

place of discovery merely to obviate further search by the travellers. Not having been able to ascertain either from the published accounts or by my inquiries at Khotan the names of those who supplied the relics, I had no means of following up the matter further. I hence fear that, as in the case of so many remains acquired through native agency in this region, the question as to the true origin of the Dutreuil de Rhins MS. must ever remain undecided.

The uncertainty about this find cannot detract from the archaeological interest of the site; for every feature proves the identity of the latter with the Mount Gośrāga or Gośīrṣa of our Chinese and Tibetan records. The position occupied by the present Mazār of Kohmārī, on the top of a hill rising precipitously above the bank of the Kara-kāsh just where it reaches the Khotan oasis, agrees accurately with all topographical indications in the notices of the *Hsi-yü-chi* and other texts above quoted. The south-westerly bearing from the Khotan capital which Hsüan-tsang mentions for Mount Gośrāga, coupled with the fact that this capital is plainly described by successive notices of the Chinese Annals as situated between the Yurung-kāsh and the Kara-kāsh, necessarily places the sacred hill by the banks of the latter. The short distance from the capital, 20 li, named by the *Hsi-yü-chi* shows unmistakably that the hill must have been at the very edge of the oasis. Now there is no eminence on the banks of the Kara-kāsh lower down than Kohmārī, nor, for a considerable distance higher up, any which comes quite close to the river bank and rises precipitously above it. From Popuna downwards to its debouchure at Ujat the river is flanked either by cultivated flats or else by gravel slopes of a very easy gradient, except just at Kohmārī.

The existence in the steep scarp of this hill, i.e. in the very position described by Hsüan-tsang, of a cave venerated to the present day as the abode of a saint completes the evidence in conclusive fashion. In the narrow fissure running into the rock from the upper story of the cave we may safely recognize the passage which in the legend related to the pilgrim is represented as having been blocked by fallen rocks and thus having hidden the Arhat¹⁷. The tenacity of local worship is proved once more by the tradition which has substituted for Gomasālagandha, the Buddhist saint once worshipped here, a Muhammadan martyr of the Faith. The alleged resting-place of the latter on the top of the ridge, between two small hillocks, may well occupy the place of the convent and Caitya which, according to the testimony of the *Hsi-yü-chi* and *Sūryagarbha-sūtra*, we must suppose to have stood on Mount Gośrāga.

The shrine and cave of Kohmārī still form a favourite place of pilgrimage for the faithful of Khotan, and the well-fed, contented look of its Shaikhs shows that their income derived from pious offerings is substantial. The intercession of holy 'Mahēb Khōjam' is believed to be particularly efficacious when the low state of the rivers makes the cultivators of certain tracts fear inadequate irrigation and consequent failure of crops. On this account quasi-official recognition, in the form of a liberal offering from the Amban Pan Darin, was said to have been recently accorded to the shrine. Is it possible that this belief in a connexion between worship at Kohmārī and the supply of flood-water in the rivers had its distant origin in the

Kohmārī
identified
with Mt.
Gośrāga.

Local
worship
continued
on Kohmārī.

¹⁷ It is scarcely necessary to point out that it was manifestly the existence of such a natural fissure, suggesting access to some mysterious inner space impassable beyond a short distance, which originated the legend. We meet with a similar piece of folklore in Hsüan-tsang's account of the sacred cave near *Yaṣṭivana* in the vicinity of ancient Rājagrha or Rājgir in South Bihār, which I have identified

with the *Rājpinḍ* cave close to the present Jeṭhian (see my 'Notes on an archaeological tour in South Bihār', *Ind. Ant.*, 1901, p. 65). A high fissure running upwards from a corner of this cave was supposed to have once given access to the magic city of the Asuras (comp. *Mémoires de H.-Th.*, ii. pp. 14 sq.).