

precipitous right bank of the river to the debouchure of the Drāsan River, which unites all the streams from the valleys of Kāshkār-Bālā.²² The village of Rēshun and the defile below Kurāgh which I passed on the opposite bank were, indeed, historical sites, but the tragic events which they witnessed during the Chitrāl expedition are still too recent for antiquarian investigation. At the village of Kusht, near the debouchure reached late in the evening, there was no time for inspecting the fort, which was stated to date from the time of the 'Ra'is'. Nor did I hear at the time of the remains of a large 'Buddhist Chogten or Stūpa' which Major Biddulph mentions as existing 'in the Chitrāl Valley, on a conspicuous point near the road not far from the valley of Koosht . . . and still spoken of as "the idol"'.²³

Rock-carving at Charrun.

By crossing both the river of Drāsan and the Yārkhūn, a little above their confluence, to the village of Charrun I had entered Mastūj territory. Before, however, I proceed to discuss the brief historical notices of the district which survive, it will be convenient to describe the pendant of the Pakhtōrīdīnī rock-carving which I examined close to Charrun village. I had heard of it already at Chitrāl, and on the morning of May 11 was guided to the spot by Khān Sāhib Pīr Bakhsh, the worthy Indian Hospital Assistant who acts as adviser to the chief of Mastūj. In the midst of terraced fields, about a mile to the south-west of the village and at a point not far above the road descending the valley, a cultivator dwelling close by had, about eight years before my visit, come upon a large boulder of roundish shape bearing upon its north face the engraved representation of a Stūpa and a short inscription in Brāhmī characters on either side (Fig. 6). Induced apparently by some lingering recollection of earlier worship, the villagers, good Muhammadans as they are, had cleared the boulder completely and erected a rude hut over it for protection.

Representation of Stūpa.

The rock-carving, of which a drawing to scale is reproduced in Plate 2, shows a Stūpa measuring 3 feet 7 inches in height and 2 feet 6 inches across at the foot of the lowest base. Here, too, as at Pakhtōrīdīnī, appear all the characteristic features of the Stūpa type prevailing to the north of the Hindukush. There are the three successively receding bases, of which the topmost appears here also as the highest. Between it and the cylindrical drum bearing the dome, a strongly marked projecting cornice is inserted. For the latter I can find no parallel amongst the Stūpa ruins of the Tārīm Basin known to me; but it is present in the same position in the small Stūpa of Thōl, in Hunza,²⁴ and it must have been a frequent feature in the Stūpas of Gandhāra and Udyāna, to judge from its characteristic representation in several sculptured Stūpa models and in stuccoed Stūpa bases still extant.²⁵ To the cornice, marked by a simple line, which divides the drum from the dome, I have referred above.²⁶ The height of the dome is in excess of a true hemispherical shape much in the same proportion as the one of Pakhtōrīdīnī. Above the dome is seen the pedestal intended to support the crowning spire of umbrellas, in a shape which is commonly met with in Gandhāra Stūpa models.²⁷ From it rises the staff, but, curiously enough, the umbrellas or discs which it was meant to carry have been left unrepresented.

Inscription of Charrun carving.

The inscription engraved on either side of the Stūpa representation shows six well-cut Brāhmī *akṣaras* on the right, on the average $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high and incised to a depth of about one-eighth of an inch. On the left, owing to the peeling of the surface of the somewhat friable sandstone, only three *akṣaras* survive, and of these the first two are mere traces. There is no actual indication that more characters preceded these, but owing to the condition of the stone surface on that side, no certain conclusion can be drawn. On the right side, however, the inscription is manifestly intact, reading

²² See *Desert Cathay*, i. 43 sq.

²³ Cf. *Hindoo Koosh*, p. 109.

²⁴ See *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 20, Fig. 4.

²⁵ Cf., e. g. Foucher, *L'Art du Gandhāra*, i. Fig. 71, 72,

and the remarkably well-preserved stuccoed Stūpa bases excavated at Takhti-i-Bāhī, Court T.XX, in 1911.

²⁶ See pp. 37-8.

²⁷ Cf. Foucher, *loc. cit.*, i. Figs. 22, 23, 70, 71.