

CHAPTER IV

THE ANCIENT REMAINS OF KĀSHGAR AND THE OASES OF YARKAND AND KARGHALIK

SECTION I.—THE STŪPAS OF KURGHĀN-TIM AND KIZIL-DEBE

NONE of the early notices about Kāshgar, above reviewed, contains any definite indication as to the position of its capital. But the oldest Muhammadan description of Kāshgar I can trace—and one exceptionally trustworthy from the intimate acquaintance of its author, Mirzā Ḥaidar, with this territory—clearly shows that the position of the city of Kāshgar early in the sixteenth century was the same as now¹. The absence of any evidence or tradition to the contrary would in itself suffice to justify this assumption; but fortunately we possess direct proof of the antiquity of the site in antiquarian remains of undoubtedly pre-Muhammadan origin.

These consist of the large ruined mound of *Kurghān-Tim*, near the left bank of the Tūmen

Site of
ancient
Kāshgar.

¹ Mirzā Ḥaidar, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī*, p. 295, speaks of Kāshgar as situated on the River *Timan*, i. e. the present *Tūmen*, which, as the map shows, actually flows round the north-western and north-eastern faces of the city. He places the River *Kara-Tāzghun* ('in the dialect of Kāshgar *Tāzghun* means a river') to the south of it, half way between Kāshgar and Yangi-Hisār. This, again, is in perfect accordance with the actual position of Kāshgar, the river in question (also known as *Kara-su*, by which name it is marked on my map) being still reckoned as midway between the two towns.

He further tells us that the *Timan* river 'flows between the ancient citadel of Kāshgar which Mirzā Abā Bakr destroyed, and the new one which he built on the banks of this river'. Mirzā Ḥaidar, who in 1514 helped to dethrone Mirzā Abā Bakr, refers elsewhere to this citadel as having been built by that tyrant shortly before his overthrow, to hold one thousand horse and foot (*ibid.*, p. 304). Considering that this stronghold is said to have been improvised within seven days, we can scarcely feel surprised at its having disappeared without leaving any trace in remains or tradition. It may be supposed to have stood somewhere between the north-western face of the present city wall and the right bank of the river. On the other hand, the name *Kurghān*, 'fort,' and the tradition of having once been a fortified position, still clings to this day to the suburb which lines the left river bank opposite that part of the city. It is from its proximity to this suburb that the ruined Stūpa described below has received its name *Kurghān-Tim*.

The account of Kāshgar which Ritter (*Asien*, v. p. 412) quotes, through Klaproth's mediation, from the *Jahān-numā*

of the Turkish geographer Ḥājī Khalfā (circ. 1640 A. D.) is manifestly a somewhat imperfect reproduction of the remarks of Mirzā Ḥaidar.

Mirzā Ḥaidar knew Kāshgar well; for much of his youth, when he served his kinsman Sultān Sa'īd Khān, Abā Bakr's successor, during the years 1514-30, must have been spent in that city. His general description of Kāshgar and the surrounding territories, written long after he had left that region to become virtual ruler of Kashmīr, is tinged with the glow of happy personal recollections, and is withal true in its particulars. He would not have been a Moghul if he had failed to extol the abundance and excellence of the fruits of Kāshgar in the passage already quoted (see p. 69, note 33). But we recognize the impress of more individual feelings in the words in which he characterizes the life of the city. Those who have lived in Kāshgar for any time can scarcely read them without being touched.

'The inhabitants of towns who go there regard Kāshgar as a wild country, while the people of the steppes consider it a refined city. It is a sort of Purgatory between the Paradise of towns and the Hell of deserts. . . . In a word, it is free from the discord of men and the trampling of hoofs, and it is a safe retreat for the contented and the rich. Great blessings accrue to the pious now, from the blessed saints who lived there in time past. From two pious persons, out of many I have seen, I have heard that when people migrate from that country to some other they cannot find the same peace of mind, and they remember Kāshgar [with regret]. This is the highest praise.' *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī*, p. 303.