rim and neck of vase. Clay a light terra-cotta colour, ill-levigated. Flat edge with flanged rim. Hand-made, no orn. $3\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2'' \times \frac{1}{4}''$ to (rim) $\frac{5}{8}''$.

Nura. 003. Pottery fr. of vase of very hard clay.

Inner surface drab, outer light terra-cotta coloured; no orn.; hand-made. Triangular, with 2'' sides. Thickness $\frac{3}{16}''$.

Nura. 004. Pottery fr. of hand-made vase of light red clay; no orn. $1\frac{3}{8}'' \times 1\frac{3}{16}''$.

Nura. 005. Terra-cotta fr. of relief drapery (?). $1\frac{1}{4}'' \times \frac{7}{8}'' \times \frac{1}{4}''$.

Nura. 006. Pottery fr. from vase of dark red clay. Outer surface has light grey slip on which are painted black bands. $1\frac{3}{4}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}'' \times \frac{1}{4}''$.

Nura. 007. Triangular fr. of mica-schist with intruding quartz (?). $1\frac{7}{8}'' \times 1\frac{1}{8}'' \times \frac{3}{8}''$.

⁵ For these legends of the 'Four Imāms' and their origin, cf. the exhaustive comments of M. Grenard in *Mission D. de Rhins*, iii. pp. 13 sqq.